

The Burlingame Chess Mate

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Most players complain to me that they never reach the endings in their games so feel study of them is a waste of time. Fact is their study quickly increases ones positional abilities, such as understanding and developing intuition concerning where in a pawn structure the pieces are best placed. Another "side effect" is the development of more exact analytical abilities -- hard-to-find moves become more easily found in the middlegame(!) However, to spare you the drudgery of endgames I will split my articles into sections for you to choose from.

First an opening study, then a few middlegame combinations (next week I'll do a middlegame and endgame study section), and finally an interesting game from the club from each week's play. On this latter item if you happen to feel your game was especially interesting, submit it to me and I'll strongly consider putting it in my next article.

** The Opening **

This week we'll study the Sicilian Defence. Since there are far too many variations to study at one time we'll conveniently confine our studies to one variation at a time. Since the 6 Bg5 Najdorf is so common in grandmaster games it is a good choice. If you know opening systems commonly played in the club let me know and I'll analyze them in a future article. Let's begin.

1 e4 c5

Black puts his "stake" in the center to help him control d4, an important square there. It is natural for movement of pieces to flow behind (rooks and queens) and around the pawns that are placed the furthest and earliest in the opening. The farther a pawn advances the more likely the exchange of that pawn, and the weaker it becomes, entering the "field of control" the opponent's pieces naturally exercise on his/her side of the board. This is why one often reads of future queenside play* for black in the Sicilian Defence.

2 Nf3

It is important to develop knights and bishops as early as possible to the vicinity of your "stakes" or pawns you've moved -- thus committed to the center. Knights are generally developed before bishops because knights generally have fewer choices for a good square (usually f3 and c3 for white and f6 and c6 for black). This means it is often wiser to "wait and see" how your opponent is going to conduct his side of the opening before using up a moves (tempii) to commit the bishops only to discover you didn't want it there later. Another reason is that bishops are valued a little more than knights and if you carefully watch how openings are played you'll notice that opening moves usually start with the least valued pieces and progress

toward the development of the more valued pieces. An obvious reason why is that the more valued pieces come under attack by the less valued pieces too quickly and must find another haven as they can't let themselves be exchanged off for the lesser valued pieces. Notice that there are also quite a few more lesser valued pieces than the more valued pieces to deal with.

2...d6

Just another way of "claiming squares" in the center (e5) and allowing piece development. Many other plans are possible but most of them use the move (...d6) in their system* of moves. Thus the move is practical and logical.

*Play -- Movement and threats of pieces normally and best organized in one particular area.

*System -- A set of predetermined moves meant to collectively battle a certain opening or system, such as Nf6,g6,Bg7,d6,e5,0-0 for black against any opening white may choose -- i.e. the King's Indian Defence.

3 d4

White chooses to open the game wide open for his pieces (note the bishops now have full scope or movement and the d-file will now be opened for whites' rooks, while the c-file is opened for blacks' rooks). White can play more conservatively with 3 d3 with the idea of a King's Indian Reversed (King's Indian Attack).

3...cd 4 Nd4

Although quite playable, 4 Qd4 is thought to be less "preventive" since black could force white to either exchange off the KB or waste time "re-moving" the queen after 4...Nc6 5 Bb5 Bd7 or 4...a6 and then 5...Nc6.

4...Nf6

Moves that help piece development and threaten the opponent are usually the best moves in openings.

5 Nc3 a6

This move characterizes the Najdorf Sicilian. Notice that play naturally revolves around open files, thus black prepares to expand and attack on the queenside with a properly timed ...b5. This move also helps prevent pressure from building on his QP after a later ...e6, weakening the QP, when white might bring guns to bear on it with rook and queen on the d-file with Nb5 (prevented by ...a6) in mind.

6 Bg5

A very comfortable system for white which threatens to double blacks pawns after 7 Bf6. Notice how a temporary pin develops as a result of black's desire to maintain a healthy pawn structure.

6...e6

If 6...e5 black is left with a backward d-pawn and weak d5 square (no pawns can ever prevent or "kick out" pieces which land there). Other moves allow the messy pawn structure after 7 Bf6.

7 f4

Prepares for a possible e5 or f5 in order to gnaw at black's center and open lines for white's pieces. Notice how pawn moves often create room for the pieces behind them but must in themselves be considered carefully, for they may become too weak (as explained earlier) or "leave weaknesses in their wake" as they can't move backwards to prevent enemy pieces from invading their territory.

7...Be7

Breaks the pin, develops a piece, and prepares to castle. Other moves are possible such as ...Nbd7, or ...Qc7 aiming to transpose to this same system by another route. 7...Qb6 is a very aggressive alternative constituting the Poisoned Pawn variation, which would have to be analyzed in another article at a club member's request as it is too lengthy to include here.

8 Qf3

Prepares for queenside castling which would put a rook on the d-file where a file has already been opened. Also the immediate 8...b5 is prevented which would allow 9 e5 threatening black's KN and QR winning at least a pawn after 9...Nd5 10 Nd5.

8...Qc7

Hurrying to get the queen off the soon-to-be pressured d-file and preparing to play ...b5 as whites' e5 in response is now stymied by ...Bb7.

9 0-0-0 Nbd7

Keeping a watch on e5 and preparing to put more pressure-to-bear on white's KP while simultaneously pressuring the queenside after ...Nc5. Black will now play on the queenside with moves like ...b5, ...Nc5, ...Rb8 (or c8), ...0-0 and ...Bd7 while white will attack kingside and/or center with either Bd3, a3, and Rhel or g4, g5, Bh3 and f5. With players playing on opposite wings, a sharp tactical battle usually follows with the winner normally being the first one to "break in" on the king -- typical Sicilian.

**** Middlegame Combinations ****

Here are some beauties from the last Burlingame tournament. *W* means white to move while *B* means black to move. Answers are on the back page.

	White Pieces	Black Pieces
W	Herb Rosenbaum(1997)-	Dave Cross(1813)
	Pawns-	Pawns-
	h3,g2,f3,c2	h7,g7,f7,e6
	b2,a3	b5,a6
	Knight-	Knight-
	b3	h5
	Bishops-	Bishops-
	b6,d1	c4,d6
	Rooks-	Rooks-
	bl,el	d8,h8
	Queen-	Queen-
	f2	c7
	King-	King-
	gl	e8
W	Paul Gallegos(2058)-	Rick Phillips(2152)
	Pawns-	Pawns-
	a3,c2,c3,f2	a7,b7,c4,f4
	g3,h2,d5	h6
	Knight-	Knights-
	dl	e7,g7
	Bishop-	Bishop-
	f3	d7
	Rooks-	Rooks-
	a2,bl	d8,f7
	Queen-	Queen-
	c5	a4
	King-	King-
	gl	b8

**** Games From The Burlingame ****

Paul Gallegos(2058)-David Levy(2108) 1 e4 Nf6
 2 e5 Nd5 3 d4 d6 4 Bc4 Nb6 5 Bb3 de 6 Qh5 e6 7 de Bd7 8 Nf3 Bc6 9 Ng5 g6
 10 Qg4 Bg7? 11 Nf7! Qe7 (11...Kf7 12 Qe6+ Kf8 13 Qf7 mate!) 12 Nh8 Bh8
 13 Bg5 Resigns

Arthur Braden(2383)-Paul Gallegos(2058) 1 e4 c5 2 c3
 d5 3 ed Qd5 4 d4 Nc6 5 Nf3 e6 6 Be2 Nf6 7 Na3 cd!? 8 Nb5 Qd8 9 Nbd4 Bd7?
 (9...Nd4 10 Nd4 a6=) 10 Bf4! a6 11 0-0 Be7 12 c4 0-0 13 h3 Qb6 14 Nb3 Rfd8
 15 Rcl Be8 16 Qc2 Nb4 17 Qbl Bc6? 18 Nfd2 Be8 (19 a3 was threatened)
 19 a3 Nc6 20 c5 Qa7 21 Nc4? (21 Bc7! followed by 22 Bb6 and 23 Nc4 leaves
 white clearly better.) 21...Nd5 22 Bd6 Bf6? (22...Bd6! 23 Nd6 b6! =)
 23 Rad1 Rac8 24 Bf3 Ncd7 25 Be4 g6 26 Nd4 b5! 27 cb (Forced.) Nb6
 28 Be7 (Forced!) Be7 29 Na5 Rcl 30 Qcl Rc8 31 Ndc6 Qc7 32 Qc3 Bf8
 33 Qd3 Qf4 34 g3 Qf6 35 b4 Na4 36 Qa6 Nc3 37 Rel Rc7 38 Bg2 Bh6 39 Qa8 Kf8
 40 Qb8 Rd7 41 Qe5 Qe5 42 Ne5 Rd2 43 Bc6? (Time pressure. 43 Ral is
 better.) 43...Ra2 44 Be8 Ke8 45 Nac4 Nb5 46 Rbl Na3 47 Na3 Ra3 48 b5 Bg7
 49 Nc4! Ra8! (49...Ral is a book endgame loss.) 50 Kfl Rb8 51 Ke2 Bd4

(Adjourned) 52 f3 Bc5? (52...f6!! 53 Kd3 Rd8! =) 53 Kd3 f6 54 Ne2!!+-
(Found by Dave Cross.) 54...Rd8+ 55 Kc3 e5?? 56 Ne4 Bd4+ 57 Kc4 Ke7
58 b6! Rb8 (58...Rc8+ 59 Kd5 f5 60 b7+-) 59 b7 Kd7 (Forced, otherwise
60 Nc5 threatening 61 Ne6 wins.) 60 Nf6+ (60 Nc5+? Kc6!) Kc7 61 Nh7 Rb7
62 Rb7+ Kb7 63 Kd5! Kc7 64 Nf8 Bf2 65 g4 Black Resigns
An intense struggle!

**** Notable Mention ****

Rick Phillips (2152) beat two masters -- me (2383)
and Kerry Lawless (2224). Paul Gallegos has been playing very well beating
both David Levy (2107) and Rick Phillips and tied for first in the
tournament. If you have any good games or combinations be sure and let
me know. Next month I'll fully analyze a club member's tournament game.
Good Luck this tournament!

**** Answers to combinations ****

Rosenbaum-Cross 1...Bh2+ 2 Kh1 Ng3+!! 3 Kh2 Nf1+
4 Kgl(h1) Qh2 mate!
Gallegos-Phillips 1 Qd6+ Kc8?! (1...Ka8 was better
but 2 Rb7! still wins) 2 Rb7!! Kb7 3 Rb1+ Ka8 (3...Bb5 4 Qd8 wins) 4 Qc7
and wins.