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DRILL YOUR CHESS STRATEGY! 2

**500 hand-picked training exercises
with detailed solutions**



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CLASSIFICATION

★ - Easy

○ White to move

★★ - Medium

● Black to move

★★★ - Hard

★★★★ - Very hard

SIGNS

± white stands slightly better

⇔ with counter-play

± black stands slightly better

○ zugzwang

± white has the upper hand

mate

± black has the upper hand

! a very good move

+− white has a decisive advantage

!! an excellent move

−+ black has a decisive advantage

? bad move

= equality

?? a blunder

∞ unclear

!?! interesting move

∞ with compensation for the material

?! a dubious move

○ lead in development

△ with the idea

→ with attack

□ only move

↑ with initiative

△ better is

≤ worse is

⊕ time

Dad, thank you for everything!

Your sons

PREFACE

Welcome back chess friends!

Tartakower wisely said: "Tactics are what you do when there is something to do. Strategy is what you do when there is nothing to do." True chess mastery demands the ability to always find the best move, regardless of the position, and a deep understanding of strategic nuances.

This book is designed to boost your positional understanding to new heights!

In this book, you'll find 500 examples from real games, sorted into four different levels. We've picked the best and most helpful examples from games played in the second half of 2024 and the first half of 2025. Most of these games were played by very strong players.

This book continues the journey we started last year, using the same concept. Our goal here is to introduce new ideas, creating a complete and comprehensive learning experience when combined with the previous book.

These exercises are perfect for intermediate and club players aiming to reach a FIDE rating of 2200–2300. They're also incredibly helpful for CM and FM-level players aspiring to become International Masters or Grandmasters.

This isn't just a collection of random positions. We've worked hard to bring you a wide variety of strategic ideas, from the simplest and most common positional thoughts to very complex and deep plans. Prepare to dive into the depths of modern chess and discover the secrets of strategic mastery!

All positions are divided according to their difficulty on:

- * Easy positions. We are asking for basic positional understanding.
- ** Medium positions. You are supposed to find a bit deeper and longer plan.

*** Hard positions. You have to apply more advanced principles, calculate well and find a subtle and more difficult idea.

**** Very hard positions. It is more complicated. You should calculate more, find more advanced ideas and you have to take a lot of circumstances into account in order to find the right move.

While doing these tasks you should pay attention to the following:

- Who is better
- What is the worst placed piece in your position
- King safety (both yours and your opponent's)
- What is your opponent's next move and what is your opponent's plan
- Where are the weaknesses (both yours and your opponent's)
- Consequences of exchanges in the position

How to study this book? You should simply try to solve puzzles one by one. That's all. After you find the move and decide what would you do in a certain position, you should go to the back pages and compare your solution with the solution in the book. We made sure that the solutions and the moves we put are precise and easy to understand. Also, we put a lot of diagrams to help you visualize better. Our personal advice is to put every position on the board and try to solve it in the old-fashioned way. But, it is totally fine to solve the positions directly from the book if you are not at home or you simply don't have chess board with you. The way we created everything allows you to do it in the both ways.

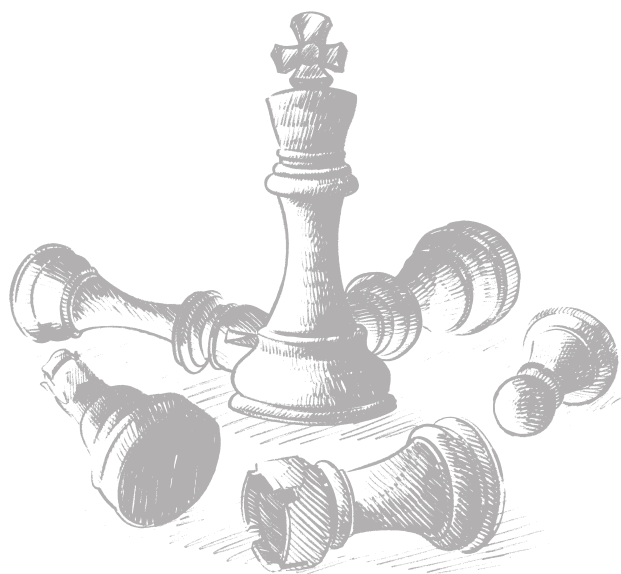
So, let's study chess strategy in the more dynamic and fun way!

GM Miloje Ratkovic

IM Milovan Ratkovic

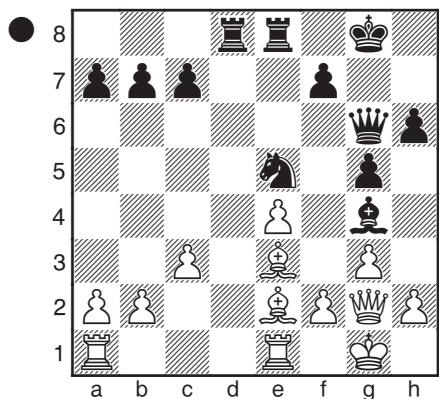
FM Petar Ratkovic

EXERCISES



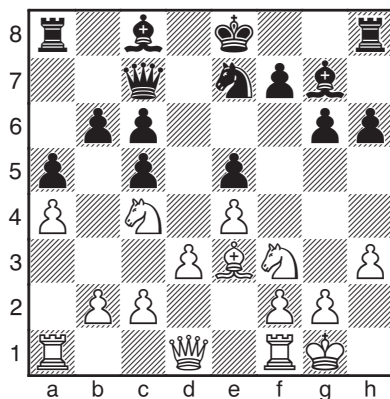
1. M. Popchev 2157 –
A. Demchenko 2619

Novi Sad 2025



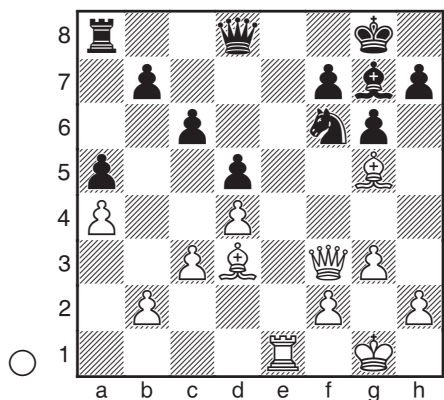
3. T. Dionisi 2410 –
N. Eveno 2249

France 2025



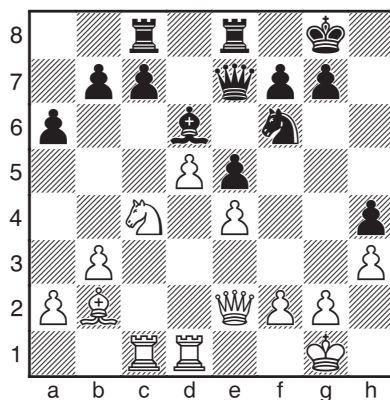
2. A. Tabatabaei 2686 –
A. Sarana 2679

Chennai 2024

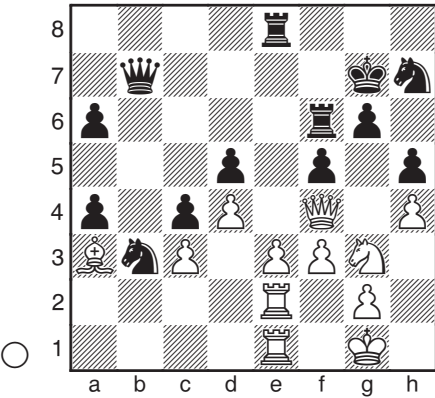


4. Xu Minghui 2428 –
S. Mitusov 2464

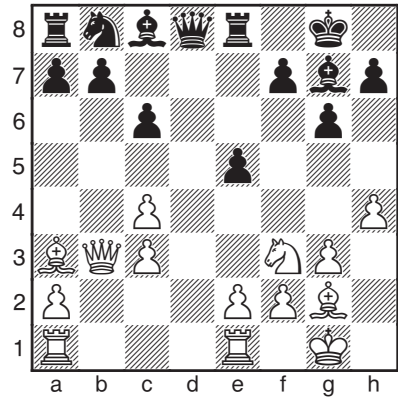
Seville Open 2025



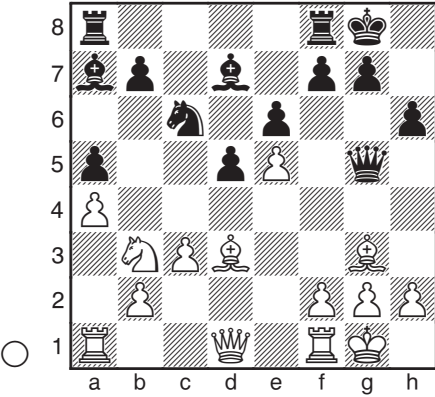
5. C. Schoppen 2527 –
L. Lenaerts 2310
Netherlands 2025



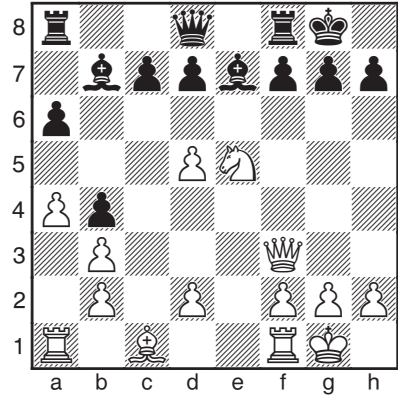
7. M. Petkov 2540 –
A. V. Sousa 2403
Olympiad Budapest 2024



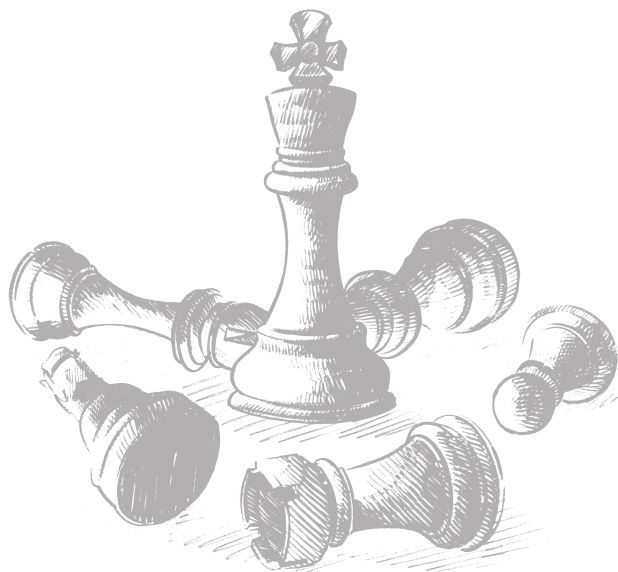
6. E. Can 2547 –
N. Noritsyn 2451
Olympiad Budapest 2024



8. R. Soltanici 2316 –
L. D. Nisipeanu 2580
Romania 2024

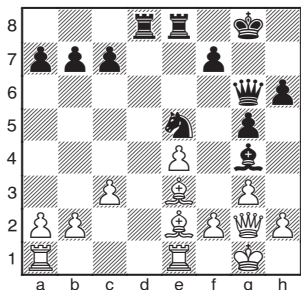


SOLUTIONS

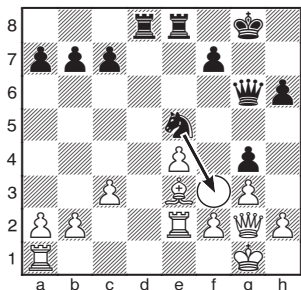


1. M. Popchev 2157 –
A. Demchenko 2619

★



1... ♖xe2! 2. ♖xe2 g4!-+

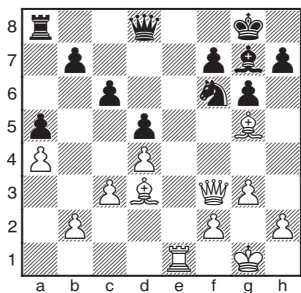


After placing the knight on the f3-outpost, White loses the e4-pawn and, ultimately, the game.

~*~

2. A. Tabatabaei 2686 –
A. Sarana 2679

★★



Black needs to play h6 or ♖d6 to escape the pin.

1. ♖f4! It prevents both! Black is passive and can't escape the pin any-time soon.

1... ♖c8

1... ♖b8 2. ♖e7!±

2. ♖f1! Fantastic idea! It goes to h3!

2... h6 Black sacrificed the pawn for activity.

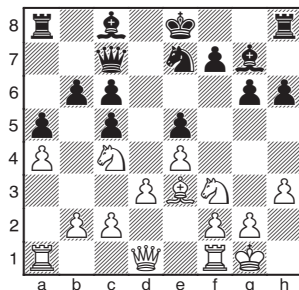
2... ♖c7 3. ♖xc7 ♖xc7 4. ♖f4 ♖c8 5. ♖h3 ♖a8 (5... ♖e8 6. ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 7. ♖c8+-) 6. ♖e7±

3. ♖xh6 ♖xh6 4. ♖xh6 ♖b6 5. ♖h3 ♖f8 6. ♖e6!! ♖h7 7. ♖e2± White's next step is ♖g2 followed by ♖g4 and h4-h5.

~*~

3. T. Dionisi 2410 –
N. Eveno 2249

★★★



1. b4! Let's be ambitious and play dynamic chess! A typical pawn break in these kinds of positions.

1. c3!?± This is the second best move in the position. It prepares b4 and d4.

1... axb4

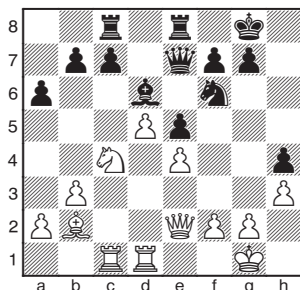
1... cxb4? 2. ♖xb6±

2.a5 bxa5 3.♙xc5± There are many threats such as ♖d6, ♙d6, ♙b6 and ♙xb4.



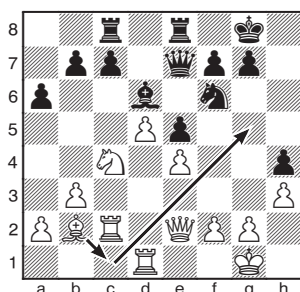
4. Xu Minghui 2428 - S. Mitusov 2464

★★★★



White is clearly better, but Black's position is relatively solid. Finding the right plan is quite challenging.

1.♖c2!



Fantastic move! Black's Achilles heel is the h4–pawn. The bishop on b2 brilliantly reroutes to g5, abandoning the long diagonal. If Black attempts to avoid this by relocating the knight, White gains control of the g4 and h5 squares for the queen.

1.♘e3!? Not bad, but Black can simply play g6;

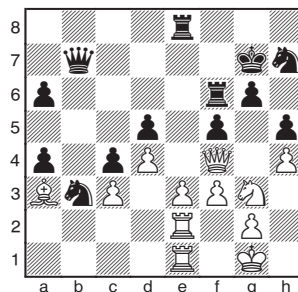
1.♘a5?! ♖b8 Nothing happens.

1...♖ed8 2.♙c1 ♘h7 3.♙g4 ♖b8 4.♙h6 ♙f6 5.♙e3 ♙b4 6.f4 exf4 7.♙xf4 ♙e7 8.e5+-

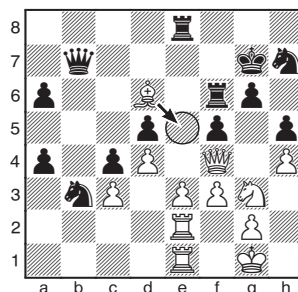


5. C. Schoppen 2527 - L. Lenaerts 2310

★



1.♙d6!



All the white pieces are actively engaged now. The e5–bishop will be a key player in White's decisive attack.

1...♙g8 2.♙e5 ♖fe6 3.e4!± White is much better. He won the game in a few moves.



6. E. Can 2547 - N. Noritsyn 2451

★★

The e5–pawn is hanging. What is the best way to defend it?