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Chess Theory: The Basics

by Jared Bray

Back when I was a young man freshly enamored by the game of chess I believed the middle game was where all the fun stuff happened! The crazy sacrifices of a Mikhail Tal or Garry Kasparov emboldened me to play fiercely and sacrifice material quickly. seething counter attacks of a Larry Christiansen or completely obscene pawn advances of an Alexi Shirov was enough to convince me there was nothing better than when all the pieces were ripping across the board.

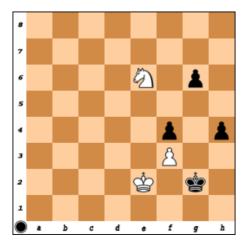
It was much, much later in life that I had one of those head pains I later discovered to be an epiphany – I lost more often than I won and it was usually in the endgame where I'd find my defeat! That is, when my attacks stalled and my opponent defended accurately, I'd be left down material and facing the impossible task of holding a very poor position. Since at that point most of my pieces were off the board I couldn't sacrifice them anymore and my opponent using his superior material edge would simply push a pawn I could not stop until promotion. It wasn't a fun realization!

So I shifted gears, as it were, and began to look at endgame studies; to take on the computer in those tricky rook endings or balanced pawn endings to see if I could draw. I spent time comparing matched pieces with various pawn formations

or knight-vs.-bishop endings. Holding squares, creating outposts, limiting my opponents maneuverability, all these strategies useful in the middle game often transferred over luckily so it wasn't a completely foreign terrain to spend time on. But there is something more in the endgame that masters have memorized and weaker players tend not too—endgame theory.

A master can tell you when you should or shouldn't lose an ending despite the win coming many moves later based on established theory. There are databases for six piece endgames out there. Any position involving six pieces and one can simply look up if it's a win or loss. Of course, one can't do that in the middle of a game but he or she can memorize pawn formations and motifs.

And this is what I wanted to share in this write-up, a couple motifs from many a game but shown quite spectacularly in this game between Reuben Fine and Miguel Najdorf from 1949. Below is the key position. Black to move and win!



At first glance your gut may be screaming that White has the better of it if not winning ... but you would be wrong. Feel free to analyze it now before I discuss it.

Black plays 1...q5! It appears to lose a pawn outright. So why would Miguel play it? Let's calculate and see: 1...g5 2.Nxg5 h3!! 3. Nxh3 Kxh3 So far it would appear Mr. Najdorf was on a bender before the match and having a bit of a joke, but let's look deeper and see if he had an idea here. 4.Kf2 Kh2 5.Kf1 Kg3 6.Ke2 Kg2 7.Ke1 Kxf3 8.Kf1. At this point it looks as if White may hold despite dropping the pawn but if you know your K-vs.-K+P endgames, you know White is lost. 8...Ke3 9.Ke1 f3 10.Kf1 f2 and the White king must move out of the way and Black will gueen after 11...Ke2.

White was up a knight and was completely lost ... why? Because of set well-known techniques—shouldering and opposition. The Black king could force the White king off of his pawn and win it. There was also the known K-vs.-K+P endgame theory in play here. Black's pawn was already on f4 and when White had to take the opposition to hold his position, he

(continued on p 2)

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GAME A

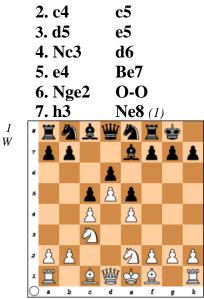
Ethan Stech – Zac Schuh Springfield Ladder Championship November 18, 2018

Czech Benoni Defense

In Round 2 of our 2018 Ladder Championship, Ethan Stech and Zac Schuh squared off and gave us a terrific display of hard-hitting, off-beat chess!

Nf6

1. d4



Black's position is solid, even though White enjoys a slight space advantage.

8. g4 g6 9. Be3 Bg5 10. Qd2 Bxe3 11. Qxe3 Nd7 12. Ng3 Ng7 13. h4 ...

The kingside storm is a' brewin'

13. ... Nf6 14. f3 h5 15. g5 Nd7 16. O-O-O a6! 17. Bd3 Oa5 (2)

The battle lines are drawn. Black has prepared extensively for a solid queenside assault.

(diagram next column)





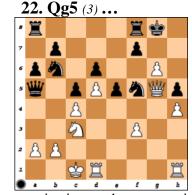
18. Nf5?! ...

W

R

Sacrificing a perfectly good piece, this move creates critical weaknesses in Black's defenses! A slower – but perhaps more advisable – continuation might be 18. Rdf1. As it stands, a flurry of decisive exchanges ensue.

18. ,,, gxf5 19. ef Nb6 20. g6 Bxf5 21. Bxf5 Nxf5



Black maintains the material advantage, but White's queen is where she wants to be.

22. ... Ng7 23. Ne4! fg

The White knight has left his defensive assignment on the queenside, but if now Black chooses to grab the c-pawn, it could lead to disaster: 23. ... Nxc4?? 24. Nf6+ Kh8 25. Qh6#. And of course, grabbing the a-pawn with the queen leads to the same result. Meanwhile, there's a future for this knight on the kingside.

24. Qxg6 Nxc4 25. Ng5! Rfe8 26. Qf7+ Kh8 27. Qg6 (4) ...

(diagram next column)



Indeed, although ahead in material, unless the Black king continues dancing back & forth, White has an immediate checkmate – and so Black's queenside assault can never be realized. Hence, a draw was agreed upon. Great attack by Mr. Stech! In the final round, Mr. Schuh beat his opponent and went on to be crowned our 2018 Ladder Champion, in a 5-way tie for first, decided by various tie-breaker criteria.

1/2-1/2

Chess Basics

R

(continued from p. 1)

was a tempo shy of forcing stalemate.

So the two elements, shouldering and opposition, were present in this endgame that Miguel Najdorf was very well acquainted with and he could tell way back when he played 1...g5 that he had the position won. I encourage any would be master to study them.

(continued on p 4)

SPBCC MEMBERS LIST

(201	Ο,
Steven Becker	Brayden Miao
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GAME B

Spencer Manchester – Cody Whittington Springfield Ladder Tournament January 11, 2019

Queen's Pawn Opening - Mason Variation

From opening night of the 2019 Ladder Season, played by a couple of our newer participants.

1. d4	d5
2. Bf4	Nf6
3. e3	g6
4. c3	Bg7
5. Bd3	Nc6
6. Nd2	Nh5 (1
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White will not be keeping the bishop pair ... but his position is solid otherwise.

7. Bg3 Nxg3 8. hxg3 O-O?!

With an open h-file, this might be dangerous. How will White exploit it?

9. Ngf3	Bg4
10. Qc2	e5
11. e4	de
12. Bxe4	ed
12 D	(2)

В



Black enjoys a slight advantage and White seeks to balance that by messing up Black's pawn structure.

13. ... d3?

Unfortunately this cheeky advance gives White new life, despite the passed pawn!

14. Qa4! Bxf3 15. Bxf3 Re8+ 16. Kd1 Qe7! 17. Ne4 h5 18. Re1 Kh8

Black saw the danger if he played something careless, e.g. 18. ... a6 19. Nf6+ Qxf6 20. Rxe8+ Rxe8 21. Qxe8+ and White wins. However, 18. ... c6 can be a useful move and short-circuits that continuation.

19. g4? ...

An invitation to fork his pieces!.

19. ... hg! 20. Bxg4 f5 21. Qb3 fxg4 22. Rh1+ Bh6 23. Rxh6+ Kg7 (3)



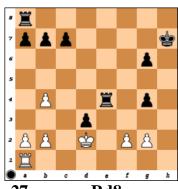
But now White has a big problem. If he saves his rook Black runs away with the game: 24. Rh1 Qxe4 25. c4 (to get some play on the diagonal, in a dire situation) Qe2+ 26. Kc1 d2+ 27. Kb1 and Black is home free.

24. Qb4? Qxb4 25. Rh7+! ...

A great little move under the circumstances. But White probably saw that after 25. ... Kxh7 26. Nf6+Kh6 you still gotta play 27. cxb4 giving the Black rook time to get behind the advanced d-pawn.

25. ... Kxh7 26. cxb4 Rxe4 27. Kd2 (4) ...

(diagram next column)



27. ... Rd8 28. Rc1 Re2+ 29. Kd1 Rde8

30. Rxc7+ R8e7

31. Rc4 Rxb2

32. Rxg4 Ree2 (5)

W



Mr. Manchester resigned. Black will inevitably prevail. Fritz suggests the following possible continuation: 33. Rh4+ Kg7 34. Rc4 Rxf2 35. Rc7+ Kf6 36. Kc1 d2+ Kxb2 d1=Q and then mate in four. A fun see-saw battle!

0-1



"Combinations have always been the most intriguing aspect of chess. The master looks for them, the public applauds them, (and) the critics praise them. It is because combinations are possible that chess is more than a lifeless mathematical exercise. They are the poetry of the game; they are to chess what melody is to music. They represent the triumph of mind over matter."

Reuben Fine

GAME C

James Huggins – Roger Pagel Springfield Open Chess Tournament October 27, 2018

Alekhine Defense

From the Springfield Open, Round 2. Jim Huggins is from Kansas.

1. e4	Nf6
2. e5	Nd5
3. d4	d6
4. Nf3	Bg4
5. Be2	Nc6
6. c4	Nb6
7 ed	cd

Up to here, all according to the established lines.

		8.	b3		g	56			
		9.	Bb	2	I	3 g 7	7		
10. Nbd2 O-O									
	1	11.	O-	O	I	3f5	(1)		
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W	7	1	1			1	1	皇	À
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	4			8	4				
	1		_				M-		

A nice sharp position, about equal. There's some interesting tension focusing on White's d4-pawn.

12. Re1 Nb4 13. Nh4 ...

Good solution for the forking threat. Now if 13. ... Nc2 14. Nxf5 Nxe1 15. Nxg7 Nxg2 16. Kxg2 Kxg7 and material is even, but White has a better game. Pagel wisely backed off.

13. ... Bd7
14. a3 Nc6
15. Nf1?! (2) ...

(diagram next column)

"The older I grow, the more I value pawns."

Paul Keres



В

White's queen wants a better view of her vulnerable d4-pawn. But Fritz prefers 15. Nhf3 here, because otherwise that h4-knight is just flapping in the breeze, as Black is about to demonstrate.

15. ... e5!

White's game now becomes very cramped as Black's tactics explode onto the board! He will win a pawn while gaining substantial space.

16. Nf3 e4! 17. N3d2 f5 18. Oc2 ...

Sadly, 18. Nb1 might've been better.

18. ... Nxd4 19. Bxd4 Bxd4 20. Rad1 Be5



Compare this diagram to the previous, just 6½ moves ago. Black is only a pawn up, but with excellent prospects for advancement. White's pieces have nowhere to go.

22. Ndf1 Qf6 23. Ne3 Bc6 24. c5!? ...

White desperately seeks advanced squares for his pieces.

24. ... dc 25. Nc4 Bd4 26. Nxb6 axb6

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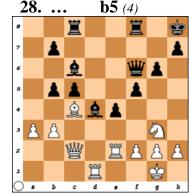
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W

Walter Ressmeyer Brian Rude Adam Whitaker Ethan Stech John Last Roger Pagel Kary Kingsland Marty Phillips Mike Little Brian Rude Stephanie Fitzpatrick Jon McClenahan

27. Bc4+ Kh8 28. Re2?? ...

It's a tough position, but here White should try 28. a4 instead. The problem is that Black's next move wins a piece.



White resigned. Mr. Pagel admits he had been apprehensive going into this match, as in the first round, Mr. Huggins had beaten our friend Zac Schuh, a formidable Class A player.

0 - 1

Chess Basics

(continued from p. 2)

It's not magic what stronger players do in their endgames despite their clear clairvoyance. It's skill, worked and hewn into a tactical weapon at the board. If by chance you found the example easy, good! Then you know what to do next-study more endgame theory! Expound on the shouldering and opposition themes. Involve more pawns including chains and isolanis. Revel in the knowledge transferred down from centuries of other players blundering left and right when either a draw or win was achievable. Make all the N.N. Players that played Morphy look like the fools they were without modern day analysis and incredible pawn breaks in your own games! JB

Blast From the Past!

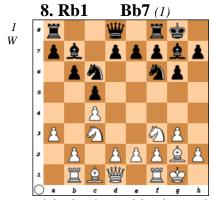
Fred Sadoogi – Marty Phillips Springfield Round-Robin Championship January, 1992

English Opening – Symmetrical Variation

An extremely tense third-round match from the Annual Springfield Round Robin, from over a quarter of a century ago.

1. c4	c5
2. Nc3	Nc6
3. Nf3	Nf6
4. g3	g6
5. Bg2	Bg7
6. O-O	0-0
7. a3	b6

Until this move, Black has just been a copy-cat!



Not surprisingly, the position is equal.

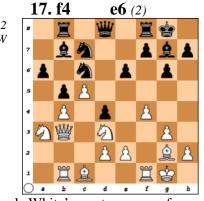
9. b4	cb
10. ab	d5
11. c5?!	d4!
12. Nb5	Nd

Black's advanced d-pawn becomes the subject of the game.

White conducts a convoluted changing-of-the-guard, but this knight blockade doesn't just stop Black's intruder at d4 – it also gums up White's structure.

Already White has a passed pawn! At this juncture, there's no need for a fire drill.

16. Qb3 Nc7



Though White's center pawns form a virtual trampoline for Black to jump on, Mr. Sadoogi's position is stable. Mr. Phillips notes: "I was under serious time pressure after seventeen moves!"

18. e4	de e.p.
19. de	Qd7 ?

Black prepares to make use of that wide open d-file, but maybe Her Majesty should not be leading the charge.

20. Rd1!	Rfd8
21. Nf2	Qe7
22. Bb2	Rxd1+
23. Rxd1	Bxb2
24. Oxb2	Nd5

With material even, Fritz nonetheless considers White's game practically winning now, and suggests 24. ... Rd8 would've put Black at less of a disadvantage, after 25. Rxd8+ Qxd8 26. h3.

White put a lot of stock in removing that knight. Mr. Sadoogi had imagined a deadly windmill attack on the Black king ... which unfortunately doesn't really have teeth. However, 27. e4 was a much better way to dispatch that knight.

(diagram next column)





В

At first blush this looks devastating, but then when you actually calculate follow-up moves ... well, let's see. 28. ... Kh8 and then if 29. Nd7+ Black simply plays 29. ... Qg7 – crisis averted. All you really have here is a possible draw by repetition: 28. ... Kh8 29. Nxd5+ Kg8 and then repeat the check. If Black wants to venture an 'escape' via 28. ... Kg7?? he loses to 29. Nd7+. But Mr. Phillips had no delusions about that variation.

28	Kh8
29. Ne8+	Kg8
30. Nd6	

And so for his efforts, White settles his knight on a very nice outpost ...

Rxd6!?

Γoo nice, perhaps!	
31. cxd6	Qxd6
32. Qc3	Bc8
33. Qd2	Be6
34. e4!	Bd7
35. e5?!	•••

30. ...

With Black up a pawn – and with White's last move, a *passed* pawn – White foregoes immediate material equality and goes for more space. He can eliminate the passed pawn anyway. Fritz calls it a toss-up.

35	Qb8
36. Bxd5	Qa7 +
37. Kg2	Ne7
38. Be4	Kg7
39. Nd4	Qb6
40. Qc3	Bg4
41. Qc5	Qxc5

(continued on page 8)

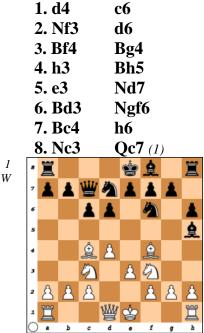


GAME D

Raphael Obiyo – Jon McClenahan Mid-Missouri Open Championship July 9, 2018

Queen's Pawn Game

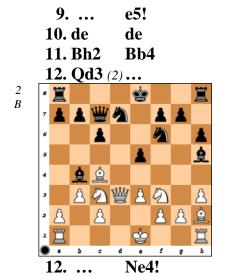
This match took place in one of Michael Clark's impromptu tournaments at Ichiban Restaurant on Glenstone. I had met Mr. Obiyo at the MSU Chess Club but had no idea of his playing strength, and so decided to use a defense with which I'd been experimenting. This game has a lot of aimless play and some unusual positions, but in the end I found an interesting tactic.



This opening has similarities to the trendy "Black Lion Defense." This is the basic setup that Black aims for: solid but with less space. His next step, however, is to advance the e-pawn and break the position open.

9. b3? ...

Not sure of the purpose of this move, other than making things uncomfortable for his own bishop. "When you don't know what to do, wait for your opponent to get an idea—it's sure to be wrong!" (Siegbert Tarrasch) Probably better was for White was 9. Be2.



Fritz liked this move as much as I did when I played it (which is unusual). Now my mind's eye saw the continuation: 13. Qxe4 Bxc3+ winning the rook. But when White came up with a different response, unfortunately, I got lost.

13. O-O Bxf3?

The correct follow-up here would've been 13. ... Ndc5 (attacking his queen) 14. Bxe5 (counterattacking mine), Qc8 15. Qd1 Nxc3 and Black has a winning advantage.

14. gxf3? ...

14. Nxe4 would've gained back the lost material without the damage to the pawn structure.

14. ... Nxc3 15. a3 Ne2+ 16. Qxe2 Bd6

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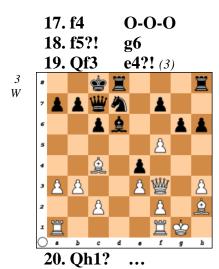
Jared Bray Roger Pagel Marty Phillips Hugh Porter Brian Rude

Hardcopy printing courtesy of

Brian Rude

Website

www.springfieldparkboardchessclub.com
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Certainly not the best place for one's queen. After 20. Bxd6 exf3 21. Bxc7 Kxc7 22. Bxf7 gf 23. Be6 and White is right back in the game.

20. ... gf

W

Now White will be facing a future of dangerous g-file intruders.

21. Rfd1 Bxh2+ 22. Qxh2 Rhg8+ 23. Kh1 Ne5 24. Rxd8+ Rxd8



A great little spot for Black's knight.

26. Qg2 b6 27. h4? ...

White is looking for a plan. 28 Qh3 looks like a candidate move: attack the backward pawn at f5. However, Black saw more value in *losing* that pawn to a marauding queen, than in keeping it.

27. ... Rd6

Since White's queen had control of the open g-file, Black intends to drive her off with a rook "lift", aiming for g6.

(continued on p. 7)

GAME E

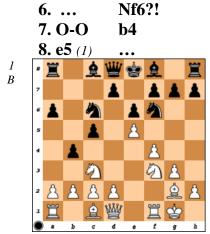
Brian Rude – Matthew Hammons Joplin Open December 1, 2018

Closed Sicilian

Fourth round of the Joplin Open.

1. e4	c5
2. Nc3	a6
3. f4	b 5
4. Nf3	Nc6
5. g3	e6
6. Bg2	•••

This was looking like a standard Closed Sicilian, but a popular 4th move for Black is to fianchetto the light-squared bishop and then challenge the center. Black chooses to challenge the center *without* the fianchetto!



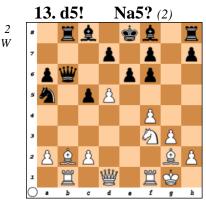
Playing "Chicken" with pawn pushes!

8. ... bxc3 9. exf6 cxb2 10. Bxb2 gf

Black's kingside pawn structure is *verkakte*, but the open g-file may yield some dividends, especially in combination with that fianchettoed light-square bishop ... coming soon, no doubt! Mr. Rude liked his two strong bishops, so he didn't mind being a pawn down here. Nonetheless, Fritz likes Black's game.

11. d4 Qb6 12. Rb1 Rb8

Although the b-file battery is powerful, Black may have wanted to play 12. ... d5 for reasons that will be apparent.



White's pawn advance cleared the diagonal and made a sharp position sharper. But rather than sideline the knight, Black would've been better served taking the d-pawn: after 13. ... ed 14. Nd2 c4+! 15. Kh1 Qc5 16. Bxf6 Rxb1 17. Nxb1 Rg8 18. Re1+ White is ahead, but less significantly. Now, the powder is loaded; let the pyrotechnics begin!

The smoke has cleared and material is even ... but now, about that fianchettoed light-squared bishop ...

17. Rb8! ...

That bishop has been sleeping the whole game, and now will die in bed – because there's no way to save it now! Beyond that, there's a mate threat.

17. ... d6 18. Rxc8+ Kd7 19. Ra8 ed 20. Ng5 d4



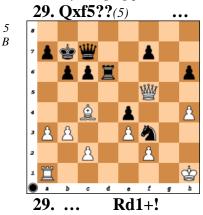
The dark-squared bishop (which ALSO never moved in the game!) is pinned and double-attacked. With the prospects of losing yet another piece, Mr. Hammons resigned. This gave Mr. Rude his fourth victory, a perfect score of 4.0, and he took the first-place prize.

GAME D

(continued from p 6).

28. Qh3 Kb7

I must admit, by "running away" to avoid a possible check (thanks to preparations made on the 26th move), I was actually setting a nasty trap. "Please, take my hanging pawn!"



Steinitz would've been sick: "A win by an unsound combination fills me with artistic horror." Nonetheless, given the position, Black was happy to grab the win.

30. Rxd1 Oh2#

0 - 1

SW Missouri Chess Calendar

2019 Springfield Open Scholastic

February 9, 2019

Ages K-12 at the Southside Senior Center, 2215 S. Fremont, Springfield starting at 11 AM . Four rounds Swiss G10/d0 To enter: adamgrantwhitaker@gmail.com

Theme: King's Gambit

Friday, Febraury 8, 2019

Brush up on your Romantic Era tactics! (see article on p. 1) 2215 S. Fremont, Springfield Starts at 7 PM. G15/d5

Springfield Park Board Club Ladder Tournament

Our ongoing cumulative Ladder Tournament for 2019 is played on every Friday (except the last of the month - see Blitz Tournament below) at 7:15 PM. G90/d5. Members only: so ... JOIN THE CLUB (\$10 annual fee) and JOIN THE FUN!

Blitz Tournaments!

G10/d0. Entry fee \$1.
All proceeds go to benefit our hosts, the Southside Senior Center.

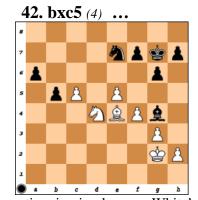
Be there by 7:15 pm to register for pairings.

If you would like to notify us of an upcoming chess-related event in our area, contact Roger Pagel: brevcamp@yahoo.com

Blast

В

(continued from p. 5)



The question is simple: can White's isolated passed pawn triumph over Black's two connected passed pawns?

42. ... b4 43. Kf2 Kf8 44. Ke3 Nf5+ 45. Nxf5 Bxf5 46. Bd5 ...

This exchange of knights has favored Black, and now White can't afford to exchange bishops.

46. ... Be6

4	7.]	Be	1		Ke7				
4	48. Kd2				Kd7				
_	19.	K	21 Kc7			7 (5)			
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In this position, 50. Bd3!? is White's only chance to stay alive (and then 50 ... Kc6 51. Bxa6 Kxc5, after which White might be able to hang on). Unfortunately White didn't find that move, and the rest is history.

50. Kb2 a5 51. h4 h5 52. Ka1 a4 53. Kb1 a3 54. Kc1 b3

	55. c6				b 2				
	5	56. Kd2				a 2)		
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Mr. Sadoogi resigned. If White had played 56. Kc2, 56. ... Bf5 forces the exchange, after which Black's king mops up.

0 - 1

"You may learn much more from a game you lose than from a game you win. You will have to lose hundreds of games before becoming a good chess player."

J. R. Capablanca