

Fundamental Chess: Logical Decision Making

GM Ramesh RB



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Symbols

!	Good move
!!	Excellent move
?	Bad move
??	Blunder
!?	Deserves attention
?!	Dubious
#	Checkmate
□	Forced; the only move
∞	Unclear position
=	Equal position
±	Slight advantage for White
∓	Slight advantage for Black
±	Distinct advantage for White
∓	Distinct advantage for Black
+−	White is winning
−+	Black is winning
↑	with the initiative
→	with the attack
∞	insufficient compensation for the material
∞	sufficient compensation for the material
↔	with counterplay
Δ	with the idea...
▷	better is...
N	Novelty
⊕	Time pressure

Preface

Having been a chess player for over twenty years and a coach for around ten, I have had an interesting journey with chess. I have experienced my fair share of ups and downs — hopes raised high one moment, only to fall flat the next. As a young player without the assistance of a coach, I had to rely on books (the computer era hadn't yet begun), tournament play, and analyzing with friends to learn the nuances of the game. I have made many mistakes in my chess career but I did few things right, too. I could not have asked for more from this wonderful game.

In this book, I will try to share the lessons I've learned from my own chess career, from my chess friends who have represented India at top-level competitions around the world, from the books I have read and from working with players of different levels as a chess trainer.

I hope this book will provide a practical approach to chess understanding and provide a slightly different perspective on chess improvement.

*RB Ramesh
Chennai
October 2015*

Introduction

I started playing chess at the age of twelve, inspired by Viswanathan Anand becoming a grandmaster in 1988. My priority at the time was to win every game I played. I lived for the thrill of beating my opponents, who were mostly friends and neighbors. Once I started playing in tournaments, I realized that mere passion and silly tricks alone would not be enough to win and I undoubtedly needed to upgrade my skills and understanding of the game. I was a very aggressive player by nature and I enjoyed surprising opponents with my knowledge of opening theory. This approach enabled me to score quick wins against opponents who were not tactically sharp or equipped with a deep understanding of opening theory. After a few years, I had achieved a decent rating and soon realized that my opponents were not falling for opening tricks and unsound attacks as frequently as they did in the past. Thus began the journey of slogging long hours in front of the chessboard.

The lack of proper coaching facilities and information accessible at the time forced players of my generation to learn chess by drawing upon their own past games and from reading the few good books that were available in India back then. There was often a limited supply of competitions, coaches, chess literature, and prize money, among other things, that players today may take for granted. As a result of these limitations, my approach to learning consisted of asking relevant questions about various aspects of my games, and thinking deeply about the problems I faced. Eventually, I came up with answers I felt comfortable with and later verified with other experienced players. Finally, I attempted those ideas in my tournament games and the whole process began again. This trial and error method, which I practiced in my formative years in India, meant that progress in chess was slow and time-consuming but the lessons learned were the bedrock of my chess understanding.

Later on, I gained access to many good books, especially those written by Mark Dvoretsky. This discovery proved to be a turning point in my career. For

the first time, I learned how a chess professional needs to think about different aspects of the game, but more importantly, how to be mentally tough to handle the many ups and downs in one's chess career, which are bound to come, no matter what.

I became an International Master within a few years of starting to play the game, but it took me eight long years to graduate to the next level of becoming a Grandmaster. There were many frustrating and rewarding moments that shaped me as a chess player in those eight years. Progress in chess involves continuous self-introspection, learning new skills and unlearning bad qualities in our thinking process. In this book, I will frequently use terms like “stronger player” and “younger player” to denote a chess player's level. The term “younger player” is not meant to be derogatory, but will be used to refer to someone struggling to improve to the next level in the upcoming player category (from roughly 1500 to 2400 ELO rating). By the term “stronger player”, I refer to players with a 2550+ ELO rating. All others will fall under the “intermediate level”. In addition, I will use the male gender in this book to describe a chess player, which is purely a matter of convenience.

This book is aimed at players who wish to improve their overall understanding of the game. We will attempt to learn how to look at and evaluate a position, which patterns to watch out for, which factors we ought to consider before finalizing our move, and much more. For this, we need to have some basic knowledge of key chess principles, which I mention repeatedly and highlight in bold print. There are many contradictory principles at play in various positions and I have tried to explain how to choose the appropriate principle using logical reasoning.

This does not in any way negate the importance of calculation and concrete thinking in chess. We will try to stick to positions where decisions can be made with the help of logical thinking. I have tried to put my thoughts into words without hiding much from the reader, on the topics covered in this book.

I thank Ankit Gupta of Metropolitan Chess for presenting me with this opportunity to write a book on the topic of my choice. My special thanks to the editors Gabriella Kay, Alex King, and Kostya Kavutskiy, who have done an excellent job of making sense of what I am trying to say, and giving the shape to this book.

I thank all those who have been present throughout my chess career — chess friends, fellow chess players, tournament organizers, arbiters, coaches, and authors of chess books I have read. I would especially like to thank Mr. Dakshinamoorthy, who was my patron from my youth, and all others from whom I learned most of what I have written in this book.

Special thanks to my wife Aarthie, my daughter Varsha and son Karthik, my parents and in-laws, who have all been very patient with me while I was writing this book. Thanks for your understanding and support.

To the readers, let us begin our journey towards understanding chess in a logical way!

PART ONE:

Logical Decision Making

With the advent of computers, especially the engines, chess is becoming more and more concrete as players rely heavily on deep analysis of complex variations to make decisions. Making decisions based on what I call “logical reasoning” has taken a back seat especially with young players who want to calculate by brute analysis.

As a coach, I sense an alarming change in the approach to the game among younger players. They make decisions after intense effort by calculating hundreds of variations in almost every game. Young players are able to solve many important challenges with this approach, but they also must incorporate logic and common sense, backed up by sound knowledge of important principles. **A good chess player makes use of concrete variations and logical reasoning to make decisions at the board.** The structure of the position on the board should dictate which kinds of moves the player should look for. A sharp position should dictate the player to make active moves, whereas in a slower position, the player must try to maneuver his pieces, regardless of whether he generally prefers to play “actively” or “strategically”.

To play good positional chess, it is essential to have a working knowledge of the main chess principles at your disposal to use in different circumstances. We should know the principles for playing with a good pawn structure, capitalizing on weak squares and pawns, exploiting our opponent’s bad bishop, playing with the bishop pair, handling minor pieces in the endgame, winning with a passed pawn, conducting attack and defense, and countless others.

Quite often it happens that after playing a tough game in a tournament, we show the game to a stronger player and he immediately comes up with better suggestions we never even suspected. How does he do this? What does he see that we don’t? How does he calculate so quickly and eliminate irrelevant moves?

We must learn to identify the important moves and take certain factors into consideration when assessing a position. Not only does a stronger player see more, he also seems to find the best moves with less time and effort. He goes to the heart of the position and comes up with an appropriate solution. The rules are the same for both sides but the stronger player evaluates and decides differently!

These were some of the many ideas that used to go round and round in my head when I was an upcoming player. In this book, I will share how I handled these questions and the conclusions I came to.

Strangely enough, the answers to the questions are not as important as asking the questions, thinking them over, drawing your own conclusions, learning from others' experiences and trying to apply these principles to our games. This might sound illogical considering the fact that most, if not all, key principles in chess have more or less already been found, or at least, that is what we all believe to be the case.

If the guiding principles are already known, why do I need to rethink them? Can't I just apply them to my games and reap the benefits?

Chess principles tell us what needs to be done on the board in certain situations. They help us decide what is most important in a given position. For these principles to become an automatic part of the thinking process, a player can't merely know these principles at the theoretical level; he must understand the basis of these principles. This understanding comes from the personal experience of applying these principles in games and in training. Following the right principle at the right time, and also knowing when to break the rules at the appropriate moment is the hallmark of an experienced professional. Principles guide us by giving direction but we should realize that there will be exceptions to the rule, and we must approach each position with fresh eyes to find our own path in the checkered jungle.

What does it take to be a good chess player?

There are many aspects to this question and we can never give one correct answer that fits all cases. A good player should obviously have the basic talent and aptitude for the game, sound knowledge of the various principles, and the skill to apply them over the board. He has seen the most important games and has the capacity to learn from his mistakes. His intuition comes from experience and knowledge, and he puts the required time and effort into studying the game. A good chess player has the humility to accept his shortcomings yet find the determination to overcome them. He is motivated to get better, is hungry for success, and constantly aims higher. By no means is the above list complete. There are many other attributes required to become a strong chess player, but we get a fair idea of just a few of the requirements. Studying chess is not the difficult part, it is rather having the right mindset and attitude to learn.

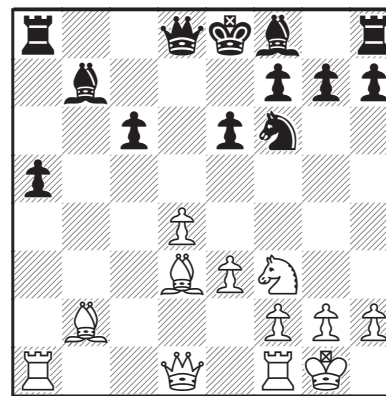
The Twin Tracks of Calculation and Logic

Playing chess, in many ways, is like driving a train on the two tracks of calculation and logic. Even though chess is becoming more concrete, especially after the arrival of analysis engines, I believe there is still a lot of scope to find the best moves in a position with the help of sound logic and understanding. Ideally, calculation should justify the logical thinking of the player.

In this book, we will focus on trying to understand the game and the various concepts behind it by using logic and common sense. Every sphere of chess has its own set of important principles, which tell us how to handle a certain aspect in the position. For example: bishops are good in open positions, rooks are good on open files, etc. These are simple principles, self-explanatory, understood without difficulty and quite easy to apply in practice.

But there are more complex principles that are difficult to apply in our games. To go from knowing these principles to applying them in our games, we need to make them a part of our thinking process and maintain a firm belief in them. For example, we say, "Sometimes it's a good idea to sacrifice a pawn in order to make our pieces more active." Knowing this principle and understanding the logic behind it is easy, but if we don't have a firm conviction in the principle, it is really difficult to give up a pawn "just" to activate a piece.

Carlsen – Aronian
Bilbao Grand Slam Final 2008



15.d5!!N

I remember checking this position with an engine and 15.d5 was its 31st choice! Does this make d5 good or bad? I believe such questions should not stand in the way of the pure joy of seeing moves like 15.d5 played in an actual game. These days every human

decision on the board is weighed in the prism of an engine's perception. In my opinion a move does not have to be completely correct to be played. If it feels comfortable in the mind of the player playing it, and if it has been analyzed reasonably well and without flaws, that should be enough reason to play it.

Carlsen came up with the surreal move 15.d5!! to open up the dark-squared bishop and to create attacking chances against the Black king, temporarily stuck in the center of the board. It is not unusual for strong players to give up a pawn for the initiative. But would the mere knowledge of this principle convince us to play this move in an actual game? I think not.

15...Nxd5

Apart from the chess reasons in favor of 15.d5, the psychological benefits should also not be ignored. Black was probably a bit under shock

upon seeing such an audacious pawn sacrifice. He also needs to calculate the various possible recaptures and evaluate the resulting positions correctly, which will take up time on the clock.

15...cxd5? is clearly the worst choice: 16.Bb5+ Nd7 17.Ne5 Bc8 18.Qh5 g6 19.Qf3+-

15...exd5 would be answered by 16.Nd4 with ideas of Qa4 and Nf5, with good compensation for White.

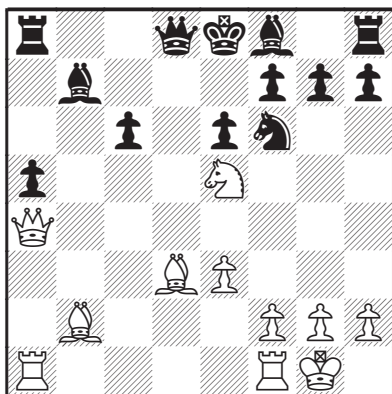
White also seizes the initiative after 15...Qxd5 16.Ne5 Bb4 (Or 16...Bd6 17.e4 Qc5 18.Rc1) 17.Qa4 O-O 18.Rfd1

16.Ne5 Nf6

Preventing White's queen from reaching g4 or h5, but also spending a valuable tempo.

After 16...Be7 17.Qh5 g6 18.Qh6 Bf6 19.e4 Nb6 20.Rab1 Black has a difficult defense.

17.Qa4



White brings a new piece into the game with a threat on every move.

17...Bb4

Black cannot wait anymore by playing defensively and tries to complete his development as soon as possible.

18.Nxc6 Bxc6 19.Qxc6+ Ke7 20.Rfd1

White has regained one pawn and denied Black the right to castle. He obviously has enough compensation for the pawn but Black only needs to develop his queen, bring his rook on h8 into the game and take his king to safety — then White's advantage will only be symbolic.

20...Rc8 21.Qf3 Qb6

With idea of Rhd8, with a solid defense, so White must act fast.

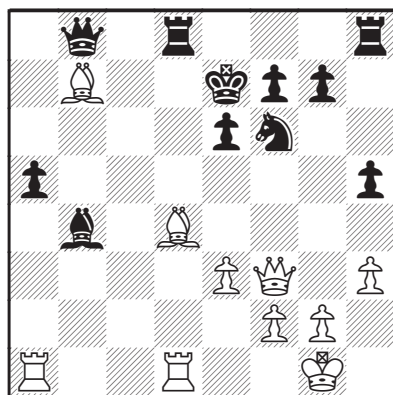
22.Bd4 Qb8 23.Ba6 Rcd8

Now the king's rook is denied the d8-square. Hence bringing in the rook will be one additional concern for Black, along with his king safety.

24.Bb7!?

Preparing Bb6.

24...h5 25.h3



The immediate 25.Rab1 was probably stronger with the idea of sacrificing the exchange on b4, followed by Bc5+. 25...Ng4 (25...e5 26.Rxb4! exd4 27.Rbxd4 Rxd4 28.exd4±) 26.h3! White's king has nothing to fear: 26...Qh2+ 27.Kf1 Ne5 28.Qe4 Ng6 29.Bxg7±

25...h4?!?

25...e5! could have neutralized White's initiative, with the following computer line: 26.Bb6 Rd6! 27.Bxa5 Rxd1+ 28.Qxd1 Qxb7 29.Rb1 Nd5 30.e4 Ra8! 31.Qxd5 Qxd5 32.Bxb4+ Qd6 33.Bxd6+ Kxd6= With the help of an engine this line is not that difficult to find, but for a human under pressure it is asking a bit too much.

26.Rab1 e5 27.Rxb4!

Removing the defender of the dark squares.

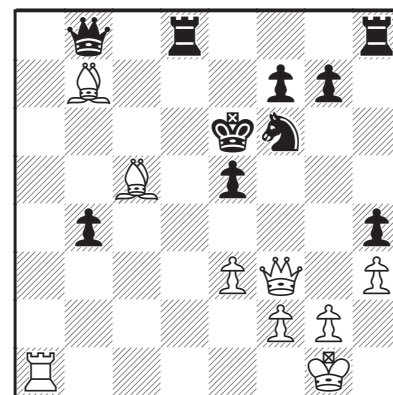
27...axb4?

27... exd4 was necessary, where Black is much worse.

28.Bc5+ Ke6

28...Ke8 leads to forced mate: 29.Bc6+ Rd7 (29...Nd7 30.Qf5 Qc7 31.Qg5+- Threatening mate on e7.) 30.Rxd7! Nxd7 31.Qf5 Qc7 32.Qg5 f6 33.Qxg7+-

29.Ra1!+-



With idea Ra6. When we are attacking, we need to take care not to exchange too many pieces and be left with nothing to attack the opponent.

29...Rd6

Giving back some of the material, a common defensive strategy, though it is already too late.

After 29...Rd2 White wins with 30.Ra6+ (Or simply 30.Ra8+-) 30...Kd7 31.Bxb4!+-

30.Bxd6 Kxd6

30...Qxd6 31.Ra6+-

31.Qc6+ Ke7 32.Ra8

White wins the rook and with it the game. All that remains is the matter of Black's b-pawn.

32...Qd6 33.Qxd6+ Kxd6

34.Rxh8 b3 35.Ba6 Nd7 36.Rxh4

36...Nc5 1-0

36...Nc5 37.Bc4+-

Chapter 1

Assessment of the Position

When we observe closely, the following are the most important steps in our thought process when considering a position:

- Assessment of the position;
- Identifying the ideas and drawbacks of the opponent's move;
- Making a list of possible moves or ideas available to us;
- Analyzing our options as efficiently and correctly as possible;
- Finishing the analysis with an appropriate evaluation;
- Deciding on a move based upon the evaluation; and
- Managing the time on the clock while doing all of the above.

Each step above has its own set of principles and methods. A broad knowledge of various chess concepts is thus a necessary requirement for a player to understand and assess the position before making the right decision. At the beginning levels, a player may still win if he breaks these principles unknowingly, but an intermediate player must learn increasingly complex principles as he progresses in strength. Later on as an expert, he will learn to break the rules to gain advantages based on the unique characteristics of the position.

Just like a doctor needs to closely monitor the symptoms of a patient's body to successfully diagnose the disease, a chess player has to learn to study the various important features of the position to come to a correct assessment. A correct diagnosis goes a long way in identifying a cure for the disease. Similarly, a correct assessment of the position lets us narrow down the path we need to take to identify the best possible move(s) in a given situation. The assessment of the position is generally done prior to identifying moves or analyzing specific variations, much like the doctor must assess his patient before discussing

specific treatment plans. The evaluation of the position comes at the end of the analysis process, as does the proper diagnosis and cure.

One of the key attributes necessary to be a good chess player is to know how to assess which elements in the position require more attention. This will narrow down our area of focus to just the essential elements in that position. Not only will this method guide our thinking process, it will save time on the clock.

The six most important elements when assessing a position are: **king safety, activity of pieces, material, pawn structure, space and weaknesses.** We will cover each element in this chapter.

Here are some of the most commonly used terms among chess players: passed pawn, open file, pair of bishops, outpost, space advantage, strong center, good pawn structure, weak squares, weak pawns, cramped position, prophylaxis, etc. Many of us know these terms and more, but are some more important than others?

Let's try to prioritize the most important elements for a proper assessment of the position:

1) KING SAFETY

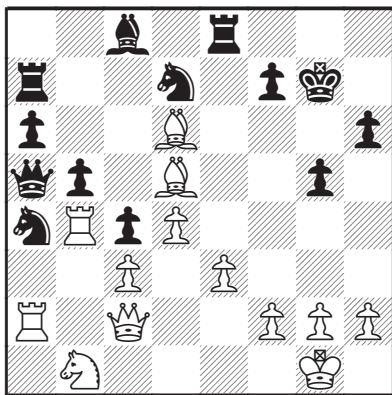
The aim in chess is to deliver checkmate to the opposing king, which we attempt in a variety of ways, either by winning material, promoting a pawn, launching a ferocious attack, obtaining small positional advantages or by meticulously building a substantial advantage with good technique.

Everything ultimately leads to checkmate, but as we have seen in the short list above, the ways in which players reach that destination are varied. Hence, king safety gets paramount consideration when evaluating a position.

A safe king frees other pieces from the responsibility of having to defend their king from an opponent's attack. Our now unburdened pieces can gather small positional advantages or go after our opponent's king. On the contrary, a weak king denies our pieces space and the opportunity to play an active role in the game. They are condemned to play the passive role of defending the king.

How to Keep the King Safe

In general, it is advisable to keep one minor piece in front of the king and have three pawns nearby in order for the king to feel secure from a frontal attack. The attacking units of our opponent (including pawns and pieces) should never outnumber the defensive units near our king by more than three. In such a case, our king could come under serious attack.



We need at least one minor piece in front of our king to reduce the possibility of a successful frontal attack by our opponent. Black's pieces are crowded mainly on the queenside with little influence on the rest of the board. The presence of White's two bishops and the queen pointing towards Black's kingside indicates the possibility of tactics in the position.

24.Bxf7! Kxf7 25.Qh7+

The reason behind the need to have at least three pieces in an attack is to be able to give up one to open up the opponent's king and use the remaining two to either deliver mate or win material.

25...Ke6

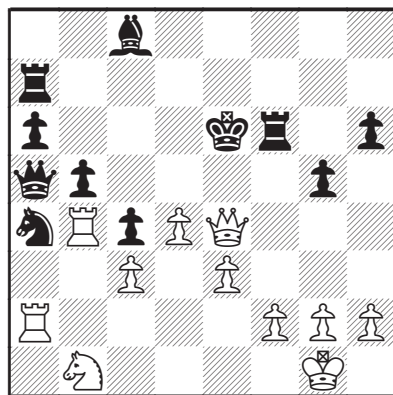
25...Kf6 would lose even more quickly after 26.Qxh6+ Kf7 27.Qh5+ Ke6 28.Qxe8+ Kxd6 29.Qxc8+-

26.Qg6+ Nf6 27.Be5

Notice how one forcing move leads to another in an attack.

27...Rf8

27...Qd8 can be met with 28.Bxf6 Rg8 29.d5+! Kd6 30.Qxh6 Qe8 31.Bxg5+ Rg6 32.Qh4+-



29...Kf7

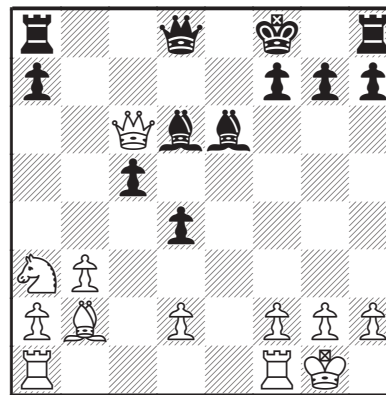
There is no way for Black to escape heavy material losses.

29...Kd7 30.Qh7+

Or 29...Kd6 30.Qe5+

30.Qh7+ Kf8 31.Qxa7 1-0

And White converted the material advantage convincingly.



When we compare king positions in this diagram, we can see that Black's king has lost the right to castle while White's king looks happily out of danger. But looks can be deceiving at times. White's pieces are all arranged on the queenside and while his king has three healthy pawns for protection not a single piece is nearby. Sasikiran exploited this wonderfully with

17...Bd5! 18.Qa6 Bxg2!

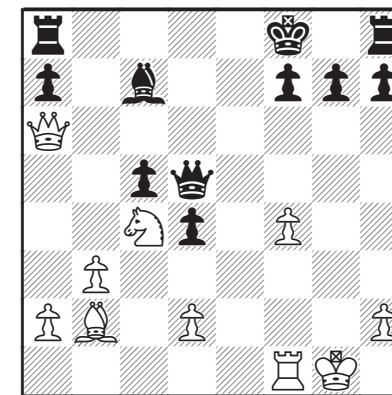
Once again, when we have three pieces available for an attack we should try to sacrifice one of them in order to destroy the opponent's pawn cover, followed by using the other two to execute the attack.

19.Nc4

After 19.Kxg2 Qg5+ 20.Kh1 Qf4+- White is getting mated. The pieces on the queenside are mere spectators to the action on the kingside.

19...Bc7 20.f4

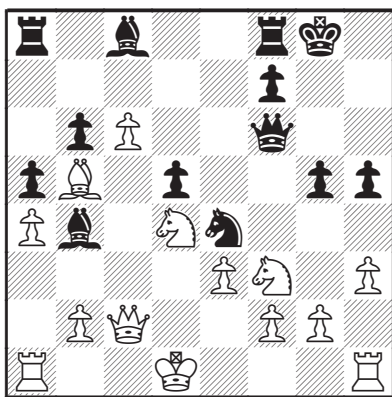
20.Kxg2 Qg5+ 21.Kh1 Qf4+- does not change anything.



And Black converted his extra exchange into a win without any problems.

The pivotal lesson from the above examples demonstrate the need for at least one minor piece as well as three pawns in front of our king for the king to really be safe. In case of the absence of a minor piece in front of the opponent's king, we should try to launch a frontal attack with pieces.

Andreikin – Topalov FIDE Candidates 2014



18.Kc1!

Black has sacrificed a pawn to keep White's king in the center of the board and hopes to exploit it with an attack by opening up the position. But as we can see, Black can only open the position on the kingside as the center and queenside are reasonably securely held by White. But this may not be the case in the long run, hence White should act with urgency to bring his king to safety before Black can successfully open up the position.

18...Bc5

18...g4 can be met with 19.hxg4 hxg4 20.Kb1! A fantastic idea. At the cost of a piece White's king will become perfectly safe while Black's king will find himself in great danger. 20...gxf3 21.gxf3 Ng5 22.Ka2+- Followed by f3-f4 & Rag1, with a winning attack.

19.Kb1!

With calm moves White has completely neutralized Black's activity and now the "active" pawns on the kingside look more like a weakness than a strength.

19...Re8 20.Ka2!

Now the king is in safe territory and the rooks are connected. Once White posts his rooks on reasonable squares, Black will have nothing to show for the pawn deficit and the kingside weaknesses.

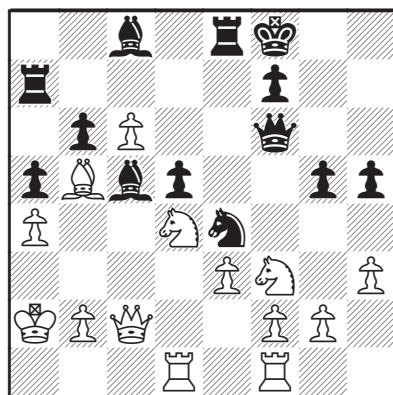
20...Ra7

Getting the rook into the game.

21.Rad1

Developing the rook and strengthening the blockade of the d5-pawn.

21...Kf8 22.Rhf1!



A deep prophylactic move. How does one find such moves? The logic could go something like this: In the opening, we try to develop our pieces as fast as possible and in the process some of our pieces may not land on the

best squares. In the middlegame, we try to improve such pieces by moving them to better squares. After this, the best way to continue improving our position is to either change the pawn structure or activate our pieces even further.

In this position, all of White's pieces are well placed except the rook on h1, which can only become active if Black plays g5-g4, which seems unlikely as of now. Since all of White's other pieces appear to be on good squares, we can think of changing the pawn structure. In that sense, h3-h4 is the only good pawn break available to White, as it would secure the f4-square for one of White's knights. But after h4 Black would play g5-g4 and the f2-pawn would fall. Hence Rhf1 defends the pawn on f2 in advance.

22...Kg7

Black indicates the absence of any active plan and is waiting for White to show his plan. In such situations, we can delay our own plan for a little while and make all the useful moves available to us first.

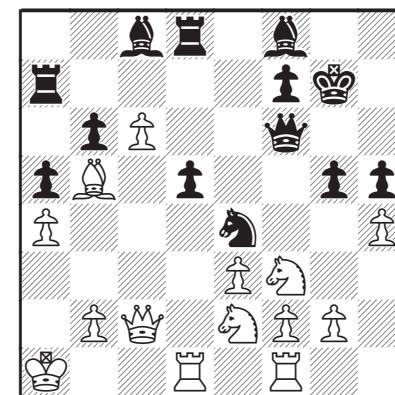
23.Ka1 Bf8 24.Ne2

Though the knight on d4 was well placed, it was blocking the d-file. By attacking the d5-pawn with a tempo, White has the option of rerouting the knight to another good square as can be seen in the game:

24...Rd8 25.h4!

From the above game, we learned the importance of keeping our king safe. Black tried to exploit the presence of White's king in the center by advancing his pawns and opening up the position.

White clearly understood the need to get his king to safety before it became too late. The maneuver involved some loss of time, which Black was not able to exploit successfully.



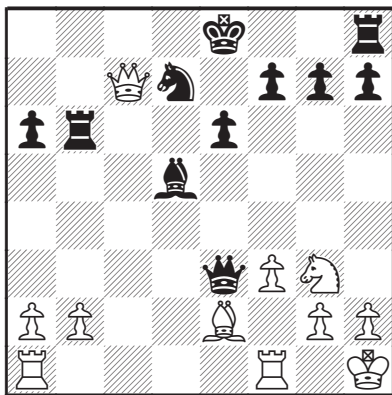
This multi-purpose move aims to clear the f4-square for the knight to e2 (improving the piece) and also exploits Black's weaknesses on the kingside.

25...g4 26.Nf4! Kg8 27.Nxd5 1-0

White has won a second pawn and Topalov saw no reason to continue the game.

After 27.Nxd5 Rxd5 28.Rxd5 gxf3 simplest is 29.Qxe4+- with a decisive material advantage.

Anand – Topalov
2nd M-Tel Masters 2006



In this complex position, Topalov opted for activity with

21...Rc6!

The more sedate 21...Qc5 22.Qxc5 Nxc5 23.Rac1 Nb7 24.b3± would allow White to use the c-file before Black can activate his king and rook on h8.

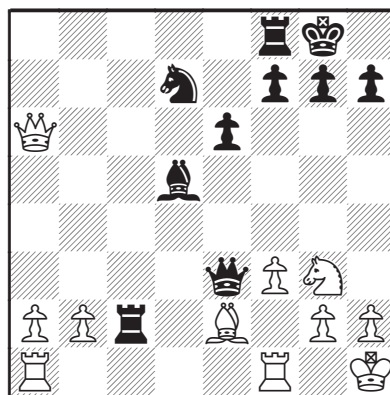
22.Qb7

Threatening Qa8+ and keeping the knight on d7 and a6-pawn under attack.

22...Rc2!

Avoiding the simplifying 22...Qb6 23.Qxb6 Rxb6 24.b3 Ke7 25.Rac1 Ra8!?= with the idea of advancing the a-pawn to create queenside counterplay, where chances are equal.

23.Qxa6 O-O↑



In this way, Topalov managed to take his king to safety and create some pressure of his own against White's king at the cost of a pawn. Here the evaluation of the position is heavily influenced by the relative safety of the kings and the activity of the pieces. Black's pieces are better coordinated, as the d7-knight and f8-rook can quickly become active. Anand was unable to find the best defense and went on to lose the game.

Keeping our king safe is the most important task we seek to achieve in each and every game. To make this happen, we must sometimes compromise on piece activity and retreat to defend our king. Other times, we are forced to compromise and turn down free material to protect our king. Often, it is a matter of compromising our pawn structure, i.e. voluntarily breaking our pawn structure if it is required to keep our king safe. Every once in a while, we must play in a slightly cramped position, or have weaknesses in our position like deficient pawns or vulnerable squares – all this and more just to keep our king safe.

Our opponent's priority is to keep his king safe, too. We can go to any extent to make our opponent's king unsafe by weakening his pawn structure, by sacrificing pieces (provided we have enough material left near his king to have a decisive attack!), and so on. We can use our knowledge of how to keep our king safe to compromise our opponent's king safety.

2) ACTIVITY OF PIECES

We might assume that the same pieces have the same power in all situations. For example, two different knights or two different queens of any color on any chessboard should have the same power in all possible positions. It is not so! A piece that is actively placed is much more powerful than one passively placed. To understand this better, we should know when a piece is considered active or passive.

We only have pieces and pawns on the board and we know that pieces are the more powerful of the two. So, we can conclude that playing with active pieces is more important than having a good pawn structure or playing with an equal number of pawns. If we are given two options:

- a. Play with equal material but have passive pieces; or
- b. Play with less material, say a pawn, but have active pieces.

We should choose option b! Active pieces easily compensate for a slight material deficit. Knowing this rule of thumb is easy, but sacrificing a pawn "just" to improve our pieces in a tournament game is not easy at all. Knowing is NOT doing!

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