
CHESS

TACTICS FOR ADVANCED
PLAYERS



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Introduction

We are witnessing at present an undreamt-of upswing in the evolution of the theory of chess in general and of the theory of openings in particular. Each year, fresh tomes devoted to the study of various opening games or particular opening systems or even opening variants appear on the book shelves. Nowadays the analyses of some openings continue deep into the middle game and even extend to the end-game. Not quite so explicit, but still very thorough is the study of the end-games. Dozens of positions, which were once blank spots on the map of the end-game, have been analysed in detail, assessed and included in textbooks on the end-game.

Turning to the theory of the middle game we find that the progress made here is by no means as impressive, the development of this phase being characterized mainly by a rapid growth in the volume of data. Books on the middle game usually contain hundreds of positions, but unlike their predecessors, the progress made here is reflected chiefly by an increasing number of examples rather than by a more profound understanding of this fascinating phase of the game. But the search for new opening systems and their elaboration by chess practitioners

have enhanced the strategy of the middle game, because many different types of middle game positions, which are characterized by a general plan or a general strategy, have been analysed extensively and in depth. Tactics, on the other hand, are dominated by chiefly a matter sizing up a concrete situation, which makes it difficult to arrive at generalizations.

Of course no one can maintain that the theory of tactics has been marking time. Attempts are made to classify combinations and work out ways of facilitating the calculation of intricate combinations. And yet on the whole the development of the theory of the middle game lags perceptibly behind the other two phases of the game.

The explanation commonly given is that the middle game is the most involved and difficult phase of the game. It is by no means easy to understand it and its laws. That is precisely why the middle game—more than any other phase—calls for a circumspect approach, for easily comprehensible principles and for a gradual transition from the simple to the complex.

Anyone who has taken an interest in engineering knows that one must first familiarize oneself with the details of a machine before trying to understand how it works. And yet it is in the study of the middle game that the basic principle of pedagogics—the necessity of proceeding from the simple to the complex—is constantly being violated.

As a rule one begins learning the

middle game and chess tactics by trying out combinations. Unquestionably, this is one of the most fascinating and exciting aspects of chess. The mechanics of even the most elementary combination are extremely complex. It is advisable to familiarize oneself thoroughly with its elements before studying the combination. When chess writers describe chess combinations they usually stress the aesthetic and emotional aspects, namely the sacrifice, the surprise effect and the paradoxical element of the game.

Without a doubt these aspects are also important, because they bring out the fascinating side of the game. But it is even more important to unravel the mystery of the complex mechanics of the combination and to show its main elements and how they function.

And still the attempts made so far to explain the combination mechanism have not yielded more than a handful of general and not very conclusive concepts, such as harmony of the pieces or the concerted use of forces. Besides, the debate about what the term "combination" means is still continuing. Different authors have interpreted the term in different ways. The reader will recall that a discussion launched by the Soviet journal "Shakhmaty v SSSR" on the topic "What is a combination?" failed to produce a good answer, although it took up a good deal of space in the periodical.

But how is one to classify and study combinations if there is no consensus about the meaning of the term?

Of the combination it may be said with perfect truth that everybody is fascinated by it, that everybody understands what it is, but that nobody seems to be able to give an exact definition of the term.

The present book is an attempt to rescue the theoretical discussion from this impasse. We have endeavoured to establish a theoretical basis that would enable us to pursue our study of the extremely diverse tactical manifestations.

We have started by examining the most common and elementary situations arising from confrontations between isolated pieces and consider possible methods of attack and defence. Then we gradually proceed to examine the more complex facets of the game, making sure to preserve continuity by delving deeper into positions that have already been analysed. We soon reach the point at which we can examine positions involving double attacks. If we regard the term "double attack" in a broader sense than has been done up to now by theoreticians, namely not merely as a two-pronged attack, but as a combination of attacks and threats, we notice that the double attack in one form or another is the basis of most intricate tactical operations.

Considerable space is devoted to this topic to convince the student of the truth of this statement. We soon realize that the double attack is a very effective device not only for attacking but also for defending one's position.

The author is convinced that this

approach makes it easier to find one's way through the mare of tactical entanglements and provides a key to understanding the problems of the tactical game.

The next important step is to find out the meaning hidden behind such mysterious terms as "harmony of pieces" or "co-ordinated use of forces". Our aim here is to uncover the meaning and the essence of each term.

This enables us to introduce the term "elementary connections" which we have coined. We discover that any tactical operation no matter how complex, can be described in terms of different combinations of contacts. We soon realize that the concerted use of forces boils down to the co-ordinated use of combinations of contacts, i. e. to certain constellations of pawns, pieces or squares on the chess board. It is also demonstrated that most combinative end-games can be reduced to a few basic co-ordinated combinations of contacts.

With the aid of the term contacts and their combinations a definition of the combination is worked out and a new and promising system of classification is introduced.

But to obtain a thorough knowledge of the theory of contacts and their combinations proposed by the author the reader will have to read the book. It is intended to help him fathom the sources of the combination and to understand the origin and function of its mechanics.

Working his way through the book the reader will realize that various

kinds of combination of chessmen and squares on the board must be preceded by various contacts between them. And it is precisely these combinations aimed at specific targets that form the basis for developing combinative possibilities. We believe that we can proceed, with good prospects of success, not only to acquainting the reader with the various combinations occurring in chess, but also to showing him how to recognize them in their incipient stages and how to prepare them after making a detailed study of the theory of contacts and their combinations.

In this work we have also been able to answer a fundamental question that has occupied the minds of chess theoreticians for many years, namely whether combinations are an exception or the rule. Contrary to the notions of adherents of the positional school, who regard the combination as an avoidable exception, we propose to demonstrate that the development of contacts and their combinations is a natural development of the chess game. Since the appearance of contacts usually heralds the combination, it evolves as a complex and various consequence of this process.

With this work we give the receptive reader a book that is in the true sense a textbook of tactics and combinations. It is designed to help the reader master the art of combination, which is the highest level of mastery of the game. It is a pinnacle which elevates the game to an art and which—like any other art—is a

source of delight which affords the practitioner an opportunity to take part in the act of creation.

Compilation of technical terms used in the book

Before delving into the actual subject matter, the author thought it appropriate to define the terms and expressions used in this book. He feels certain that this will facilitate the study of the work and help the reader master the theory of contacts and their combinations.

Individual contacts — various forms of contact that develop between the pieces of one or both sides as well as between pieces on the one hand and the squares they control on the other.

Offensive contact— contact between the attacking piece and the piece it attacks.

Restrictive contact — contact that develops between any given piece and pieces of both players that restrict its freedom of movement by being in its line of fire. Or the contact that occurs between the piece and the squares of its normal range of movement when these squares are attacked by hostile pawns or pieces.

Defensive contact — contact that is normally established between a player's pieces and pawns for mutual protection.

Shielding contact — contact that occurs between pieces and pawns of

one colour. It occurs when one piece is attacked and another chessman (piece or pawn) shields it by stepping into the line of fire.

Queening threat — this contact develops between a queening pawn and its queening square.

Use of the queening threat — the contact that occurs between the king and the queening square of the opponent's passed pawn approaching the queening square.

Co-ordinated combination of contacts — deliberate combination of contacts between pieces and pawns of one side aimed at one or two targets. There are two distinct types of co-ordinated combinations of contacts: the combined attack and the double attack.

Combined attack — co-ordinated attack by pieces and pawns against a hostile chessman, one piece or pawn attacking the chessman, while the other attacking pieces or pawns restrict its freedom of movement. This is a combination of an offensive contact and a restrictive connection. A combined attack may also include shielding connections.

Two-fold attack — co-ordinated attack by two pieces threatening one and the same object (chessman or square); or the co-ordinated attack by two pieces against different objects; or the attack by one piece or pawn against two objects in the hostile camp. In most cases this involves the combination of two active connections.

Double attack — this term is broader than the term "two-fold attack", because in addition to being a two-

fold attack it covers the combination of attacks and threats and even the combination of two threats. The object of a double attack can be not only a piece or a pawn, but also an important square in the opponent's camp. As a rule a double attack occurs in the form of a combination of any two of the aforementioned contacts, but it can also be a combination of strong threats, such as mating, stalemating and perpetual check threats.

Combination — this term, in its original sense, refers to a co-ordinated combination of contacts, which necessarily gives a player an advantage, or to the conversion of a certain combination of White and Black pieces into a co-ordinated combination, which necessarily gives one side the advantage. A distinction is made between winning and drawing combinations.

The finale of a winning combination can be a combined attack, a two-fold attack or a double attack. The finale of a drawing combination can be the creation of a position in which there is no co-ordinated attack, but only restricting contacts (stalemate, fortification, blocking), or in which there is an attack or a threat, but no complete restricting contacts (perpetual check, perpetual pursuit). It goes without saying that the finale of a drawing combination can also be a double attack.

Stages of attack — the posting of a piece in relation to the object of attack. We distinguish, in the order of increasing influence, between three main stages: the concealed threat (also referred to here as preliminary threat or threat of the second order), the threat and the attack.

