Lesson 71

HOW TO STUDY THE OPENING

Guidelines for lessons 71-75

Young players with high ratings are excessively attracted by forcing opening variations, by fashion. For example, against the Dragon Variation nearly all of them, irrespective of their style, play the system with queenside castling etc. This is not supported by appropriate analytical work, and anything unexpected on the part of their opponent usually knocks them out of their stride.

The root of such an approach to opening theory lies, in my view, in the incorrect teaching of chess novices, which is essentially cramming. 'Overwhelmed' by the mass of variations, the pupils trust too much in other people's recommendations, and lose the habit of thinking critically.

The following approach seems correct. It is advisable to study opening theory on the basis of actual games – the teacher should help in their selection. A small number of good games recorded in a notebook and carefully analysed, plus an understanding of opening principles, will enable any simple system to be successfully mastered. The proposed method is also advisable, because the opening stage is not detached from the middlegame. The selected material should be augmented with games by the player himself. It is useful for him to use opening books as reference material, for checking on the correctness of his play. A comparison of his own opinion with book assessments, and a critical verification of them, will contribute to the development of creative independence.

Searching and experimentation should be encouraged. It does not matter if initially this is naive. Without a love for research it is impossible to become a strong chess player.

Below are given a few games, all of them 'Italian'. Of course, the opening has been chosen arbitrarily. Also when introducing other openings to pupils, the teacher should have an essential minimum of instructive games.

Content of the lesson

Brief biography of Chigorin.

Example I. Knorre − Chigorin, 1900.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.0-0 ♘f6 5.d3 d6 6.♗g5 (before Black castles this pin is ineffective) 6...h6 7.♗h4? g5 8.♗g3 h5! 9.♘xg5 (9.h4 was better, after which there would have followed 9...♗g4) 9...h4! 10.♘xf7
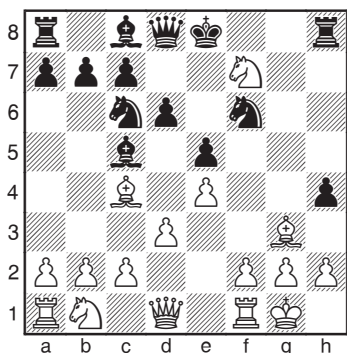

10...hg! 11.♘xd8 (if 11.♘xh8, then 11...♕e7 12.♘f7 ♗xf2+ 13.♖xf2 gf+ 14.♔xf2 ♘g4+ 15.♔g3 ♕f6 16.♕f3 ♕g7 is possible) 11...♗g4! 12.♕d2 (12.♘f7 ♖h5) 12...♘d4 13.♘c3 ♘f3+! 14.gf ♗xf3 with unavoidable mate.

Example II. Anand − Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 2018

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.d3 ♘f6 5.a4 (to maintain the light-squared bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal, but now queen-side castling looks dangerous for White) 5...d6 6.c3 a6 7.♗g5 (it is very tempting to pin the knight, but Black has not yet castled, and he has a strong continuation) 7...h6 8.♗h4 ♗a7 9.♘bd2 ♕e7! (now if White castles there follows g7-g5 with a strong attack) 10.h3 g5 11.♗g3 ♘h5 12.♕e2 (the standard manoeuvre 12.♘xe5 does not work because of 12...♘xg3 13.♘xc6 ♗xf2 14.♔xf2 ♘xh1 15.♔g1 bc) 12...♕f6 (Black's pieces are more promisingly placed; he can exchange the opponent's dark-squared bishop for a knight, and the bishop that remains without an opponent is very strong) 13.♗h2 ♘f4 14.♗xf4 gf 15.g4 ♘e7 16.b4 ♘g6
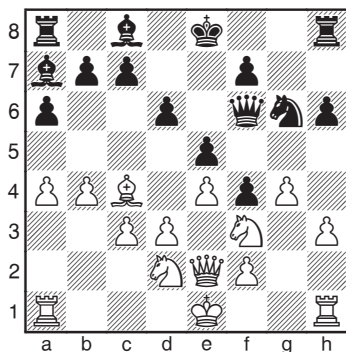
17.♔d1 (the white king has no safe place on the board; White decides to try and hide it on the

queenside) 17...h5 18.g5 ♕e7 19.b5 ♔f8 20.ba ba 21.d4 ♔g7 22.d5 ♗d7 23.♔c2 ♖hb8 24.♗xa6 ♗xf2 25.♗b5 ♗e3 26.h4 ♖a5 27.c4 ♖ba8 28.♔b3 ♘f8 (Black begins transferring his knight to c5, after which White's position becomes very difficult) 29.♖hc1 ♗g4 30.♔c2 ♗xd2 31.♔xd2 ♘d7 32.♖a3 ♘c5 33.♗c6 ♖b8 34.♔e1 ♕d8 35.♕c2 ♗xf3 36.♖xf3 ♕c8. Not finding any defence against the opponent's threats, the chief of which was 37...♕g4, White resigned.
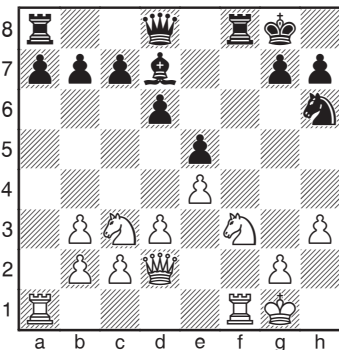
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HOW TO STUDY THE OPENING (continuation)

Content of the lesson

Example I. Salwe − Schlechter, Karlsbad 1907.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♘f6 4.d3 ♗c5 5.♘c3 d6 6.♗e3 ♗xe3? 7.fe (the f-file and control over the central squares more than compensate for the doubled pawns) 7...♘a5 8.♗b3 ♘xb3 9.ab ♘g4 10.♕d2 f5 11.ef ♗xf5 12.0-0 0-0 13.h3 ♘h6 (13...♘f6 14.♘xe5) 14.e4 ♗d7


15.d4! (White is better mobilised, and the opening of the game is to his advantage) 15...♘f7 (15...ed 16.♕xd4 b6 17.e5 is dangerous) 16.de de 17.♖fd1 ♘d6 18.♘xe5 ♗e6 19.♘f3 (now if 19...♗xh3 there follows 20.e5) 19...♖xf3 (an attempt to create an attack) 20.gf ♕h4 21.♖a5 ♖f8 22.♕f2 ♕xh3 23.♖d3 b5 (after 23...♖f6 24.♖g5 ♖h6 25.♕g2 Black's offensive is repelled) 24.♕h2 (forcing the exchange of queens) 24...♕xh2+ 25.♔xh2 g5 26.e5 ♘f7 27.♖xb5 g4 28.fg ♘g5 29.♖c5 ♖f2+ 30.♔g3 ♖f7 31.♖e3 ♖f1 32.♘e4 ♖g1+ 33.♔f2 ♖xg4 34.♘xg5. Black resigned.

Example II. Dominguez − Caruana, Internet 2018.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.c3 ♘f6 5.d3 d6 6.0-0 0-0 7.♖e1 h6 8.h3 a5 9.♘bd2 a4 10.♘f1 ♗d7 11.a3 (11.d4 is more in the spirit of the position) 11...♗b6 12.♘g3 ♖e8

13.♘h4? (White prematurely begins concrete action; after 13.♗a2 ♗e6 14.♗xe6 fe the position would have remained equal) 13...♘g4! 14.hg ♕xh4 15.♕f3? (after 15.♗e3 ♗xe3 16.♖xe3 ♗xg4 17.♕c2 White would be a pawn down, but he would have avoided any direct threats) 15...♗xg4! (luring the opponent) 16.♕xf7+? (the best chance was 16.♗xf7+ ♚f8 17.♘f5 ♕xf2+ 18.♕xf2 ♗xf2 19.♚xf2 ♚xf7 with an extra pawn for Black; now White loses material) 16...♚h7 17.♗e3
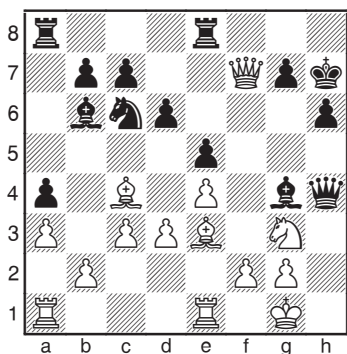
17...♖f8! (an interesting example of trapping the queen) 18.♕d5 ♘e7 (18...♖xf2! was even stronger, as is demonstrated by the variation 19.♚xf2 ♖f8+ 20.♚g1 ♕xg3 21.d4 ed 22.cd ♗f3 23.♗f1 ♗a5 24.♗f2 ♕xf2+ 25.♚xf2 ♗xe4+) 19.♕b5 ♖a5 20.♕b4 ♘c6 21.♗xb6 ♘xb4 22.ab ♖aa8 23.♗xc7? (23.♗e3, defending the f2-point, was stronger) 23...♖xf2! (Black's attack is irresistible) 24.♖e3 ♖af8 25.♗xd6 ♗h3 26.♗xf8 ♖xg2+ 27.♚h1 ♖xg3 28.♖xg3 ♕xg3 29.♖g1 ♕f3+ 30.♚h2 ♕f2+ 31.♚h1 ♕xf8. White resigned.

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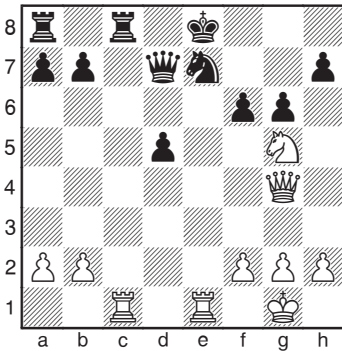
HOW TO STUDY THE OPENING (continuation)

Content of the lesson

Steinitz – Bardeleben, Hastings, 1895.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.c3 ♘f6 5.d4 ed 6.cd (6.e5 is not dangerous on account of 6...d5) 6...♗b4+ 7.♘c3 d5 8.ed ♘xd5 9.0-0 ♗e6 10.♗g5 ♗e7 11.♗xd5! ♗xd5 12.♘xd5 ♕xd5 13.♗xe7 ♘xe7 14.♖e1 f6 15.♕e2 ♕d7 16.♖ac1 c6 (16...♚f7 was better) 17.d5! cd 18.♘d4 ♚f7 19.♘e6 ♖hc8 20.♕g4 g6 21.♘g5+ ♚e8

22.♖xe7+! ♔f8! 23.♖f7+! ♔g8 24.♖g7+! ♔h8 25.♖xh7+ ♔g8 26.♖g7+! ♔h8 27.♕h4+ ♔xg7 28.♕h7+ ♔f8 29.♕h8+ ♔e7 30.♕g7+ ♔e8 31.♕g8+ ♔e7 32.♕f7+ ♔d8 33.♕f8+ ♕e8 34.♘f7+ ♔d7 35.♕d6#.
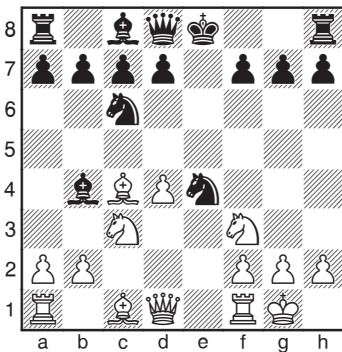
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HOW TO STUDY THE OPENING (continuation)

Content of the lesson

Example I. Spielmann − Cohn, Karlsbad 1907.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.c3 ♘f6 5.d4 ed 6.cd ♗b4+ 7.♘c3 ♘xe4 8.0-0

8...0-0 (8...♘xc3 9.bc ♗xc3 allows a very strong attack after Keres's suggestion 10.♗a3; correct is 8...♗xc3 9.d5 − cf. the following game) 9.d5 ♗xc3 10.bc ♘e7 11.♖e1 ♘f6 12.d6 ♘g6 (12...cd should have been preferred, when White would have played 13.♗a3) 13.♗a3 c6 14.♘e5 ♘xe5 15.♖xe5 b6 16.♕f3 ♗b7 17.♖ae1 ♖b8 18.♗c1 b5 19.♗d3 ♘d5
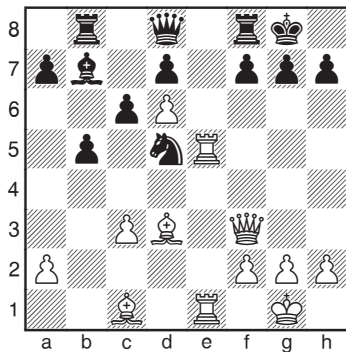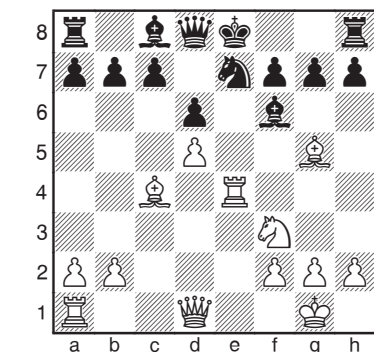

20.♗xh7+. Black resigned because of the forced mate: 20...♔xh7

21.♖h5+ ♔g8 22.♕h3 g6 23.♖h8+
♔g7 24.♕h6+ ♔f6 25.♗g5+ ♔f5
26.♕h3+ ♔xg5 27.♕g3+ ♔f5
28.♕e5+ ♔g4 29.f3(h3)#.

Example II. Spielmann − Duras,
1907.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5
4.c3 ♘f6 5.d4 ed 6.cd ♗b4+ 7.♘c3
♘xe4 8.0-0 ♗xc3 9.d5 (the Moller
Attack; 9 bc d5 is good for Black)
9...♗f6 10.♖e1 ♘e7 11.♖xe4 d6
12.♗g5

12...0-0 (allowing the break-up of the
kingside pawns; 12...♗xg5 13.♘xg5
0-0 or 13...h6 is correct) 13.♗xf6 gf
14.♘h4 ♘g6 15.♕h5 ♔h8 16.♖ae1
♗d7 17.♗d3 ♖g8 18.♖e7 ♖g7 (18...
♘xe7 allows 19.♕xh7#) 19.♗xg6 fg
20.♘xg6+ ♔g8 21.♖xg7+ 1−0 (in
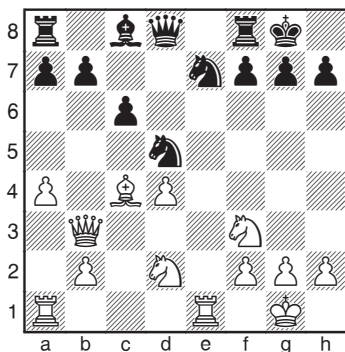view of 21...♔xg7 22.♖e7+ ♕xe7
23.♘xe7 ♖e8 24.♘f5+).

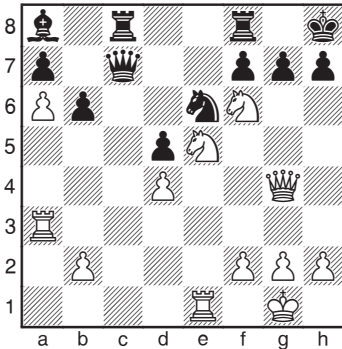## *Lesson 75*

HOW TO STUDY THE OPENING (conclusion)

Content of the lesson

Example I. Rossolimo − Reis-
man, San Juan 1967.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5
4.c3 ♘f6 5.d4 ed 6.cd ♗b4+ 7.♗d2
♗xd2+ 8.♘bxd2 d5 9.ed ♘xd5
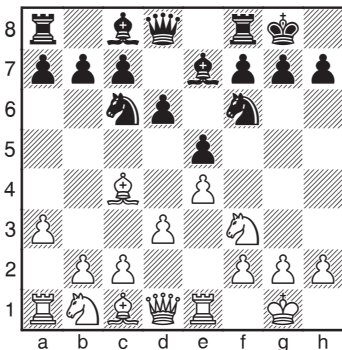10.♕b3 ♘ce7 11.0-0 c6 12.♖fe1
0-0 13.a4

13...b6? (this weakens the c6-pawn; 13...♛b6 is correct) 14.♘e5 ♝b7 (15.♘xc6 was threatened) 15.a5 ♜c8 16.♘e4 ♛c7 17.a6 ♝a8 18.♛h3 ♘f4 19.♛g4 ♘ed5 20.♜a3 ♘e6 21.♝xd5 cd 22.♘f6+ ♚h8
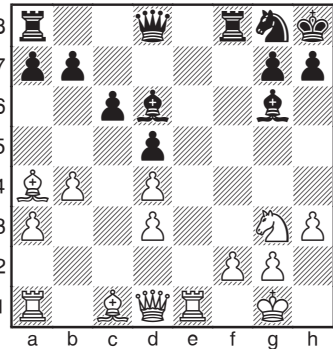

23.♛g6!! ♛c2 (23...fg 24.♘xg6+ and 25.♜h3#) 24.♜h3! Black resigned.

Example II. Horvath − Naiditsch, Mainz 2006
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♝c4 ♘f6 4.d3 ♝e7 5.0-0 0-0 6.♜e1 d6 7.a3

7...♚h8 (White's slow build-up encourages Black to launch an attack by advancing his f-pawn) 8.♘bd2 ♘g8 9.♘f1 f5 10.ef ♝xf5 11.h3 (this weakens the castled position; 11.♘e3 was better) 11...d5 12.♝b5 ♘d4 13.♘xd4 ed 14.♘g3 ♝g6 15.c3 ♝c5 16.b4 ♝d6 17.cd c6 18.♝a4

18...♜xf2! 19.♚xf2 ♛h4 20.♛g4 ♝xg3+ 0−1 (after 21.♛xg3 ♜f8+ the queen is lost).