

Chess Strategy

Practice and training guide



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In the *mare magnum* of chess literature, a vast room is already taken up by a multitude of educational texts, practice and training guides, encyclopedias: most of them are focus on tactic and combinational motifs. At the same time, it is uncommon to find texts where not only the strategy principles are present, but also an adequate amount of examples for an autonomous workout.

This work is intended for expert chess player (class A and Master candidates) and wants somehow to fill that gap. Here are collected positions taken from “classical” Grand Master games of the past and also pieces of nice creativity from contemporary players, including games played by the author; the effectiveness of the work performed with these positions has been successfully proven during the pre-match training group lesson of the “Avangard” School. Puzzles are randomly mixed, because I have knowingly avoided any classification based on thematic principles which may give the student a hint. By contrast, the complexity is purely subjective: a strategic solution may be evident for one student, whilst for another of the same strength that solution may be considered obscure. Thanks to this book, just during the training process, most of the moves will likely become easy and obvious.

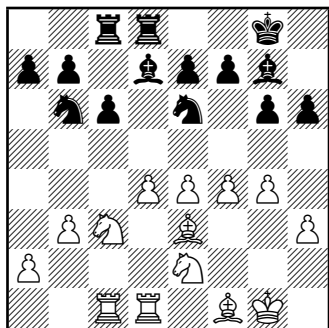
During the decision-making processes, these following rules simplify the discovery of the right continuation:

1. (Prophylaxis rule) First of all ask yourself: what is my opponent trying to do? Discovering hidden threats make it possible to drastically cut down the overall number of candidate moves.
2. (“Bad piece” rule) Choose a badly placed piece and try to move it into a better position.
3. (“Second weakness” rule) Whilst the attack against a vulnerable point of your opponent line-up might not immediately succeed, you are asked to find (or build up) a new target to attack on the opposing side.

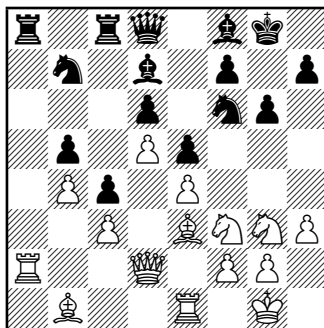
While you are solving a puzzle, I suggest not to spend more than 15–20 minutes; in general there are no sequences of forced moves nor long variations to calculate. Instead of searching for long variations, it is better to come up with an accurate analysis of the game hereinafter.

I hope this book will be useful as much for the students as for the instructors. I shall be grateful for all the advices and remarks that will be arriving.

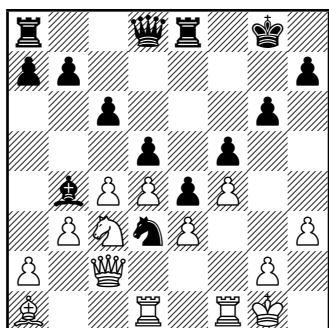
**Leonid Nikolaev, Master of Sport, first instructor of the
“Avangard” School**



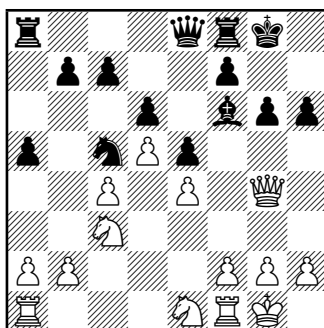
1: Black to move ■



2: White to move □



3: Black to move ■



4: Black to move ■

1. White is threatening 26. f5 to lock out Black. It needs to block the mobilised pawns center.

25... f5! 26 ♖g2 ♗c7 27 ♜f3 fxe4 28 ♙xe4 ♗bd5 (Rubinstein - Grünfeld, 1923)

2. 24 ♙a7!

This original manoeuvre helps White, who has an advantage in space, to avoid pointless exchanges and occupy the 'a' file.

24... ♗e8 25 ♙c2 ♗c7 26 ♖ea1 ♗e7 27 ♙b1 ♙e8 28 ♗e2 ♗d8 29 ♗h2 ♙g7 30 f4!± and White won:

30... f6 31 f5 g5 32 ♙c2! ♙f7 33 ♗g3 ♗b7 34 ♙d1 h6 35 ♙h5 ♗e8 36 ♗d1 ♗d8 37 ♖a3 ♗f8 38 ♖1a2 ♗g8 39 ♗g4 ♗f8 40 ♗e3 ♗g8 41 ♙xf7+ ♗xf7 42 ♗h5 ♗d8 43 ♗g6 ♗f8 44 ♗h5 1-0 (Karpov - Unzicker, 1974)

3. White wants to swap the strong ♗d3 with a ♗c3-e2-c1 manoeuvre.

21... ♙xc3!

and Black comes up with a useful swap: "good" Knight against "bad" Bishop, 22 ♙xc3 b5! 23 c5 b4! 24 ♙e1 a5 (and Black is eventually going to win:

25 g4 ♗d7 26 gxf5 ♗xf5 27 ♗h2 ♖e7 28 ♖g1 h6 29 ♖d2 ♗h7 30 ♖dg2 a4 31 ♙h4 axb3 32 axb3 ♖ea7! 33 ♗e2 ♖g8 34 ♖g4 ♖a3 35 ♗c2 ♖ga8 36 ♖1g2 ♗h5! 37 ♙g3 ♖a1 38 ♙h4 ♖e1 39 ♗e2 ♖aa1 40 ♗d2 ♖h1+ 41 ♗g3 ♖af1 0-1 (Yudovich - Alatortsev)

4. Black has a "bad" Bishop but with the following brilliant manoeuvre he finds him a task:

14... ♙d8! 15 ♗e2 c6! 16 ♖d1 ♙c7 17 h4 ♗e7 18 g3 ♗g7 19 ♗f3 a4 20 h5 ♙a5

Black has now the initiative which eventually turns into a victory:

21 ♖c1 ♗d7 22 ♖fd1 ♖ae8 23 ♗g2 f5! 24 exf5 ♖xf5 25 ♗e4 ♗xe4 26 ♗xe4 ♖ef8 27 ♖d3 ♖xh5 28 ♗h4 ♖xh4! 29 gxh4 ♖f4 30 ♗e2 ♗f5 31 c5 cxd5 32 cxd6 ♙b6 33 ♖f1 e4 34 ♖g3 d4 35 ♗d2 e3 36 ♗e1 ♗d5+ 37 ♗h3 ♗e6+ 38 ♗g2 ♗d5+ 39 f3 ♗xd6 0-1 (Ivanov - Benjamin, 1990)

5. White plans to play 17. g4 followed by the manoeuvre ♗d2-f1-g3-f5, therefore

16... h5! 17 ♖ed1 ♖fd8 18 ♗f1 g6 19 ♗f2 ♗g7 20 a4 ♗d7! 21 a5 ♗e5! 22 ♙e2 d4 23 exd4 cxd4 24 cxd4 ♖xd4 25 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 (Kasarian - Nikolaev, 2002)

Maurizio Camangi, software engineer, chess enthusiast, author of “[Guida ai server FICS](#)” (in Italian) and Olga Strelnikova, Russian mother-tongue, software engineer and beginner of the *Nobil Giuoco*, have already translated the original booklet from Russian to Italian with the aim of popularising this work which is focused on testing your own analysis abilities and strategic evaluation, thanks to 200 positions accurately selected by Leonid Nikolaev.

Leonid Nikolaev is the original author of this booklet in Russian and an important representative of the everlasting “soviet” chess school. Leonid set about developing a training program which would target the evaluation of strategic patterns and this booklet is his first work, followed by other interesting publications (in Russian).

We all hope that these translations will raise the interest in chess and the feedback from both Italian and English readers will support us on maintaining our [website](#) and boost new publications.

Leonid Nikolaev is available on [Chess.com](#).