Build Up Your Chess with Artur Yusupov

The Fundamentals

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Pawn combinations

The famous French chess master François-André Philidor called the pawn the soul of chess. In the chapters on ‘Combinations involving promotion’ and ‘The double attack’ we have already learned something about the capacities of the pawns. These pawns are very important tactical elements, as we shall also learn in this lesson.

Underpromotion
An especially spectacular tactic is an underpromotion, when the pawn does not promote to a queen, but to a rook, bishop or knight. The last case is the most frequent underpromotion, and is linked to a gain of tempo by check or to a knight fork.

Diagram 21-1

1. ¤c8†! ¤xc8
   If 1...¢xb7, then 2.¤xd8+, but not 2.¤xd8?? due to 2...¤e1#.
2. ¤xa7†!! ¤xa7
   Or 2...¢c7 3.bxc8¤†+–.
3. bxc8¤†!!+–
   With a winning knight fork. 3.bxc8¤?? would allow 3...¤e1#.

Diagram 21-2

1. ¤f5†?
   White wants to employ his well-coordinated forces for a final attack on the black king, before Black can manage to bring his extra material into play.
1...¢f6!
   But apparently Black has found the only way to win. 1...¢e8 leads only to a repetition of moves: 2.¤d6† (but not 2.e7?? ¤x5 3.¤a4† ¤c6++) 2...¢e7 3.¤f5†
2.e7! \( \text{Qxf5} \)??
A fatal error in a won position. Black was reckoning
simply on 3.e8\( \text{Qh2} \# \) and had completely forgotten
the motif of underpromotion. The correct move is
2...\( \text{d7} \), and Black is winning.
3.e8\( \text{Q} \)!!

**Two connected passed pawns**
Two connected passed pawns are much stronger
than a single passed pawn, because they can offer
each other mutual support. **In the endgame a rook
cannot stop two connected passed pawns on the**
6th (or 3rd) **rank** (or one on the 7th and the other
on the 5th rank).

**Diagram 21-3**
1...\( \text{xa2} \)! 2.\( \text{xa2} \) b3 3.\( \text{a8} \)\( \text{g7} \) 4.\( \text{e2} \)
If 4.\( \text{b8} \), then 4...c2++ while after 4.\( \text{c8} \) there
comes 4...b2++.
4...b2! 5.\( \text{b8} \) c2++

**The pawn phalanx**
In the next example, Aron Nimzowitsch made superb
use of the penetrative power of a pawn phalanx
against the author of *Pawn Power in Chess*.

**Diagram 21-4**

H.Kmoch – A.Nimzowitsch
Bad Niendorf 1927

How can Black break down the blockade on the
queenside and conduct his pawns to their much
desired promotion?
1...\( \text{b4} \)!!
Nimzowitsch sacrifices his strongest piece! The
threat is ...\( \text{a4} \)-a2, followed by ...a5-a4-a3.
2.\( \text{xb4} \) a4 3.\( \text{b5} \)\( \text{xb5} \)
The three connected passed pawns simply cannot
be stopped.
4.\( \text{a3} \) c3 5.\( \text{b1} \) \( \text{c4} \) 6.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{xd4} \)
This is the simplest. Now Black has obtained a
fourth connected passed pawn!
7.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{g}}}f2 \texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{c}}}c4 8.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{e}}}e1 \texttt{d}4 9.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{e}}}e2 \texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{d}}}d5 10.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{f}}}f3

If 10.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{d}}}d3, then 10...\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{a}}}6#.

10...\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{b}}}7

Don’t be too hasty! Black brings his bishop into the game.

11.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{e}}}e1 \texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{c}}}e4† 12.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{f}}}f2 \texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{b}}}2 13.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{f}}}xf5 14.e6 \texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{c}}}c6

White has no defence against ...\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{b}}}3. For example, 15.e7 \texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{b}}}3 16.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{e}}}e6 \texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{f}}}e8–+

0–1

The pawn fork

The following typical exchanging combination uses the pawn fork to win the piece back and destroy the opposing centre.

Diagram 21-5

\begin{center}
R.Spielmann – E.Cohn
Ostend 1907
\end{center}

1...\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{d}}}xe4! 2.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{d}}}xe4 \texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{d}}}5 3.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{g}}}g5 \texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{d}}}xc4 4.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{c}}}xc4 \texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{d}}}d7†

Black has the bishop pair and stands better. The c6-bishop is particularly strong.

Diagram 21-6

\begin{center}
S.Tarrasch – Em.Lasker
Berlin 1916
\end{center}

1.e4 \texttt{\textfrak{e}5} 2.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{f}}}f3 \texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{c}}}c6 3.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{c}}}c4 \texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{f}}}f6 4.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{c}}}c3

There is a standard reply to this variation.

\begin{center}
Diagram 21-6
\end{center}

4...\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{d}}}xe4! 5.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{d}}}xe4

5.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{e}}}xf7† \texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{f}}}xf7 6.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{d}}}xe4 \texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{d}}}5 7.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{d}}}eg5† \texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{g}}}g8 is even better for Black.

5...\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{d}}}5 6.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{d}}}d3 \texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{e}}}xe4 7.\texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{d}}}xe4 \texttt{\textbf{\textfrak{d}}}d6=

Black has no opening problems.

Mating motifs with pawns

Pawns are not only superb at supporting attacks, when the occasion arises they can also deliver mate themselves. Here are two spectacular examples.
1. \texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}e3!}  
   1.\texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}g3} is bad, on account of 1...\texttt{f4.}  
1... \texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}xh4} 
   If 1...\texttt{f4} 2. \texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}e4} \texttt{f3} (2... \texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}xh4} 3.\texttt{g6}! – see the main variation), then 3.\texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}f2}++.  
2. \texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}g6!}  
   White is aiming for a zugzwang position.  
2... \texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}f4}†  
   Or 2...\texttt{fxg6} 3.\texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}f4} wins similarly.  
3. \texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}f3!} \texttt{fxg6} 4. \texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}xf4} \texttt{g5}† 5. \texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}f5} \texttt{g4} 6. \texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}f4} \texttt{g3} 7.\texttt{hxg3}#  

\textbf{Diagram 21-8} 

\textbf{Moldojarov – Samochanov}  
Correspondence 1974  

1. \texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}g6!}  
   White is playing for mate. 1.\texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}xa5? \textordsuperscript{1}g3} would only lead to a draw.  
1... \texttt{a4} 2. \texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}e3} \texttt{a3} 3. \texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}f4} \texttt{a2} 4. \texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}g3}  
   Threatening \texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}h3}#.  
4... \texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}e6} 5. \texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}h3}†! \texttt{\textordsuperscript{1}xh3} 6.\texttt{g3}#
Exercises

† Ex. 21-1

† Ex. 21-2

† Ex. 21-3

† Ex. 21-4

† Ex. 21-5

† Ex. 21-6
Exercises

Ex. 21-7

Ex. 21-8

Ex. 21-9

Ex. 21-10

Ex. 21-11

Ex. 21-12
Ex. 21-1

1. g4!
   But not 1. a5 b8 2. g4 b6† 3. xf7 b7†=.
   1... a2 2. h5†! gxh5 3. g5† xg5 4. hxg5# (1 point)

Ex. 21-2

1. a5!
   1... d3? 2. cxd3† xxd3 3. h5 c2 4. h6 d1 5. h7†=
   2. xc2 d3
   3. c1
   Or 3. xc3† xxc3 4. h5 d2 5. h6 d1 6. h7 d4=+
   3... d2 4. d1 c2=+

Ex. 21-3

Woizechowski – Sandler
Riga 1982

1... e2! 2. xf2
   Or 2. xf4 xg3 3. xg3 c6=+
   2... e3! (1 point)
   3. a1 gxf2†+–
   But not 3... xf2†? 4. h1 c1† 5. xe1 xxe1 and White has set up a drawing fortress.
   0–1

Ex. 21-4

G.Stahlberg – V.Menchik
Moscow 1935

In the game Menchik played 1... c7?.
   Instead the Women's World Champion could have won the game with a promotion combination:
   1... xb3! (1 point)
   2. axb3 a2 (1 point)
   But not 2... xc3, because of 3. a6.
   3. d1 xc3=+

Ex. 21-5

V.Panov – M.Taimanov
Moscow 1952

1. xa6!
   White now creates a pawn phalanx and wins the game. 1. xe7 is not so energetic (only 1 point).
   1... a2 2. d6! (2 points)
   2... e5
   If 2... xd6, then 3. d5† f8 4. h8† c7 5. g7† e8 6. f7#.
   3. xe5 a5 4. d5† f8 5. b1++
   1–0

Ex. 21-6

A.Medina Garcia – H.Mecking
Palma de Mallorca 1969

1... e4! (2 points)
   Black seizes his chance and activates his pawns in the centre. Only 1 point for 1... f3.
   2. c4
   If 2. xe4, then 2... e5 3. g4 h5=+
   2... d5! 3. b5 e3! 4. f4
   4. xe3 xf2† 5. xf2 xf2†+
   4... d4
   Another very strong move would be 4... e6.
   5. c1?? g5+= 6. cxd4 xg4 7. h1 f3
   8. d7 cxd4 9. g1 f2
   0–1

Ex. 21-7

I.Csom – T.Ghitescu
Siegen Olympiad 1970

1. c7! (1 point)
   1... g5
   Other moves lose more simply: 1... c7
   2. e8†+= or 1... xxe7 2. e8† f8 3. d8=+.
Solutions

2. \( \text{Ke8}^+ \text{Kh6} 3. \text{Ke8}^+ \text{Kf5} 4. \text{Kf7}^+ \)  

(1 point)

4...\( \text{Kh4} \)
Or 4...\( \text{Kh6} \) 5.\( \text{Ke5}^+ \text{Kh5} \) 6.g4#.

5.\( \text{Ke2} \)
Threatening g3#.

5...\( \text{Kd8} \)
Or 5...\( \text{Ke4}^+ \) 6.g3#. 

6.f4!
Threatening g3# once more, this time decisively.

1–0

Ex. 21-8

B.Gulko – K.Grigorian
USSR 1971

1.\( \text{Kf8}^+ \)!
1.\( \text{Kg6}^+ \) (1 point) is also good enough, but the move in the game wins in a more forcing manner.

1...\( \text{Kh7} \) 2.\( \text{Kg6}^# \)

2...\( \text{Kd}^5 \)!

(1 point)

2...\( \text{Kh7} \)
2...\( \text{Kh8} \) 3.exf8\( \text{KphT}^+ \) 
3.exf8\( \text{Kh6}^+ \)

(1 point)

3...\( \text{Kh8} \) 4.\( \text{Kg6}^# \)

Ex. 21-9

Piotrowski – Tannenberg
Lemberg 1926

1.\( \text{Kf8}^+ \)!! \( \text{Kxh8} \) 2.g7^+ \( \text{Kg8} \) 3.\( \text{Kh7}^+ \)!! \( \text{Kxh7} \) 
4.g8\( \text{Kph#} \)

(1 point)

Ex. 21-10

E.Melnichenko
1979

1.g6!
1.\( \text{Kf4} \) would be wrong, on account of 1...f5!=.

1...\( \text{fxg6}^+ \)
1...f6 2.\( \text{Kxf6}^+ \)

2.\( \text{Kf4}^+ \) \( \text{g5} \)
Or 3.\( \text{Kf5} \) g4 4.\( \text{Kf4} \) g3 5.hxg3#.

3...g4 4.\( \text{Kf4} \) g3 5.hxg3# 

(2 points)

Ex. 21-11

R.Spielmann – L.Forgacs
Ostend 1907

1...\( \text{Kxe4}! \)

(1 point)

2.\( \text{Kxe4} \) d5 3.\( \text{Kxd5} \) \( \text{Kxd5} \) 4.\( \text{Kc3} \) \( \text{Kd6} \)=

Ex. 21-12

Goljak – Gajduk
Moscow 1949

1.\( \text{Kf6}^! \) \( \text{gxf6} \) 2.exf6

(1 point)

2...\( \text{Kg5}^?! \)
If 2...\( \text{Kec6} \), then 3.f7=+. But a more stubborn defence would be 2...\( \text{Kbc6} \) 3.f7 \( \text{Kxg2}^+ \) and then 4...\( \text{xf8} \).

3.\( \text{Kxe7} \) \( \text{Kf7} \) 4.\( \text{Kc3} \) (\( \text{Kh5} \)) 4...\( \text{Kd7} \) 5.\( \text{Kb5} \) 
\( \text{Kxe7} \) 6.\( \text{fxe7} \) \( \text{Kxe7} \) 7.\( \text{Kg1}^+ \)

1–0

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Scoring

Maximum number of points is 19

16 points and above — Excellent
13 points and above — Good
9 points — Pass mark

If you scored less than 9 points, we recommend that you read the chapter again and repeat the exercises which you got wrong.

The World Chess Federation has the Latin motto Gens una sumus which means, ‘We are one people’. Chess is a truly global sport, played worldwide by men, women and children of all races, religions and ages.

Viktor Korchnoi has been one of the best players in the world for over five decades, and he was still in the Top 100 at the age of 75. ‘If a player believes in miracles he can sometimes perform them.’ – V.Korchnoi

Judit Polgar is the strongest ever women player. Polgar became a grandmaster at 15, and since then she has established herself as a top player. In 2005 she became the first woman to compete in a World Championship final.

Parimarjan Negi from India became a grandmaster while still only 13 years old. In chess it’s the brain that counts, not the birth certificate.