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Simon Webb began to make an impact on the chess world in the 1960s. He learnt the game at the age of seven and ten years later, in 1966, he became under-18 champion in the UK and came fourth in the European junior championship. He moved to Sweden in the 1970s and became one of the few correspondence chess Grandmasters. The first edition of *Chess for Tigers* was published in 1978. He died in 2005.

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Chess for Tigers

Simon Webb



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A BATSFORD CHESS BOOK

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Foreword

Since the second edition was published in 1990, there have been dramatic changes in competitive chess. Time limits have become shorter, adjournments and adjudications have been replaced by quick finishes, and Quick Play events have become much more popular. Correspondence chess has been transformed by the impact of e-mail, analysis engines and databases.

So I have updated *Chess for Tigers* to reflect these and other changes.

Simon Webb

Stockholm, 2005

I So you want to be a Tiger?

Note: Some time after the author had submitted his manuscript for this new edition of *Chess For Tigers*, FIDE, the International Chess Federation, passed new laws forbidding a player to write moves down in advance and also insisting that a player's scoresheet be visible to the arbiter throughout the game. This clearly has a bearing on advice given on pages 115 and 121-122, but as a mark of respect to the late Simon Webb we have retained his original text.



You could be a much better chess player than you are.

How? Simply by making fuller use of your natural ability. You have a reasonable knowledge of your favourite openings, your positional judgement is better than that of many players you lose to, and you can analyse tactical lines as well as some players of twice your strength. And yet you only play at your full strength maybe one or two games in ten. This is because you waste much of your ability by not directing it properly. You get into the wrong positions against the wrong opponents, you make silly mistakes, you adopt the wrong mental attitude, and you handle the clock badly.

So you want to be a Tiger?

If you could *fully harness your natural ability* you would find yourself consistently beating your current rivals and holding your own against players you now consider to be out of your class.

'Well, I'm sure I could do better if I spent a lot more time studying chess ...', you may say, ' ... but there are other things in life, and I don't really want to spend hours and hours every evening swotting up openings and things'

The answer is – you don't have to! You need not spend any more time on chess than you do now, but what you *must* do is *adopt a practical approach and play to win*.

Next time you sit down to play a match, ask yourself what is your aim in playing. Are you aiming to play the best moves? Or are you playing to win? There is a difference. Many players aim merely to play the best moves, objectively speaking. They never succeed, of course, but that doesn't stop them trying. But chess is not a science – it's a game, a struggle between two mortals who make mistakes, deceive themselves and each other, get tired, allow themselves to be distracted, and altogether have no hope of attaining perfection at the chess-board. If you want to become a Tiger, you must forget about playing the best moves and concentrate on winning.

Of course, I know that you play chess for enjoyment, and that winning or losing isn't really all that important – the game's the thing. But just between you and me, you may as well admit that you get a bit of a kick out of winning, and you simply hate losing. If you want to improve your results you must harness that desire to win and transform yourself into a Tiger of the chess-board. And if you want to know how, read on ...

Note. This book is designed to make you think. Diagrams are placed to bring out key points, and to get the maximum benefit you should have a brief look at the position in each diagram before continuing with the text.

2 Play the man – not the board



Only an automaton plays the same way against every opponent. The practical chess-player looks out for the strengths and weaknesses of his opponents, and goes out of his way to capitalize on the weaknesses.

Before a World Championship Match, each player may spend months making a very thorough study of his opponent's games, searching for weaknesses in his opening repertoire, identifying the types of positions in which he is at home or ill-at-ease, assessing his tendency to over-optimism or pessimism, and so on. You can't go to these lengths, but you should still be able to make good use of anything you know about your opponent's style of play.

If you play regularly at a club you will doubtless know what to expect from most of the other club members. You may know that Smith will attack like crazy and go to any lengths to avoid an exchange of queens, that Jones is lacking in confidence and inclined to agree a draw in a good position, and that Bloggs relies mainly on setting cheap traps. With this information you should be able to tackle each of these opponents in a particular way.

You will have less to go on, however, when you face an opponent you know nothing about, in a match against another club, for example. Your friends or team-mates may be able to give you some information about him, but even against a complete Mystery Man you should be able to make a few deductions. Does he look a bit past his prime? Is he carrying a briefcase bulging with openings books? Does he look confident or nervous?

If you've got nothing else to go on, age is a reasonable guide. Older players tend to have less stamina; they may be subject to time-trouble, unfamiliar with current opening theory, and bad in complications, but they often play simple positions and endings well. Younger players are usually well genned up on current opening theory (though not the theory of ten years ago), and good at analysing tactical lines, but frequently lack technique in simple positions and endings. Once the game gets started you will be able to modify your first impressions in the light of your opponent's choice of opening, although by this stage you will have less opportunity to steer the game in a particular direction.

A good illustration of how to play on your opponent's weaknesses is provided by the way Korchnoi tackled Geller in their semi-final match in the 1971 World Championship Candidates' series. He knew that he couldn't outplay Geller positionally (as he frankly admitted after the match); so he deliberately aimed for complicated and unclear positions, in which he believed Geller would be uncomfortable. This approach paid off handsomely. Geller continually became short of time trying to fathom the complications which Korchnoi produced, failed to find the right answers, and lost 5½-2½. Indeed he lost 3 of the 8 games on time.

Here is the eighth and final game of the match:

White: **Geller** Black: **Korchnoi**

Sicilian Defence, Scheveningen Variation

1	e2-e4	c7-c5
2	g1-f3	d7-d6
3	d2-d4	c5xd4
4	f3xd4	g8-f6

5 **b1-c3** **a7-a6**

Challenging Geller to enter the notoriously complicated lines of the Najdorf Variation started by 6 **g5** e6 7 f4 **b6** 8 **d2** **xb2** with which Bobby Fischer had had many successes as Black round about this time.

6 **f1-e2** **e7-e6**

7 **0-0**

Geller opts for quiet development.

7 ... **f8-e7**

8 **f2-f4** **0-0**

9 **g1-h1** **b8-c6**

10 **c1-e3** **d8-c7**

11 **a2-a4**

Having completed his development, Geller plays thematically, restraining Black's possible breaks with ... b5 and ... d5, and trying gradually to build up control of the centre.

For the moment Korchnoi is passively placed, and contents himself with bringing his remaining pieces into play, while waiting for a chance to open up the struggle.

11 ... **c8-d7**

12 **d4-b3** **b7-b6**

13 **e2-f3** **f8-d8**

14 **d1-e2** **d7-e8**

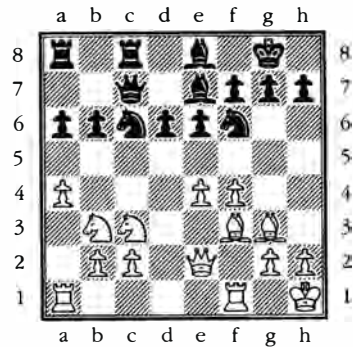
15 **e3-f2** **d8-c8**

16 **f2-g3**

Bringing another piece to bear on e5, and indirectly on Black's d-pawn. White has plenty of pieces stopping ... d5 and ... b5, and sooner or later will be able to open up the position with e5.

How is Black to continue?

Play the man – not the board



16 ... ♖f6-d7!

Korchnoi goes for active counterplay on the Q-side. The knight is heading for c5, and at the same time making way for the bishop to come to f6, where it will bear down on White's Q-side. This plan has the disadvantage of taking a piece away from the defence of the king, but the merit of being active and thus forcing Geller to bring about a confrontation by trying to press home his advantage in the centre.

The alternative of preventing White's e5 thrust by playing ... e5 himself would have been reasonably solid, but would have left White with a slight plus and Black with no active counterplay – just the sort of position in which Geller excels.

17 ♖a1-d1 ♙e7-f6

18 e4-e5!

A pawn sacrifice that can't be accepted!

18 ... ♞d6xe5

19 ♜f4xe5 ♙f6-e7

19 ... ♙xe5 20 ♙xc6 ♜xc6 21 ♙xe5 wins a piece, while 19 ... ♞dxe5 20 ♜fe1 leaves Black unable to prevent material loss, for White is threatening both ♙xe5 and ♙xc6.

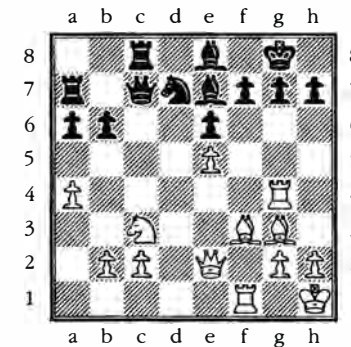
20 ♞b3-d4 ♞c6xd4

21 ♜d1xd4 ♜a8-a7

22 ♜d4-g4

White has a clear advantage. This is not to say that Korchnoi was wrong to provoke e4-e5, for if he had played passively for a few moves Geller would have built up an even stronger position before opening up the centre.

With his last move Geller employs the objectively best plan of attacking on the K-side while the black pieces are grovelling around on the Q-side. How would you defend?



22 ... ♜h7-h5!

Korchnoi deliberately weakens his K-side in order to confuse the issue and encourage Geller to spend valuable time on the clock analysing sacrificial attacks. This is the crucial moment in the game, and an excellent example of playing the man, not the board. A defensive move like ... ♞f8 might have been objectively better, but then Geller would have had the sort of position he likes, with everything under control, and would probably have continued to play well.

23 ♜g4-e4 ♜g7-g6

24 h2-h3?

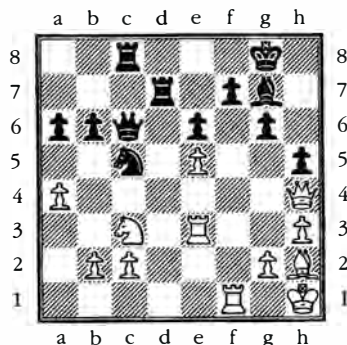
24 ♙xh5! would have led to a powerful sacrificial attack after 24 ... gxh5 25 ♜f6!, but Geller, after running short of time analysing this, shrinks from the complications and tries to play positionally after all. Now that his K-side pawn advances have gone unpunished, Black is able to consolidate his gain of space and obtain reasonable chances.

Play the man – not the board

- 24 ... ♖e7-f8
 25 ♖g3-h2 ♖f8-g7
 26 ♜e4-e3 ♘d7-c5
 27 ♚e2-e1

Although he no longer has the advantage, Geller is still playing for a win, since he is behind in the match. He would like to play ♚h4, followed by either g4 or ♘e4 (after first chasing away the knight with b4). This plan turns out to be too slow, however.

- 27 ... ♖e8-c6
 28 ♖f3xc6 ♚c7xc6
 29 ♚e1-h4 ♜a7-d7



If only Geller hadn't been distracted by the possibility of a K-side attack he would still be controlling the d-file! But once having started it he should have gone through with it.

- 30 ♜e3-f3 b6-b5

Now that Black has control of the centre White's pieces lining up on the K-side can do little. If Black can manage to get in ... b4, chasing away the knight, he will be able to get in behind the white e-pawn, which is now looking rather weak, and White's Q-side pawns will also be in danger of dropping off.

- 31 a4xb5 a6xb5
 32 b2-b4?

A tactical error in time-trouble.

- 32 ... ♘c5-d3!
 33 ♘c3-e4 ♚c6xc2
 34 ♘e4-f6+ ♖g7xf6
 35 e5xf6 ♜d7-d5

Flank attacks are usually easy to repulse when you have control of the centre, and here the rook easily stops White's K-side threats such as ♚g5, or e4 and gxh5.

- 36 ♜f3-e3 ♚c2-c4
 37 ♚h4-g3 h5-h4

White lost on time, but his position is completely lost in any case, for Black is about to win a second pawn and his pieces dominate the board.

Although unable to match Geller's fine positional play in the first 20 moves, Korchnoi succeeded in obtaining the sort of complicated position which he plays better than Geller. If Geller had been more aware of his own and Korchnoi's strengths and weaknesses, he might have been content to maintain a slight advantage by controlling the d-file and restricting Black's Q-side activity, even though he knew that the K-side attack was objectively better. It is not always a good idea to play the best moves, particularly when you have to use up a lot of time finding them.

You can bet Korchnoi wouldn't have played like that against Tal!

Another example of the benefits of leading your opponent into unfamiliar paths is provided by my game against Hartston in the 1974 British Championship. Knowing that I very rarely open 1 e4, and prefer Q-side openings, Hartston inveigled me into playing the White side of a Maroczy bind Sicilian, I was unfamiliar with this type of position, went wrong, and was duly punished for my psychologically poor choice of opening:

White: **S. Webb** Black: **W. R. Hartston**

English Opening – Maroczy Bind

- 1 g1-f3 g8-f6
 2 d2-d4 c7-c5
 3 c2-c4 c5xd4
 4 f3xd4 b7-b6!

An unusual move, allowing White full control of the centre, and with no particular intrinsic merit. It gets an exclamation mark, however, because the player of the white pieces is S.Webb. I always like to fianchetto my king's bishop in such positions, and this is the one move which prevents me from doing so. Had it occurred to me that Hartston might play this move, I would have played 3 g3 or possibly 2 c4 and then 3 g3.

- 5 b1-c3 c8-b7
 6 f2-f3 d7-d6
 7 e2-e4 e7-e6
 8 f1-e2 f8-e7
 9 0-0 0-0
 10 c1-e3 b8-d7

This position is perfectly good for White, objectively speaking, and I knew that I had been playing in approved fashion up to now. From this point, however, I had to decide on some sort of strategy. Should I go for f3-f4-f5? Or g2-g4-g5? Or try to get play against the pawn on d6 by doubling rooks on the d-file? None of these plans looked particularly convincing, so I settled for putting my rooks in the centre and waiting to see what happened. It's not much use knowing you've got a good position if you don't know what to do with it!

- 11 d1-d2 a7-a6



Hartston commented on this position in the *British Chess Magazine* as follows:

'Now the position bears a very strong resemblance to a Sicilian. I felt quite happy now since I seem to have spent half my life playing Sicilian positions of this type, while my opponent, not a 1 e4 player, had to be less familiar with the problems.'

- 12 f1-d1 d8-c7
 13 a1-c1 a8-c8
 14 e2-f1 c7-b8
 15 d2-f2 f8-e8

Hartston's comments again:

'White has made a series of natural moves and maintains a spatial advantage; nevertheless I believe that Black already has the better prospects. The black pieces, at first sight a little cramped, are beautifully placed to leap into action after the thematic d6-d5 breakthrough – possibly with a pawn sacrifice.'

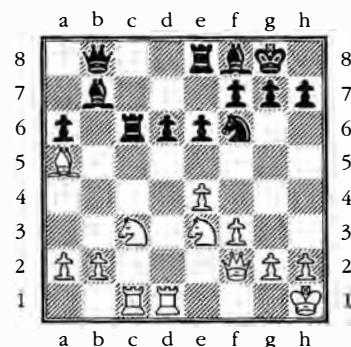
By this stage I was definitely running out of things to do. I still don't know what I did wrong, apart from choosing the wrong opening!

- 16 g1-h1 e7-f8
 17 d4-c2 d7-e5
 18 e3xb6

I would have preferred to defend my c-pawn, which is doing its best to prevent both ... b5 and ... d5, but both 18 b3 b5 and 18 a3 d5! are very unpleasant for White.

- 18 ... e5xc4
 19 f1xc4 c8xc4
 20 c2-e3 c4-c6
 21 b6-a5

Black now has a definite advantage due to his bishop pair and central pawn majority, and Hartston exploits this superbly.



- 21 ... d6-d5!
 22 e4xd5 e6xd5
 23 e3-f5

Taking the pawn is too dangerous, e.g. 23 exd5 dxd5 24 fxd5 fxc3 winning a piece, or 23 cxd5 dxd5 24 fxc6 dxe3 also winning a piece. The move played is an attempt to blockade the d-pawn with d4 next move, but there's something wrong with this ...

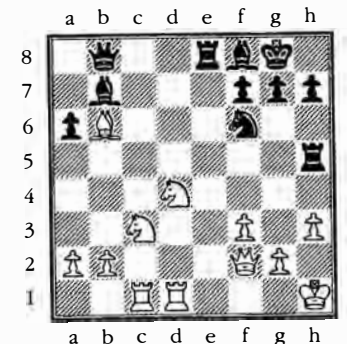
- 23 ... d5-d4!

A fine pawn sacrifice, opening up lines for the black pieces to swing into action against the white king.

- 24 f5xd4 c6-c5

- 25 h5-b6 c5-h5
 26 h2-h3

How would you continue the attack?



- 26 ... f6-g4!!

Well, if you saw that one either you're a very good combinative player or you cheated! This is an excellent piece sacrifice, because although it doesn't force an immediate win it gives Black a lasting attack against which there is no defence.

- 27 f3xg4 h5xh3+
 28 h1-g1 b8-h2+
 29 g1-f1 h3-g3
 30 c1-c2 g3xg4!

There is no hurry – White has no way of reorganizing his defence.

- 31 f2-g1 h2-h6
 32 d4-f5(?)

A wild attempt to play actively, which only succeeds in losing back the piece without blunting Black's attack. But it is difficult to see how else White can defend. If 32 a5 or a7 the reply 32 ... c5 leaves White hopelessly tied up, while 32 b3 allows 32 ... a5! with the powerful threat of ... a6+. Possibly 32 a7 would have been the best chance, planning

Play the man – not the board

to meet 32 ... ♖h4 with 33 ♜f5. After 32 ... ♗e5, however, it is difficult to find a move which doesn't lose something.

32 ... ♗h6-f6
 33 ♗c2-f2 ♗f6xb6
 34 ♗g1-h2 a6-a5!
 35 ♗h2-h3 ♗g4-g6
 36 ♜c3-d5?

Losing immediately, but in any case there was no answer to the threat of ... ♗a6+ followed by ... ♗c5.

36 ... ♗b6-b5+
 37 ♜f1-g1 ♗b7xd5

White resigns

A finely played attack by Hartston, but he was able to make use of his attacking skill only because he had tricked me into playing a position I didn't understand.

In this game choice of opening was the principal factor in 'playing the man', but you should be constantly aware of who you are playing throughout the game. The opening provides the greatest opportunity for you to determine the character of the whole game, but critical strategical decisions frequently occur at quite a late stage in the game. A common one, for example, is the choice of whether to continue with a middle-game attack or to swap off into a slightly favourable ending. Here your opponent's style of play is an important factor to be considered, but there are a number of others, and the main ones can be listed as follows:

- (1) The objective merits of the two alternative lines.
- (2) Your opponent's style of play.
- (3) Your own style of play (see next section).
- (4) The clock position. If you are ahead on time you might do better to choose the attack, while if behind on time you should tend to go for the ending.

(5) Whether you want to keep the draw in hand or whether you need to win at all costs (because of the match or tournament position).

Well, that will do to be going on with, though you will probably be able to think of a few more. The one factor you should *not* consider, however, is how much the attack will impress everyone if you can win with a brilliant sacrifice. As a Tiger, you should be concerned only with *results*, and that means going for the ending if that is the safest way of winning.

3 Looking in the mirror



You can identify weaknesses in your opponent's play without too much trouble, but do you know your own weaknesses? Really? You're quite sure? Because a lot of players don't.

There is a great temptation to have an image of yourself as a particular type of player. For example I used to regard myself as a positional player who was hopeless at tactics, as if positional players are morally obliged to be bad at tactics! The result was that I didn't bother to calculate any tactical lines in my games, because I thought I was no good at them and anyway a positional player shouldn't need to consider such lines. In fact I was perfectly capable of calculating tactics if I tried, and my positional sense was nothing like as well developed as I imagined.

Another form of image is to see yourself as 'a bit like Tal' or Karpov or someone. You can develop this sort of delusion on completely irrational grounds, and attempt consciously or unconsciously to play in the style of

your hero, which may be completely unsuited to your natural abilities. In 1968/9 I played in a junior tournament at Groningen in Holland, at which the Russian representative was Vaganian, who later became a very strong grandmaster. At that time he was a great fan of Petrosian – no doubt this had something to do with the fact that they both come from Armenia. He played in a very stodgy style, always fianchettoing bishops and so on, and yet it seemed to me that this was not his real strength. When I played him I gained a slight advantage from the opening/built up pressure on the Q-side and won a pawn, and it was only when he realized that he was in grave danger of losing that he suddenly woke up and launched a devastating sacrificial attack on the K-side, against which I failed to defend correctly and lost. Over the next few years he must have come to appreciate where his true ability lay, for he considerably altered his style, and played sharply right from the opening, with great success.

How to analyse your own style

How can you hold up the mirror and identify your own strengths and weaknesses? Start by asking your friends what they think, and don't just dismiss what they say, because it is often easier to be objective about other people than about yourself. You know their weaknesses, so why shouldn't they know yours?

But the best method is to go through your own games, trying to keep an open mind, and see which games you won and why, and which games you lost and why. You probably don't have time to analyse all your games move by move, but you don't need to do this to tell roughly which sorts of positions you played well or badly, where you blundered, where you got into time-trouble, and so on. If you lost a game as a result of a silly mistake, don't say to yourself 'I'm good at those positions really – I just made a silly mistake' until you are quite sure that this is not an unconscious cover-up for the fact that you often make 'silly mistakes' in those sort of positions. Maybe you don't understand them quite as well as you think you do.

In every game you are faced with different problems and make different mistakes, but if you consider all your games together and draw up a few tables of your results from various types of positions, you may be surprised at the patterns which are revealed. For example, from your last 50 games you might discover the results shown in the table for White Openings.

WHITE OPENINGS

	Result of Opening			Result of Game			Total
	±	=	∓	1	½	0	
Ruy Lopez	3	4	1	2	4	2	8
Petroff	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Sicilian (open)	2	5	3	5	3	2	10
Sicilian (3 Bb5)	0	2	0	0	1	1	2
French	0	1	1	0	0	2	2
Modern	3	0	0	2	1	0	3
Alekhine	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Totals	8	14	5	9	11	7	27

Conclusions:

Ruy Lopez not too successful – maybe should try something sharper.

Play well in Sicilian positions but must learn more theory.

Don't understand French – must find decent line.

You could then draw up a similar table for 'Black openings' and again note down any conclusions you came to.

Classification of middle-game positions is somewhat more difficult, but the following table gives an example of the sort of categories that can be used.

MIDDLE-GAMES

	Outcome	++	+	=	-	--	Total
Positional – Open		1	2	5	2	2	12
– Semi-open		4	7	17	4	1	33
– Closed		0	4	9	3	2	18
Tactical – Attack on king		5	9	7	6	6	33
– Defence of king		1	3	5	4	2	15
– Wild tactics		3	4	2	3	1	13
Middle-game without queens		0	2	7	1	0	10
Late middle-game		1	4	9	7	3	24

The symbols at the top of the middle-game table indicate whether your position improved considerably, improved slightly, remained about the same, got worse, or got much worse, during the phase of the game in question. Of course a particular game may appear under two or three middle-game categories as it moves from one type of position to another. The choice of categories is up to you, and will depend on the types of positions you most frequently get. You may wish to include certain standard types of positions (e.g. isolated queen-pawn, Maroczy bind) as special categories if you frequently play these positions.

You could then draw up a similar table for endgames. Classification should be fairly easy here – rook endings, knight endings, endings with several pieces, etc.

Another interesting table might be formed by looking at games where time-trouble was a critical factor. You could classify phases of your games where you, your opponent, or both of you were in time-trouble, and see how many games you have messed up in time-trouble, and whether you have been gaining any benefit from your opponent's time-trouble.

How to use this analysis

Once you have drawn up a few tables and come to some conclusions as to which positions you play well and which badly, there comes the crucial point of what use you should make of the information. You have established where your weaknesses are, but what should you do about them? Should you try to eliminate them, or just avoid them? Many people say you should concentrate on the elimination of your weaknesses in order to become a well-rounded player. There is a certain amount of sense in this, but I do not believe it is the best way to make the most of your ability. All players have certain natural strengths; so why not build on them? You are good at playing certain types of positions; so if you get into these positions you will not only get good results, but you will also get even better at playing them. There's no point in playing the Ruy Lopez if you are more at home with the King's Gambit. As long as you concentrate on playing like *you*, instead of like somebody else, you are likely to be making the most of your ability and getting the best results you are capable of. Inevitably you will sometimes have to play positions which don't suit you, and so you should make some effort to reduce your weaknesses, but always try to avoid positions you know you play badly. You will never be a perfect player. You will always be better at some phases of the game than others; so you might as well accept this and try to make the most of it.

To illustrate this question of being objective about your own play I am going to offer two of my own games, because only then can I give an accurate account of the reasons for playing in a particular way. First let's see what happens when you fail to recognize your own limitations. The following game was my first in the Hastings Premier tournament, 1976/7. This was distinctly the strongest tournament I had ever played in, and I was particularly anxious to play well – maybe a bit too anxious.

White: **S. Webb** Black: **S. Kagan** (Israel)

King's Indian Defence

1 ♖g1-f3 g7-g6
2 d2-d4 ♗f8-g7

3 e2-e4 d7-d6
4 ♙f1-e2 a7-a6!?

Kagan is tempting me to form a big centre, so that he can play to undermine it.

5 0-0 ♘b8-d7
6 c2-c4 c7-c5



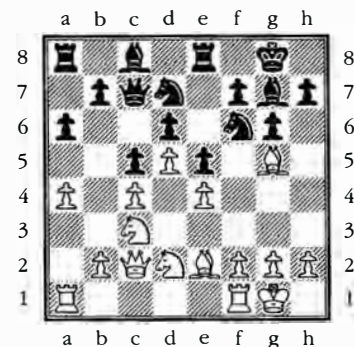
7 d4-d5(?)

I knew this was objectively the best move. Sooner or later Black will have to play either ... e6 or ... e5, reaching a Benoni or King's-Indian type of position in which he has already committed himself to the moves ... a6 and ... ♘d7, which he doesn't necessarily want to play.

Yet normally I would have played 7 ♘c3 without even thinking – simply because I don't like Benoni positions and never play d4-d5 in such situations unless it leads to a big advantage. I would have been quite happy to allow Black to play ... cxd4 reaching a Maroczy-bind position. (I had had quite a bit of practice with these since my game against Hartston in the previous chapter, particularly with Black's bishop on g7 instead of e7.) But because it was an important game to me, I was trying too hard to play well, and made the mistake of playing the 'correct' move.

7 ... ♘g8-f6
8 ♗b1-c3 0-0

- 9 a2-a4 ♔d8-c7
- 10 ♖c1-f4 ♗f6-h5
- 11 ♖f4-g5 ♜f8-e8
- 12 ♗f3-d2 ♗h5-f6
- 13 ♔d1-c2 e7-e5



14 d5xe6?

I should have been relieved when Black played ... e5 instead of ... e6, since I much prefer King's Indians to Benonis. But after considerable thought I came to the conclusion that to take the pawn was the 'best' move, since it opens up the centre while Black's Q-side is still undeveloped, and leaves Black with a weak d-pawn. However, I hadn't much idea of how to follow it up, and so was wrong to play it. My natural plan would have been 14 ♖ab1, followed by b4 with pressure down the b-file, which would have ensured a slight advantage and an easy game to play.

- 14 ... ♜e8xe6
- 15 f2-f4 b7-b6
- 16 ♗c3-d5 ♗f6xd5
- 17 c4xd5 ♜e6-e8

I may be wrong, but I still think this position ought to be very good for White, although I'm not sure how to play it. What I am sure of is that I didn't know what I was doing at the time, and went completely wrong in the next three moves.

- 18 ♖e2-f3 ♖c8-b7
- 19 ♜a1-c1 b6-b5
- 20 b2-b3?

20 b4 would at least have checked Black's expansion on the Q-side, with probably about even chances.

- 20 ... ♔c7-a5!



Suddenly Black has much the better game. White daren't play 21 axb5, because this would allow Black's pieces to come down the a-file with great effect. It is difficult to suggest a regrouping plan for White which will prevent Black from breaking through quickly with ... c4.

At this point I woke up, realized that I was in big trouble, and started to play like Simon Webb again. The rest of the game is a good example of a swindle that didn't quite work (see Chapter 7 on Swindling). Nevertheless I think my sacrifice of two pawns for a strong initiative was the best practical chance, and Kagan was forced to defend accurately. Since the remaining moves are not relevant to this chapter, I give them without comment.

- 21 e5! dxe5 22 ♗e4 ♖xd5 23 ♜cd1 ♖e6 24 ♗d6 ♔b6! 25 a5 ♔a7
 - 26 f5 gxf5 27 ♗xf5 c4+ 28 ♗h1 cxb3 29 ♔e4 ♗c5 30 ♔g4 ♖xf5
 - 31 ♔xf5 e4 32 ♖h5 ♜e5 33 ♖xf7+ ♗h8 34 ♔f6!? ♗d3
 - 35 ♖xb3 h6 36 ♜xd3 exd3 37 ♔d6 ♜xg5 38 ♜f7 ♔e3 39 ♜e7 ♜e5
- White resigns

The last few moves were played in a furious mutual time-scramble. Of course Black could have forced mate by 39 ... ♖c1+, but the move he played was still good enough to force resignation!

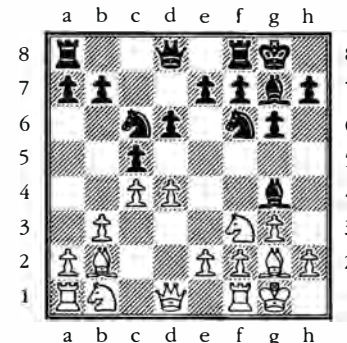
This game was a demonstration of what happens when you get too big for your boots. By contrast, the following one shows how to play successfully to one's known limitations. It was played in a junior training tournament when I was 16. At this age I was really quite weak in terms of general understanding of chess. I was bad at analysing complications, and understood the strategy of only the simplest types of middle-game. My comparative success in junior tournaments can only be attributed to a combination of determination and realization of my own capabilities. I knew that my best chance lay in keeping things as simple as possible, exchanging pieces and hoping to win the ending, which was my main strength.

Here is an example of the way I played:

White: **S. Webb** Black: **J. Sugden**

King's Indian Defence (by transposition)

1	d2-d4	♘g8-f6
2	c2-c4	c7-c5
3	♘g1-f3	g7-g6
4	g2-g3	♙f8-g7
5	♙f1-g2	0-0
6	0-0	d7-d6
7	b2-b3	♘b8-c6
8	♙c1-b2	♙c8-g4



9 **d4xc5!**

I knew perfectly well that this was not the 'best' move. 9 d5 would have given White the advantage, but I also knew that I was quite likely to be outplayed in the resulting middle-game, whereas by keeping symmetrical pawns I was less likely to adopt a completely wrong plan.

9 ... **d6xc5**

10 **h2-h3** **♙g4xf3**

11 **♖d1xd8!**

Sacrificing a tempo in order to make sure Black doesn't avoid the queen-swap. Objectively this is not justified since White has no particular reason to swap queens in this position, except personal preference.

11 ... **♙a8xd8**

12 **♙g2xf3** **♘c6-d4**

13 **♙b2xd4** **♙d8xd4**

14 **♘b1-c3**

14 ♙xb7 is not safe because of 14 ... ♗d7 15 ♙c6 ♗d6 followed by a knight move, and White is unable to get his rook out of the firing line of the bishop.

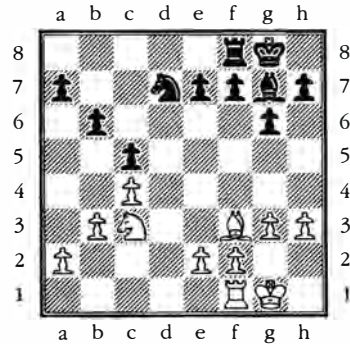
14 ... **♙d4-d7**

14 ... b6 would have been more accurate, so that the rook is not tied to defending the b-pawn.

Looking in the mirror

- 15 ♖a1-d1 b7-b6
 16 ♖d1xd7 ♜f6xd7

How is White to make anything of this symmetrical ending with opposite-coloured bishops?



- 17 ♜c3-b5

Of course the position is completely drawn, but I was confident I could outplay my opponent. He proceeds to make a number of inaccuracies which gradually alter his position from being completely drawn, to drawn, to just tenable, to lost.

- 17 ... a7-a5
 18 ♖f1-d1 ♜d7-e5 (drawn)
 19 ♙f3-e4 ♖f8-c8
 20 ♜b5-a7 ♖c8-c7
 21 ♖d1-d8+ ♙g7-f8
 22 ♜a7-b5 ♖c7-d7
 23 ♖d8xd7 ♜e5xd7
 24 ♜b5-a7 ♙f8-g7

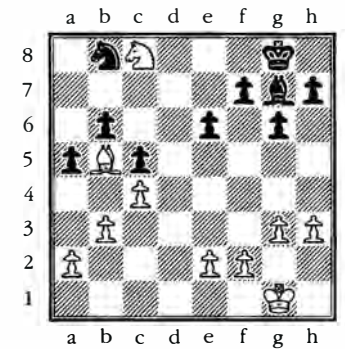
It was difficult to see how Black could protect his b-pawn against the

threats of ♜c8 and ♙c6, but he should still be able to lose it in such a way that he retains a drawn position.

- 25 ♜a7-c8 e7-e6 (just tenable)
 26 ♙e4-c6 ♜d7-b8? (lost)

After any other knight move the position would still be drawn, although I should have fancied my chances of winning it.

- 27 ♙c6-b5



Now the knight will never be able to get out without being exchanged for the white bishop, and the ending with knight and extra pawn against bishop is a win.

- 27 ... ♙g8-f8
 28 ♜c8xb6 ♙g7-e5
 29 ♜b6-a4 ♙e5-d6
 30 e2-e4 f7-f6
 31 ♙g1-g2 ♙f8-e7
 32 f2-f4 ♜b8-d7
 33 ♙b5xd7 ♙e7xd7
 34 e4-e5 f6xe5

Looking in the mirror

35 f4xe5 ♖d6xe5?

This makes it easier, since White gets two passed pawns on the Q-side.

36 ♖a4xc5+ ♔d7-e7

37 ♔g2-f3 ♖e5-c7

38 g3-g4 h7-h6

39 ♔f3-e4 ♔e7-f6

40 a2-a3 ♖c7-d6

41 b3-b4 a5xb4

42 a3xb4 ♔f6-e7

43 ♖c5-d3 **Black resigns**

If you think I could have won more easily by playing more normally and staying in the middle-game, you should see some of my other games of this period! At the time I felt that the selectors of junior teams rather underestimated me, but looking back I can understand their being unimpressed with this style of play – and of course they didn't know about Tigers!

So you see chess is not just a question of playing the best moves. If you are aware of your own strengths and weaknesses, and those of your opponent, compare the two, and try to steer the game into the sort of position which favours you. Then the game will not only become a more interesting battle, but you will be using your technical skill in the most effective way. Any player who ignores these considerations and tries to play like a computer is simply not doing himself justice.

4 How to improve your opening repertoire



In the previous two chapters I've been trying to convince you that you should gear your play – particularly your choice of opening – to gain the maximum benefit from the difference in style between you and your opponent. Since you probably play a different opponent every game, your choice of an opening repertoire should depend mainly on your own natural style, but should allow you enough flexibility to vary against different opponents.

If you follow the suggestions of Chapter 3 you will analyse your own results with your current stock of openings, and get an idea not only of the openings which are most effective for you, but of the sorts of positions you play best.

There are three main questions to consider:

- (1) Whether to play 1 e4 or 1 d4/c4/f3
- (2) Your main defence to 1 e4
- (3) Your main defence to 1 d4

To alter your normal solution to any one of these three questions is a fairly drastic step, and I recommend that you don't try to change more than one of them at a time. So if you want to switch from 1 e4 to 1 d4 and also from the Sicilian to the Caro-Kann, decide which is more important and concentrate on that first, otherwise you won't have time to prepare your changes sufficiently. Alterations within these three main categories are less fundamental, however, and you shouldn't have too much trouble changing from 1 d4 to 1 c4 at the same time as changing to a different variation of the Sicilian.

How varied should your opening repertoire be?

The main advantage of specializing in a particular opening line is that you obtain positions which suit you and which you are familiar with. If you play several different openings you will find yourself having too many problems to solve at the board, and this will make you a less effective player than you ought to be. On the other hand, if you stick rigidly to the same lines all the time, you will have no opportunity to vary against different opponents, your play may become stale and stereotyped, and you may run into the occasional wizard who has looked up the line he knows you are going to play and prepared some devastating response to it.

The ideal solution to this problem is to have a choice of two lines available in each situation, one possibly being your main weapon and the other a less frequent alternative. For example, you may normally play the Dragon Sicilian, but vary by playing the Centre Counter against particularly bookish or attacking opponents. With White you may normally go into the Open Sicilian, but vary occasionally with the King's Indian Attack (3 d3), and so on. This will enable you to add new weapons to your armoury gradually, without having to place all your reliance on a new line which you are slightly doubtful about. In the above example, if you decided the Dragon didn't suit you and you wanted to learn up a different variation of the Sicilian, you could play the Centre Counter more regularly for a while, gradually introducing your new line in less important games or against

selected opponents. This approach combines the advantages of specialization with flexibility.

How to learn a new opening

Assuming that you have analysed your results, decided to discard one of your less successful openings, and identified a new opening which leads to the sort of positions that you play well, how should you go about learning it, particularly if you only have a limited amount of time to spare?

There are two considerations – theory and general strategy.

(1) Theory

Unless you have a great deal of time available you are unlikely to choose a very theoretical opening like the Dragon or Najdorf Sicilian. Whichever opening you choose, however, there are a certain number of concrete lines which you must know in order to avoid falling into traps. These can be obtained either from a standard reference work on the openings or from a specialist book on the opening you are learning. Pick out the tactical lines where the moves of both sides appear to be more or less forced, and make sure that you either know them or can avoid them by playing a slightly different line. This is all the theory you need remember exactly.

(2) General strategy

This is something you will pick up as you start to play the opening, but initially you should get an idea of the plans and manoeuvres that occur most commonly by playing through games to see how Masters treat the opening. Don't restrict yourself to the first 15 moves; play through the whole game, because it is very important to understand the middle-game strategy which the opening leads to. The best source of illustrative games is a specialist book on the opening in question, which if it is well written will include a fair amount of verbal explanation of the strategy involved. Don't be put off if the book includes a vast number of variations which you hardly have time to play through, let alone remember. Most of these will be fairly positional in nature, and as long as you have a general idea of what

How to improve your opening repertoire

to do, you shouldn't come too far unstuck if you fail to play the move recommended in the book. Whenever you play a game in this opening, consult the book afterwards to see where your game deviated from the lines in the book, and whether you could have played better. Having already played the line yourself, you will probably find it easier to understand and remember what the book says about it. In this way you will gradually build up your knowledge and understanding of the opening without spending an excessive amount of time on it.

How to combat your opponent's pet opening line

There are some players who always play the same openings. In principle, all you have to do is to predict their first 20 moves and find out what's wrong with them. But beware! This can be dangerous!

Suppose you know in advance that you are going to play one of these characters, and you hunt through your openings book to find that the line he plays is supposed to come out in your favour. Firstly, your opponent may well have studied other sources that give slightly different lines which, even if they are not theoretically any better for him, you won't know how to combat. Secondly, even if you do reach the advantageous position you were aiming for, your opponent will almost certainly have more experience than you of playing this sort of position, and this may outweigh the advantage of having a theoretical plus. The main point of specializing in a particular opening is not that you can win on opening analysis but that you become an expert on the sort of middle-games which arise from it.

Having said all this, anyone who always plays exactly the same line is asking for trouble. But in order to take advantage of an opponent like this you must do your preparation very thoroughly. This means consulting as many sources as possible to see what is recommended by theory, and then spending some while analysing the resulting position. Anything less is worse than useless, and it would be better to avoid the line altogether – which is never difficult, for 'main lines' tend to be determined by fashion as much as anything, and there are always less-well-analysed alternatives.

To show what can be achieved by opening preparation, however, let's take a look at a game from the Karpov-Korchnoi match in 1974 for the Final of the Candidates' Tournament, which turned out to be the deciding match for the World Championship. Before the match, Karpov and his

grandmaster assistants had analysed Korchnoi's favourite Dragon Variation of the Sicilian in great detail. The result was that Karpov won the second game of the match almost entirely on opening preparation:

White: **Karpov** Black: **Korchnoi**

Sicilian Defence – Dragon Variation

1	e2-e4	c7-c5
2	g1-f3	d7-d6
3	d2-d4	c5xd4
4	f3xd4	g8-f6
5	b1-c3	g7-g6
6	c1-e3	f8-g7
7	f2-f3	b8-c6
8	d1-d2	0-0
9	f1-c4	c8-d7
10	h2-h4	a8-c8
11	c4-b3	c6-e5
12	0-0-0	e5-c4
13	b3xc4	c8xc4
14	h4-h5	f6xh5
15	g2-g4	h5-f6

So far Karpov has been following Geller's moves against Korchnoi from the Candidates' Match three years earlier. The whole variation is very sharp, and a considerable amount of analysis on it had been published in recent months.

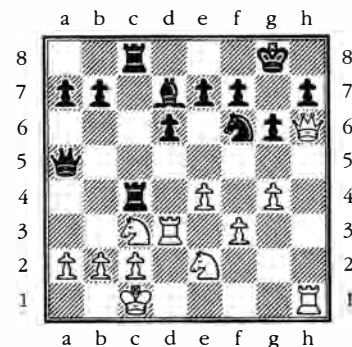
16	d4-e2	d8-a5
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How to improve your opening repertoire

17 ♖e3-h6 ♗g7xh6

18 ♔d2xh6 ♜f8-c8

19 ♞d1-d3!



At last a new move! This improvement on the previously known analysis was worked out in Karpov's pre-match preparation. The general idea of it is to delay Black's Q-side attack by preventing him from sacrificing on c3, while White's K-side attack breaks through very rapidly.

Don't expect me to explain the theory of all the moves so far – I haven't studied it! The point is that Karpov, by predicting Korchnoi's moves before the match, has reached a won position without having to think. The rest of the game is – for one of Karpov's ability – quite simple.

19 ... ♞c4-c5

20 g4-g5! ♞c5xg5

21 ♞d3-d5 ♞g5xd5

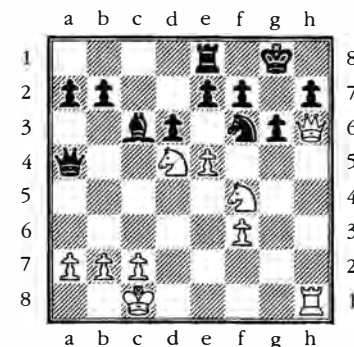
22 ♜c3xd5 ♞c8-e8

23 ♜e2-f4

Since Black has had little option in these last few moves, Karpov is probably still following his prepared analysis.

23 ... ♗d7-c6

24 e4-e5!



24 ... ♗c6xd5

If 24 ... dx e5 25 ♜xf6+ exf6 26 ♜h5 gxh5 27 ♞g1+ ♗h8 28 ♞g7 mate.

25 e5xf6 e7xf6

26 ♞h6xh7+ ♗g8-f8

27 ♞h7-h8+ **Black resigns**

For if 27 ... ♗e7 28 ♜xd5+ ♞xd5 29 ♞e1+ wins a rook.

After this disaster Korchnoi turned to less-well-analysed defences against 1 e4 for the rest of the match, with comparative success.

This game shows how an opponent's pet line can be flattened with sufficient preparation, but let me emphasize once again the dangers involved. If your opponent has a slight improvement up his sleeve which you haven't considered, you will find yourself behind on the clock, struggling to find a path through unfamiliar territory, while your opponent wanders round the room looking smug. You will have only yourself to blame!

5 How to catch Rabbits



Do you know how Tigers catch Rabbits? Do they rush after them and tear them limb from limb? Or do they stalk them through the bush before finally creeping up on them when their resistance is low?

The trouble with the first method is that even Rabbits have sharp teeth, and when cornered can be surprisingly ferocious. So a sensible Tiger takes no chances – he patiently stalks his Rabbit, and when the poor thing makes a bolt for freedom, he pounces and kills it swiftly and easily.

As a chess-player you would do well to follow the excellent example set by these beasts of the field, when playing someone you know you definitely ought to beat. This doesn't mean an opponent only slightly weaker than you, but one against whom you would expect to score at least 75 per cent. How can you turn this into 90 or 95 per cent? Should you try to catch him out with your superior opening knowledge? Should you try to bamboozle him with tactical complications?

Well, if you do either of these things you are taking unnecessary risks. It is always possible that he will know a good line against your favourite sharp opening, or that you will end up by bamboozling yourself in the cut-and-thrust of a wild position. Of course you are still likely to win, but the point is that you shouldn't need to take these sort of risks against a weak player. Against someone only slightly weaker than yourself you may find that you are unable to get more than a draw without mixing it a little. In these circumstances you should just play normally, taking advantage of your opponent's weaknesses, and if this means complicating then go ahead and complicate. But against an opponent who is considerably weaker than you, it is not so important to search for specific weaknesses in his style – just regard his whole play as one big weakness.

The safest way to take advantage of your overall advantage in strength is to keep it simple. You may take rather longer to win than if you go for complications, but you are more certain to win in the end. The biggest difference between a Master and a club player is in positional understanding. This pays off most clearly in simple positions, where the Master knows exactly what to do, and finds it easy to punish the positional errors of his opponent. This almost certainly applies to you too when you play someone distinctly weaker than yourself. Remember that the Tiger is not interested in playing brilliant combinations or original manoeuvres for their own sake – he just wants to make sure he wins.

The worst thing you can do is to overpress. The average strong player, when up against a weaker player whom he feels he must beat, tries too hard to punish his first mistake. He sees a slight inaccuracy, spends valuable time trying to work out a refutation of it, and then goes into a complicated forced line. The result is that the weaker player just plays forced moves, while the stronger player has all the pressure on himself, since he is trying to win the *position*, instead of concentrating on beating his opponent.

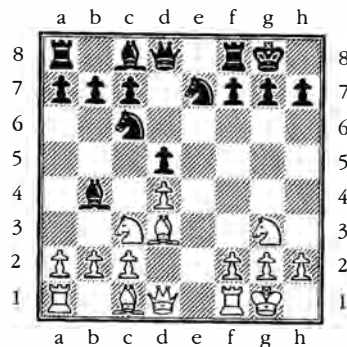
A much more effective approach is to wait for your opponent to make a few more mistakes, rather than trying to refute the first one. Just play solidly, and don't try to force the issue until you are sure you are winning. David Rumens won 13 tournaments in Britain in 1976, during the course of which he achieved a very high percentage against players markedly weaker than himself, and he told me that in order to achieve maximum efficiency against weak players he had learned to curb his natural attacking style and outplay them on technique.

Another player at a higher level who was extremely efficient at beating comparatively weak opposition is Grandmaster Wolfgang Uhlmann of

Germany. Watch how he completely crushes the British player Brian Eley from an almost symmetrical position, without doing anything at all complicated:

White: **B. Eley** Black: **W. Uhlmann**
 French Defence – Winawer Exchange Variation
 (Played at Hastings 1972-3)

- 1 e2-e4 e7-e6
- 2 d2-d4 d7-d5
- 3 ♖b1-c3 ♗f8-b4
- 4 e4xd5 e6xd5
- 5 ♗f1-d3 ♖b8-c6
- 6 ♗g1-e2 ♗g8-e7
- 7 0-0 0-0
- 8 ♗e2-g3



Eley adopts a quiet opening in the hope of maintaining a level position and getting a draw against his strong opponent. But as we shall see in the next chapter this is the wrong approach in such a situation. It is much better to try to put the strong player under pressure.

- 8 ... f7-f5!

8 ... ♗xd4 9 ♗xh7+ ♖xh7 10 ♗xd4 would give Black the two bishops but lead to a rather scrappy sort of position, whereas the move played keeps everything under control. Uhlmann doesn't worry about the likelihood of White soon playing f4, blocking the position, since he is confident of being able to grind down his opponent from a position with just a slight advantage, or even no advantage at all! For this reason he avoids complications and plays for a spatial advantage.

- 9 ♗c3-e2 ♗b4-d6
- 10 ♗g3-h5?

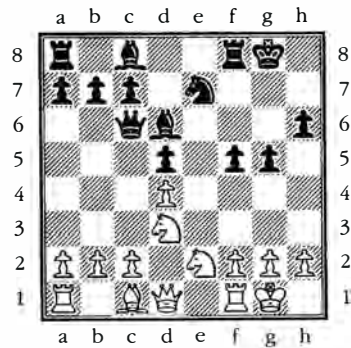
An attempt to get some play for his minor pieces. But it is not really possible to play aggressively in a position like this, and having chosen this opening White should maintain the symmetry by 10 f4, although after this he would have his work cut out to avoid succumbing to Uhlmann's grandmasterly technique. It seems to me that Eley's main mistake from a practical point of view was not to play a more attacking opening, which would have been more in keeping with his normal style, as well as the right approach in general against a very strong grandmaster.

- 10 ... ♗d8-e8
- 11 ♗h5-f4 h7-h6
- 12 ♗d3-b5 g7-g5
- 13 ♗b5xc6

It is the right principle in general to exchange bishops for knights in blocked positions, although this doesn't stop Uhlmann making good use of his bishops. White may have been worried about 13 ♗d3 ♗h5, although it is not clear how Black follows this up after 14 f4, and I imagine Uhlmann would have answered 13 ♗d3 with ... f4.

- 13 ... ♗e8xc6
- 14 ♗f4-d3

How to catch Rabbits



14 ... f5-f4!

Already Black has a clear advantage. His bishops are bearing down on the K-side, his knight has plenty of room to move around in, and he is threatening ... f3 immediately, breaking up White's king protection. White's knights and bishop, on the other hand, are severely hampered by the black pawns. The only decent square for a white knight is e5, and this will not be very devastating without a rook on e1 supporting it.

Clearly White has been outplayed during the last few moves. You don't need to go into great detail about exactly where he went wrong or how he could have defended more accurately, in order to appreciate that the stronger player is outplaying the weaker player in a simple position without resorting to complications.

15 f2-f3 e7-f5

16 d3-e5 c6-b6

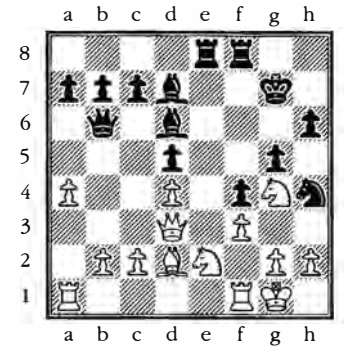
17 e5-g4 c8-d7

Calmly completing his development – he is in no hurry to force the position.

18 a2-a4 a8-e8

19 d1-d3 g8-g7

20 c1-d2 f5-h4



Have you ever had to defend a position like this? Your opponent remorselessly builds up the pressure, taking no chances at all, and you can see no way of stopping him. This sort of situation is much more difficult psychologically than when your opponent is attacking like fury, for then you always feel you're in with a chance.

21 a4-a5 b6-b5

Uhlmann is only too pleased to exchange queens, for this removes most of White's conceivable swindling chances, and enables him to exploit more easily his advantage in strength as well as his advantage in position (the two bishops, more space, control of the e-file).

22 e2-e3

White is unable to avoid the doubling of his d-pawns in the queen exchange, for after 22 b5xb5 d5xb5 he must lose the exchange, while if 22 c1xc1 b2xb2 23 d3b3 f5f5 and all his pawns are dropping off.

22 ... b5xd3

23 c2xd3 c7-c6

24 c3-a4 d7-f5

25 a4-c5 f8-f7

25 ... dxc5 26 dxc5 dxd3 would win a pawn, but would unweaken White's pawn structure and let his bishop out. When you have a positionally won game there is no need to grab the first pawn you see – wait for a really tasty one.

- 26 ♖a1-e1 ♜e8xe1
- 27 ♙d2xe1 ♞h4-g6
- 28 ♙e1-c3

How does Black turn his advantage into a win?



- 28 ... ♞h6-h5!

Having reduced White to passivity, Uhlmann slowly advances on the K-side, keeping everything under control as he does so.

- 29 ♞g4-f2 ♗g5-g4
- 30 ♗f3xg4

Black was threatening 30 ... gxf3 31 gxf3 ♞h4 followed by ... ♔h7 and ... ♜g7.

- 30 ... ♞h5xg4
- 31 ♜f1-e1 ♗g4-g3
- 32 ♞h2xg3 ♜f4xg3
- 33 ♞f2-h1 (?)

White is lost anyway, but this is hardly the way to create counter-chances! The knight goes into voluntary entombment on h1.

- 33 ... ♞b7-b6

- 34 ♞c5-e6+ ♔g7-f6
- 35 ♞e6-d8 ♜f7-c7
- 36 a5-a6 ♙d6-f4
- 37 ♜e1-d1 ♙f5-g4
- 38 ♜d1-e1 ♜c7-c8
- 39 ♞d8-b7



Now both White's knights are trapped in opposite corners of the board! Note how Uhlmann concentrates on restricting the activity of his opponent's pieces, instead of picking off pawns. This is the most certain way of winning, since the pawns won't run away.

- 39 ... ♜c8-h8
- 40 ♙c3-b4 ♜h8-h2
- 41 ♞b7-d8 c6-c5!

A small combination – almost the only piece of tactics in the game. The point is to block the white bishop's path to e7, so that Black can play ... ♞h4. Uhlmann only employs tactics because he has calculated that this leads to a *certain win*, not just good chances.

- 42 d4xc5 ♞g6-h4
- 43 c5xb6 ♜h2xg2+

44 ♖g1-f1 ♜g2-h2

White resigns

He was faced with the double threat of 45 ... ♜xh1 mate and 45 ... ♙h3 + 46 ♖g1 ♘f3 mate, while if 45 ♙e7 + ♖g6 46 ♙xh4 then 46 ... g2+ followed by 47 ... gxh1 = ♚+ finishes him off.

My apologies to Brian Eley for casting him in the role of a Rabbit (which is of course a relative term), but the game seemed too good an example to miss. In terms of rating, Uhlmann would have expected to score about 70-80 per cent against Eley, but in view of his excellent technique he probably scored close to 90 per cent against players of Eley's standard. This might have been compensated by a somewhat less than 50 per cent score against players of his own rating, who were perhaps less effective against weaker players.

Notice how Uhlmann didn't overpress, but was content to go for a slight advantage and wait for more inaccuracies from his opponent. This also has the practical advantage of enabling him to play quickly, since it is much easier to find solid moves than to take full advantage of a slight mistake. If you get a slight advantage against a player of about your own strength, it is much more important to try to extract the maximum from the position, since your advantage is unlikely to go on increasing of its own accord, and it may be worth using up quite a lot of time doing so.

Returning to our theme, the Tiger loves nothing better than Rabbit for breakfast, dinner, and tea. He is a cunning beast, however, and not over-hasty to go in for the kill. He will stalk his Rabbit for as long as necessary to make quite sure of not going hungry.

6 How to trap Heffalumps



Heffalumps are mighty strong – stronger than Tigers. On open territory a Tiger doesn't stand much chance against a Heffalump; he can't even dig a Very Deep Pit to trap it, because Tigers aren't much good at digging. What he *can* do, however, is to entice the Heffalump on to swampy ground and hope it falls into a bog and gets sucked underground by the quagmire. The only trouble is that Tigers are even more prone to getting stuck in bogs than Heffalumps are, and they're not much good at struggling out of them. But what is the poor Tiger to do, when faced with a big strong Heffalump? He can put up a fight neither on open plains nor in the jungle; so his only chance is to head for a swamp and *hope* that the Heffalump gets stuck before he does. If the Heffalump had any sense he would keep well away from the swamp, but Heffalumps, in spite of their great strength, are not always sensible when it comes to staying away from swamps.

Now let us see how this battle between the species can be applied on the chess-board. The Heffalump is a strong player – considerably stronger than you are – against whom you would normally hope to score only ten or twenty per cent. I can't suddenly transform you into an equally strong

How to trap Heffalumps

player, but I can tell you how to give yourself as good a chance as possible of taking a point or half a point from him.

The basic principle is to head for a complicated or unclear position such that *neither of you* has much idea what to do, and hope that he makes a serious mistake before you do. Of course you are still more likely to lose than to win, but by increasing the randomness of the result you are giving yourself more chance of a 'lucky' win or draw. This is exactly the opposite approach to that recommended in the previous chapter on how to beat weak players. There you were trying to keep everything under control so that your greater skill would pay off, whereas here you should be happy to let things get completely out of control so that neither player can predict the consequences of his actions, for then you might happen to come out on top.

The only reason for not adopting this approach is if you are playing for education. You may wish to play your normal game 'just to see how he wins'. This is one way of learning about the game, but as an aspiring Tiger you should want to get results as good as possible, and not to let strong opponents off easily.

These are the main points to bear in mind:

(1) Choice of opening

Don't imagine that your opponent is a tremendous openings expert, just because he's a good player. The chances are that he will be trying to get you 'out of the book' so that he can outplay you from there; so unless you happen to know that he is a great expert on the opening you would normally play it is best to follow a book line and wait for *him* to deviate. In this way, at least you will start off with a good position. In particular, if you have a favourite gambit, don't avoid playing it because you are afraid he will know the refutation. It is quite likely that your gambit is not fashionable in the circles in which your opponent moves, and that he won't know the theory of it. Even if he does, you may bluff him out of it, because he may be wary of going into a complicated line in which you have probably prepared something. He may therefore avoid it and play something simple but not very devastating, relying on outplaying you later on. So don't be afraid to play a theoretical main line or an unsound gambit!

(2) Play actively

Don't let him have it all his own way. Put him under pressure. Even if the summit of your ambition is to draw, you are much more likely to achieve this by getting the advantage and then offering a draw, than by playing to maintain a level position throughout. For as long as the position is equal, he will be able to play for a win without taking any risks, and the longer the game lasts, the more chance you've got of making a mistake. But if you've got the advantage, he will be taking quite a risk in refusing a draw, particularly if he can see clearly how you can exploit your advantage (even though you may not be able to see this yourself).

By playing aggressively you may put him off his stride, and if you attack like crazy he will be under great psychological pressure, for remember that he is much more scared of losing to you than to someone of his own strength. Since he is better than you, he is likely to make fewer mistakes than you; so you want to be able to take advantage quickly of any mistakes he does make. In a fairly steady position he may make a mistake which allows you to get positional pressure on the Queen-side, let us say, but the trouble is you may make several mistakes yourself before you've succeeded in exploiting this; so he's got a good chance of recovering and winning in the end. If, on the other hand, you sacrifice a pawn or two and mount a fierce attack on his king, one mistake by him may enable you to win in two or three moves. This is what I mean by being in a position to take advantage of any mistakes he does make.

(3) Randomize

There are some sorts of positions which are so unclear that it is not really appropriate to speak of 'making mistakes'. For if you simply have no idea what to do, you can hardly be accused of 'making a mistake' if you fail to play the best move. In positions like this the course of the game becomes fairly random, since both sides are floundering around in a swamp without much idea of what is going on, and it is here that the weaker player stands the greatest chance of 'luckily' coming out on top. You may make a few good moves without fully understanding why, or your opponent may go into a forced line, having misjudged the position at the

end of it. I'm not suggesting that your judgement will have been superior – you may not even have seen that you could be forced into the line – but you may find when you get there that you have the advantage because of some possibility that neither player had foreseen.

So if you see a line which is difficult to judge, give it a try. If your opponent is also unsure how to judge it he may avoid it, at the expense of some minor concession, in order to try and keep the position under control. The sorts of positions which are particularly difficult to judge are those with a material imbalance, such as queen for two rooks, two minor pieces for a rook, the exchange for a pawn or two, etc.

(4) Don't swap everything off

Remember that the stronger player's greatest advantage is likely to be in the ending; so try to stay in the middle-game. Obviously it's not worth contorting yourself too much to avoid exchanges, but certainly don't go out of your way to exchange pieces. This is one of the most common misconceptions among weaker players. They think that if they can exchange all the pieces they will draw. So they cheerfully abandon open files and allow their opponent lots of strong squares for his pieces in the interests of exchanging as much as possible, and then get easily outplayed in the ending.

(5) Be brave!

Your opponent is the one who should be nervous, not you! Remember that he has his reputation to keep up, and so is on a hiding to nothing, whereas you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Above all, don't run short of time double-checking everything and taking five minutes to play moves you would normally play in two minutes. Just play confidently and hope for the best. If you make a blunder, that's too bad; but if you get desperately short of time you won't stand a chance.

The following game was played in the 1972 Olympiad at Skopje in Yugoslavia (good swamp territory). American Grandmaster Walter Browne, representing Australia at the time, is the Heffalump.

White: **Browne** (Australia) Black: **Taha** (Iraq)

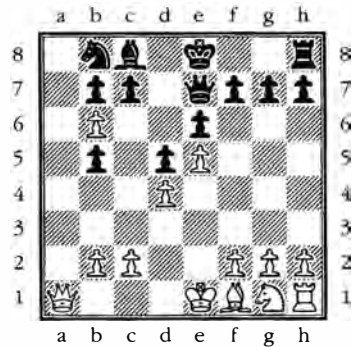
French Defence

1	e2-e4	e7-e6
2	d2-d4	d7-d5
3	♘b1-c3	♗g8-f6
4	♙c1-g5	♙f8-e7
5	e4-e5	♗f6-d7
6	♙g5xe7	

6 h4! is the Alekhine Attack, sacrificing a pawn for rapid development and a K-side attack. It is regarded as good for White, but Browne probably didn't know much about it, since the Classical Variation of the French is rarely met in Master Chess nowadays. He therefore plays what he no doubt thought was a quieter line. This is a typical instance of a grandmaster avoiding a theoretical battle against a weaker player, believing that he should be able to win anyway without risking falling into some prepared analysis.

6	...	♙d8xe7
7	♗c3-b5	♗d7-b6
8	a2-a4	a7-a6
9	a4-a5	a6xb5
10	a5xb6	♙a8xa1
11	♙d1xa1	

How would you continue? (Watch out for ♙a8 winning a piece.)



11 ... c7-c6!!

A bold piece sacrifice! The exclamation marks are not because it is theoretically sound (it may or may not be), but because in the circumstances it gives excellent practical chances, since it leads to unfathomable complications.

On 11 ... cxb6 12 ♖xb5+ ♗d7 White can play either 13 ♗d3 with a good game or 13 ♗xd7+ ♘xd7 14 ♖a8+ ♗d8 15 ♖xd8+ ♘xd8 with a slight endgame advantage, which a grandmaster would very likely turn into a win with a bit of help from his opponent.

The theoretical move is 11 ... 0-0, which is reckoned to equalize after 12 bxc7 ♖xc7 13 ♗d3 ♘c6 14 c3 b4, but again it is a nice clear-cut position from which I would fancy a grandmaster's chances of outplaying a weaker opponent.

12 ♖a1-a8

The sacrifice must be accepted, for otherwise Black will castle and then round up the b-pawn with ... ♘d7 and ... ♗d8.

12 ... 0-0

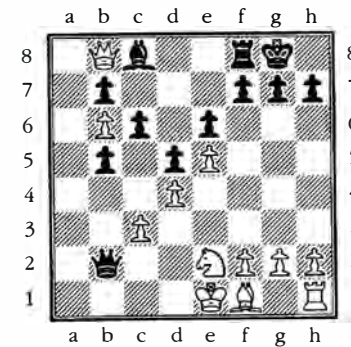
13 ♖a8xb8 ♖e7-b4+

14 c2-c3 ♖b4xb2

A crazy position! It's Black Queen v. the Rest, but with the white pieces undeveloped she is threatening to wreak all sorts of havoc. If the white king tries to run away, for example, after 15 ♗d3 ♖xc3+ 16 ♘e2 ♖b2+ 17 ♘e3 ♖c1+ 18 ♘f3 ♖d1+ 19 ♗e2 ♖b3+ his days are numbered. As

the stronger player, Browne must have been in a great quandary now and during the next few moves as to whether to allow perpetual check. For the moment, at least, he avoids it.

15 ♘g1-e2



15 ... b5-b4!

Opening up the position for a series of big checks!

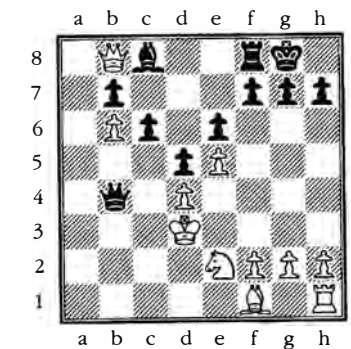
16 c3xb4 ♖b2xb4+

17 ♘e1-d1 ♖b4-b3+

18 ♘d1-d2 ♖b3-b4+

19 ♘d2-d3?!

19 ♘d1, settling for perpetual check, might have been wiser.



19 ... c6-c5!

The pawn threatens to join in the orgy of checks, and also makes room for the bishop to come out.

20 ♖b8-c7 c5-c4+

21 ♔d3-e3 ♜b4-b3+

22 ♔e3-f4

A horrible decision to have to make. Maybe he could have survived with 22 ♔d2, e.g. 22 ... ♙d7 23 ♜xd7 ♜a8 24 ♘c1 or 22 ... ♜d3+ 23 ♔e1 ♙d7 24 ♜xd7 c3 25 f3 with a very unclear position. The text avoids perpetual, however, and possibly Browne still had hopes of winning.

22 ... ♜b3-d3

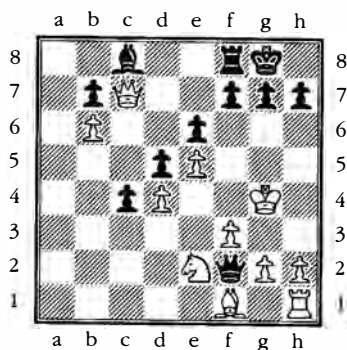
23 f2-f3 ♜d3-d2+

24 ♔f4-g3 ♜d2-e1+

25 ♔g3-h3 ♜e1-f2

26 ♔h3-g4

Hoping to provide a refuge for his king with h2-h4. White has made eight king moves and Black eleven queen moves! How does Black continue the attack?



26 ... f7-f6!

Giving his rook a chance to join in the attack.

How would you like to play this position for White? Browne couldn't find a way out of it. And yet Taha hasn't played all that brilliantly, apart from the original piece sacrifice, which may have been prepared before the game. He's just been playing natural attacking moves and leaving his opponent to work out the consequences. This is a somewhat risky approach, but it's worth taking risks against a very strong opponent. The whole game has been much easier to play for Black than for White, which is one of the main reasons for playing aggressively against a strong opponent. You put the pressure on him, and take it off yourself.

27 e5xf6?

Desperately short of time, Browne panics and opens up lines for Black's bishop as well as his rook.

27 ... e6-e5+

28 ♔g4-h5 g7xf6

29 d4xe5 f6xe5

30 ♜c7-e7 ♜f8-f5+

White resigns, for he will be mated either by 31 ♔h6 ♜xb6+ or by 31 ♔g4 h5+ 32 ♔h3 ♜xf3 mate.

Next time you sit down against a player who's a few rungs above you, remember this game and come out fighting!

Another, slightly less extreme, example of Heffalump-trapping is provided by the game Polugaevsky-Estevez played at Sochi in 1976. The Cuban player Estevez was an International Master, but certainly not in Polugaevsky's class; in this tournament, for example, he scored only half as many points as Polugaevsky. So he would obviously expect to have a hard time avoiding defeat with Black. Let's see how he tackles his illustrious opponent:

White: Polugaevsky Black: Estevez

English Opening

- | | | |
|----------|---------------|---------------|
| 1 | c2-c4 | e7-e5 |
| 2 | ♘b1-c3 | ♘g8-f6 |
| 3 | ♘g1-f3 | e5-e4 |
| 4 | ♘f3-g5 | b7-b5! |

This gambit, which is no doubt unsound, enjoyed a brief period of popularity round about the time this game was played. The idea is to give up a pawn for a strong centre, and make the knight on g5 look a bit silly if it has to retreat to h3 instead of capturing on e4, e.g. 5 cxb5 d7-d5, or 5 ♖xb5 c6 6 ♖c3 d5. If 5 ♗gxe4 ♗xe4 6 ♗xe4 bxc4 Black gets a good centre without giving up a pawn.

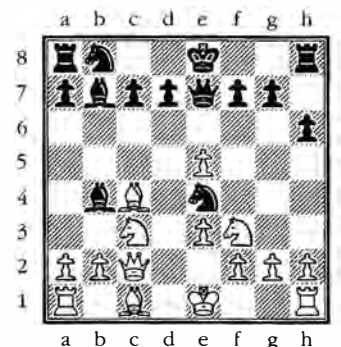
Polugaevsky was very good at grinding out wins from the dull technical positions which frequently occur from the English, and so it was a good idea to play this obscure gambit to try to put him off his stride.

- | | | |
|----------|--------------|--|
| 5 | d2-d3 | |
|----------|--------------|--|

Sensibly declining the gambit, Polugaevsky neutralizes Black's centre and aims for a quiet position with a slight initiative, from which he will hope to outplay his opponent later.

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| 5 | ... | b5xc4 |
| 6 | d3xe4 | h7-h6 |
| 7 | ♗g5-f3 | ♙c8-b7 |
| 8 | e4-e5 | ♗f6-e4 |
| 9 | e2-e3 | ♙f8-b4 |
| 10 | ♚d1-c2 | ♚d8-e7 |
| 11 | ♙f1xc4 | |

Polugaevsky has succeeded in emerging with a slight advantage, and it's difficult to see how Black can try to win his pawn back without allowing White all the play. How would you continue?



- | | | |
|-----------|------------|----------------|
| 11 | ... | ♗e4-g5! |
|-----------|------------|----------------|

A good way of confusing the issue. This prevents White from castling for the moment and undermines the defence of his pawn on e5. It looks like the best move objectively, but even if it wasn't it would still be a good move subjectively, if you see what I mean!

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------|--------------|
| 12 | ♗f3xg5 | h6xg5 |
|-----------|---------------|--------------|

12 ... ♗xg5 would be met by 13 f4 and if then ... ♗xg2 14 ♗xg2 ♙xg2 15 ♙g1 gives White a good ending.

- | | | |
|-----------|----------------|--|
| 13 | ♙c1-d2! | |
|-----------|----------------|--|

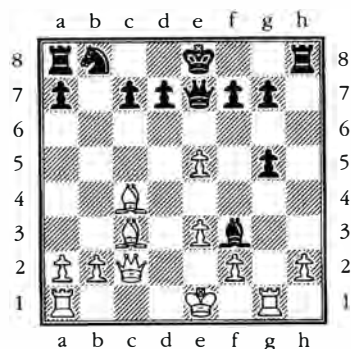
Polugaevsky is happy to give back the pawn in order to complete his development and maintain the initiative. He must now be planning to castle Q-side.

- | | | |
|-----------|------------|---------------|
| 13 | ... | ♙b4xc3 |
|-----------|------------|---------------|

The knight's threat of coming to d5 was a little too strong, e.g. 13 ... ♙xg2 14 ♙g1 ♙f3 15 ♙d5 ♙xd5 16 ♗xd5 ♙xd2+ 17 ♗xd2! and 18 ♗xc7+. Also against 13 ... ♗xe5 White has 14 ♙xf7+ ♗xf7 15 ♗b3+ and 16 ♗xb4.

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| 14 | ♙d2xc3 | ♙b7xg2 |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| 15 | ♙h1-g1 | ♙g2-f3 |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|



16 ♖c2-f5!

Once again Polugaevsky finds a way to bring a scrappy position under control. So far Estevez's attempts at 'mixing it' have come to nought, as so often happens against a strong opponent, but he still keeps trying.

16 ... ♗5-g4

17 ♘c4-e2 ♗7-g6

18 ♖f5-f4 ♗e7-e6

Hoping to blockade White's pawns on black squares after the inevitable exchange of the white-squared bishops.

19 ♘h2xf3 ♗4xf3

20 ♖g1-g3?!

This may be good, but it seems unnecessarily complicated. After 20 ♖xf3 ♘c6 21 ♖g4, for example, I would have fancied Polugaevsky's chances of winning the ending with a slight advantage, (Black can't avoid exchanging queens, for if he moves his queen 22 e6 will be devastating.)

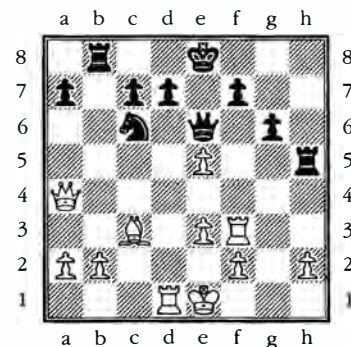
20 ... ♗b8-c6

21 ♖g3xf3 ♖a8-b8

22 ♖a1-d1 ♖h8-h5

23 ♖f4-a4

A critical position worth having a good look at. Is Polugaevsky consolidating his advantage? Can Black play ... ♗xe5? What happens if he plays ... ♖xh2? Does he have any other moves?



23 ... ♖h5xe5!

An imaginative exchange sacrifice, taking advantage of the lack of coordination of the white rooks, getting rid of the annoying pawn on e5, and giving Black the initiative. I doubt if Estevez calculated very far in playing this move, since it's the sort of position where anything can happen, and you have to base this type of sacrifice on general principles rather than exact analysis.

This is a typical example of the merits of aggressive play against a strong opponent. As mentioned earlier, positions with a material imbalance can be very difficult to judge, and are usually much easier to play for the side with the initiative, which is why they take the pressure off you, the underdog. You don't have to be sure that a sacrifice like this is good, but only to realize that it might well be good, and hope the Heffalump can't find a way out of it.

Returning to the questions asked before this move, what were the other possibilities?

First of all, 23 ... ♗xe5 is bad, because of 24 ♘xe5 ♖xe5 (or 24 ... ♖xe5 25 ♖xd7+) 25 ♖xa7, after which 25 ... ♖xb2? loses to 26 ♖a8+ ♗e7 27 ♖a3+ winning the rook.

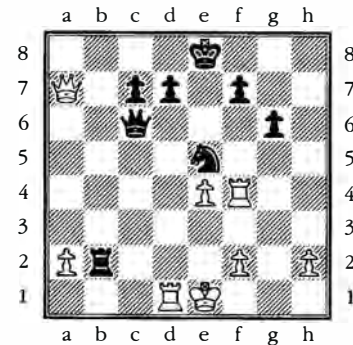
Less clear cut is 23 ... ♖xh2 24 ♜f6 ♚e7 25 ♜xc6! e.g. 25 ... dxc6 26 ♚xc6+ ♜f8 27 ♜d7 ♚h4 28 ♚f3 with a winning attack, or 25 ... ♜h1+ 26 ♜e2 ♜xd1 27 ♜xc7 when White seems to have more than enough for the exchange.

Also possible after 23 ... ♖xh2 24 ♜f6 is ... ♜h1+ 25 ♜e2 ♚h3, after which White stands better, but it is sufficiently unclear to be worth a try, if it hadn't been for the much better try 23 ... ♜xe5!

- 24 ♜c3xe5 ♜c6xe5
- 25 ♜f3-f4 ♜b8xb2
- 26 ♚a4xa7 ♚e6-c6!

There's usually a good move lurking around in a position like this, and you don't necessarily have to see it in advance, as long as you see it when you get there. This threatens ... ♚h1 mate, ... ♜f3+, and ... ♚c3+, and also prevents 27 ♚a8+.

27 e3-e4



27 ... ♚c6-c3+?

This is natural enough, but being rather short of time Estevez overlooks the crushing ... g5! If then 28 ♜f5 ♚xe4+ and 29 ... ♚h1 mate, while against either 28 ♚d4 or 28 ♚a3 the reply 28 ... ♚b5, threatening ... ♚e2 mate and ... gxf4, is unanswerable.

- 28 ♜e1-f1 ♚c3-h3+
- 29 ♜f1-g1 ♜e5-f3+

29 ... g5 is no good because of 30 ♚d4.

30 ♜f4xf3 ♚h3xf3

31 ♚a7-d4!

Black has won the exchange back, with his queen still looking dangerous, but this move saves the day for White. Now everything seems to end in perpetual check for one side or the other.

31 ... ♚e8-f8

32 ♚d4-h8+ ♚f8-e7

33 ♚h8-e5+ ♚e7-f8

Drawn by perpetual check

An exciting game all the way through, and what particularly impressed me was the way Estevez kept coming back with attacking ideas every time Polugaevsky seemed to be bringing the game under control. Although Estevez missed the win near the end, he had reached the sort of position where it is difficult to go too far wrong, and should have been well satisfied with a draw as Black against Polugaevsky.

Next time you adopt anti-Heffalump tactics against a strong player, remember that you can't necessarily expect your first attacking try to work, for the chances are that your opponent will repulse your attempt and gain the advantage, but as long as you keep attacking, complicating, and randomizing at every opportunity you are still in with a chance. This isn't a recipe for getting consistently good results against players who are better than you (there isn't one!), but it does give you a good chance of achieving some 'surprise' results. At any rate, if you lose you will go down fighting instead of being ground into the dust or crushed like a bug!

7 Fortune favours the lucky

Being an initiation into the secrets of Swindling



WARNING This chapter could cause distress to those of a nervous disposition.

I'm one of the luckiest players around, and a notorious swindler. When I get a lost position, my opponent always seems to blunder and allow me to escape. Well, that's not quite true, since I *do* lose sometimes, but I feel fully qualified to initiate you into the art of being lucky, and shall have no compunction in using my own games to illustrate how it's done.

What does it take to be a lucky player? How can you make your own luck? Well, read on and you will learn the Secrets of Swindling, but first of all, to whet your appetite, have a look at the following position. White is to move. Can he survive?

White: **Nykopp** Black: **Webb**

(England v. Finland, Students Olympiad 1970)



34 ♔c1-e1!!

If you saw the trap set by this move you're doing extremely well. I only spotted it because I couldn't find anything else that didn't lose almost immediately. Black was threatening 34 ... exf3, winning a piece for a start, and 34 fxe4? loses immediately to 34 ... ♖xf1, threatening ... ♗xh2 mate, while if 34 f4 ♗g4 will rapidly finish White off.

34 ... ♗h4xe1?

Falling into the trap – it looks as though Black will win a piece after 35 ♗xe1 exf3 threatening 36 ... f2. The correct move, however, was 34 ... ♗h5, after which Black still has a very powerful position, in view of the tangled nature of the pieces struggling to protect the white king, although White has some surviving chances with 35 f4.

35 ♖a1xe1 e4xf3

36 ♗g2-h3 f3-f2

37 ♖g1xg6!

The point of the trap is that Black can't play 37 ... fxe1 =♗ because of 38 ♖xg7+ ♗h8 39 ♖g6+ which forces mate. So he has to take the other rook, after which White has succeeded in breaking up Black's pawns and

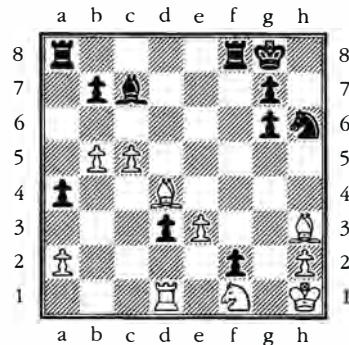
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gaining the initiative at the cost of the exchange, which is certainly good value.

37 ... h7xg6

38 ♖e1-d1

How would you assess this position?



Black has the exchange extra, but he is about to lose his d-pawn; his remaining pawns are disconnected, and his rooks have no real target. White has two strong connected pawns on the Q-side and his bishops have plenty of freedom of action. The position is probably slightly in White's favour, and it's very much better for White than the position in the previous diagram so the Swindle can definitely be said to have worked. Whether I am correct in believing that White stands better is not really relevant, as long as it is clear that White has good practical chances.

The rest of the game is not part of the Swindle, but here are the next few moves so that you can see how it worked out in practice:

38 ... ♗h6-f5

39 b5-b6 ♙c7-d8

40 ♙h3-g2 ♗f5xd4

41 ♙g2xb7 ♖a8-b8

42 ♙b7-d5+ ♗d4-c6

To avoid giving White three connected passed pawns.

43 ♙d5xe6+ ♔g8-h7

44 ♙e6-d7 ♙d8xb6

The passed pawns are too strong. If Black delays giving up the bishop he will only have to give up even more for them in a few moves' time.

45 c5xb6 ♖b8xb6

46 ♖d1xd3

and **White won** after 68 moves.

Having demonstrated what is meant by a Swindle, now for the theory behind it – the Secrets themselves ... !

(1) Be objective

Swindles happen only in lost positions, so if you won't accept that you have a lost position you'll never get started on a Swindle. You may be tempted to carry on pretending to yourself that you're doing OK, and then suddenly realize that you're being wiped off the board. This is where most 'unlucky' players go wrong. They continue with their original plan until defeat is staring them in the face, and then they set some feeble trap, which their opponent easily avoids, and they go around complaining that nobody ever falls into *their* traps! What they don't understand is that the first prerequisite of a Swindle is to be objective enough to recognize trouble when it first appears, before the rot sets in, because at this stage you have a fair chance of doing something about it. Stop, tell yourself 'I am losing', and start playing for a Swindle while there are still plenty of resources left in your position.

(2) Don't be afraid of losing

Once you've accepted that your position is lost, you should be in a position of psychological strength. Keep calm, remember that the worst

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you can do is lose, and look for a way of helping your opponent to go wrong. If he doesn't make any mistakes you're going to lose whatever you do, so don't worry if you can't see a good continuation. You know in your heart that there isn't one; so don't waste all your time looking for one. Instead, assume that your opponent *is* going to make a mistake, and play to give him the maximum chance of doing so.

This approach is rather similar to that recommended against Heffalumps. Remember that the pressure's on him. He's the one who's going to look silly if he doesn't win. You don't need to worry since you have a lost position anyway, and so you can try anything. Any Swindle that you manage to pull off will be a bonus; so Fortune is on your side.

(3) Play actively

When you first realize that you're losing, you are normally on the defensive. What you *mustn't* do is to just sit there and get squashed like a slug. To stand a chance of a successful Swindle, it's important to get the initiative, and to do this you'll probably have to give up material. Quite often, all you have to give up is a pawn, particularly if you diagnose early enough that you are in difficulties and that a Swindle is required.

Suppose you're sitting there defending a number of weak pawns. Your pieces are blocked in behind them, or at least restricted to defending them. Sacrifice one of them, or even two! While he's taking the pawn, get your pieces out into active positions, and then you'll be in a position to take advantage of any mistake he might make. Look at it this way – if you sit there defending, your position will get worse and worse, and your opponent won't have much chance of going wrong, but if you seize the first opportunity to come out fighting, he's only got to make one slip and you've got him!

Sometimes you may have to give up more than a pawn – the exchange, say, since knights and bishops are often more useful for attacking than rooks. If the attack goes wrong you'll probably lose the ending, although endings the exchange down are frequently quite playable if you have the initiative, as in the last example. Above all, remember that your opponent is much more likely to go wrong if you put him under pressure than if you let him dictate the course of the game.

(4) Use the process of elimination

This refers to the way you choose which moves to play, but if you can eliminate your opponent's pieces this is also helpful! To eliminate your opponent himself is a rather more drastic measure, not to be recommended unless you have a good alibi.

Suppose you have a choice of several moves, all of which look dubious, how should you go about deciding which one to play? Well, look at each one in turn, as you would normally, rejecting those that allow your opponent an easy win. If you come across one against which you can't quite see how he's going to win, eliminate the remaining possibilities, and then play the one plausible move that's left. Don't sit there analysing it – he's the one who should be doing that, not you! Unlike normal positions, where you should never play a move without carefully checking that there's nothing wrong with it, here all you have to do is eliminate the moves you're *not* going to play. Of course, sometimes you will have more than one plausible possibility, in which case you should investigate further to see which gives you the best chance, but very often you'll find you've only one hope, and you can save yourself the effort of working out whether it's really any good by playing it forthwith.

This method of Controlled Desperation enables you to play complicated moves quite quickly, and give your opponent something to worry about. He may have a forced win, but he still has to find it. Look at it from your opponent's point of view. He has a number of possibilities, all of which look good, but he's got to make sure that the move he plays really *is* good, so he must analyse it in detail. If you can confuse him by making the position complicated enough, he won't be able to analyse it out to the end. Instead he'll have to play the move which looks best and hope, and this is exactly what you want, because he's more likely to make a mistake when he's not in full control of what he's doing.

So by using the process of elimination you'll find you can play quickly and gain time on the clock, because you are just looking for unclear moves, while your opponent is spending lots of time trying to analyse everything. And when he gets short of time he's more likely to make a mistake and allow you to bring off the Swindle. Even leaving aside the time factor, the more you can confuse him, the more likely he is to go wrong. It doesn't matter if you confuse yourself – you've got a lost position anyway!

(5) *Star quality*

This is the special Miracle Ingredient, revealed only to readers of this book. It is concerned not with the moves which you make, but the way in which you make them – your manner at the chessboard. All the world’s a stage, and you can improve the effectiveness of your Swindling technique by indulging in a little play-acting, provided you don’t overdo it!

Is this fair? Some people would say that you should always preserve an impassive countenance at the chessboard, and if you think this way you can still swindle to some extent. If you want to be a *real* Swindler, however, you must learn to overcome your moral scruples (if you have any) and act the part.

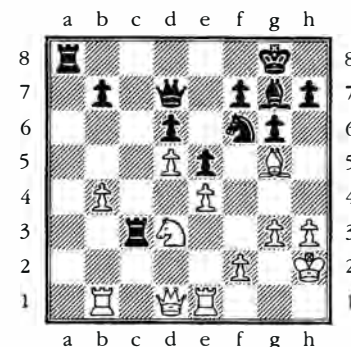
The basic principle is this: if you’re on the defensive try to look completely dejected and uninterested, in the hope that your opponent will get careless; but once you start getting your pieces into action and complicating the position, look as confident as possible in an effort to frighten him. You’ll have to adapt this approach according to the type of player you’re up against – nervous players are more susceptible to being frightened, while confident players are more liable to get careless. The typical Swindle starts with a passive position where your opponent is attempting to turn the screw. This is where you should look dejected. Then supposing he allows you to give up a pawn for some active counterplay, you should start bashing your moves out confidently. If your opponent is struggling to find a clear path through complications, he’s more likely to be worried that he’s overlooking something if you are playing quickly and looking confident. This is assuming that you’re not actually threatening anything – just trying to frighten him. If you can actually see a Swindle in prospect, however, don’t look too confident. When you set a trap, or see a way for him to go wrong, try to look normal, or even to appear nervous if you’re sure you can do so without arousing his suspicions. It always amazes me to see a player set a trap by bashing out a move and glaring at his opponent! This naturally warns him to look for a trap, when he might otherwise have been lulled into a false sense of security.

Of course you mustn’t overact. It’s probably easier to pretend to be confident than to pretend to be nervous. What I do is to try and *feel* nervous (by telling myself that I’m losing disastrously) and hope that this is communicated to my opponent by various mannerisms and looks which are not easy to reproduce consciously. This certainly works some of the

time, for several times people watching my games have commented to the effect that they thought I was cracking under pressure, when in fact I was just trying to give this impression to my opponent. If you don’t think you’re much of an actor, try underacting at first to see if anyone notices, and work up from there.

For an illustration of these Secrets in action, have a look at the following position, which I reached against Reshevsky, a very experienced grandmaster, in a tournament in London, 1973:

White: **Webb** Black: **Reshevsky**



25 ... ♖f6xe4!

A neat combination which wins a pawn. I had been under increasing pressure during the last few moves, but had been trying to play properly. This looked like a decisive breakthrough, however, and demanded that I start playing for a Swindle. As I realized this, I felt the pressure lifted from me, and I was able to relax and tell myself ‘Now I can try anything’.

26 ♖e1xe4

Black wins the piece back next move, but the knight was so strong that it seemed essential to get rid of it before it did any more damage. In principle the Swindler should avoid exchanges, but not if this means going right onto the defensive, as for example after 26 ♖e3 f5, when Black’s centre is starting to roll.

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26 ... ♖d7-f5

27 ♜e4-e3 ♜f5xg5

28 ♜b1-a1!

Played quickly. The only chance for some counterplay lay in contesting one of the files on the Q-side and trying to get in with the rook or queen. I didn't waste time looking to see how Black was going to win against this, for example whether 28 ... ♜xa1 29 ♜xa1 e4 might be good. In a position like this your only chance is to go for counterplay and hope for the best.

28 ... ♜a8-c8

29 ♜a1-a7

Again this looked like the only move to cause Black any worries.

29 ... ♜g5-f5

Can you see a possible Swindle here?



30 ♜e3-f3!

First I had a quick look at 30 ♜xb7 and presumed he'd worked out a win after 30 ... ♜xd3 31 ♜xd3 ♜xf2+ 32 ♜h1 ♜c2. In fact this wins after 33 ♜g1 ♜e2 threatening 34 ... ♜e4+, but I didn't get that far at the time.

Then I realized that 30 ♜f3 would set a trap, for against the natural 30 ... ♜d7 31 ♜c5 appeared to win the exchange. Not stopping to see what would happen if he moved the queen anywhere else, I played it immediately. Analysing other queen moves would only have given him

more time to spot the trap himself. I saw a chance for him to go wrong, so I played for it.

The next minute was agonizing as I waited for his reply. Doing my best to look nervous, I hesitated about writing my move down, looked at my scoresheet and then at the clock (I was rather short of time after my struggles in the earlier part of the game), and sat back clasping my chin. Fortunately I had not long to wait, for he soon played the blunder, looking extremely confident. He afterwards claimed that he had been trying to rush me because I was short of time (a foolish and unnecessary ploy in a won position).

30 ... ♜f5-d7??

31 ♜d3-c5!

Bashed out instantaneously for maximum shock value. Reshevsky sat bolt upright in his chair, and remained perfectly still for about a minute as he concentrated really hard for the first time in the game. I now felt extremely confident – there was no need to act this part!

31 ... ♜c8xc5

32 b4xc5 ♜c3xc5

33 ♜d1-b1

I had not been sure who would stand better in this position, since Black has two pawns for the exchange, but on reaching it I realized that White has the advantage. (The Swindler usually has Fortune on his side.)

33 ... ♜d7-b5

At this point Reshevsky generously offered a draw, which I didn't need to think twice about declining.

34 ♜a7xb7 ♜b5xb1

35 ♜b7xb1

Black cannot now play 35 ... ♜xd5 because of 36 ♜b7 f5 37 ♜a3 and he is in big trouble on his back two ranks. He therefore went on the defensive, and I managed to convert my advantage into a win some 40 moves later.

This was a particularly satisfying Swindle because there had been a certain amount of Aggro at the start of the game, and I had been subjected to Smoke Warfare for a large part of the ensuing battle.

The next game, played at Birmingham in 1976, is really all one big Swindle, and should illustrate all the points made in the first part of this chapter.

White: **M. F. Stean** Black: **S. Webb**

Queen's Gambit – Irregular Variation

- 1 c2-c4 g8-f6
- 2 b1-c3 e7-e6
- 3 g1-f3 d7-d5
- 4 d2-d4 d5xc4
- 5 c1-g5

The opening is a battle of transposition. This move invites 5 ... c6, transposing into the Anti-Meran Gambit. I didn't know much about this, and although I doubted whether Stean knew any more than I did, I tried another move.

- 5 ... c7-c5
- 6 e2-e3 b7-b5!?

It would have been much better to play something simple like 6 ... c6, but after analysing 6 ... b5 for over half an hour I couldn't resist playing it. Judgement told me there must be something wrong with it, for White has played eminently natural moves, and so Black shouldn't be able to get away with such a wild thrust, but instead I relied on my powers of analysis, which were not able to reveal the refutation. Spending a long time analysing a move which looks dubious on general principles is a very bad practice. Detailed analysis of a complicated but good-looking move can justify spending a long time, but that is another matter.

The idea of the move is that if White plays 7 b5 then 7 ... a5+ 8 c3 e4 threatens ... cxd4 followed by ... xg5 or ... b4. But White has a much stronger reply:

- 7 g5xf6 d8xf6
- 8 c3xb5 c5xd4
- 9 d1-a4!

After 9 c7+ d8 10 xa8 b4+ Black has dangerous attacking chances in an unclear position, which was my intention on playing 6 ... b5. After 9 a4, however, Black is in trouble, for if 9 ... d7 simply 10 xc4 is very strong, since it still threatens c7+ followed by a5, and enables White to castle before Black gets in ... b4+.

- 9 ... b8-c6

At least this renews the threat of ... b4+, e.g. 10 c7+ d7 11 xa8 b4+ with a strong attack.

- 10 0-0-0!!

A tremendously strong move which came as a complete shock to me. Now for the Swindle ...

How can Black defend against White's hideous threats of c7+ and (either)xd4? He also has to think about getting his king to safety.



- 10 ... a8-b8!

Defending against c7+ the active way by developing the rook, with vague hopes of doing something on b2. The alternative 10 ... d8, undeveloping the queen, would have been crushed by 11 fxd4 xd4 12 d6+ + e7 13 exd4. I felt sure White ought to have an easy win against 10 ... b8, but I couldn't quite see one, and I'd eliminated all other possibilities, so I was able to play it quickly and leave it to my opponent to find the win.

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11 ♖f3xd4 ♗c6xd4

Looks horrible, but the only alternative 11 ... ♗d7 was eliminated by 12 ♗c7+ and if then 12 ... ♗e7 13 ♗xc6+ ♗xc6 14 ♖a3+ and mates, or if 12 ... ♗d8 13 ♗xc6+ ♗xc7 14 ♖xd7+ ♗xd7 15 ♗xb8++ and wins.

12 ♗b5-d6++ ♗e8-d8

Or 12 ... ♗e7 13 ♖xa7+.

13 ♗d6-e4?

White is still winning, of course, but he could have put the issue beyond doubt by 13 ♗xc8 ♗xc8 14 ♖xd4, after which the black king has nowhere to hide and will soon succumb to White's queen, rook, and bishop. They say that with opposite-coloured bishops in the middle-game the side on the attack is always winning, and this is certainly true here.

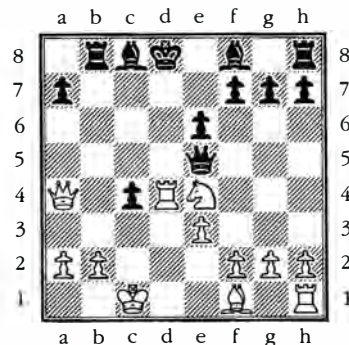
From White's point of view, it is easy to overlook a simple move like 13 ♗xc8 when he has so many more exciting lines to consider.

13 ... ♖f6-e5

On general principles the queen must go to the most active square. From here she can still cast a hopeful glance in the direction of b2.

14 ♖d1xd4+

Which way should the king go? You've got a 50% chance of getting this one right!



14 ... ♗d8-e7!

Putting the king in front of the bishop looks a bit strange, but the reason is this: if the king goes to the Q-side, he will have nowhere to hide, even if he avoids getting mated for several moves, and will be a vagrant for the rest of his days. If, on the other hand, he can manage to get over to the K-side, he might be fairly safe behind the pawns. Since this is the only choice which stands a chance of success if things go right, it must be played. This form of reasoning enabled me to make the move quickly, without spending time analysing the alternatives, other than a quick check that White had no instantaneous win against 14 ... ♗e7.

15 ♗f1xc4 ♖7-f5

Attacking a piece at the same time as giving the king an escape square. Note that there is no need to bother about protecting the a-pawn. Black is already a pawn down; so he might as well give up another one, and the only chance of a Swindle lies in playing actively, which means getting your pieces out. If Black messed around protecting pawns he would never develop his K-side, and White could win at leisure.

16 ♖a4xa7+ ♖b8-b7

17 ♖a7-a3+ ♗e7-f7

18 ♗e4-g5+ ♗f7-g6

Not 18 ... ♗f6? 19 ♗xh7+ ♖xh7 20 ♖xf8+.

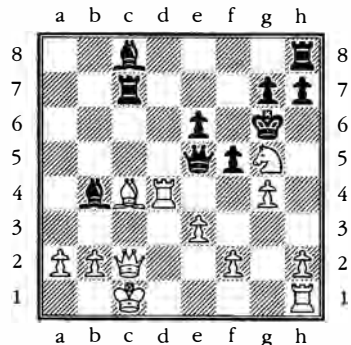
19 ♖a3-c3 ♗f8-b4

I was fairly happy at this stage. Not only had I succeeded in rescuing the king and getting my pieces on to reasonably active squares, but I had caught up on the clock, for most of my moves had been practically forced, while Stean had had to choose between several good-looking moves almost every time.

20 ♖c3-c2 ♖b7-c7

21 g2-g4!?

Still intent on attacking, rather than trying to consolidate his two extra pawns, which might allow Black some sort of attack on the Q-side.



21 ... ♖c8-b7!

Continuing to put pieces on active squares, without any definite follow-up in mind. The position is now so unclear that this is the only sensible approach – just play actively and quickly, and hope something turns up. I was tempted by 21 ... ♖a6, threatening ... ♗xd4 followed by ... ♖xc4, but this would have encouraged White to strengthen his Q-side by 22 b3 after which the bishop has no future on a6. It seemed better to put the bishop on the long diagonal, where it controls lots of squares, and with White's bishop unsupported by a pawn there might be a chance later on to play some combination involving ... ♖xc4.

22 ♖h1-g1 ♗e5xh2

I couldn't see how to stop the threat of 23 gxf5+, so I thought I might as well take a pawn and harass White's most dangerous attacking piece, his rook on g1. As far as I knew he might have had a forced win against this, but I couldn't see one; so I just hoped that either he didn't have one or he wouldn't find it.

23 g4xf5+ ♗g6-f6

23 ... exf5 loses to 24 ♖f3+.

24 ♖g5xh7+!?

I hadn't seen this coming, but never mind, let's take it first and think about it afterwards.

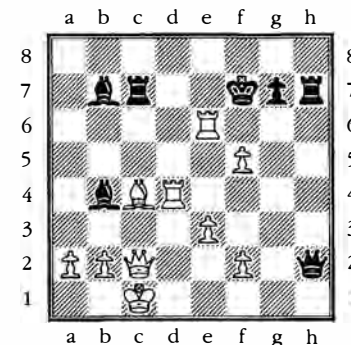
24 ... ♖h8xh7

25 ♖g1-g6+ ♗f6-f7

25 ... ♗e7? loses to 26 ♖xe6+ ♗f8 27 ♖d8+ ♗f7 28 ♖h6+, among other things.

26 ♖g6xe6

Threatening some nasty discovered checks. How would you continue?



26 ... ♗h2-h1+!

Suddenly a Swindle appears! I saw that 27 ♖d1 lost to 27 ... ♗xd1+, as you will see in a moment, while after 27 ♗d1 I reckoned I could get a draw by swapping queens. It was important psychologically to play 26 ... ♗h1+ rather than 26 ... ♗g1+, for with the queen on g1 it would have been more obvious that I was intending 27 ... ♗xd1+, but with the queen on h1 Stean assumed that I was trying to do something down the long diagonal, and was anticipating 27 ... ♖d5.

I now did my best to look normal, as I waited for him to fall into the trap. Looking nervous would have been too suspicious in a wild position like this, especially since I'd been playing the last few moves with a show of confidence.

27 ♖d4-d1?

Phew – he fell for it!

27 ... ♗h1xd1+

White resigns

I almost felt sorry for Michael Stean as his face dropped when the truth

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dawned on him, but then I remembered that Tigers have no pity for their victims!

If 28 ♖xd1 ♙f3+ 29 ♜e2 (or 29 ♙e2 ♜h1 mate, or 29 ♖c1 ♜h1+ and mate in two) ♙xe2+ 30 ♙xe2 ♜h1+ wins easily, while 28 ♜xd1 ♜xc4+ 29 ♖b1 ♜h1 leaves Black with two extra bishops.

After the game I worked out that against 27 ♜d1 the best reply would have been 27 ... ♙d5 28 ♜xd5 ♜xc4+ 29 ♖b1 ♜xd1+ 30 ♜xd1 ♜h2, which should end in a draw.

This game illustrates how Swindles frequently appear without being particularly planned if you play actively in a wild position. Many of Stean's moves took me by surprise, and I was very lucky that none of them happened to finish me off, but I think I contributed to my own luck by playing actively and using the process of elimination. I didn't calculate all that much, but just kept moving in the hope that something would turn up.

Happy Swindling!

8 How to win won positions



'The rest is just technique' How many times have you heard this cliché? What does it mean? What sort of technique is involved?

We all fail to win 'won' positions much more often than we should. In fact if we were fully equipped with the sort of technique the annotators seem to take for granted, our opponents could resign much earlier than they do in real life. But even strong grandmasters let clearly winning positions slip from their grasp from time to time, so clearly the technique involved is far from easy to apply in practice.

There seem to me to be four basic principles which should be borne in mind, although I must admit it is not always easy to apply them. If you remember them, however, you should significantly reduce the number of won games which you let slip away.

(1) Keep the initiative

This is the Golden Rule. The successful Swindler operates by first gaining the initiative; so the way to foil him is to prevent his getting it. If you have a positionally won game with everything under control, don't grab the first pawn your opponent leaves lying around. Instead, continue to turn the screw until his position cracks at the seams. Remember how Uhlmann did this against in Chapter 5. Instead of winning a pawn, he concentrated on bottling up his opponent's pieces, and after this he didn't need to take any pawns, because his advance led to a quick decision.

You may be tempted to win material by playing a combination which you are sure your opponent has overlooked. Be careful! Look to see whether your opponent will be able to break out and get counterplay at the end of it. This is the worst way of being swindled, for you are swindling yourself if you play an unsound combination which your opponent hasn't even seen. An 'unsound combination' means one which allows him to come out with a reasonable initiative for the material lost, even though you may still have a won game theoretically, for a clear won game is better than an unclear won game.

If your opponent sacrifices something you will frequently be able to refuse it and continue to pile on the pressure, but if you are forced to accept the sacrifice in order to maintain your advantage, look for a way to give back some or all of the material gained, in order to regain the initiative. This can frequently be done in such a way that you end up with an even more won position than you started with, although level on material. Above all, don't hang on to your ill-gotten gains at all costs; this is the perfect recipe for being swindled.

(2) Give your opponent as little chance as possible

This really amounts to 'keeping everything under control' (one of my favourite phrases). Pay particular attention to stopping your opponent's threats, before continuing with your own active plan. If you are not quite sure how to make progress, keep him bottled up for a while and wait for an opportunity to finish him off. He may get desperate and do something ridiculous to try and break out of your stranglehold. If he just sits there, however, he will probably run short of time, since cramped positions are usually rather difficult to play. Your position should be much easier to play, provided you don't try too hard to find the most crushing moves. Many

won games have been thrown away in time-trouble because the player with the advantage spent too long looking for the most crushing win, instead of being content to maintain his advantage and wait for an opportunity to increase it. Don't exchange a position which you know is won for a position which you only think is won. Be patient and stay in control until you see a clear way of transforming your advantage into a win.

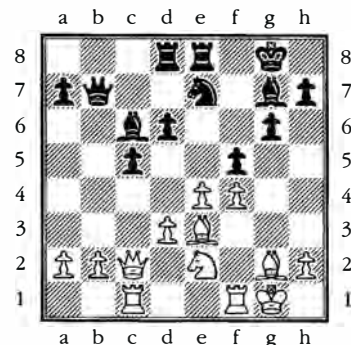
(3) Check complications carefully, but don't be afraid of them

Some players dash headlong into what they think is a winning combination, without making quite certain that it is sound, frequently with the idea of winning brilliantly and impressing everyone. As a Tiger, however, you should not be concerned about whether you win brilliantly or not, as long as you win. On the other hand, don't go to the opposite extreme and avoid all complications just for the sake of doing so, or 'in case you've overlooked something'. If a complex continuation leads to a clear win, the safest way is to play it, rather than to stodge around and give yourself a chance to make mistakes. You must be certain that it wins in all variations, however, before you give up a positionally won game for a complicated tactical line.

(4) Don't assume the game will win itself

There is a temptation to relax when you're winning. Resist it! Force yourself to concentrate as hard as you would if you had that position against the World Champion! Your opponent may appear to have lost interest and be playing very quickly, but until he resigns, you have work to do. If you have plenty of time, use it in looking for the most certain win, rather than just any old win. Even easy wins have to be won, and if your opponent seems slow resigning he is more likely to do so if you play slowly and carefully than if you try and rush your way through to the end. Some people fail to win the most absurdly easy positions; so make sure you're not one of them!

For a first illustration of these principles, take the following position, from the game **M. Hebden v. S. Webb**, played at Nottingham, 1977, in which Black has a distinct positional advantage:



22 ♖e2-g3!

Black has pressure against the b- and e-pawns. I was expecting 22 ♖c3, after which 22 ... fxe4 23 dxe4 ♖f5 24 exf5 ♜xe3 gives excellent winning chances for Black, who has the initiative, bishop against knight in an open position, and two powerful central pawns.

With 22 ♖g3 Hebden sacrifices the b-pawn for the initiative and reasonable swindling chances.

22 ... ♜b7xb2

23 ♜c2-c4+ ♖g8-h8

24 ♜c1-b1 ♜b2-a3

24 ... ♜c3 would be met by 25 ♜a6 followed by 26 ♜fc1, with good play for White.

25 e4-e5!

Playing actively and creating the maximum amount of confusion in the centre. This move leads to the exchange of the white-squared bishops, after which White will be threatening ♜b7. Black must play very carefully to preserve the advantage against this thrust.

25 ... ♙c6xg2

26 ♖g1xg2 d6xe5

27 ♙e3xc5 ♜a3-a5

Avoiding the trap 27 ... ♜xd3? 28 ♜xd3 ♜xd3 29 ♙xe7 ♜xe7 30 ♜b8+ winning a piece.

28 f4xe5

How can Black ensure the win?



28 ... ♜a5-c7!

28 ... ♙xe5? would have allowed 29 ♜b7, after which White has a strong initiative and excellent swindling chances. Instead, Black brings his queen back into the game and regains the initiative. This is a typical example of returning a sacrificed pawn to consolidate and go for a positional advantage, which is easier to exploit than a material advantage.

29 ♜b1-e1

White quite rightly attempts to preserve the activity of his pieces in order to retain swindling chances, but against accurate play he is lost. On 29 d4 ♖d5 Black would be right on top, in spite of the material equality, for he would be threatening ... ♖e3+, or ... f4 followed by either ... ♖e3+ or ... ♜d7, bringing the queen across to take advantage of White's weakened king. Also if 29 ♙d6 ♜xc4 30 dxc4 ♖c6 Black has a won ending because all White's pawns are weak.

29 ... ♙g7xe5

It is now safe to take this.

30 d3-d4 ♜c7-c6+

31 ♔g2-g1 ♙e5xg3

32 h2xg3 ♘e7-d5

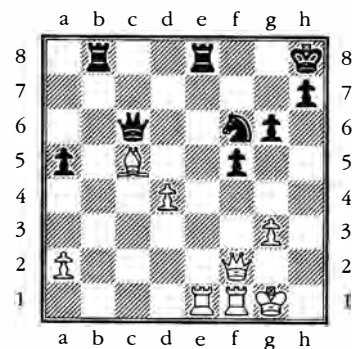
These last two moves clarify the position and leave Black with everything under control, which is the safest way of ensuring the win.

33 ♚c4-b3 ♜d8-b8

34 ♚b3-f3 a7-a5

There's no hurry. White isn't threatening anything; so Black waits for an opportunity to simplify the position. Both players were now short of time, and this makes it particularly important for the side with the advantage not to risk losing control by trying to force the pace.

35 ♚f3-f2 ♘d5-f6



36 d4-d5!

Cheerfully sacrificing another pawn to open up the long diagonal and give me a chance of going wrong in time-trouble. It didn't work, but it had me worried!

36 ... ♘f6xd5

37 ♚f2-d4+ ♔h8-g8

38 ♜e1-c1 ♜e8-e4

39 ♚d4-d3 ♚c6-e6

40 ♜f1-d1 ♘d5-f6

41 ♜c1-b1 ♜b8xb1

42 ♜d1xb1 ♜e4-e1+

43 ♔g1-g2 ♜e1xb1

44 ♚d3xb1 ♚e6-e4+

Overlooking 44 ... ♚d5+ winning the bishop, but with only a few seconds left to reach move 48 I was quite happy to swap queens, and **White resigned** when the time control was reached on move 48.

This game demonstrates how an attempted swindle can be foiled by keeping the initiative rather than grabbing pawns.

The next example shows the crucial stage of the game **Webb-Eley** played at Blackpool 1977. White, to move, has a clear advantage because of Black's draughty king, his weak isolated pawns, and his inferior bishop, but it wasn't easy to see how this advantage could be turned into a win.



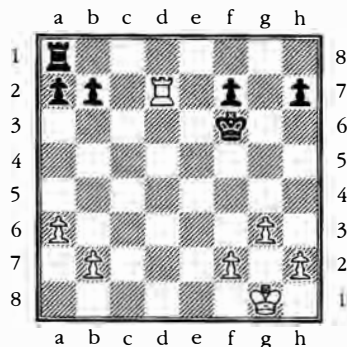
20 ♜d1-d4!

I thought a long time in this position, deciding between ♜e1, ♜a1, and ♜d4. 20 ♜e1 threatens ♜e5 and then ♜g5+, and this can be stopped only by 20 ... ♚f8 21 ♜e5 h6, after which White has good attacking chances, with the possibility of bringing the other rook across and sacrificing the exchange to open up Black's king still further. I couldn't see a clear win, however, and it seemed unnecessarily risky to go all out for the K-side attack when I had a positional advantage anyway.

The second possibility was 20 ♖ac1, with the idea of penetrating to the seventh rank after 20 ... ♕f8 21 ♖c7. This also looks as if it ought to be good, but I couldn't see a clear follow-up, and was afraid that Black might get counter-chances by advancing his d-pawn at some stage.

So we come back to 20 ♖d4, which virtually forces the win of the d-pawn, but allows Black to swap off into an ending, and says goodbye to any hope of a dramatic K-side attack. The rook ending with an extra pawn, however, must surely be a win with reasonably accurate play, and is therefore the safest way of playing the position, giving Black hardly any chance of saving it. This is what I mean by giving your opponent as little chance as possible – go for the safest win rather than the quickest win.

- 20 ... ♔c5-f8
- 21 ♖a1-d1 ♕f8-g7
- 22 ♕f6xg7+ ♖g8xg7
- 23 ♗g2xd5 ♗e6xd5
- 24 ♖d4xd5 ♖d8xd5
- 25 ♖d1xd5 ♖g7-f6
- 26 ♖d5-d7

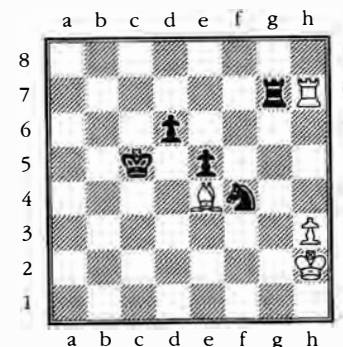


I now proceeded to misplay the ending, and took much longer winning it than I should have done, *but I still won* (after 95 moves!). This illustrates that if you go into a nice safe position you can afford to make a few mistakes (although trying your hardest not to) and the position will still be winnable. As a Tiger you shouldn't mind how long it takes you, as long as you win in the end.

Quite possibly a strong grandmaster would have played a different move in the diagrammed position, for he might have seen a rapid win on the K-side. This comes back to the question of what constitutes the 'best move' for you or me. The best move for a grandmaster is not necessarily the best move for you or me. If you want to win your won games you should allow for your own limitations by playing moves which you know are good rather than moves which you think ought to be tremendous.

Another point about this game is that if the time limit had been all the moves in a fixed time, it would have been easy to play the rook ending with an extra pawn, staying ahead on time and waiting for a mistake from my opponent.

Our final example illustrates the same point of playing to one's limitations by preferring the safe, slow win to the rapid but more risky win. The following position is taken from the game **Lehmann-Webb**, played at Albena in Bulgaria, 1977.



White has just captured a pawn on h7, and Black has to decide whether to exchange rooks. This position is definitely a 'technical win' for Black, but there are chances of going wrong in practice. I had originally intended to exchange rooks, which would be the simplest win if it worked, but at the last moment had second thoughts. After 49 ... ♖xh7 50 ♗xh7 ♖d4 51 ♖g3 ♖e3, supposing White moved his king round to harass the pawns from behind, with 52 ♖g4 d5 53 ♖f5? Was there a chance that he could either sacrifice his bishop for the two pawns or advance his h-pawn sufficiently to drag my knight away from supporting the pawns? I wasn't sure. If, on

the other hand, I avoided the exchange of rooks, his king was less likely to do any damage, for I could always chase it away with my rook and knight, whereas my king could always get away from his rook by hiding behind the knight and pawns while they gradually advanced. Also my rook would be useful to prevent the h-pawn getting too far. Keeping the rooks on the board would obviously make the winning process much longer, which in itself would give me a chance to make blunders, but it seemed the safer course. I was 90 per cent sure that exchanging rooks was a theoretical win, and about 75 per cent sure that I would win it in practice, but I was 100 per cent sure that keeping the rooks on was a theoretical win, and 90 per cent sure that I would win in practice. So I adopted the safer course:

49 ... ♖g7-g8

I imagine that Karpov would have exchanged rooks without hesitation, knowing that the resulting position was an easy win, but I'm not Karpov, and it would be pointless trying to play like him.

The rest of the game was a long grind, but you can see that White never really had a chance:

50 ♙f3 d5 51 ♙g4 ♘d4 52 ♖a7 ♜b8 53 ♖a4+ ♚e3 54 ♖a3+ ♚e4
55 ♙f3+ ♘d4 56 ♚g3 ♜g8+ 57 ♙g4 ♘h5+ 58 ♚f2 ♘f6 59 ♖a4+
♚c3 60 ♙e6 ♜e8 61 ♙f5 ♜f8 62 ♚e1 ♘h5 63 ♙g4 ♘f4 64 ♖a3+
♘d4 65 ♘d2 e4 66 ♖a4+ ♚e5 67 ♖a5 ♜b8 68 ♖a3 ♘d3 69 ♜xd3
exd3 70 ♘xd3 ♜b3+ 71 ♚e2 ♚e4 72 ♚f2 d4 73 ♙d7 ♜b2+ 74 ♚g3
d3 75 ♙c6+ ♘d4 76 h4 d2 77 ♙a4 ♖a2 White resigns

Towards the end of this game, having an easily won position, I was tempted to relax, and had to force myself to concentrate on finding the safest win. This is the sort of situation where the Tiger's Killer Instinct is very valuable. It comes naturally to some players, but many of us have to generate it artificially. If you want to make the most of your ability to get good positions, you must not only learn the technique of how to convert them into wins, but you must also find a way to develop this Killer Instinct, so that you can bring your full powers of concentration to bear against stubborn opponents. To do this, you must find some way of convincing yourself that each game is of vital importance. If you can't pretend that your opponent is World Champion, try imagining that you are playing for some large amount of money, or that he is your worst enemy. (But remember to be nice to him after the game!)

9 What to do in drawn positions



In an equal position with chances for both sides you should play normally, of course, but what do you do if you reach a dead position which clearly ought to be agreed drawn, but for some reason one player is not willing to agree to a draw? This can happen either if one player desperately needs a win in order to win the tournament or the match for his side, or if one player is very determined or plain obstinate, whichever way you look at it.

The main quality you need is patience, but the approach to adopt varies according to whether it is you or your opponent who is trying to win.

Your opponent is trying to win

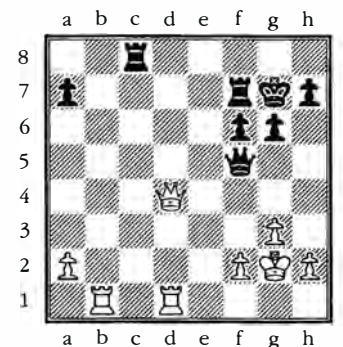
Don't assume that any position with equal pawns and not many pieces left is a dead draw, for there may be quite a lot of play in it. Assuming that you know the position really is a dead draw, however, you shouldn't have much trouble drawing it. The main thing to guard against is carelessness.

What you should *not* do is to play very quickly, glaring at your opponent to show your annoyance at being made to play on in such a trivial position. This is exactly what he wants, for the faster you play the more likely you are to make a silly mistake and give him genuine winning chances. Instead, take your time, even if your moves are completely obvious, and try to give the impression of infinite patience. This is most calculated to annoy him and teach him a lesson for playing on, particularly if he is playing quickly in the hope that you will do the same. In dead positions the right moves are by definition easy to find—or at least moves which succeed in holding the draw. You will therefore tend to play faster than the speed limit, even though consciously taking your time. Against an opponent playing at normal speed, you probably take the occasional stroll while it's his turn to move, so as to keep your mind relatively fresh. So against a fast-moving opponent in an easily drawn position it's not a bad idea to go for the occasional wander round the room while it is *your* turn to move. This serves the double purpose of keeping your mind active and infuriating your opponent! When you return to the board, he will probably be fidgeting around, while you sit down with elaborate calm, spend a minute or so checking your intended move, and then slide your piece carefully into position. If he replies instantaneously, don't follow his example, but take at least 30 seconds over each move, even if it is completely forced. While you are at it, you might as well strive to play not just any old drawing move, but the best and most convincing drawing moves. Provided you don't go round in circles wondering which draw to play, you should be able to do all this and still play slightly faster than the normal time limit.

You are trying to win

Again, you need patience more than anything. Don't go mad and play a patently unsound line, just to unbalance the position. You may be reduced to this in the end, if you are really desperate to win, but first see what you can do by quieter means. Try various manoeuvres, to see what your opponent does, and if you don't seem to be getting anywhere, repeat position and try something different. Your best chance is that your opponent will get careless and make an oversight which gives you genuine winning chances. He is more likely to do this if you prolong the game by trying various noncommittal plans, than if you go in for some wild sally, for then he may wake up and beat you.

In the following example, played at Birmingham 1975, Tony Miles gives an excellent demonstration of how to play for a win in a drawn position, and I give a good demonstration of how to help him succeed!



23 ... ♖c8-c2

Having just exchanged into this 'completely drawn' position, I was rather surprised when Miles refused to agree a draw. I could see no possible way for him to try and win, and decided that he was just being obstinate. His only conceivable advantage lies in the fact that my f-pawn had advanced one square, making the king slightly more difficult to defend along the back two ranks. This shouldn't matter much, however, and the symmetry of the position should make it easy to hold. 23 ... ♖c2 is obviously perfectly good, restricting White's freedom of action by making him keep his f2 pawn protected.

24 a2-a3

Looking at it from White's point of view, how is he going to try for a win? He has various vague possibilities, such as attacking the a-pawn by ♖b8 and ♖a8 or by ♖b4 and ♖a4, or he can try to penetrate to the seventh or eighth rank. What he should *not* do is to wildly advance his K-side pawns by g4 and h4, for this would only weaken his king without really threatening anything. Instead, Miles waits to see where I am going to put my pieces.

24 ... ♕f5-c5

Perfectly adequate. This indirectly maintains the pressure on f2, and gives Black the option of swapping queens if he wishes. White will not swap queens himself, for on recapturing Black would be able to play ... ♖a5 next move, tying White down to the defence of his a-pawn.

25 ♖b1-b3

Protecting the pawn, and waiting to see whether Black will try to force the issue.

25 ... ♜c5xd4?

Although leading to a drawn ending, this is a slight concession, for after recapturing the queen White will be able to play ♖a4, tying Black down to the defence of his a-pawn. I know it's still completely drawn, but there was no reason to make any concession at all, since White wasn't threatening anything. More uncompromising would have been 25 ... ♗e7 or 25 ... ♗c7. White couldn't then afford to play 26 ♗f3, for the rook would be pinned by 26 ... ♜c6, after which Black can easily keep his f-pawn protected.

When playing for a draw, there is a natural tendency to try to simplify the position at the cost of going on the defensive, as long as you can see that the resulting ending is drawn. In a position like this, however, almost any move should draw, so there is no reason to make forcing moves. It's better to look for the strongest moves, just as you would if you were trying to win the position. By exchanging queens I was voluntarily going on the defensive, although from the objective point of view there was no reason why I should. In making this concession I was only encouraging Miles to continue playing for a win.

26 ♗d1xd4 ♜f7-e7

27 ♗d4-a4 ♔g7-f7

28 ♗a4-a6 ♜c2-e2

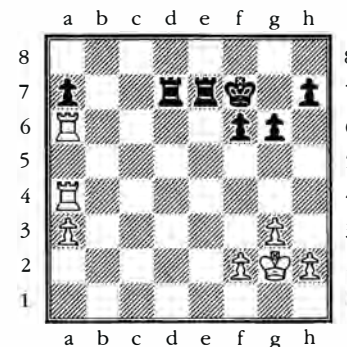
To meet 29 ♗f3 with ... ♗2e6. Otherwise Black would have to answer 29 ♗f3 with ... f5 allowing 30 g4 breaking up the pawns, which would then be slightly more tricky to defend. This was a fairly obvious move to find, but from the attacker's point of view you might as well make little threats like this, for it costs nothing, and you never know – your opponent *might* overlook one of them, particularly if he is becoming impatient and therefore careless.

29 ♗b3-b4

Now both rooks head for the a-file, so that Black must defend with his rooks on the second rank.

29 ... ♗e7-d7

30 ♗b4-a4 ♗e2-e7



31 g3-g4!

The standard method of defending rook endings with three pawns on the K-side is to put them on h5, g6, and f7 (or in this case f6), for this structure shelters the king from rooks checking from the side, and prevents White's pawns from advancing very far without being exchanged. So this move prevents Black's intended ... h5, which possibly should have been played a few moves ago.

31 ... ♗h7-h5?

Well, it didn't entirely prevent it, but now the exchange of pawns gives Black more points to protect, and the two remaining K-side pawns can be harassed from the side by the white rooks. Black would have done better to 'do nothing' with 31 ... ♔g7, for it's difficult to see how White can make any progress. He can get in h4 and g5, giving his rook a square on f6, but with the black king on g7 this doesn't really achieve anything.

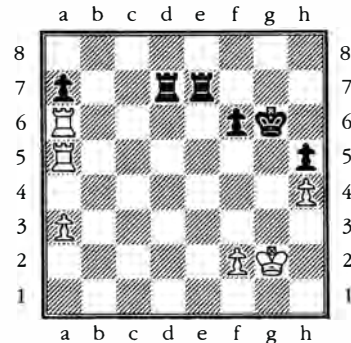
I fell for the trap of getting impatient and trying to defend actively, when passive defence would have been perfectly adequate. In the chapter on Swindling I stressed the importance of active defence, but this applies in a lost position, when passive defence will eventually fail. In a drawn position active defence is frequently not necessary, and although it's worth playing actively if you can, don't weaken a sound position in order to do so. Only if your defences are beginning to crumble must you leap out before it's too late.

32 g4xh5 ♗g6xh5

What to do in drawn positions

33 ♖a4-a5 ♔f7-g6

34 h2-h4



34 ... ♖d7-c7?

The losing blunder. I completely overlooked White's threat. Black can still draw fairly comfortably by 34 ... ♖f7, although no doubt Miles would have managed to find some way of setting me problems after this.

35 ♖a5-g5+

Winning a pawn. Lack of patience was the main reason for my overlooking this threat. If I had felt myself to be under pressure I would have looked more closely and seen it, but because I thought the position an easy draw, and that Miles was being excessively obstinate in playing on, I got careless and played unnecessarily quickly, with the result that I fell for this 'cheapo'.

Only now did I wake up and start concentrating properly, but it was too late, for Miles's accurate endgame technique succeeded in finishing me off. Whether the position was tenable from this point I don't know; I give the rest of the game so that you can judge for yourself.

35 ... ♔f7 36 ♖xh5 ♔g7 37 ♖f5 ♖f7 38 ♔g3 ♖c3+ 39 f3 ♖c1
 40 ♖fa5 ♖cc7 41 ♔g4 ♖c4+ 42 f4 ♖cc7 43 ♔f5 ♖b7 44 a4 ♖bc7
 45 h5 ♖b7 46 h6+ ♔xh6 47 ♖xf6+ ♔g7 48 ♖xf7+ ♔xf7 49 ♖a6 ♖c7
 50 ♔g5 ♔g7 51 f5 ♖d7 52 a5 ♖c7 53 ♖d6 ♔f8 54 ♖d8+ ♔e7 55 ♖h8
 ♔d6 56 ♔g6 ♖c1 57 ♖a8 ♔e5 58 ♖e8+ ♔f4 59 f6 ♖g1+ 60 ♔f7 ♖a1
 61 ♔g7 ♔f5 62 f7 ♖g1+ 63 ♔f8 ♔g6 64 ♖e6+ Black resigns

This game illustrates two of the qualities which made Tony Miles such a strong player – his endgame technique and his determination to win. Being on the receiving end of it, I learned that a game of chess is never drawn until it's drawn. All too frequently players agree draws in level positions, without realizing that there are ways of winning these positions against a careless opponent. The Tiger has the determination to play such positions out to the end, but if you are content to agree a draw, don't slacken off if your opponent refuses to accept. The more uninteresting the position, the more you must force yourself to concentrate, just as when your opponent is slow resigning a lost position. You can imagine how I suffered during the latter part of this game, so unless you want to do the same – Be Careful!

10 Clock control



Control of the clock is one of the most important and most neglected aspects of practical play. Hundreds of volumes have been written on openings, and yet hardly anything on how to handle the clock correctly; so I will try to redress the balance to some small extent in this chapter.

Ideally you should apportion your time so that the length of time you think over each move is related to the difficulty of the move, and so that you use all the time available without having to rush at the end. This is easier said than done, and many experienced players, including some grandmasters, seem unable to avoid getting into time-trouble game after game. As a result they regularly throw away good positions, and fail to achieve the results of which they are capable. If this sounds like you, then you have an easy way of improving your results. Stop getting into time-trouble! Forget about openings, tactics, strategy, and all the rest of your game. First concentrate on this one aspect of chess, and when you have conquered it your results will improve automatically. Only then should you return to improving the rest of your play.

Planning your time

First of all you must have a plan. The obvious approach is to divide the time available into equal portions and mark on your score-sheet how long you intend to spend over each ten moves or so. I have noticed several players doing this, and what tends to happen is that they play the first ten moves quickly, then slow down to about ten minutes a move, since they are ahead of schedule, and find it difficult to speed up again when they get back to having to play at three minutes a move. So an improvement on this system is to take account of the fact that you know your openings for the first few moves, and don't plan your time until you get to the end of your knowledge of the opening and have to start thinking. For example, suppose you are playing at 36 moves in 90 minutes, and you start off with a Ruy Lopez that you know well. After 14 moves your opponent does something you haven't seen before, or you reach the end of your known line, and you have to start thinking. Now you have about 88 minutes for your remaining 22 moves, and should allow yourself an average of four minutes a move. You could mark moves 21 and 28 on your score-sheet to indicate roughly where you should be after 30 and 60 minutes. If your opponent plays an opening you know nothing about, however, you may have to start thinking from about move 3, and in this case you might mark moves 14 and 25 on your score-sheet.

When the time control is reached

Suppose you reach the time control and have 60 minutes for the rest of the game. How can you plan your time when you don't know how many moves will be played? If there was a time scramble before the time control, you may need a few minutes to work out what's going on in the position. Hopefully you can do this in your opponent's time, but otherwise 5-10 minutes may be well worth investing here. Then the golden rule is to keep moving steadily and stay ahead on the clock! We will come back to this in the chapter on Quick Play.

The above scheme is only a guide, and if you get a particularly critical position you will need to spend longer than normal to decide how to continue, but here you are banking on your investment of time yielding dividends in the form of a rapid win or a simplified position which you can play quickly. If this goes wrong you will find yourself staggering from one crisis to another, with less and less time to cope with them as the game proceeds.

*Clock control***Using your time effectively**

In addition to planning your time, there are various ways in which you can use your time to good effect, and the following seem to me to be the most important:

(1) Go for a position you feel at home in

This comes back to suiting your play to your natural style, as explained in Chapter 3. If you can steer the game into a position which you feel you understand, not only will you play better but you will also be able to play more quickly.

(2) Have confidence in your own ability

Don't be afraid to play good moves. The longer you think over a position, the less likely you are to change your mind about it, so if you see a good move, don't waste too much time wondering what's wrong with it. Play it, and save your time in case things go wrong later. Don't be a Nervous Ninny and spend so long getting a won position that you don't have time to win it.

(3) Don't be a perfectionist

In the past, many leading grandmasters were so fascinated by chess that they couldn't resist the challenge of finding the very best move in a position, even if this meant spending up to an hour on a single move. Consequently they often ended up having to make their last 10 or 15 moves in less than a minute. This perfectionism is all very well in analysis or in correspondence chess, but it's a handicap in over-the-board play. It seems to me that players such as Geller, Bronstein, Andersson, and Smejkal achieved good results in spite of being perfectionists, not because of it. Their love of the game explained why they were perfectionists as well as why they were good players, but maybe they would have been even better players if they had been content to play reasonable moves instead of always striving for the best move. Karpov and Larsen, two of the most successful tournament players in the world, were known to be

content with preserving their position by playing adequate moves, in order to conserve their time and wait for their opponent to make a mistake.

Nowadays leading grandmasters get a lot of practice at Quick Play, and this has helped them to use their time effectively at normal time limits too. Anand is an example of a player who is known for making adequate moves at a steady speed rather than aiming for perfection. This is a more practical approach, for more games are lost through mistakes than are won by brilliancies, and if you want to get the best results you can, you would do well to follow his example.

(4) Use your opponent's time

Few players sit at the board for the whole of a game. Nearly everyone goes for the occasional wander round the room to stretch their legs and look at other games. This is physiologically justified, for physical movement helps the brain to stay active. If you get up after every move, however, or spend long periods chatting to your friends, you are wasting your time, and this is a good recipe for getting into time-trouble. The Tiger is determined to do his best, and so gets up only as often as necessary to refresh his brain. He spends his opponent's time thinking generally about the position and what manoeuvres are available to both sides, so that he can start thinking in terms of exact moves as soon as his opponent makes a move.

Why do you get into time trouble?

If you're not sure why you get into time-trouble, try making a note on your score-sheet of the time you take over each move. Bojan Kurajica, the Yugoslav grandmaster, told me that he had tried doing this and discovered that after playing the opening fairly quickly, he tended to 'drop off' round about moves 15-20, and take far longer than necessary to decide on his moves. He reckoned he could have played the same moves in less than half the time he was taking for these moves. I tried doing the same thing on some of my own games, and the following example may give you an idea of how you can analyse your own games with particular reference to the time taken over each move, to see where you might speed up, or even where you might have benefited from taking a little longer at certain stages.

Clock control

White: **J. Speelman** Black: **S. Webb**

Athenaeum v. Islington, London League, October 1977

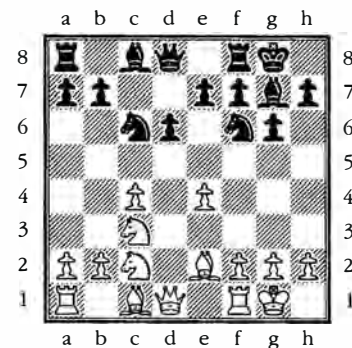
Time limit: 30 moves in 90 minutes (total times in minutes shown in brackets)

Sicilian – Maroczy Bind (by transposition)

- 1 c2-c4 c7-c5
- 2 g1-f3 g7-g6
- 3 d2-d4 c5xd4
- 4 f3xd4 b8-c6
- 5 e2-e4 g8-f6
- 6 b1-c3 d7-d6
- 7 d4-c2 (18)

The first Big Think of the game. The usual move is 7 e2, after which 7 ... dxd4 8 wxd4 eg7 9 eg5! gives White a slight edge. Speelman was obviously thinking of 7 d2; so I was able to prepare my reply during his time.

- 7 ... ef8-g7(1)
- 8 ef1-e2 0-0
- 9 0-0



- 9 ... b7-b6(?) (6)

Played too fast. Having run out of 'automatic' opening moves and reached a position I'd never seen before, now was the time to start planning the middle-game. There are several possible plans, such as:

(a) The 'hedgehog' formation with b6, eb7, a6, xc8, wc7, e6, etc., as played in the game.

(b) Playing for b5 with a6, xb8, ed7, and so on.

(c) Blockading with d7, a5, and dc5 so that White's f4 can always be met by ... f5.

An investment of about 15 minutes would have enabled me to weigh up the various plans and, having decided on one, to play my next few moves fairly quickly. Instead of which, I played the first plan that occurred to me, without considering how White might counter it.

- 10 ec1-g5! (26)

An eventual de3 and d5 will be stronger with the bishop on g5 than with it on b2, where I was expecting it to go. Normally in the Maroczy Bind Black can counter White's eg5 and wd2 by ... wa5 after which the thematic d5 allows a simplifying exchange of queens.

- 10 ... ec8-b7 (7)

- 11 wd1-d2 (31) xa8-c8 (11)

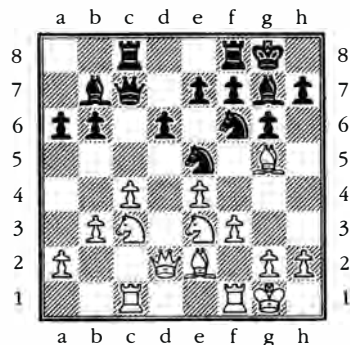
- 12 b2-b3 (32) a7-a6 (15)

- 13 xa1-c1 (38) dc6-e5 (18)

So that 14 f4 can be met by 14 ... ded7 and ... dc5, pressurizing the e-pawn.

- 14 f2-f3 (41) wd8-c7 (20)

- 15 dc2-e3 (48)



Although I was ahead on time, my position was difficult, and the more I looked at it the less I liked it. White is threatening Qxf6 followed by plonking a knight on d5, and whichever way I recapture the bishop I will have doubled f-pawns and a very weak d-pawn. If I prevent this by 15 ... e6, however, my d-pawn will be very difficult to defend. I decided it was worth spending some while here to look for a way of getting active counter-chances before my position got any worse. I thought of 15 ... Wc5 , threatening ... Qxf3+ and ... Wxg5 , but 16 Qcd5 looked strong, so instead I played ...

15 ... e7-e6! (38)

Preparing 16 ... Wc5 with counter-chances. 18 minutes well spent!

16 Qf1-d1 (53) Wc7-c5 (39)

17 Wd2xd6? (55)

Overlooking the threat of ... Qxf3+ . First White should play 17 Qxf6 Qxf6 18 Qa4 Wc6 and then 19 Wxd6 , against which I reckoned that 19 ... b5 would give reasonably active play for the pawn (an example of the Swindler sacrificing a pawn for active play before it is too late).

17 ... Qe5xf3+

18 Qe2xf3 Wc5xg5

19 Wd6xb6 (68) Qc8-b8 (56)

Too slow! This was the obvious move and I could have played it immediately, since I had been planning it while Speelman was thinking about his last move. Instead of which I wasted 17 valuable minutes partly

looking for alternatives, but mainly working out what to play against his various possible replies. This is a common temptation, and one which should be resisted. Black clearly has more than enough compensation for the pawn, with the two bishops, play against White's weak e-pawn, and attacking chances on the K-side. White is the one who should be thinking.

20 Qe3-f1 (72) Qf6-g4 (70)

Too slow again! 20 ... Qxe4 21 Qxe4 Qxe4 22 We3 gives a roughly equal ending, and 20 ... Qxe4 is similar. 20 ... Qg4 looked right, giving the knight or bishop a chance to come to e5, but I dithered over playing it because I couldn't decide what White's reply might be. I could easily have played the move in two or three minutes and left myself more time for later.

21 Qf3xg4 (74) Wg5xg4

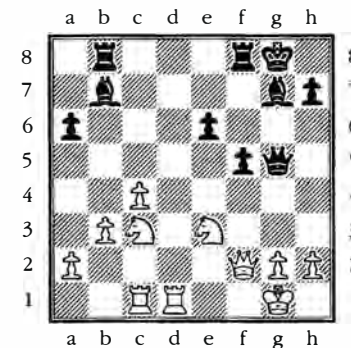
22 Wb6-f2 (75) f7-f5! (76)

Opening up the white-squared bishop and giving possibilities of attacking with ... f4 and ... f3.

23 Qf1-e3 (81) Wg4-g5 (77)

24 e4xf5 (83) g6xf5

A critical position for White.



25 Qc3-a4! (86)

Although short of time, Speelman finds the only move to make things awkward for Black, threatening to come in on c5. I felt sure I ought to have a win here, and would like to have spent about 15 minutes looking for it.

Unfortunately I had only 13 minutes for my next six moves.

25 ... ♖g7-h6? (82)

After the game Speelman pointed out that 25 ... f4 26 ♗f1 e5! 27 ♗c5 e4 would have been very strong, for the knight on c5 can knock out a rook or a bishop, but the rest of the black pieces combined with those two giant pawns seem devastating.

26 ♖c1-c3 (87) ♖b8-d8 (85)

26 ... f4 27 ♗f1 e5 would still be strong.

27 ♖d1xd8 ♖f8xd8

28 ♗a4-c5 f5-f4 (86)

Too late.

29 ♗e3-f1 (88)

I forgot about this, having only considered 29 ♗xb7 fxe3, which looked quite good.

29 ... ♖b7-c8 (89)

30 ♗c5-e4 (89) ♖g5-e5

31 ♖f2-h4! (90)

Having reached the time control, Speelman immediately played this move and offered a draw. This was rather rash, for after considering the position for several minutes we both realized that White stands better! After the natural 31 ... ♖d4+ 32 ♗h1 ♖g7 the position is unclear but probably better for Black, and this was the continuation Speelman was thinking of when he offered the draw. However, 31 ... ♖d4+ 32 ♗f2! threatening 33 ♖d3 is very hard to meet, and so I accepted the draw.

Draw agreed

It is a common mistake to relax and play a careless move after reaching the time control, although in this case the mistake was the draw offer rather than the move played. Particularly if you have the advantage, never hurry your first move after a time scramble. Take a few minutes to weigh up the position and then continue moving at a steady speed. If you are losing it's a different matter. Then it's best to play quickly in the hope that your opponent will do the same and your position will improve.

How to get your opponent into time-trouble

You can't sit down against a random opponent and decide on move one that you're going to get him into time-trouble. It won't work. But there are certain players who are notorious time-trouble addicts, and against these you *can* aim to take advantage of their addiction right from the start of the game. More frequently, if you find by about move 20 that your opponent is heading towards time-trouble, you can help him on his way.

You might think that the way to get people short of time is to make the position complicated, but my observations of addicts in action lead me to disagree with this approach. The positions where they seem to take the most time are those where there is no clear line of play, and where they have to choose between several plans. Often these are quite simple-looking positions. For example, a perfectionist may spend half an hour wondering which file to put a rook on, particularly if he is unable to predict his opponent's reply. The next example will give you an idea of the sort of positions I have in mind. In positions where it is possible to analyse definite lines of play, even in complicated tactical positions, most addicts seem less inclined to dither. They may spend some while analysing all the possibilities, but this time will have been used to good effect, and the decision may seem fairly clear-cut to them, in which case they are unlikely to delay unnecessarily over it. It's the non-forcing sort of positions which they tend to go to sleep over.

As well as trying to stay in non-forcing positions, a useful ploy against many an addict is to walk away from the board and stay away so as not to wake him up. I know this conflicts with my advice to use your opponent's time for thinking, but it all depends on the particular situation – who you're playing, how difficult the position is, and so on. When he looks as if he is about to move (you can usually tell by the shifting of position and flexing of muscles in the right arm) return to the board and pretend to start concentrating hard. It's surprising how often this provokes or frightens him into going into another long trance. I'm not quite sure why this works, or indeed whether it is entirely my imagination, but it has worked for me over and over again, and the only way to test it is to try it yourself!

I can't very well illustrate how to get someone into time-trouble without picking on someone to represent as a time-trouble addict, and the unlucky man is Les Blackstock, who (I think he would agree) gets into time-trouble too much for his own good. The following game was played at Borehamwood, 1977.

Clock control

White: L. S. Blackstock Black: S. Webb

Time limit: 48 moves in 1 1/2 hours

French Defence – Tarrasch Variation

- 1 d2-d4 e7-e6
- 2 e2-e4 d7-d5
- 3 ♖b1-d2 c7-c5
- 4 e4xd5 e6xd5
- 5 ♗g1-f3 ♖b8-c6
- 6 ♙f1-b5 ♙f8-d6
- 7 d4xc5 ♙d6xc5
- 8 0-0 ♗g8-e7
- 9 ♗d2-b3 ♙c5-b6

The main advantage of this move is that everyone else plays ♙d6. Both moves lead to a solid position with a very slight edge for White.

- 10 ♖f1-e1 0-0
- 11 ♙c1-e3 ♙c8-f5
- 12 c2-c3 ♙f5-e4



So far both sides have played fairly quickly. This was not the first time I'd reached this position, and I think Blackstock, who is known as a theoretical

expert, knew as far as 11 ♙e3, and his last move was not hard to find. Now, however, he went into a Big Think.

This is what I mean by a non-forcing position. White has a slight edge because of Black's isolated d-pawn, but it's not at all clear how he should proceed, and Black has such a wide choice of moves that it's impossible to analyse definite lines. What should White do? Should he put a knight on d4, and if so which one? How is he going to develop his queen and queen's rook? Should he exchange bishops? There is little to choose between several moves, and most players would probably pick one without worrying too much about whether it was the best. Les Blackstock, however, thought for about half an hour, trying to decide between several more-or-less equivalent possibilities.

- 13 ♙e3xb6 ♖d8xb6
- 14 ♗f3-d4

Again this took him quite a while. The exchange of bishops hasn't altered the position much, so he must have been re-thinking what he'd thought about on the previous move. Many players are apt to do this in non-forcing positions.

- 14 ... ♗c6xd4
- 15 ♗b3xd4 ♗e7-c6

15...a6 would be answered by 16 f3.

- 16 ♙b5xc6

Necessary because of the threat of ... ♗xd4 and the pressure on White's b-pawn. Black has now at least equalized, however, and probably White should have retreated his bishop on move 14, and protected his b-pawn before playing one of his knights to d4.

- 16 ... b7xc6
- 17 ♖d1-b3 ♖b6-c7

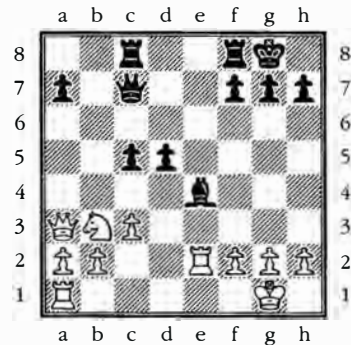
Black's hanging pawns are more useful in the middle-game than in the ending, and besides this move leaves White without a clear continuation. Again he thought for some time before replying, and had by now used up about an hour, leaving 45 minutes to reach move 48.

- 18 ♖b3-a3 c6-c5

19 ♖d4-b3 ♜a8-c8

20 ♜e1-e2

It's still very difficult for White to decide what he should be doing. He has three plausible ways of deploying his rooks, on d1 and e1, d1 and d2, or e1 and e2. There's not much to choose between them, but it gives him a nice harmless way of using up his time.



20 ... ♞e4-f5!

Redeploying the bishop on e6 makes the d-pawn more secure, since it's more difficult to dislodge the bishop from e6, and is also a convenient way of using up two moves to prolong a position in which White can't decide what to do.

21 ♜a1-e1 ♞f5-e6

22 ♜e2-d2

After prolonged thought, he decides his rooks should have been on the d-file after all.

22 ... ♞h7-h6!

Continuing to do nothing much until he gets *really* short of time. You've got to *look* as if you're doing something, however. A move like ... ♚h8 would be a bit obvious!

23 ♜e1-d1 ♜f8-d8

24 ♞h2-h3

Having wasted precious minutes over this, Blackstock was now down to about one minute for his remaining 24 moves! Now that he is really in time-trouble, he is concentrating hard, and ready to answer 'nothing' moves with 'nothing' replies; so now is the time to start doing something.

24 ... ♜d8-d6

25 ♜a3-a4 ♜d6-b6

Putting pressure on the b-pawn, and also with hopes of trapping the queen.

26 ♞b3-c1 ♜c7-b7

27 ♞b2-b3?

Falling into a trap. 27 ♜c2 would have been better.



27 ... ♞d5-d4!

28 ♞c3xd4? ♜b6-a6

White resigns, for the queen is trapped.

Note that if he had not run short of time before I opened the game up, in the first place he probably wouldn't have fallen for 27 ... d4, and even if he had, he might have created difficulties by 28 ♞b4!? or 28 ♜a3; for example 28 ♞b4 dxc3 29 ♜d8+ ♜xd8 30 ♜xd8+ ♚h7 31 ♜c2+ ♞g6 32 ♜xc3. I was planning to answer either of these moves with 28 ... ♞xh3! which is impossible to answer with less than a minute for 20 moves, but against which he *might* have struggled out with more time left.

What to do if you are in time-trouble

You're bound to get into time-trouble sometimes – everyone does. Some players go to pieces in time-trouble, and if you are one of these, I fear there's not much that can be done. You'll just have to concentrate on not getting too short of time. Most players can put up a reasonable show in time-trouble, however, especially if it's the five-minute variety rather than the one-minute variety. The following points of technique should prove helpful:

- (1) Look at the clock while it's your opponent's turn to move, not in your own time.
- (2) While your opponent is thinking, work out a provisional reply to each likely move.
- (3) If the position is very complicated, don't spend all your remaining time trying to analyse it. Play the move which 'looks right' and hope for the best. This way you will conserve those valuable seconds for later.
- (4) Don't write down your opponent's move when he makes it, but do write down your own move after playing it and pressing the clock, or at least make a mark on your score-sheet, because losing count of the moves can be disastrous.

What to do if your opponent is in time-trouble

IF YOU ARE WINNING, IGNORE IT! Too many won games have been thrown away through trying to rush an opponent in time-trouble. If you have a won position, just concentrate on winning it and don't worry about your opponent's antics with the clock.

If a Tiger has a worse, equal, or only slightly better position, however, he uses the *barrage technique*. This consists of playing several moves at once! Well, actually, you have to let your opponent play moves in between, but the idea is that you play two or three moves instantaneously. Before doing this, you need to spend some while planning your barrage, otherwise you are not benefiting from your extra time. This is easiest to do when your opponent's first move is forced. For example, if you have an obvious exchange of pieces available, don't play it immediately, but first decide on your next move, and then play them both at once. While you are thinking, your opponent will probably start looking at less obvious first moves for you, so he will not be using your time to good effect. The aim

is to catch your opponent with a move he hasn't considered. He will probably have considered most sensible moves in the position on the board, but since he doesn't know what your first move is going to be, he can't prepare replies to your second or third moves. The effect of an unexpected second move bashed out instantaneously can be shattering, and many players will panic and blunder, even if the move isn't particularly good.

The Laws of Chess require you to keep a score of the game as long as you have more than five minutes left on your clock. This means that you must write down each move played before making your next move. So to play a really instantaneous barrage and stay within the Laws, you need to write down the moves first, covering up your scoresheet, and then bash them out on the board. Alternatively, you can write very quickly as you play, although the shock value may be slightly less. Also there is no Law which says you must tell your opponent how many moves he has made; so if he stops writing the moves down, you can add to his difficulties by covering up your scoresheet so that he does not know when the time control has been reached.

There is nothing unethical about this – your opponent started off with plenty of time, and if he chooses to use it in such a way that he has hardly any left for his last few moves, that's his own fault. The *really* unethical approach is to tell him he's reached the time control when he hasn't. This is not recommended.

The barrage technique doesn't seem to be widely used, but I noticed the Czech player **Augustin** employing it to good effect with the white pieces in the following game, against **Bednarski** played at Decin, 1977:



At this point I wandered up and saw that Bednarski, as usual, had only one minute left for his next 10 moves, while Augustin had about 15 minutes left. The position looked interesting; so I stopped and watched. Although White is a pawn up, he is under some pressure, for Black is threatening ... ♗c5 trapping the queen. The obvious 31 ♖e3 looks OK to me, but Black certainly has the initiative. After some thought, Augustin played his first barrage:

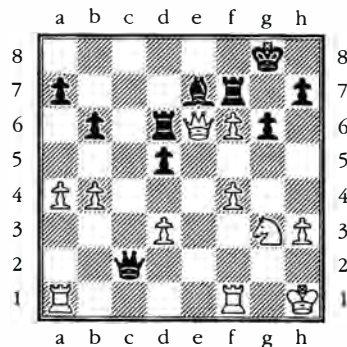
- 31 b2-b4! ♘g7-e6
- 32 ♖d4-e3 ♖c7xc3
- 33 ♖e3xe6+ ♗f8-f7

That one didn't work too well – Black's moves were more or less forced anyway, and he still has a good position. Augustin thought for two or three minutes before playing:

- 34 g5xf6 ♖c3xc2+
- 35 ♔h2-h1 ♗d8-d6!

Sensibly, Augustin decided on ♔h1 before playing 34 gxf6 rather than afterwards, but Bednarski, who plays well in time-trouble, had obviously had 35 ... ♗d6 prepared.

Augustin now thought for about five minutes before playing his next barrage.



- 36 ♖e6xe7! ♗f7xe7

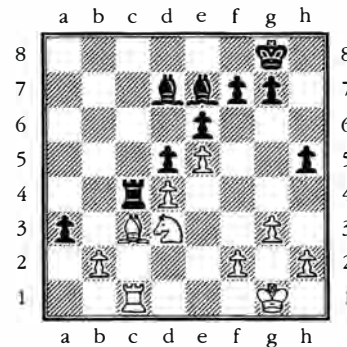
- 37 f6xe7 ♔g8-f7
- 38 ♗a1-e1 ♔f7-e8
- 39 f4-f5

This one caught Bednarski by surprise. He can win easily by 39 ... ♗f6, preventing White's rook from getting to f8, but with his flag teetering, his hand shot out to hover over his queen, and he played:

- 39 ... ♖c2xd3?
- 40 f5xg6 ♖d3xg6
- 41 ♗f1-f8+ ♔e8-d7
- 42 e7-e8=♖+ ♖g6xe8
- 43 ♗f8xe8 **Black resigns**

Fireworks! Although the queen sacrifice was unsound, it was the best chance, for if the queen had retreated on move 36 White would have been left with a position full of weak pawns, which Bednarski would have had no difficulty in winning, assuming he reached 40 without mishap. It was vital to play moves 36-39 instantaneously, for only a few seconds' hesitation over 39 f5 might have allowed Bednarski to see the defence 39 ... ♗f6.

The next example is rather more routine, but I think a typical instance of taking advantage of an opponent's time-trouble. It comes from my game against the Indonesian **Suradiradja** played at Albena in Bulgaria, 1977. In the following position Suradiradja, playing White, had only one minute for his next 6 moves, while I had about 20 minutes.



Black has the advantage, but is by no means clearly winning, and so I thought it was worth trying to induce a time-trouble blunder. If the a- and b-pawns get swapped off Black will have a slight advantage because of his two bishops and White's vulnerable pawns on d4 and f2 (or h2 if the f-pawn moves). However I was hoping to force a decision with the a-pawn. The immediate 34 ... a2 simply loses it to 35 ♖a1 ♗a4 36 ♘c1; so I spent several minutes considering White's possible replies to 34 ... ♗b5, which looks vaguely threatening. After the obvious 35 bxa3 ♗xa3 36 ♗b2 (not 36 ♗c2 ♗a4) ♗xb2 37 ♗xc4 dxc4 38 ♗xb2 c3 and the pawn queens, but I couldn't see anything much against 36 ♗b2. I decided on a barrage of 34 ... ♗b5 35 bxa3 ♗xa3 and if 36 ♗b2 ♗c8 instantaneously, but if 36 ♗b2 I would stop and make sure that my intended win really worked. (There's no need to hurry when you have a won position.)

34 ... ♗d7-b5

35 ♗d3-e1

A surprise. I had to start thinking again. (Never continue a barrage if they play an unexpected move.) 35 ... a2 36 ♗c2 and 35 ... ♗b4 36 ♗d3 ♗xc3 37 bxc3 both looked good but not conclusive; so I decided to try another waiting move, hoping for a blunder.

35 ... ♗b5-a4

36 ♗e1-d3

This didn't seem to have got me anywhere, so I decided to repeat position, but first I decided on my follow-up, so as to make a two-move barrage.

36 ... ♗a4-b5

37 ♗d3-e1 ♗e7-b4

38 ♗c1-a1?

Taken by surprise, Suradiradja makes a blunder which loses a pawn and the game.

38 ... ♗b4xc3

39 b2xc3 ♗c4xc3

40 f2-f4 ♗b5-c4

41 ♔g1-f2 ♗c3-b3

At this point the game was adjourned, and after analysing it **White resigned** without continuing.

So the barrage technique saved me a lot of effort trying to grind out a win from a slightly better position.

One final word of warning – you are more likely to make a blunder yourself if you play two moves at once instead of one. So unless you have a lost position, *check your barrages particularly carefully before playing them.*

II How to avoid silly mistakes

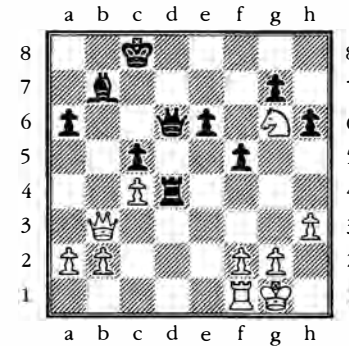


Are you prone to making silly mistakes? Many chess-players are. I know some who never lose without making a 'silly mistake'. If only they could cure this weakness they would all be World Champions.

So first we must distinguish between these sorts of 'silly mistake' and genuine Blunders. By a Blunder I mean a move which allows your opponent an immediate win of material, or to wreck your position with a reply you hadn't considered. Other 'silly mistakes' include playing a combination which is not quite sound, or allowing your opponent's attack to break through slightly more quickly than it should have done. How often have you heard players saying 'I was holding him easily, but then I blundered and let him win a pawn', when what they mean is that they could have held out for a few more moves with a different defence? These latter types of 'silly mistake' will disappear from your play as soon as you learn to be objective, and recognize them as part of the normal hazards of chess. There is an element of risk in playing combinations, and bad

positions are always liable to become worse. Then you will realize that they are not really 'silly mistakes' at all.

Here I am concerned with cutting down on real Blunders. Look what happened to me in the following position against **Jeff Horner**, played at Blackpool, 1977.



I decided to threaten mate in the hope of provoking a pawn weakness in front of White's king:

31 ... ♔d8-c6???

32 ♘g6-e7+ **Black resigns**

This was a traumatic experience, and also cost me £150, for this game was in the last round of the tournament, which Horner and I were leading with 4/4, and the position should be won for Black with careful play.

The solution

Immediately after this nasty accident, I adopted a method which over the next few years virtually eliminated one move Blunders from my play. *Write the move down first.* Of course you already knew about this, didn't you? You've seen other players doing it, but probably you think you can decide on your move and check it mentally before playing it. That's what I thought! But I still left my queen en prise.

After taking up this method I found that I nearly always played the move which I wrote down, changing about one in fifty on average, and not all these changes were because I was about to make a Blunder. For a very

small effort I saved myself quite a lot of points over the next few years, and so it was well worth it. Try it, and you won't regret it!

Now for the details of exactly how and when to put the writing-down-first method into operation. Don't write down the first move that comes into your head, and then start thinking about it. Think first, and when you have decided which move to play, write it down on your score-sheet. Then spend a few seconds checking that your opponent has no unexpected reply. Assuming that you don't spot anything you should be able to make your move within 10-30 seconds of writing it down. If you take longer than this, you may start running into time-trouble. Tigers generally cover their move up so that their opponent can't see it, and sometimes go so far as to disguise their hand movements when writing the move down, but this is not essential! The extra few seconds your opponent has to think will not make a great difference, but all the same there is no point in giving him something for nothing.

In the opening, when you know which move you are going to play, it may seem a bit pointless writing it down first, and this is up to you. Two more important exceptions, however, are the following:

(1) When you are in time-trouble, you shouldn't use your own time to record your opponent's moves, let alone your own. A convenient guideline might be to stop writing your own moves in advance when you have less than ten minutes left, and to stop writing your opponent's moves in your own time when you have less than five minutes left, although of course if you only have one or two moves to make then this doesn't apply.

(2) When you have a lost position, you will probably be less in the mood for being extra careful, and as pointed out in the chapter on Swindling, it can be a good idea to appear to be losing interest, in the hope that your opponent will get careless and play too quickly. So I prefer not to write my moves down first when I have a really bad position.

Remember that if you can reduce your Blunders by as little as 50 per cent you will save yourself quite a few points over the season, unless you're a bit of a Superman already. You won't eliminate them completely, but I guarantee that writing the move down first will significantly reduce them.

12 Team Play



I once played in a National Club match for Islington against Cheltenham. We won 5-1, the sole point for Cheltenham being scored by Nick Patterson. He remarked darkly 'In some teams I have played for this would have been the optimum result for me!' Not in a team of Tigers. A successful team must be better than the sum of the individuals who play in it, and this means that the players must play for the team, not just for themselves.

How can this be achieved? What makes a good team?

Well, that elusive quality 'team spirit' is obviously important. And effective organisation is also vital – a good non-playing captain can make a terrific difference. But let's begin at the beginning ...

Before the Match

First the team needs to be selected. Often this is done by the captain or a committee. But I believe that a more effective method is to base both

Team Play

selection and board order entirely on grading or results for the team. This has the great advantage that it is seen by everyone to be fair, so that any mutterings about cliques and favouritism are avoided, and team spirit is encouraged. The exact selection method is not too important, as long as it is objective and everyone knows what it is. An exception can be made if a player himself asks to move down a board, for example if he is convinced that a younger player one board lower has overtaken him in strength.

A Council of War can be useful a few days before an important match. This takes the form of a gang of Tigers getting together and planning how they are going to destroy the opposition. Information about the opponents is swapped, opening lines are looked at and refreshments imbibed. Excellent for team spirit!

Finally, the administrative details for away matches must be made clear to everyone – exactly when and where the team are meeting, what will be done if someone fails to turn up, whether refreshments are provided at the match or whether the team will eat together first, etc.

Winning the Match

Let's assume that the aim is just to win the match, regardless of margin. This does not apply to leagues with aggregate scoring, where the aim is simply for each player to do as well as possible. But it applies to cup matches and leagues with match scoring, which are more interesting and exciting.

Suppose that the teams are of roughly equal strength. Most games ought to result in draws, so one or two wins should be sufficient to win the match. This factor often seems to be overlooked. There is a tendency for every player to press for a win in an effort to win the match. Pressing for a win against a player of your own strength is pretty risky, to say the least. What often happens is that almost all the games are decisive, and the players who win feel aggrieved that their fine play has been wasted by their team-mates who failed to take draws when they had the opportunity!

A Tigers' team is more cautious. The Tigers play patiently, keeping the draw in hand, and watching to see what happens on the other boards. Usually something definite happens fairly soon on at least one board. Either a Tiger gains a winning position without needing to take any risks or another simply plays badly and is heading for a loss. Gradually the results

on most of the boards become clear, and the remaining Tigers then know what they need to do. If one of them needs to win from a level position, he attempts this towards the end of the game, perhaps in a time scramble or quick play-off. In this way *risks are taken only when needed*, on one or two boards, not on every board right from the start!

My current team is the Stockholm club Wasa. By following the 'Wait and See' approach explained above, we managed to win the Swedish league three seasons in a row, 1987-89. Admittedly we had the highest rated team, but the difference in strength was not great. The secret of our success was that we managed to reduce the variability of our results, so that we won almost every match, but usually by a narrow margin. With match scoring this is much better than oscillating between winning devastatingly and losing.

I will try to illustrate our approach by a game played against Brno (Czechoslovakia) in the European Cup 1989. This was a double round match. The first round finished 3-3, so a tense struggle was expected in the second round.

White: **Z. Hracek** (Brno) Black: **S. Webb** (Wasa)

Board 4

Sicilian – Maroczy Bind (by transposition)

1 **c2-c4** **c7-c5**
 2 ♖g1-f3 **g7-g6**

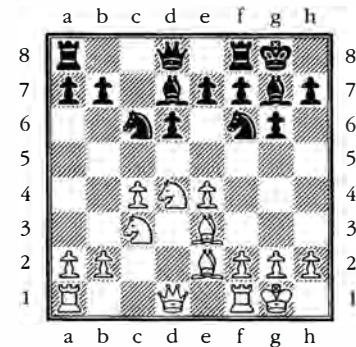
I normally play 2 ... ♗f6 here. Most of my opponents reply 3 ♘c3 followed by e3 and d4, which is fairly easy to equalise against. I suspected that Hracek, an improving young player, would instead play 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 and be happy in the sharp positions arising after 4 ... e6, my normal continuation. So I decided to go for a Maroczy Bind, against which White's best strategy is to manoeuvre patiently, exploiting his space advantage, an approach which I hoped that Hracek would not yet have learned to handle properly. My aim was to avoid a quick draw but without taking undue risks, and retain the possibility of playing for a win in the endgame if necessary.

3 **e2-e4** ♗f8-g7

- 4 d2-d4 c5xd4
- 5 ♟f3xd4 ♟b8-c6
- 6 ♟c1-e3 ♟g8-f6
- 7 ♟b1-c3 d7-d6

In the past I have played 7 ... ♟g4 8 ♟xg4 ♟xd4 9 ♟d1 ♟e6, which leads to an interesting position. But I decided that this would be too risky in this important match.

- 8 ♟f1e2 0-0
- 9 0-0 ♟c8-d7



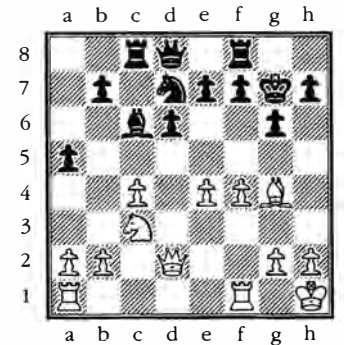
The standard position in this opening. White normally continues 10 ♟d2 or 10 ♟c1, and in either case Black can obtain a solid game by 10 ... ♟xd4 11 ♟xd4 ♟c6 12 f3 a5 followed by ... ♟d7 and ... ♟c5.

10 f2-f4?!

As I had half expected, Hracek plays a more aggressive move. I was unable to see anything particularly wrong with it, so continued with normal looking moves.

- 10 ... ♟a8-c8
- 11 ♟g1-h1 ♟c6xd4
- 12 ♟e3xd4 ♟d7-c6
- 13 ♟e2-f3 a7-a5

- 14 ♟d1-d2 ♟f6-d7
- 15 ♟d4xg7 ♟g8xg7
- 16 ♟f3-g4



Black has managed to exchange two pieces without creating any weaknesses, but with this move White starts to create attacking chances. Was he threatening 17 f5 ♟e5 18 fxg6!? Or 17 e5!? I was not going to allow these sort of tricks.

16 ... f7-f5

17 ♟g4-f3

If 17 exf5 then 17 ... gxf5 followed by ... ♟c5 looked sound enough.

17 ... f5xe4

18 ♟f3xe4

18 ♟xe4 ♟xe4 19 ♟xe4 ♟xc4 20 ♟xb7 ♟b6 seemed OK.

18 ... ♟c6xe4

19 ♟d2-d4+ e7-e5!

Forcing further exchanges.

20 ♟d4xe4 ♟d7-c5

21 ♟e4-e3 e5xf4

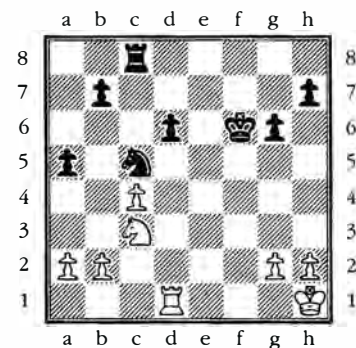
22 ♟f1xf4 ♟f8xf4

Team Play

23 ♖e3xf4 ♔d8-f6

24 ♗f4xf6+ ♔g7xf6

25 ♜a1-d1



Having achieved my aim of exchanging into a roughly equal ending, I was confident of not losing against a talented but relatively inexperienced opponent. How were the other games going? It looked like we were losing on board 6, but the other four games were too unclear to predict with any confidence. I decided to prolong my game, but without taking undue risks, so that I could try for a win later if necessary.

25 ... ♔f6-e5!?

A slightly provocative move, going for active play with the king, e.g. 26 ♜e1+ ♔d4 27 ♘b5+ ♔d3 with an unclear but probably drawn position.

26 ♔h1-g1 ♜c8-f8

27 ♘c3-b5 ♘c5-e4!?

Avoiding the passive 27 ... ♜d8, which would probably draw but leave almost no winning chances. The critical line after the text is 28 ♜e1 d5 29 ♘c3 ♔d4 and now 30 ♘d5 b5 or 30 cxd5 ♘xc3 31 bxc3+ ♔xc3 and in either case Black's active King holds the draw.

28 ♜d1-d5+ ♔e5-e6

29 ♘b5-d4+ ♔e6-d7

30 ♘d4-f3 b7-b6

White is now in time-trouble and plays a series of aimless moves up to the time control at move 40.

31 ♜d5-d1 a5-a4

32 ♜d1-d3 ♜f8-c8

33 ♜d3-d4 ♘e4-c5

34 ♔g1-f2 ♜c8-e8

35 ♘f3-d2 ♔d7-c6

36 b2-b4?!

Making the black a-pawn into a long term threat if the white a-pawn should fall.

36 ... ♘c5-e6

37 ♜d4-d5 ♘e6-f4

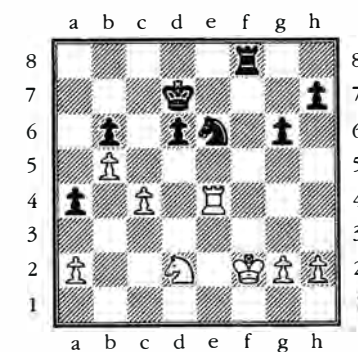
38 b4-b5+?!

Creating a hole on c5.

38 ... ♔c6-d7

39 ♜d5-d4 ♘f4-e6

40 ♜d4-e4 ♜e8-f8+



The first time control has now been reached, and Black has a distinct advantage because of the weak pawns on a2 and c4, and the more active placing of his pieces, especially the rook.

The smoke had now cleared on the other boards, to leave the score at 2-2, with my game and Caspar Carleson's game on board 5 still going.

Caspar held a winning advantage but still had some work to do in order to complete the win. I decided that my position was so safe that I should play on for a win (taking no risks at all) just in case Caspar had an accident. Hrcek was in the unenviable situation of needing to play for a win from a poor position with no active play.

41 ♖d2-f3 ♗e6-c5
 42 ♜e4-d4 ♜f8-e8
 43 ♗f3-d2 ♜e8-e5

Planning ... ♗e6 and ... d5 followed by winning the b-pawn.

44 g2-g4?

Creating another hole for the black knight on f4.

44 ... h7-h6
 45 h2-h3 g6-g5
 46 ♗d2-b1 ♗c5-e6
 47 ♜d4-d3 ♗e6-f4
 48 ♜d3-e3 ♜e5-c5
 49 ♗b1-a3 d6-d5
 50 c4xd5 ♜c5xd5

By this stage Caspar was looking certain to win, but so was I.

51 ♗a3-c4 ♜d5xb5
 52 ♜e3-a3 ♗d7-c6
 53 ♜a3xa4 ♗f4xh3+
 54 ♗f2-e3 ♗h3-f4

55 ♜a4-a8 ♗c6-d5
 56 ♗c4-d2 ♜b5-a5
 57 ♜a8-d8+ ♗d5-c6
 58 ♜d8-c8+ ♗c6-d7
 59 ♜c8-h8 ♜a5-a3+
 60 ♗d2-b3?

A blunder which hastens the end.

60 ... ♜a3xa2
 61 ♜h8xh6 ♜a2-a3

White resigns

This made the match result 4-2 to Wasa. Sorry if you found this game rather boring, but I hope that it illustrates the effectiveness of playing boringly in team matches!

How to win against much stronger teams

Well, I'm afraid this is impossible. Normally, that is ...

In an individual game you can occasionally beat a much stronger opponent using the anti-Heffalump approach. But the chances of more than half the team achieving this are virtually nil.

The Wait and See approach then? This is all right for the stronger team, but is likely to backfire for the weaker team, as in the process of waiting and seeing they normally get outmanoeuvred and lose.

The only approach to give some chance of success is to amass as many draws as possible and hope that the last one or two Tigers can somehow produce an upset. It's not all that difficult to draw with a stronger player, especially with White. Start with a sound main-line opening. (Remember that you can look up the theory just as well as he can. Unless he is a leading expert on the line, he will be trying to get you out of the book.) You emerge from the opening with a roughly equal position. Offer a draw! If he accepts, your team has got half a point nearer to winning the match. If he refuses then at least you have gained a psychological advantage. He has

Team Play

subconsciously committed himself to winning, and may lose his sense of objectivity and try to win the *position*, rather than relying on you to make mistakes.

The winning scenario is that some draws are agreed early, one Tiger gets outplayed and loses (you can't expect everything to go smoothly), and the last game is won heroically by the Tiger in a time scramble, thereby winning the match on tie-break!

Don't be surprised if this method doesn't work. After all you are attempting the impossible. But sooner or later it just *might* work!

The match captain's role

I have played under two excellent captains – David Anderton (England) and Bo Aurehl (Wasa). The main part of the captain's job has already been done when the players sit down at their boards. He has negotiated with the opposing captain, and confirmed the date, time and place of the match in writing. He has contacted the players to find out who is available, selected the team and reserves, and made sure that everyone knows where and when to turn up. He has organised the transport if it is an away match, kept in touch with the reserves to let them know if they are needed, and reminded any 'unreliables' at the last moment.

After all this it is a strong man who can sit down and concentrate fully on his own game. Hence the advantage of having a non-playing captain.

Here are a couple of situations for the captain to avoid. The first is when the Tigers meet at the station for an away match, only to find that one is missing. Anxiety turns to panic as the last seconds tick away and none of them can decide what to do. The answer is to have a 'Plan B' decided in advance, e.g. 'meet at the match', 'captain stays and waits', 'ring for reserve'. Then everyone knows what to expect.

The second situation is where the Tigers start the match on an empty stomach, expecting raw meat sandwiches to appear, and are rewarded only with a cup of tea. Stomachs can make all the difference between winning and losing, as brains tend to stop working when they run out of fuel. The answer is of course to find out from the opposing captain what refreshments will be provided, if any, and inform the players in advance.

During the match a good captain adopts a low profile. When asked he advises players whether to accept or offer draws. But he refrains from

continually tapping them on the shoulder to ask how it is going. The players do not normally need help to decide whether or not to take a draw, as they can see in a few seconds how the other games are going. If a player gets into acute time-trouble the captain should help by keeping a score of the game (or getting someone else to do so).

When a player gets short of time at the end of the match, the captain can give support in various ways. He can tell the player whether he needs to win or draw, depending on what happens in the other games. He should be there to witness what happens, and should call an arbiter if the final time-scramble gets really desperate. As captain, he should know the rules for situations which can happen in desperate time-scrambles (see next chapter on Quick Play) and be able to support the player in any dispute which arises.

Finally, the captain can do a lot for morale by suitable congratulations and commiserations after the match.

13 Quick Play



Quick Play (QP) tournaments are becoming increasingly popular, with time limits varying from five minutes to one hour for the whole game. How do Tigers adapt to QP?

Opening preparation

For Tigers opening preparation is even more important at QP than at normal speeds. But not boring main lines. At QP the Tiger aims to spring a surprise as early as possible. The opportunities to do this at Slow Play are much more limited, as most early surprises can be refuted or at least successfully parried after a number of minutes thought. But at QP those minutes are vital. Either your opponent gives you a big advantage on the

clock or he plays quickly and risks falling into a trap or choosing a weak line of play,

But what happens if he springs a surprise before you do? Well, you can't plan how to meet surprises. You just have to get your surprise in first. For example the Marshall Gambit is not much good at QP because it requires your opponent to play the main line of the Spanish.

I am not going to recommend any particular surprises, as it is up to you to find some gambits or other unusual lines which will surprise your opponents. Then of course you need to prepare them properly just as you would normal openings (see Chapter 4).

Here is an example of an early gambit which worked well at QP. It was played in the 1989 match between the Soviet Union and the Grandmaster Association at a speed limit of 25 minutes per player per game. Jonathan Speelman is cast in the role of Tiger.

White: **A. Sokolov** Black: **J. Speelman**

Centre Counter

1 e2-e4 d7-d5

Speelman immediately gets Sokolov into an unusual opening.

2 e4xd5 ♠g8-f6

3 e2-c4 e7-e6?!

Here comes the prepared gambit! Black gives up a central pawn for a lead in development. I have marked it as dubious, since it would hardly hold up against a strong grandmaster at normal speed, but at Quick Play it is a different story! Sokolov was taken completely by surprise. No doubt he had been expecting 3 ... c6, when he could have transposed into a normal line by 4 d4 cxd5 5 ♠c3.

4 d5xe6 ♠c8xe6

5 d2-d4 ♠f8-b4+

6 ♠c1-d2 ♗d8-e7

Setting the incidental trap of 7 ♗a4+?? ♠d7+ winning the queen.

7 ♠d2xb4 ♗e7xb4+

Quick Play

8 ♖b1-d2

An alternative was 8 ♖d2 ♗c6, after which White cannot win a piece by 9 d5 because of 9 ... 0-0-0 10 ♖xb4 ♗xb4 threatening ... ♗c2+.

8 ... ♗b8-c6!

This time it's a genuine piece sacrifice. After 9 d5 0-0-0 Black gets a strong attack whichever piece White takes, e.g. 10 dxc6 ♗e4 11 cxb7+ ♗b8 12 ♗gf3 ♗xd2 13 ♗xd2 ♖he8 14 ♗e2 ♗xc4 or 10 dxe6 ♗e4 11 ♗gf3 ♗e5. These lines would take a few minutes to work out!

9 ♗g1-f3 0-0-0

10 d4-d5 ♗e6-g4

If now 11 dxc6 ♗xf3 12 gxf3 ♖he8+ 13 ♗e2 ♗h5 gives White a headache, so Sokolov chooses a safer looking move.

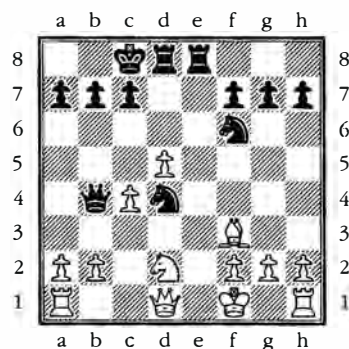
11 ♗f1-e2

I do not claim to have seen the clock position, but wouldn't mind betting that Speelman was well ahead on time by now, since his prepared analysis must have extended to about this point.

11 ... ♗g4xf3

12 ♗e2xf3 ♖h8-e8+

13 ♖e1-f1 ♗c6-d4



Black's opening has worked. At the cost of a pawn he has got all his pieces into play, prevented White from castling and gained a significant advantage on the clock.

Speelman completed the game in brilliant style. You or I might have been less brilliant but would still have been highly likely to win from this position against a player of our own strength. Our opponent might either play quickly and blunder a pawn or more, or become desperately short of time and collapse.

Here is the rest of the game:

14 ♖c1 ♗xf3 15 ♗xf3 ♖e4 16 b3 ♖de8 17 h3 ♗h5 18 g3 ♗xg3+!
19 fxg3 ♖e3 20 ♗g1 ♖d6 21 ♖h2 ♖xg3 22 ♖b2 ♖g6 23 ♖f2 ♖e3
24 ♗e2 ♖gf3+ 25 ♖e1 ♖g1+ 26 ♖d2 ♖xh2 27 ♖e1 ♖f2 White
resigns

Using your time effectively

Just as in Slow Play, you need to plan your time. Suppose you have 30 minutes for the whole game. You play the opening 10 moves quickly, and then you might aim to reach move 40 with 10 minutes left. This means averaging about 40 seconds per move during the middlegame. You use your opponent's time for thinking about strategy, and your own time mainly for analysing tactics. So if there are few tactics in the position you will be able to get ahead of schedule by playing moves which look natural. You are unlikely to play different moves if you think for 2 minutes instead of 20 seconds, so trust your judgement and play quickly.

An important point arises when you get down to 10 minutes left. Now you have time to play 60 moves at 10 seconds per move. So if you have a reasonable position you should keep calm and play a move every few seconds. Your opponent may be one of many who get down to 2 minutes before speeding up significantly, and this will give you a big advantage in the ending.

Winning the game

As you will have gathered by now, the Tiger's winning scenario at QP starts by gaining a lead on the clock through choice of an unusual opening.

Quick Play

The next stage is to match your opponent's speed of play during the middle game. Then if you haven't already won, your opponent should at least be short of time, and you can put him under pressure using the techniques described under 'Clock Control'. So whether your position on the board is good, bad or indifferent, you always stand a chance of winning on time!

Here are two other tips:

Keep the initiative. This is especially important at QP, as active play is easier than defence when playing fast. So don't be afraid to give up a pawn or the exchange for the initiative.

Don't try to be too brilliant. Keeping the initiative is not the same as going all out for an attack on the king. You may not find that winning combination you are looking for, and meanwhile your clock is ticking. It is normally safer and easier to play actively over the whole board. After all, how often is there a brilliancy prize at QP?

Know the rules

Crazy things happen in time scrambles at the end of QP games. For example, pieces get knocked over, illegal moves are made, positions are repeated many times, both flags fall, players try to win on time in obviously drawn positions, spectators interfere, etc.

Tigers take the trouble to find out which rules apply in these sorts of situation – both the laws of chess and any special QP rules which apply in the particular competition. So they know when to call an arbiter, when to stop the clock, when to claim a draw or win, and when to just carry on regardless. Think how many points you could save by knowing exactly what to do in these situations!

Staying lively

Playing QP all day is tiring, so you must conserve your energy. You need a good sleep the night before, and you need to take it easy between the rounds. Watch other games at your peril! (Do you want to be entertained or do you want to win the tournament?) Much better to stretch your legs and get some fresh air.

You also need to eat. A big meal produces sluggishness, but starvation drains the energy from your brain. So try a number of light snacks. Chocolate is also good for topping up the energy reserves.

Practice

As well as preparing your openings you need to practice playing quickly. However well the Tiger strategy works, you are bound to end up desperately short of time in some of your games, so practice playing 5 minute, 3 minute and even 2 minute chess.

14 Correspondence Chess



Correspondence Chess (CC) means playing by e-mail, post, via an internet site, or some other means of communication.

So what are the differences between CC and over-the-board (OTB) play? One of the main differences is that you have much more time to think, which means that the standard of play is much higher, and a much higher proportion of “best” moves are played. Another important difference is that you have access to help in the form of computer engines, databases and books. With this help you can study opening variations in great detail, and work out tactics with all your analysis neatly recorded. But you still need the strategical skill to choose between different lines of play.

Perhaps CC is the advanced chess of the future?

Given that the conditions are so different from OTB play, many of the recommendations in this book involving subjectivity are of less relevance in CC. Basically you should strive to play the best moves, and only in borderline cases take into account your preferences for particular types of position.

Another difference is the existence in CC of a small number of Cheetahs. These beasts suffer from technical problems with their computers and/or a poor postal service, particularly when they have a difficult move to make. Tigers should not be confused with Cheetahs. Tigers play hard according to the rules, and get their satisfaction from winning legally.

Taking into account these fundamental differences, how do Tigers maximise their results at CC?

Clerical method

First of all a foolproof method of avoiding those infuriating ‘clerical errors’ is needed. These come in three forms:

- sending the wrong move
- misreading your opponent’s move
- setting up the wrong position

To guard against the first two of these you need to make a habit of double checking that the following all agree with each other:

- the move played on the board
- the move sent or received
- the move written on your score of the game

A typical error is to play on the board the move you were expecting your opponent to make, rather than a similar move which he actually played. For example you were expecting 5455 (e4-e5) but he actually

Correspondence Chess

played 5445 (e4xd5). One way of avoiding this type of error is to write your moves (and repeat your opponent's moves) both in numerical CC notation and in algebraic notation. But this has the disadvantage of making it more difficult for your opponent to make a clerical error, so Tigers prefer to write their moves only in numeric notation and double check carefully!

Avoiding the third type of error, setting up the wrong position, is easy if you store your games on a database, as the right position will come up automatically if you have recorded the right moves. If you are playing without a database, proceed as follows:

- analyse the position and decide on your move
- play the game through from the start or from the last point where you wrote down the position
- check that the position looks the same as the one you analysed (but without moving any pieces)
- write down your move immediately.

When you write down the position to save playing the game through from the beginning each time, check and double check that you have done it correctly.

All this advice about clerical method may seem rather pedantic and boring, but just think how annoyed you will be when you waste hours and hours of effort with one little slip on a day when you are in a hurry to do something else. So devise a method and follow it routinely, every time!

Choice of opening

Even a slight disadvantage in the opening can lead to years of suffering (if the post is slow). There is a temptation to follow a book line routinely and work out what to do when you get to the end of it. I did this when I first started playing CC, thinking that I was saving valuable time for the middle game. But I found in practice that I often got caught out in the opening, either because I had not consulted the latest theoretical sources or because the assessment at the end of the line was wrong.

You need to be particularly wary of moves which have only been played in one game, as the players may well have missed the best moves, even if

they are grandmasters, and the theoreticians may have simply reproduced the moves without studying them critically. Here is an example:

White: **S. Brilla-Banfalvi** Black: **S.Webb**

BdF Jubilee tournament 1986-88

Nimzo-Indian, Hübner Variation

1	d2-d4	♘g8-f6
2	c2-c4	e7-e6
3	♗b1-c3	♙f8-b4
4	e2-e3	c7-c5
5	♙f1-d3	♗b8-c6
6	♗g1-f3	♙b4xc3+
7	b2xc3	d7-d6
8	0-0	e6-e5
9	♗f3-g5	0-0
10	f2-f4	

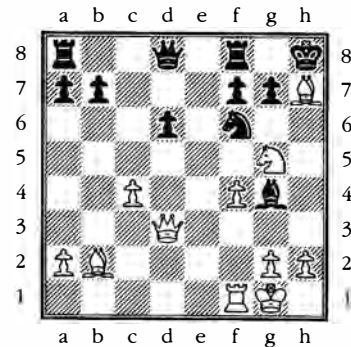
According to theory Black has two main lines now, 10 ... exd4 11 cxd4 h6 12 ♗f3 cxd4 13 exd4 d5 with approximate equality, or the line played in the game. I saw an innovation at move 17 given in *Informator* as leading to Black's advantage, and I decided to play it without studying it too closely or looking at the alternative line.

10	...	c5xd4
11	c3xd4	e5xd4
12	e3xd4	♗c6xd4
13	♙c1-b2	♗d4-f5
14	♚d1-c2	♗f5-e3
15	♙d3xh7+	♙g8-h8

16 ♔c2-d3 ♘e3xf1

17 ♖a1xf1 ♙c8-g4

This was the new move, played by Hjartarson against Hansen and given an exclamation mark by Hansen.



White's alternatives were given as:

(a) 18 ♖h1 ♕e7 (threat ... ♕e2) 19 ♖c3 ♖ae8 20 ♙e4 ♗h5 21 ♙d3 f6 with advantage to Black (as played in Hansen-Hjartarson)

(b) 18 ♙g8 ♖b6+ 19 ♙d4 ♙f5 20 ♖c3 ♖c7 21 ♙xf6 ♖xg8 22 ♖f3 gxf6 23 ♖xf6+ ♗g7 24 ♖xf5 ♖c5+ 25 ♖xc5 dxc5 also with advantage to Black.

Brilla-Banfalvi played:

18 h2-h3!

A natural looking move. I now had plenty of time to analyse the position but try as I might I could not find a reasonable reply. The line 18 ... ♙h5 19 g4 ♙g6 20 ♙xg6 f6 21 ♖xg6 ♖e8 22 ♖d3 looked excellent for White. So I tried:

18 ... ♕d8-b6+

19 ♖f1-f2 d6-d5

20 c4-c5!

And White won quickly.

I should have analysed the position after 17 ... ♙g4 before committing myself at move 10.

So it is worth taking time in the opening to look up as much theory as you can get access to, consider transpositional possibilities and study the resulting positions. This is hard work, but vital if you are to gain an opening advantage with White or equalise with Black.

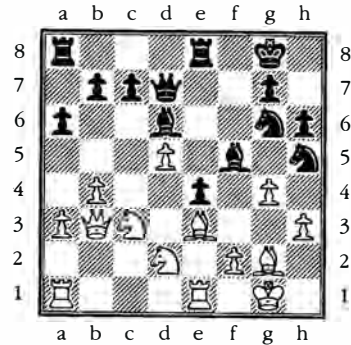
You can always avoid the hard work by going 'out of the books' at an early stage, but this does not pay at CC. You will have to play a dubious move, and your opponent has plenty of time to work out how to exploit it. No, the best policy is to play the best moves, and this means playing reputable main lines and carefully studying the theory.

Analysis

Having got out of the opening you are now on your own and will need to analyse accurately to be successful. I have a tendency when analysing a position for a long time (say an hour or more) to get obsessed with a particular line which seems best for both sides, and to miss alternatives on the first move or two. A good way to counter this is to have another look at the position the next day. Surprisingly often I see a new possibility *within a few seconds* which I had completely missed on the first day.

Another tendency is to go into a forcing line thinking 'This looks pretty good. I have several promising possibilities in this line. I'll play the first move and work out which variation to choose while I am waiting for his reply.' This is lazy thinking. If your opponent's moves are forced, you should decide on the whole line before playing the first move of it. Only if your opponent has a number of alternatives have you an excuse to give up analysing and trust to judgement.

I had a situation like this in the Tenth CC Olympiad (started 1987) against the East German player **Volker-Michael Anton**.



In this position I had already committed myself to sacrificing a piece for a pawn or two and a weakened white king, but had not decided exactly how because White had several alternatives at his last move (22 ♖f3-d2).

Now the main line seemed to be 22 ... ♗xg4 23 hxg4 ♖xg4 24 ♖d1 ♖h4 25 ♘dxe4 ♖h2+ 26 ♔f1 with promising continuations like 26 ... ♘h4 or 26 ... ♗f8. I was tempted to play this line and decide what to do at move 26 in the meantime. But since White's moves are more or less forced I decided to analyse the position at move 26 more closely before committing myself.

The more I analysed, the easier it seemed for White's king to slip out leaving me a piece down, and I reluctantly came to the conclusion that my judgement had been wrong – none of the alternatives at move 26 was any good. By now several days had gone by. I returned to the diagrammed position and looked at 22 ... ♘h4, 22 .. ♘gf4 and 22 ... ♘hf4, but these didn't look much good either.

I had a further look at the 'main line', and suddenly spotted the alternative 24 ... ♖f5, leaving h4 clear for the knight. If 25 ♘dxe4 or ♘cxe4 then 25 ... ♘h4 with a bind or if 25 ♗xe4 ♖h3 26 ♗g2 (or 26 ♖f3 ♗h2+ with a draw) ♖h2+ 27 ♔f1 ♘h4 28 ♖xh5 (or 28 ♖g4? ♘g3+!) ♖xg2+ 29 ♔e2 ♗g3! with an unclear position, but clearly better than anything else so far. Why hadn't I seen 24 ... ♖f5 before? I suppose my thought processes had got into a rut. Anyway I checked this line the next day and it still seemed OK, so I played it. The game proceeded:

22 ... ♗f5xg4
23 h3xg4 ♖d7xg4

24 ♖b3-d1 ♖g4-f5
25 ♘d2xe4 ♘g6-h4
26 f2-f3 ♗e8-f8
27 ♗a1-a2

At this point White offered a draw, which vindicated my choice of line. The position is roughly evenly balanced. White's pieces are restricted, but on the other hand Black has no rapid breakthrough in sight. I decided to play on, but that is another story.

You may say that I could have played the first move and still found 24 ... ♖f5 in the meantime. Well, I could have, but I wouldn't have. In practice I would have got past move 24 before giving serious thought to move 26.

On many occasions you will find that your analysis of the end of a forced line confirms your inclination to play it, and enables you to make a decision several moves in advance. But now and again you will find that the line is not as good as you thought, and that you have a better move in the initial position.

'Illogical' analysis

How do you go about analysis? Do you follow the textbook method of identifying the candidate moves, analysing each one in turn, working through the sub-variations and arriving logically at the best move?

My brain doesn't work like that. When analysing candidate move two I often come upon an idea which would have been relevant after candidate move one. So I prefer to go backwards and forwards between a number of lines, identifying ideas and eliminating inferior variations. Sometimes it emerges that one line is clearly better than the rest. Other times two alternatives seem about equal, and more detailed analysis is needed. Even then I tend to alternate between the two lines before convincing myself that one is superior.

This 'illogical' method of analysis seems to fit the way my brain works. We think not only convergently (i.e. starting with information and deducing conclusions) but also divergently (i.e. having ideas around a theme). The logical, convergent method is suitable for computers. But we Tigers need a combination of convergent and divergent thinking to get the best out of our brains.

So don't worry if your thought processes seem disorganised. Your brain probably works better like that!

Conditional moves

Keith Richardson came close to winning the World CC Championship a few years ago. He told me 'I never offer conditional moves – I don't see any advantage in doing so.' Generally speaking I agree, but there are one or two exceptions ...

But first I should explain to those who have not played CC that one can offer conditional moves by writing, for example:

1 e2-e4

If 1 ... e7-e5 2 ♖g1-f3

Here White plays 2 ♖g1-f3 on the condition that Black replies 1 ... e7-e5. Conditional moves are normally used to speed up the game when the opponent's reply is forced, for example when exchanging pieces.

The argument for *not* making conditional moves is that:

- you gain more time to think about other games;
- players who are doing badly in a tournament tend to lose interest as time goes by, and put up less resistance, so it is advantageous to slow down the game.

But there are two situations where conditional moves *can* be helpful. Firstly, if your opponent is short of time a conditional move can put him under pressure, as long as it does not allow him to get past the time control. For example, with the time control at move 30, you play '28 ... d5xe4, if 29 d3xe4 then 29 ... ♗d8'. This forces him to think about move 30 immediately, which might be inconvenient for him. Note, however, that if you play move 29 and offer a conditional move 30 this allows him to use time from the next time period, since by accepting your conditional move he gets past the time control.

Secondly, if the post is *very* slow, conditional moves can be used to speed up the game and finish it before the end of the tournament, thereby avoiding adjudication (unless you think that adjudication will go in your

favour, that is). For example, the post to Russia can take three weeks or so in each direction, which means that a game can take five years or more to complete.

How to use your time

As pointed out earlier, it pays to take your time over:

- looking up and evaluating opening theory
- analysing forcing lines to the end before going into them.

You can *save* time by:

- playing the easiest moves first (if you have moves to make in several games)
- preparing your next move in advance when you are pretty sure what your opponent's reply will be
- carrying a pocket set with you for use in trains, buses, lunchbreaks, etc.

Don't use up all your time, but keep a few days in hand for those occasions when you are just too busy to concentrate on your games.

Some players, particularly those who are new to CC, play very quickly. Using e-mail they might finish some games in just a few weeks, while other players take 2 years or longer. Tigers are not in a hurry. They know that many players try very hard at the start of a tournament, but lose interest when they have lost a few games and have no chance of getting a top place. So by playing fairly slowly, and taking holidays as allowed according to the rules, the Tiger postpones the critical phase of the game until some of his opponents have already lost interest. This gives him the occasional easy win.

How many games?

You have to answer this one, not me! It all depends how much time you have, how quickly you play, the speed of the post, and so on. The only way

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to find out is to try it. Take on more games until you find that you *occasionally* get into time-trouble. Then stop taking on new games until you can play comfortably within the time limit. Happy hunting, CC Tigers, and don't bite the postman!

15 Are you ready...?



Now for a very important factor which is ignored by many players. When you sit down for a game of chess, are you really ready for it? Your physical and mental condition can make a big difference to your results – in fact it's *bound* to make a big difference to your results. Nobody plays at their best after four hours' sleep followed by a hard day at work. You will probably play mostly the same moves whether you are tired or not, but one slip can make all the difference between winning and losing.

Are You Ready...?

You know this perfectly well. The question is – what are you going to do about it? You may have good reasons for staying up late. You may feel that chess is not important enough to disrupt the rest of your life. All right – no need to make excuses. I'm just reminding you of a factor which significantly affects your results, and it's up to you what you do about it.

One thing that *is* stupid, however, is to tire yourself out preparing for the game. Don't spend two hours just before a game preparing an opening variation. It's much better to rest or go out for a walk for two hours, so that you come fresh and relaxed to the game, and then avoid the theoretical opening you haven't prepared. If you play in a tournament, don't waste energy playing friendly games between the rounds – instead try to have a break from chess.

Victor Korchnoi trained for his Candidate Matches by going to Health Farms and by regular cross-country running. This is a bit beyond the average player, or even the average grandmaster. Two simple ways in which you can make sure you are in a reasonable state for playing chess, however, are the following:

- (1) Get a good night's sleep the night before.
- (2) Go for a ten-minute walk immediately before the game. This will clear your brain, so that you start the game in the right frame of mind.

That's all, Tigers! Good luck (though you shouldn't need it)!