

Puzzles from HMP Leeds

Thanks to Stephen who runs the chess club at Leeds for these puzzles. When you start a game the weakest squares are f2 for white and f7 for black because they are only protected by the kings. Even after castling they can still prove to be serious weakness, especially if the rook moves away from f1 (f8 for black).

1 White to play

White has the more active pieces. The knight is very strong and the rook is on an open file. How did White finish off?



5 White to play

White would like to play 1 Ne8 but it fails to 1 ... Qxh6 and 1 Qxg7+ Kxg7 2 Ne8+ fails to 2 ... Rxe8. However, noticing these ideas gives the clue to the actual finish. Can you see it?



2 White to play

White has the advantage of rook against knight and pawn. A simple line would be to exchange queens (1 Qxc7 Rxc7) but then Black would be able to fight on. White avoided this obvious and tempting try, instead finding a killer blow. Can you find the move?



6 White to play

Certain checkmating configurations have been given names, the most well-known being "smothered mate". How did that great tactical genius Paul Morphy engineer a smothered mate from this position?

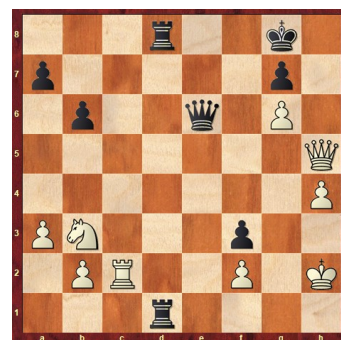
3 Black to play

Another puzzle where f2 is a weakness. Which accurate move gives black a winning advantage?



7 Black to play

This mating configuration is named after Giambattista Lolli, an 18th-century chess theoretician. How did black finish here with a fine example of the Lolli?



4 Black to play

White is a rook down but has created serious threats against the black king. How did Black defuse White's attack and secure victory?



8 White to play

The white minor pieces are vastly more active than their Black counterparts, and this is the key to the position. What did White play?

1

1 Re8 wins as after 1 ... Nxe8 2 Qxf7+ Kh8 3 Nxe8 Qxd4 4 Nf6 Black has to give up the queen to prevent checkmate. Black tried the tricky 1 ... Qd7 2 Rxc8 g5 but the nimble 3 Qd2 Ra6 4 Qb4 allowed White to retain a winning material advantage.

2

1 Rxe6 wins as 1 ... fxe6 (1 ... Qxf4 2 Re8+ Nf8 3 Rxf4) 2 Qf7+ Kh8 3 Qe8+ Kg7 4 Rf7 checkmate

3

1.Re8+ Rxe8 2.Qxg7+ Kxg7 3.Nxe8+ Kf8 4.Nxd6 and white emerges a piece up. .

4

1...Qf4 2.Nf3 (if... 2.Qxh4 Re1 checkmate)...Qxh4 winning.

5

1 ... Bd6 forces the white queen away from defending the f2 square (or Bxg4 with the loss of the queen) 2 Qxc3 Qf2+ 3 Kh3 Qh2+ 4 Kxg4 4.h5 checkmate

6

The preliminary sequence 1 Nc5+ Kb8 2 Nd7+ Kc8 3 Nb6+ Kb8 (3 ... Kd8 4 Qd7 checkmate) sets up the smothered checkmate with 4 Qc8+ Rxc8 5 Nd7 checkmate

7

1 ... Rh1+ 2 Kxh1 Qh3+ 3 Kg1 Qg2 checkmate or 2 Kg3 .Rg1+ 3 Kh2 (3 Kxf3 Rf8+ 4 Qf5 Rxf5 checkmate) 3 ... Rg2 + 4 Kh1 Qh3 checkmate

8

1 Nd6 Rcd8 2.Qxc7 winning the bishop.

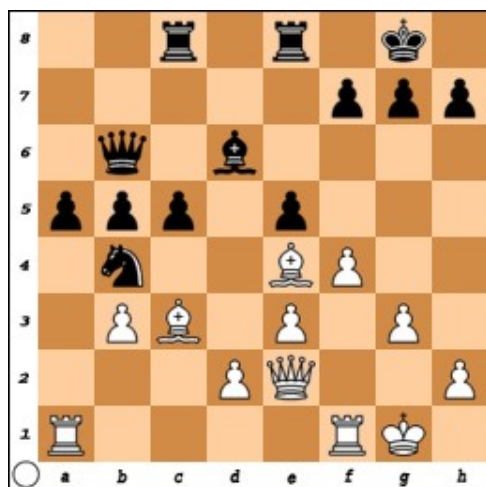
Legends

The Legends of chess internet tournament started this week in which four of the World's top ten, including World Champion Magnus Carlsen, are playing six of the best players over the past 25 years. One of the players who made a strong start is Peter Svidler, Super Grandmaster, 8 times Russian Champion, winner of 5 Olympiad gold medals. He is one of the best commentators on the game and has a fantastic eye for tactics. He has too much class to follow the current trend of pushing the g and h pawns at every opportunity and best of all he is a keen follower of the English cricket team. Here are some of his games.

Tactics and Strategy

This starts as a quiet strategic game but then explodes when Peter Svidler, playing white, spots a tactic against Peter Leko.

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 g3 c5 3 Bg2 Nc6 4 0-0 e5 5 c4 d5 6 cxd4 Nxd4 7 Nc3 Be6 8 Ng5 Qxg5 9 Nxd5 Qd8 10 Ne3 all this has been played before by Peter Leko so I would guess both players know this position **10 ... Rc8 11 b3 Bd6 12 Bb2 0-0 13 Rc1 b5 14 Nd5 a6 15 e3** Svidler has sat back in the centre, allowed Leko to play ... e5 and ... c5 and will now attack the centre. Now Leko decided to grab a pawn. **15 ... Bxd5 16 Bxd5 Nb4 17 Be4 Nxa2** Svidler now gets the initiative. His next nine moves contain a direct threat or capture **18 Ra1 Nb4 19 Bc3 a5 20 Qe2 Qb6 21 f4** An aggressive move. Svidler attacks Leko's centre but weakens his own king. **21 ... Rfe8** This looks so natural and defends the e pawn but allows a tactical trick because the f pawn is undefended. What did Svidler play next?



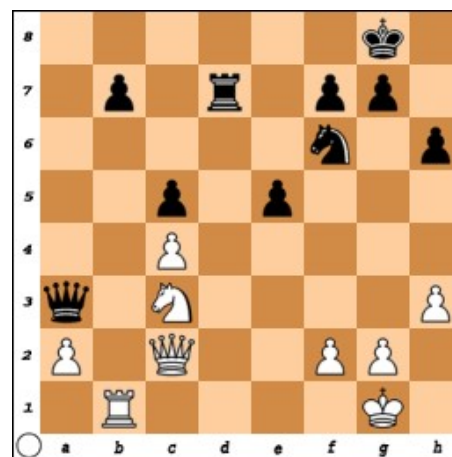
22 Bxh7+ Kxh7 23 Qh5+ Kg8 24 fxe5 g6 the bishop cannot move because of Qxf7+ and e6. **25 Qf3 f5 26 exd6** Leko fought on but Svidler is

winning comfortably. **26 ... Re4 27 Qg2 Nd5 28 d3 Nxc3 29 dxe4 Nxe4 30 g4 c4 31 gxf5 Qxe3+ 32 Kh1 resigns**

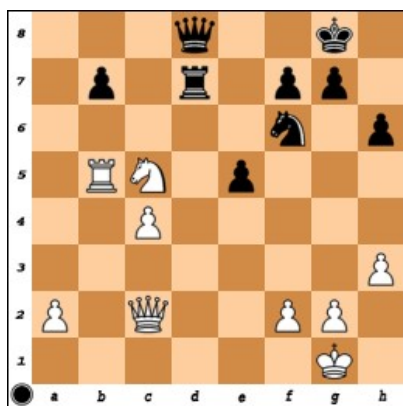
Three things to take from this game are the strategic idea of allowing your opponent to build a centre and then smashing it up with moves like 21 f4. This is similar to Tiger's game in Chaos on Board that we looked at a few weeks ago. Also, keep alert to tactics such as 22 Bxh7+. Lastly, if you sacrifice a pawn play aggressively. Svidler played nine forcing moves in a row.

A kingside attack out of nowhere

Peter Leko is playing white and Peter Svidler is playing black in this position. Leko has been pressing but now makes a couple of small errors.



1 Rb6 a small error. Svidler has a rook on the open d file, something we always tell you to do, and now has time to get the queen back to d8 which would give total control of the d file. **1 ... Qa5 2 Rb5 Qc7** defending the c pawn **3 Na4 Qd8** setting a wicked trap **4 Nxc5** Leko, one of the best players in the world, falls for the bait. Svidler now has a winning tactic. Can you see what he played?



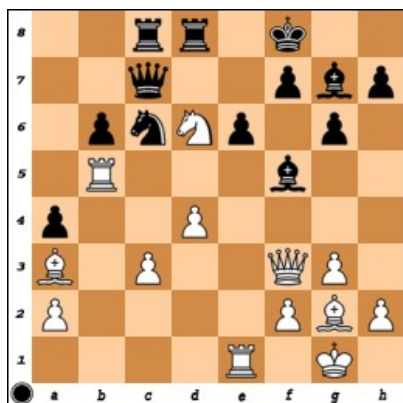
The first move is easy enough 1 ... Rd1+ 2 Kh2 Ng4 + 3 Kg3 if 3 hxg4 Qh4 checkmate 3 ... Qg5 Svidler's rook is undefended and his knight can be taken and yet he is winning. What is impressive is that he probably saw it when Leko played Na4, if not earlier. 4 Nd7+ Kf8 5 resigns if 5 Qxd1 Qf4+ 6 Kh4 Nf6+ 7 Qg4 g5 checkmate. If 5 hxg4 Qf4+ 6 Kh4 Rh1 mate.

Leko made three small mistakes with Rb6, putting a knight on the edge of the board and grabbing a pawn. Svidler took control of the d file and then found an imaginative attack.

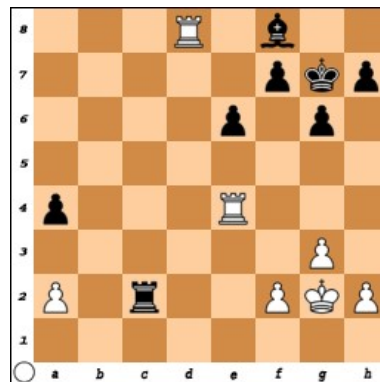
More tactics and how to win a won ending

Peter Svidler had the white pieces in this game against Ding Liren.

1 Nf3 d5 2 g3 g6 3 Bg2 Bg7 4 d4 Nf6 5 0-0 0-0 6 c4 c6 7 Qb3 a5 8 cxd5 a4 9 Qd1 cxd5 10 Nc3 Ne4 11 Nd2 Nxc3 12 bxc3 Both players have played this position before with the black pieces so they are still in their preparation, possibly for a few more moves 12 ... Nc6 13 Ba3 Bf5 14 e4 dxe4 15 Nxe4 Qc7 16 Re1 Rfd8 17 Rb1 b6 18 Qf3 Rac8 19 Rb5 e6 20 Nd6



Again Svidler is not afraid to get involved in complicated tactics and Ding goes wrong. 20 ... Rxd6 the computer engines prefer 19 ... Nxd4 20 cxd4 Rxd6 but it would be very difficult for a human to find. 21 Bxd6 Qxd6 22 Rxb6 this is the point of 19 Nd6. The knight on c6 cannot be saved. 22 ... Nxd4 23 Rxd6 Nxf3+ 24 Bxf3 Rxc3 25 Rd8+ Bf8 26 Kg2 Kg7 27 Be4 Bxe4 28 Rxe4 Rc2



White is better but this is tough to win. Ding can attack the a and f pawns and push his a pawn. Club players would struggle here but Svidler is a product of the Russian chess school so he knows how to win tight endings. Let's see how he does it. 29 Rd7 g5 to stop Rf4 and Rxf7 30 Rxe6 Bc5 31 Re5 Svidler cannot defend the f pawn so he concentrates on increasing the power of his rooks 31 ... Kf6 32 Rdd5 Bxf2 33 Kf3 Rxa2 34 Rxc5 Very cool. Svidler has let both the a and f pawns go but he knows the rooks will stop the a pawn and now have space to attack Ding's king. 34 ... a3 35 Rdf5+ Ke6 36 Ra5 Bg1 37 Ra6+ Ke7 38 h4 Bd4 39 Kg4 the king attacks the black pawns and does not defend against the a pawn 39 ... Ra1 40 Rb5 Bb2 41 Kh5 Re1 42 g4 Re6 43 Rb7+ Kf8 Ding's king is pushed to the edge of the board 44 Rxe6 fxe6 45 Ra7 Svidler's rook stops the a pawn and his king takes Ding's kingside pawns 45 ... Ke8 46 g5 Kd8 47 Kh6 e5 48 Kxh2 e4 49 g6 e3 50 Rxa3 resigns a final tactic. White queens first.

How did he win this? I am not a good enough player to tell you but one theme is to attack. Svidler put his rooks on dangerous squares and attacked with his king rather than defending his pawns. We can learn a lot from his games.

Chessable Masters Semi-Finals

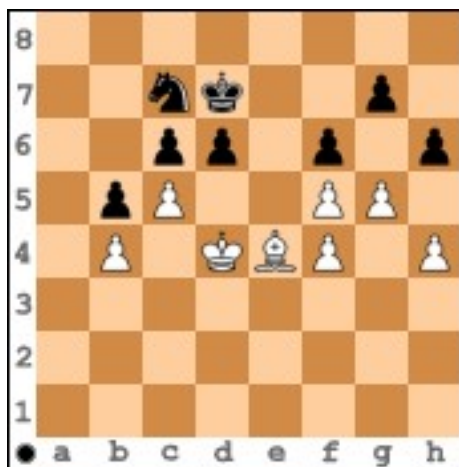
This week it's the semi-finals. Look at the 3rd diagram for the most stunning move I've ever seen a World Champion play. I don't know whether it's the best or worst move. Take a look and decide for yourself.

The best or worst move ever played by a World Champion

Magnus Carlsen beat Ding Liren, the World number 3, in the first semi-final. Carlsen has now beaten the World no 2 and 3. The player with the white pieces kept getting a slightly better position but had difficulty in converting to a win.

The pawns are the key to this position. White has one extra pawn on the kingside but it is doubled so it is difficult to create a passed pawn. Black has one extra pawn on the queenside and none are doubled so it should be easier to create a passed pawn.

Ding playing white in this position has just played c5 giving Carlsen a chance.



Carlsen played 1 ... **Na6**. This causes problems because 2 Kc3 loses to 2 ... dxc5 3 bxc5 Nxc5. Ding played 2 cxd6 Kxd6 3 Kc3 c5 4 bxc5 Kxc5. Carlsen now has the passed pawn and this should be enough to win. After 5 Bc2 Nb4 6 Bb3 Nd5 Carlsen will win the f pawns and the game.

Ding was playing white in the second position and this time he has the passed pawn but he has just played Qb3 which was a disastrous mistake. Can you see what Carlsen, playing black, played?



1 ... **Rc1+** wins on the spot. 2 Rxc1 loses the queen to 2 ... Qxb3 and 2 Kg2 loses the rook to 2 ... Qxb1.

Now for a stunning move that goes beyond chess. In game 1 Ding lost internet connection in an equal position. Ding is in China and sometimes has trouble connecting to western servers. He lost the game through no fault of his own.

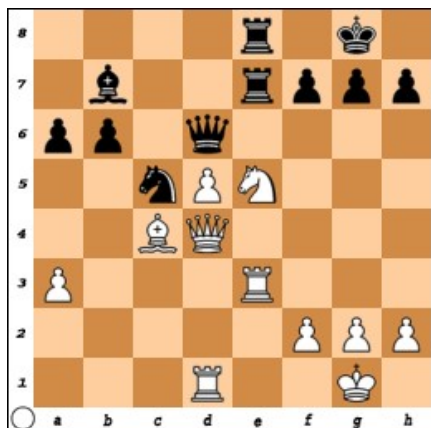
How did Carlsen react? Game 2 went 1 c4 e6 2 g3 Qg5 3 Bg2 to reach the diagram. What did Carlsen playing black play next?



3 ... **Qxd2+** 4 Qxd2 **resigns**. Carlsen threw the game to equalise the match. Was he a mug or was he the ultimate sportsman? In my eyes he is a great sportsman. I think not many players would have done the same.

Anish Giri beats Ian Nepomniachtchi

It is a fast time limit with only 15 minutes each for the whole game so there will inevitably be mistakes. This time Nepo made more mistakes than Giri. Nepo playing black has just played ... Re8. What did Giri playing white play next?



1 Nxf7 Kxf7 if 1 ... Rxf7 2 Rxe8+ and if 1 ... Rxe3 2 Nxd6 2 Re6 this allows Giri to push the d pawn and open up the bishop 2 ... Qd8 3 Qf4+ Kg8 4 Rxe7 Rxe7 5 d6+ and Giri won.

A great attacking win by Nepo

Nepo playing the white pieces attacked for the entire game. Giri finally cracked.

1 Nf3 d5 2 e3 Nf6 3 c4 e6 4 Nc3 dxc4 5 Bxc4 c5 6 d4 a6 7 e4 Nepo shows his attacking intentions by taking the centre cxd4 8 Nxd4 Bd6 9 Be3 0-0 10 Rc1 b5 11 Bb3 Bb7

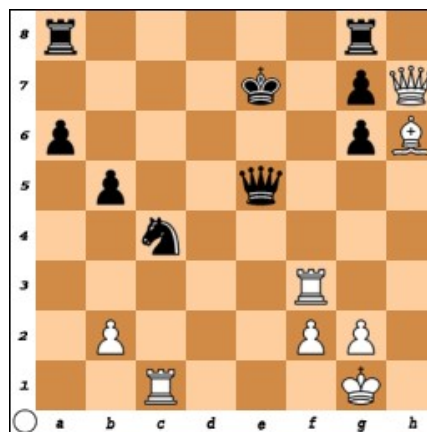


What would you play here? Both sides have developed their pieces and now it is time to decide on a plan. Nepo does not waste any time.

12 Bxe6 Nxe4 12 ... fxe6 13 Nxe6 Qe7 14 Nxf8 is also possible. Nepo is forcing Giri to make choices 13 Nxe4 Bxe4 14 Qg4 Bg6 white is better after 14 ... fxe6 15 Qxe4 15 Bf5 Qa5+ 16 Kf1 Brave. Nepo choses not to block the check so the rook on h1 can join in the attack Be5 17 Bxg6 hxg6 18 h4 Qxa2 it is dangerous to grab pawns when the king is under attack 19 h5 Qd5 20 hxg6 fxg6 black's pawn defences are shattered 21 Ne6 Re8 22 Ng5 Bf6 White missed a spectacular win here. Can you see it?



23 Kg1 Nepo goes a bit wrong here. It turns out that 23 Rh8+ Kxh8 24 Qh4+ Kg8 25 Qh7+ Kf8 26 Bc5+ and it will soon be checkmate Bxg5 24 Bxg5 Nc6 25 Be3 Ne5 26 Qh3 Nc5 27 Qh7+ Kf7 28 Bh6 Qe5 29 Rh3 Rg8 30 Rf3+ Ke7



31 Rxc4 31 Qg6 threatening Bg5+ was a nice finish because 31 ... gxh6 loses to 32 Rf7+ Rh8 32 Qxg7 Qxg7 33 Re4+ resigns The most impressive thing for me was that Nepo kept setting Giri problems and even such a strong player could not solve them all.

Puzzles from HMP Isis

Thanks to Mark who runs the chess club at Isis for these puzzles. The theme is pins. We start with some basic pins to show you the idea but the last few are tougher.

The power of pins

The white queen on f2 is pinned. It cannot move because the black bishop would then be able to take the king.



4 Black to play and win.

Black would like to play Qxc2 checkmate but the white queen is defending the c2 square. Can you see a different move for black?



1 White to play and win a piece

If the black pawn on d6 was not there then the white rook could take the black queen. How can white take advantage of this and win a piece?

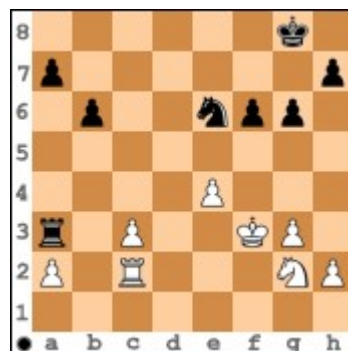


5 Black to play and win

This puzzle is slightly different. Black has an attack and there are ideas of Bxb2+, b3 and Qa5 but none seem to work immediately. Can you see a quick win for black? Remember the theme of pins.

2 Black to play and win a piece

Look for a white piece that is pinned and see whether you can take advantage of this.



6 Black to play and win

Too easy for you so far? Try these two. Black took a bishop on e3 but then white played Qc1 and pinned the rook. It looks as though black will lose the rook. Can you see a way for black to save the rook?



3 White to play and win

Use the same approach as last time. Look for a black piece that is pinned and see whether you can take advantage of it.



7 White to play and win

The black pieces are a bit cramped and the bishop has not moved yet. Can white take advantage of this?

1 1 Bxc5 wins the knight because 1 ... dxc5 loses the queen after 2 Rxd8

2 The white pawn on c3 is pinned. It cannot move because the black rook could take the king. Black can take advantage of the pin by playing **1 ... Nd4+** and then take the rook on c2 when the white king moves.

3 The black rook on f7 is pinned. It cannot move because the white bishop on d5 could take the king. White can take advantage of the pin by playing **1 Qxg7 checkmate**

4 The knight on c2 is pinned and this allows black to play **1 ... Qa1 checkmate**

5 Black wins by playing **1 ... Bh6**. This pins the white queen to the king. This is a different use of the pin because the bishop is undefended so white could play **2 Qxh6** but this loses to **2 ... Qxc2 checkmate**. Any other move by white loses the queen.

6 Black can save the rook by playing **1 ... Bd2**. This is a really imaginative move. The key point is that if **2 Qxd2 Rxg3+ 3 hxg3 Qxd2** wins the queen. The immediate **1 ... Rxg3+ 2 hxg3 Qxc1 3 Rxc1** loses for black because the white queen is defended.

7 1 Nxe6 fxe6 2 Qxe6+ Kh8 wins for white because there is time to play the quiet move **3 Rd2** threatening Rad1 winning the knight. Now the knight is pinned because **3 .. Nc5** loses to **4 Qf6+ Kg8 5 Rxd8+**. Black tried **3 ... a6 4 Bc6 b5 5 Rad1 Rb6 6 Rxd7 resigns**. **6 ... Bxd7** loses to **7 Qf6+ Kg8 8 Bd5+** Well done if you solved this one.

Winning by pinning

This World Championship game was played in 1927 and it shows a deadly idea that can help win any game. Alekhine was playing with the white pieces and he recognised that Capablanca playing black cannot move his rook. It is pinned and if it moves black loses the queen. So how did Alekhine go about winning by pinning?

First of all he avoided playing **1 Rc1** because black can play **1 ... Rc1+** forcing **2 Qxc1** and black escapes the pin.

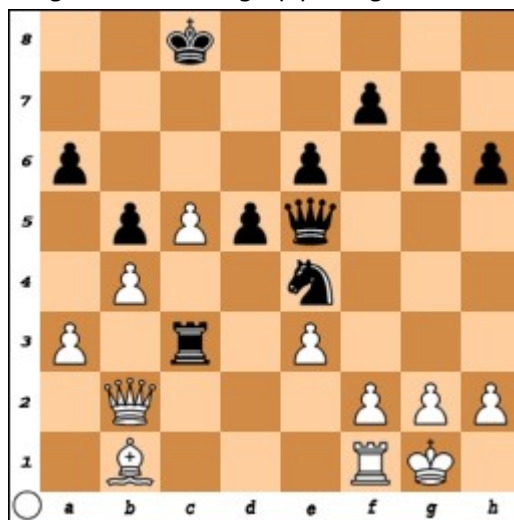
Alekhine attacked the black queen with **1 f4 Qg7** Black retreated the queen to a square where it could continue to defend the rook.

Now Alekhine played **2 Kf2**, a move only made possible because he played **1 f4** earlier. White's threat is simply to play **3 Rc1** and if black plays **3 ... Rxc1** it is no longer check so Alekhine can win the queen with **4 Qxg7**.

Capablanca is lost but has one last hope. **2 ... Qf6** threatens a check on h4 but white avoids it with **3 g3**. Increasingly desperate Capablanca tried **3 ... g5** but after **4 Rc1** Alekhine won the rook and Capablanca resigned.

It is worth noticing that every white move contained a threat.

1 f4 threatened the queen, **2 Kf2** threatened Rc1 winning the rook, **3 g3** also threatened Rc1 winning the rook and **4 Rc1** threatened the rook.



Puzzles from HMP Leeds

Thanks to Stephen who runs the chess club at Leeds for these puzzles. Puzzle 3 is spectacular. I found puzzle 5 tough because I kept wanting to play Rb7 which does not work. Puzzle 8 is also tricky. I saw the correct first move but I couldn't see why it worked.

1 White to play

At first sight this position appears hopeless for Black as White is a piece ahead with a strong kingside attack. However, the white queen is threatened and the black queen and bishop create surprisingly awkward threats, such as 1 ... Qb4+ or 1 ... Qxb2. How can White avoid these problems and win at once?



5 Black to play

Black's queen & rook are both under attack from the knight on a5. What should black play?



2 White to play

We often talk about the power of rooks on open files. Here it helps white. Also black's queen is a long way from the king. How can White take advantage of this?



6 White to play

1 Re8 looks strong but it loses to 1 ... Qa1+ 2 Kh2 Qe5+ 3 Rxe5 Bxe5+ 4 f4 Rxf7 and black is better. Can you see a stronger move for white?

3 White to play

Here the white rook and bishop can both be taken. Can you find White's clever solution to this problem?



7 Black to play

Black has a great attack with the queen, rook, knight and two bishops all pointing towards the white king. Can you see a spectacular win for black?



4 Black to play

Players are told correctly that they should get the king safe by castling. However, if all the pieces abandon the king, this pawn wall may not provide good enough cover, as is the case here. How did Black win?



8 Black to play

White is attacking the black queen and if it moves then white can play Rxc8. However, Black has a clever tactic to turn the tables. Can you see it?

Answers

1

1.Qxg7+ Kxg7 2.Bf6+ Kg8 3.Nh6 checkmate.

2

1.Rg5+ hxg5 (1...Kh7 2.Qf5 checkmate.) 2.Qf6 Kh7 3.Rh8 checkmate.

3

1.Ra8 wins ...Rxa8 (1...Bxb3 2.Rxa6) 2.Bxd5+ followed by ...Ke7 3.Bxa8.

4

1...Rxc2+ 2.Kxc2 (if 2.Kf1 Rg1+3.Kxc1 Rg8+ 4.Kh1 Bxd5+ 5.Re4 Bxe4+ 6.f3 Bxf3 checkmate) ...Rg8+ 3.Kf3 Bxd5+ 4.Kf4 Qg5 checkmate.

5

1...bxa5 2.Rxb7 Nxd3 and Black emerges a piece ahead.

6

1.Bf6 Rxf7 2.Re8 Rf8 3.Rxf8 checkmate.

7

1...Qxh2+ 2.Kxh2 hxg3 3.Kg1 Rh1 checkmate

8

1 ... Qxc1+ 2 Rxc1 Rxc1+ 3 Kxc1 bxa2 and the pawn promotes, giving Black a decisive material advantage. After 4 Qxh7 a1Q+ 5 Kc2 Qa4+ Black won easily

Chessable Masters Final

A final between two in-form players. Dutch No 1 Anish Giri is much improved and has obviously been working hard at internet speed chess. He celebrated his 26th birthday during the semi-finals. But World Champion Magnus Carlsen has looked so strong beating very dangerous opponents with surprising ease. Giri looked dangerous at times but Carlsen was the well-deserved winner.

A great attacking win by Carlsen

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 d5 4 Nc3 c5 5 cxd5
Nxd5 6 e4 Nxc3 7 bxc3 cxd4 8 cxd4 Bb4+ 9
Bd2 Bxd2 10 Qxd2 O-O 11 Bc4 Nd7 12 O-O
b6 13 Rad1 Bb7 14 Rfe1 Rc8 15 Bb3 Re8



This has all been played before and Giri has reached similar positions in this tournament so it cannot have come as much of a surprise to Carlsen. He now plays Re3 which signals his attacking intent. I would not be surprised if the Re3 and d5 idea was planned beforehand.

16 Re3 Nf6 17 d5 Carlsen gives up a pawn for an attack 17 ... exd5 18 e5 Ne4 19 Qe1 threatens Rxe4 19 ... Qc7 20 Nd4 this is a strong square. The knight can aim for f5 or b5 and d6 and gives Carlsen compensation for the pawn 20 ... a6 Giri cannot take the e pawn with 20 ... Qxe5 because 21 f3 wins the knight 21 h4 this is usually played when the rook is still on h1 but it proves tough to meet here too 21 ... Rcd8 22 f3 Nc5 23 h5 Ne6 24 Nf5 d4 Giri gives a pawn back to try to get some counterplay by unlocking the bishop 25 Rd3 Nc5 26 Rxd4 Rxd4 27 Rxd4 Nxb3 28 Qg3 threatens checkmate 28 ... g6 29 axb3 Rd8 not 29 ... Qxe5 30 Qxe5 Rxe5 31 Rd8 checkmate 30 e6



This piles the pressure on Giri Qxc7, exf7+ and Rxd8+ are all threats. Giri cannot play 30 ... Qxg3 because of 31 Rxd8 checkmate 30 ... Qc1+ 31 Kh2 Rxd4 32 e7 Qc8 33 Qe5 Rh4+ 34 Kg3 resigns Giri's position falls apart. The rook is under attack and the threat of Qg7 checkmate is too strong.

What can we learn from this game? The idea of d5 giving up a pawn for a big pawn on e5 and a strong knight on d4 is powerful.

Giri misses a chance

Giri played 1 Bxe6 fxe6 and gave Carlsen a weak e pawn but there was a better move that almost wins on the spot. Can you see it?

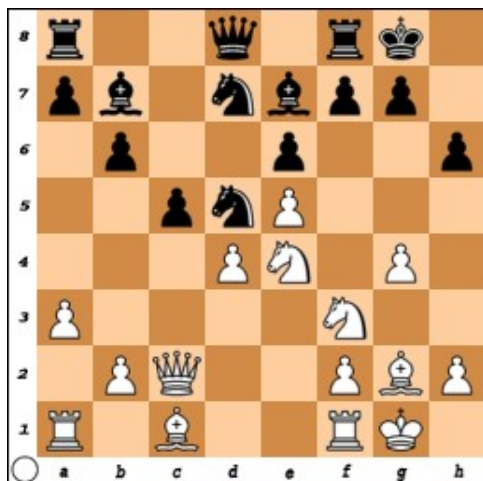


1 Qh6 threatening Ng5 and Qxh7+ gives white an advantage. Black's only defence is 1 ... Qf6 but after 2 Ng5 Qg7 3 Qxg7 Kxg7 4 Bxe6 fxe6 5 Nxe6+ and white wins the rook on f8.

How to react to an attack on the wing

Players are often advised to react to a wing attack with an attack in the centre. I recently heard a GrandMaster criticise this, not because it is wrong but because it is so hard to do. So it is good to see the World Champion playing black giving us an example of how to do it.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 c6 4 Nbd2 Nf6 5 g3 Be7 6 Bg2 0-0 7 0-0 b6 8 Qc2 Bb7 9 e4 Na6 10 e5 Nd7 11 a3 Nc7 12 cxd5 Nxd5 13 Ne4 h6 14 g4 c5



Giri was behind in the match and needed to win. By playing g4 he shows he is up for a fight. It sets Carlsen problems. Carlsen reacts by attacking the white centre with ... c5.

15 g5 a tough move to meet. If 15 ... hxg5 16 Bxg5 followed by Kh1 and Rg1 gives Giri an attack. Carlsen keeps attacking the centre. 15 ... cxd4 16 gxh6 g6 Instructive play from Carlsen. He does not worry about losing a pawn but he prevents white having an open file to attack.

17 Neg5 Rc8 18 Qd1 Ba6 19 Re1 d3 Carlsen keeps playing in the centre 20 h4 Nc5 21 Nd4 Nf4 22 Bxf4 Qxd4 23 Qg4 d2 24 Rd1



Carlsen now played 24 ... Nd3 25 Ne4 Nxf4 26 Qxf4 and with threats of Nf6+ white got enough counter play to equalise. Can you see a better move than Nd3?

24 ... Be2 is a better try because after 25 Qxe2 Qxf4 the d pawn is safe because 26 Qxd2 Qxd2 27 Rxd2 Nb3 wins a rook for a knight.

Two things to learn from this game are the way Carlsen reacted to g4 and g5 by attacking the centre starting with ... c5 and the way Carlsen kept things blocked on the kingside with ... g6.

Giri hits back

Carlsen took an early lead but made the mistake of playing too passively. Giri got an active position and found a nice finish,



1 ... Nb4 2 cxb4 Bxd4 3 bxa5 Bxf2+ 4 Kf1 Qd4 5 Qxc6 Bxe1 6 Bxe1 Qxb2 with a big advantage for Giri.

Moves that gain time

In many positions, especially when both sides are attacking, it is important to act as quickly as possible. Sometimes it is worth giving up pieces to gain time. We look at eight examples here.

1 Black to move

If black had a pawn on f5 rather than a knight it would be checkmate. A slow move such as 1 ... Ng7 allows black to hit back with a move like 2 Rc1. Black needs to act more quickly. Can you see it?



5 White to move

White has three possible moves. Two lose and one wins. Which one wins?



2 Black to move

If the black knight was not there 1 ... Qf6+ would lead to checkmate. Black must act quickly though. A slow move such as 1 ... Ng5 allows white to defend with Nd4. Where can black move the knight to force a win?



6 Black to move

White has just taken a bishop on g7. Black can retake but is there a better move?

3 Black to play

Both kings are under attack. It is vital to act quickly in this type of position. Black would like to play 1 ... Rf2 checkmate but the rook is pinned. Can black break the pin? This one is spectacular.



7 Black to play

Now for a queen dance. If black's queen was on c1 then 1 ... Rxe3+ 2 fxe3 Qxe3+ 3 Kb4 Qb3+ wins the queen. Can black gain a move and get the queen on c1?



4 Black to play

Both sides are attacking so black does not have time for 1 ... e1(Q) 2 Rxh6+ gxh6 3 Qxh6+ Qh7 4 Qxh7 checkmate. What did black play?



8 Black to play

1 ... Rg5+ 2 fxg5 Qh3 threatens Qh2 checkmate but loses to f4. How can black gain a move and make this idea work?

1 Black needs to move the knight and not give white a chance to respond. 1 ... **Nd6+** wins. Black is happy to give up the knight to be able to play ... f5. 2 **exd6** this is the only way to get out of check 2 ... **f5 checkmate**. The black rook stops the king from retreating.

2 Black's winning move is 1 ... **Ne1**. The key point is that it threatens ... Qf1 checkmate as well as ... Qf3+ and ... Qg2 checkmate. White cannot defend both threats. If 2 (either) Rxe1 Qf3+ 3 Kg1 Qg2 checkmate. If 2 Nd4 Qxf1 checkmate. White can play on with 2 **Kg1** but after 2 ... **Nxc2** the position is lost for white.

3 1 ... **Qd3+** is a brilliant move. White's only reply is 2 **Rxd3** but this blocks white's bishop's view to the black king and allows 2 ... **Rf2 checkmate**. Both sides were attacking so the most important thing is to act quickly. Black is prepared to give up the queen to speed up the attack.

4 I think this one is really tough. The winning move is 1 ... **Qh7**. Many players might look at this and still not understand why it is so strong. The key point is that it slows down white's attack. White can win the queen with 2 **Bxh7** but this gives black time for 2 ... **e1(Q)** because 2 ... **Rxh3** is no longer check. It would take a real chess imagination to see this one. It was actually Boris Spassky the great Russian chess World Champion who played it.

According to the chess engines 1 ... e1(N)+ also wins. In most lines black can play ... Nf3+ and ... Ng5 defending h7 and stopping white's attack. Full marks if you said 1 ... e1(N)+. The point about it is that black is acting quickly and not giving white spare moves.

5 The winning move is 1 **Nb1**. the important point is that the black knight does not end up on e1 and threaten checkmate on c2. Play might continue 1 ... **Kxg7** 2 **gxf7+** **Qxg3** 3 **fxe8(N)+** **Kf8** 4 **Rxg3** **Kxe8** 5 **Rxd3** and white wins. If 1 Rxe1 Rxe1+ 2 Qxe1 Nxe1 threatens 3 ... Nc2 checkmate and white has a few checks but cannot stop it. Play might go 3 Rh7+ Kg8 4 gxf7+ Kxh7 5 f8(N)+ (not 5 f8(Q) Nc2 checkmate) 5 ... Kh6 6 Nd7 Nc2 checkmate. 1 Qxe1 Rxe1+ 2 Rxe1 Nxe1 leads to the same position as before. When both sides are attacking it is often more important to attack quickly than to win material.

6 1 ... **Qxa2** is better than taking the bishop because black threatens ... Qa1 checkmate and, if the white queen moves, ... Qxc2 checkmate. White can only prevent checkmate by 2 **Qd3** giving up the queen. 1 ... Kxg7 is not as clear because white can fight on with 2 Kb2 and Nc1. 1 ... Qa3+ 2 Kb1 Be6 is also not as clear because white can defend with Nc1.

7 The main line is 1 ... **Qe1+** 2 **Rd2** (only move) **Qc1+** 3 **Rc2** and now black has gained a move so 3 ... **Rxe3+** 4 **fxe3** **Qxe3+** 5 **Kb4** **Qb3+** wins the white queen. If 3 Kb4 Qxd2+ wins a rook. If 4 Kb4 Rb3+ 5 Kc5 Qxc2 also wins a rook.

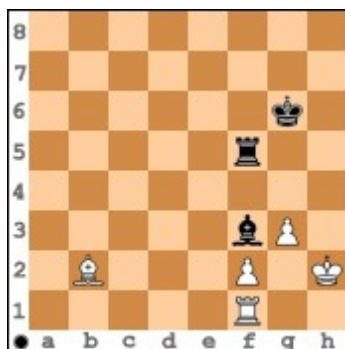
8 We saw that the basic line with ... Rg5+ and ... Qh3 does not work but white can gain a move with 1 ... **Rg5+** 2 **fxg5** **Qg4+** 5 **Kh1** **Qh3**. The crucial difference is that by playing Qg4+ black forced the white king to h1 so now ... Qh3 threatens ... Qxf1 checkmate as well as ... Qxh2 checkmate. Black cannot defend both threats. 6 **f4** fails to 6 ... **Qxf1 checkmate**.

Puzzles from HMP Leeds

Thanks to Stephen who runs the chess club at Leeds for these puzzles. White often plays g3, Bg2 and castles (or black plays g6, Bg7 and castles). This can provide a strong defence and the bishop can be very powerful. However, If the bishop is exchanged then the white king can become weak because the white squares (f3, g2 and h3) are hard to defend. The first four puzzles show examples of attacks when the bishop on g2 has been exchanged.

1 Black to play

White has played the pawn to g3 and lost the bishop on g2. This has allowed black to put a bishop on f3 and build up a mating attack. Can you see how black checkmates in two moves?



5 Black to play

Now for a different theme. Black's control of the d file gives an advantage. Can you see a checkmate in five moves in the main line?



2 Black to play

White has played g3 and lost the bishop on g2 and black has taken control of the light squares. The pawn on f3 covers g2 and e2 and the bishop on h3 covers g2 and f1. How can black force checkmate in three moves?



6 Black to play

We often show checkmates but this puzzle is slightly less dramatic. How did black win a pawn with a clever combination?



3 Black to play

We have the familiar pattern of a pawn on g3 and no bishop on g2. Black has a spectacular finish but the basic idea is the same as in puzzle 1. Can you see the finish?



7 White to play

Chess puzzles can often be solved by considering what moves you would ideally like to play and then working out a way of playing it. White wants to play Qg7 checkmate but the g3 rook is in the way. How can it get out of the way?

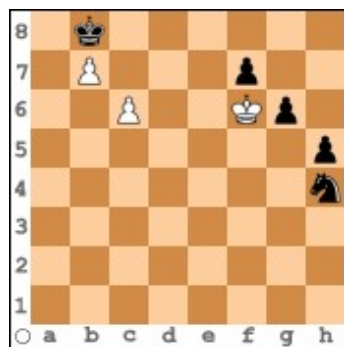
8 White to play

Black's three pawns look dangerous. How can white force a winning position?



4 Black to play

Here we have the same pattern but on the other side of the board. A pawn on b3 and no bishop on b2. Black has pushed a pawn to a3 to control b2. How can black checkmate in two moves?



1

The bishop on f3 is very powerful and gives black control of g2 and h1. Black wins with 1 ... Rh5+ 2 Kg1 Rh8 checkmate.

2

1 ... Bf1 wins because it let black's queen into the attack. White has no defence to ... Qh3 and ... Qg2 checkmate. If 2 Kxf1 Qh3+ 3 Kg1 Qg2 checkmate. If 2 Rxf1 Qh3 and white cannot prevent 3 ... Qg2 checkmate.

3

1 ... Ne2+ 2 Qxe2 (if 2 Kh1 Qxf1 checkmate) Qxh2+ 3 Kxh2 Rh4+ 4 Kg1 (4 gxh4 is impossible because the bishop on d6 would be able to take the king) Rh1 checkmate.

4

1 ... Qd4 is decisive. If 2 Rxd4 Re1 checkmate. Any other move fails to 2 ... Qxb2 checkmate.

5

1 ... Rxa5 wins as 2 Rxa5 allows 2 ... Qd2+ 3 Qxd2 (3 Kf1 Qe1 checkmate) Rxd2+ 4 Kf1 Rd1+ 5 Ke2 Re1 checkmate.

6

1 ... Qxf2+ 2 Qxf2 Bxf2+ 3 Kxf2 Ng4+ 4 Kf1 Rxd1 5 Rxd1 Nxe5 and black has emerged with a safe extra pawn.

7

1 Rg7 threatens Rh7+ clearing g7 for the queen. After 1 ... Bf8 (1 ... Nh5 2 Rg8+ leads to checkmate next move) 2 Rg8+ Kh7 3 Qg7+ Bxg7 4 R1xg7 checkmate.

8

The white king has to support the c pawn without the knight forcing it away. The winning move is 1 Ke7 Nf5+ 2 Kd7 Nd4 3 c7+ Kxb7 4 c8(Q)+ wins. If 1 ... Nf3 2 Kd8 Nd4 3 c7+ Kxc7 4 c8(Q)+ wins. If 1 ... g5 2 Kd8 Ng6 3 c7+ Kxb7 4 c8(Q)+ wins.

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Checkmate

Here are eight puzzles that all involve the threat of checkmate. The more you play the more you will develop an eye for these patterns.

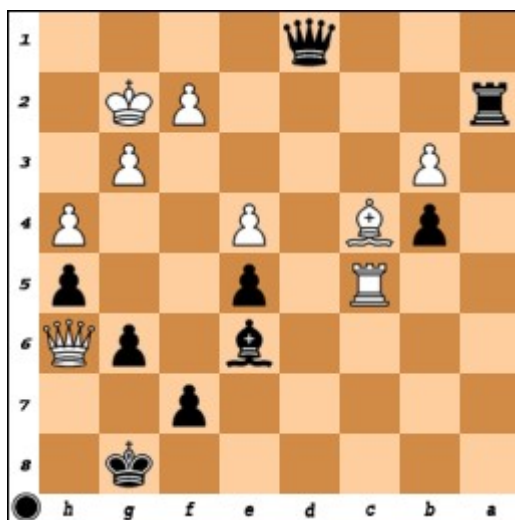
1 Black to play and win.

The white king looks as though it might be escaping. Can you see how black trapped it?



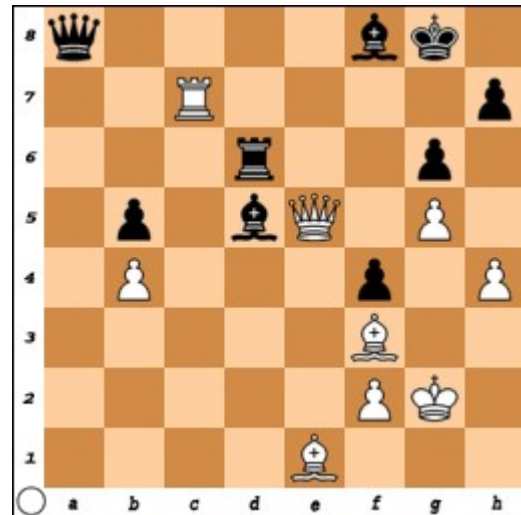
2 Black to play and win.

White's attack looks very threatening so black needs to act quickly.



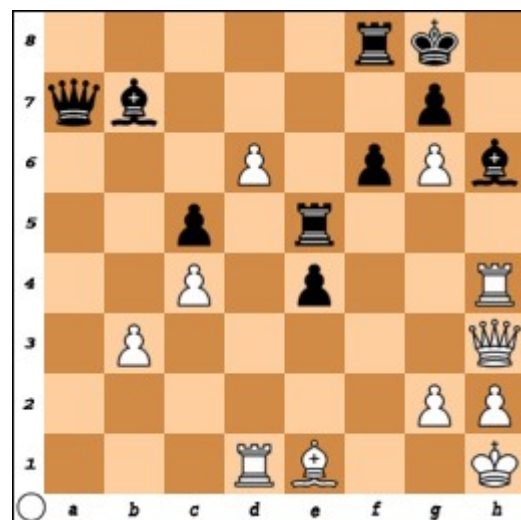
3 White to play and win.

Both kings are very exposed. Black is threatening ... Bxf3+. How can white strike first?



4 White to play and win.

White has a big attack on the h file and a strong pawn on d6. There are a number of winning moves but can you spot the quickest win?



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5 White to play and win.

White wants to play Qh6 but black can respond with ... Bxf6. What did white play?



6 White to play and win. How does white deal with the attacked knight.



Solutions

1 1 ... Bd3+ 2 Ke1 Qe6+ 3 Be3 Qxe3+ leaves black a piece up. If 2 Kg1 Qh2 checkmate. If 3 Kd1 Qe2 checkmate

2 1 ... Bh3+ 2 Kxh3 Qh1 checkmate. If 2 Kh2 Rxf2+ 3 Kxh3 Qh1 checkmate

3 1 Bc3 1 ... Bxf3+ 2 Kh2 and Qh8 checkmate can be delayed but not stopped.

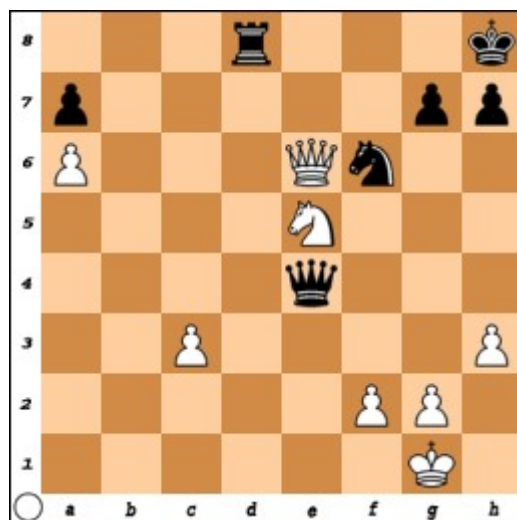
4 1 Rxh6 gxh6 2 Qd7 and Qh7 checkmate cannot be stopped. 2 Qxh6 also wins.

7 Black to play and win.

Qg7+ allows the king to run to e7. Can you see a better move?



8 White to play and win. This is a classic checkmate. Worth remembering.



5 1 Rxe5 Nxe5 2 Qh6 and 3 Qg7 checkmate cannot be stopped.

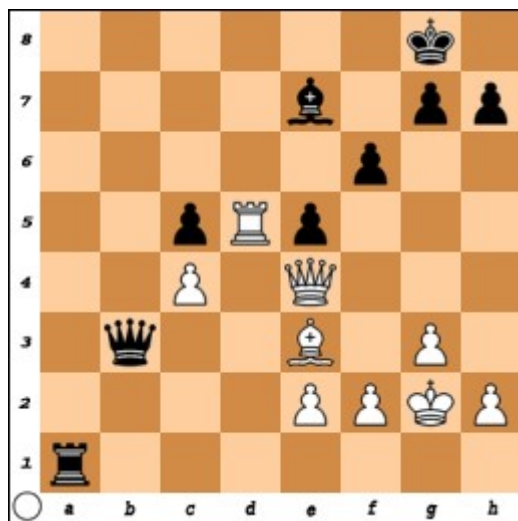
6 1 Qh6 Bxf6 2 Qf8 checkmate if 1 ... Qxf6 2 Rd8+ Bxd8 3 Qf8 checkmate.

7 1 Bxg6 Ne5 2 Rxe5 Qxe5 3 Qxf7 checkmate. 1 ... fxg6 2 Qg7 checkmate 1 ... Ke7 2 Qxf7+ Kd8 Qxe8+ wins easily

8 1 Nf7+ Kg8 2 Nh6+ Kh8 3 Qg8+ Rxg8 4 Nf7 checkmate. If 2 ... Kf8 3 Qf7 checkmate. If 3 ... Nxg8 4 Nf7 checkmate

Missed opportunities

Here are two positions from a drawn game played at HMP Wandsworth.



White to move. Can you see a strong move?

1 Rd8+ Bxd8

It looks as though white has lost a rook but the Queen gets a lot of dangerous checks.

2 Qd5+ Kf8
3 Qxd8+ Kf7
4 Qd7+ Kg6

If 4 ... Kf8 5 Bxc5+ Kg8 6 Qe8 checkmate

5 Qe8+ Kf5
6 g4+ Kxg4
7 Qd7+ Kh5

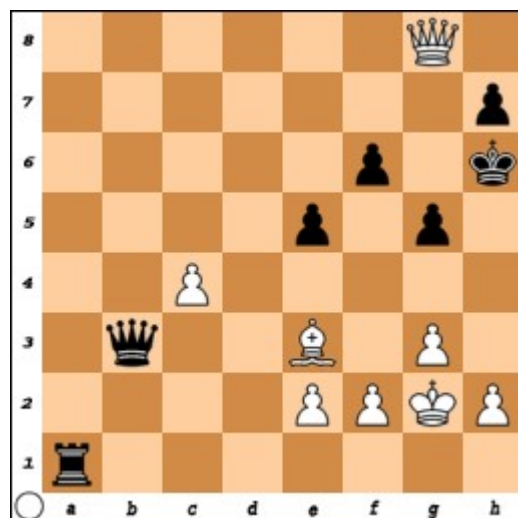
If 7 ... f5 8 Qxg7+ Kh4 9 Qg5 checkmate

8 Qf5+ g5

If 8 ... Kh4 9 Qh3 checkmate

9 Qxh7+ Kg4
10 Qh3 checkmate

All white's moves are forcing moves, checks. Black has very few choices and ends up getting checkmated. However, this line is difficult to see because it is 10 moves deep.



Here is a position from later in the same game. It is White to move.

White played h4 but there is a stronger move.

1 Qf7

This is very strong because threatens the pawn on f6 and stops the King running away to h5.

The only way for Black to defend the pawn on f6 is to play 1 ... Ra6 but then White can play 2 Bc5. What does this threaten?

The answer is Bf8 checkmate. The only way to stop it is 2 ... Qb8 3 Bf8+ Qxf8 4 Qxf8+ but this loses the Queen.

Black's other try is to play

1 Qb1
2 Qxf6+ Qg6

2 ... Kh5 allows 3 Qg5 checkmate

3 Bxg5+ Kh5
4 Qxe5 Qxg5

It looks like White has lost the bishop but the key to this position is that the Black rook is undefended on a1.

5 Qxa1

White is now four pawns up and should win.

Four puzzles

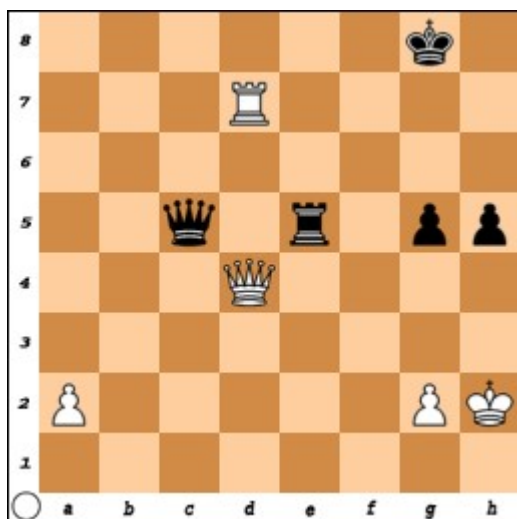
1 White to move

White wants to play Qg7 or Qf6 but the Black queen and rook are defending. One move forces black to move the queen or the rook.



2 White to move

Equal pieces but white has a rook on the seventh rank, which is very powerful. How can white win?

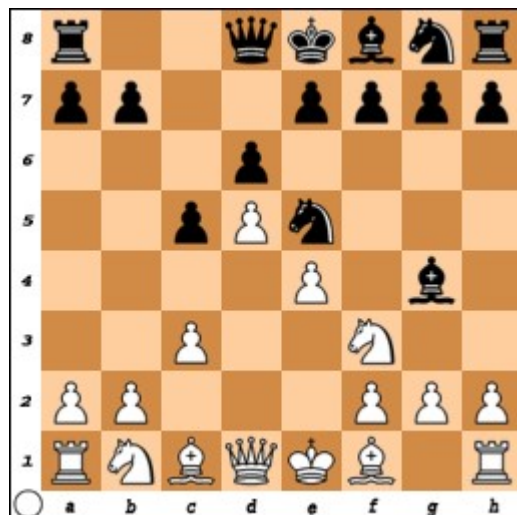


1 1 Re8 Qxe8 (if 1 ... Rxe8 2 Qg7 checkmate) 2 Qf6+ Rg7 3 Qxg7 checkmate.

2 1 Qd3 Rf5 (forced to stop Qg6+ or Qh7+) 2 Qb3+ Kh8 3 Qb8+ Qf8 4 Rd8 wins the queen. If 3... Rf8 4 Qb2+ and checkmate on g7.

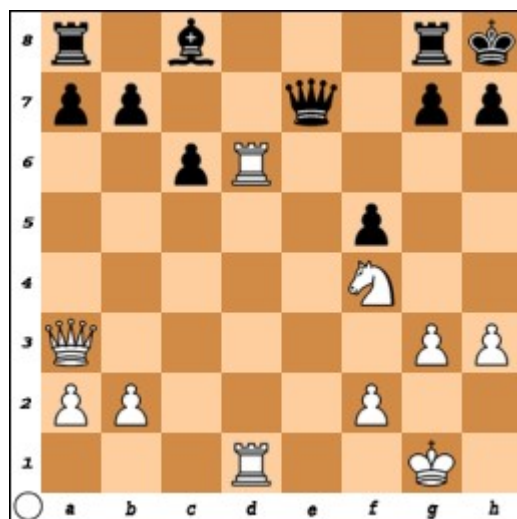
3 White to move

This is just out of the opening but white has a chance to win a piece. Can you see how?



4 White to move

White's rooks are controlling a lot more squares than black's. Can you see how white can win?



3 1 Nxe5 Bxd8 it looks like white has lost a queen but there is a lethal check 2 Bb5+ Qd7 3 Nxd7 wins a piece.

4 1 Rh6 threatens Ng6 checkmate 1 ... gxh6 2 Qxe7 wins a queen. If 1 ... Qxa3 then Ng6 checkmate.