



# Week 5 – 3/18/24



1. Basic Opening Analysis Review
  - A. Quick Look at One System
  - B. An Introduction to Pawn Structures
2. Introduction to Positional Play
  - A. Steinitz Elements
  - B. Review of one of the Elements “#10 Bad Piece Position”
  - C. Other Definitions/Ideas
3. Introduction to Strategic Play
  - A. Definitions
4. Pulling it Together

# The Opening?

## Remember Week 1

Starting the game – What are we trying to do?

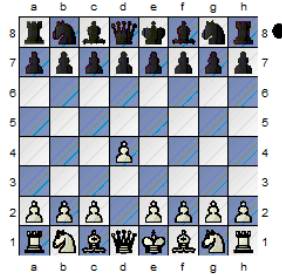
- a. Develop your pieces. This is the absolute number 1 most important rule of the opening.
- b. Don't make too many pawn moves.
- c. Don't bring your queen out too early.
- d. Don't move the same piece twice.
- e. Castle early.
- f. Develop towards the center.
- g. Clear the back rank and connect your rooks.

# Opening "Philosophy"

## Memorize 400 to 800 Lines but whatever you do

# Don't Understand

ChessBase 16 Printout, Baldr , 2/4/2024 1



**B08** **1.d4**

|          | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4    | 5    | 6    | 7    | 8    | 9     | 10   | 11               |
|----------|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|------------------|
| <b>1</b> | ... | Nf3 | c4  | Nc3  | Qb3  | c5   | axb3 | b4   | Bf4   | Nd2  |                  |
|          | d5  | Bf5 | e6  | c6   | Qb6  | Qxb3 | Nd7  | a6   | Rc8   |      |                  |
| <b>2</b> | ... | ... | Bf4 | e3   | exf4 | h4   | h5   | g4   | Nc3   |      |                  |
|          | ... | e6  | Bd6 | Bxf4 | Ne7  | b6   | h6   | c5   |       |      |                  |
| <b>3</b> | ... | Nf3 | Bf4 | c4   | Nc3  | e3   | Be2  | Bg3  | Bh4   | d5   | Rc1              |
|          | f5  | Nf6 | g6  | Bg7  | 0-0  | d6   | Nc6  | Nh5  | h6    | Na5  | c5 <sup>1</sup>  |
| <b>4</b> | ... | ... | ... | e3   | h3   | Bd3  | 0-0  | c4   | Nfd2  | Qxd2 | Nc3              |
|          | ... | ... | e6  | Be7  | 0-0  | b6   | Bb7  | Ne4  | Nxd2  | d6   | Nd7 <sup>2</sup> |
| <b>5</b> | ... | Nf3 | c3  | dx5  | b4   | e3   | cx4  | Bb5+ | Bxd7+ | a4   | b5               |
|          | Nf6 | d5  | c5  | e6   | a5   | axb4 | b6   | Bd7  | Nbxd7 | bx5  | Bd6 <sup>3</sup> |
| <b>6</b> | ... | ... | ... | Qc2  | h3   | Bf4  | e3   | Qb3  | Nbd2  | g4   | g5               |
|          | ... | ... | c6  | g6   | Bg7  | 0-0  | Bf5  | Qb6  | Nbd7  | Be6  | Nh5 <sup>4</sup> |
| <b>7</b> | ... | ... | ... | ...  | Ne5  | Qf5  | Qh3  | Qh4  | dx5   | Qxg4 | h3               |
|          | ... | ... | ... | Bg4  | Bh5  | Nbd7 | Qc8  | Nxe5 | Qg4   | Nxg4 | Nh6 <sup>5</sup> |

ChessBase 16 Printout, Baldr , 2/4/2024 2

|           | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5    | 6    | 7    | 8                 | 9    | 10                | 11                |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>8</b>  | ... | ... | Bf4 | e3  | Bd3  | h3   | c3   | 0-0               | Nbd2 | a4                | Qb1               |
|           | ... | e6  | b6  | Bb7 | Be7  | c5   | 0-0  | d5                | Nbd7 | a6                | c4 <sup>6</sup>   |
| <b>9</b>  | ... | ... | ... | ... | Bg5  | Ne5  | Qf3  | h4                |      |                   |                   |
|           | ... | ... | ... | Nh5 | Be7  | Nf6  | c6   |                   |      |                   |                   |
| <b>10</b> | ... | ... | ... | c3  | e3   | exf4 | Nbd2 | dx5               | g3   | Nb3               | Bg2               |
|           | ... | ... | d5  | Bd6 | Bxf4 | 0-0  | c5   | Qc7               | Nbd7 | a5                | a4 <sup>7</sup>   |
| <b>11</b> | ... | ... | ... | ... | e3   | Nbd2 | Bg3  | Bd3               | e4   | Nxe4              | Bxe4              |
|           | ... | ... | ... | c5  | Nc6  | Bd6  | 0-0  | b6                | dx4  | Nxe4              | Bb7 <sup>8</sup>  |
| <b>12</b> | ... | ... | ... | ... | ...  | ...  | ...  | ...               | ...  | e5                | Ng5               |
|           | ... | ... | ... | ... | ...  | ...  | ...  | Be7               | Nh5  | Bxg5 <sup>9</sup> |                   |
| <b>13</b> | ... | ... | ... | c3  | Qb3  | Qxb6 | Nxd4 | Nb5               | f3   | N1a3              | 0-0-0             |
|           | ... | ... | c5  | Qb6 | axb6 | d5   | Na6  | Bd7               | Bc5  | Bc5               | 0-0 <sup>10</sup> |
| <b>14</b> | ... | ... | Nc3 | d5  | e4   | Bb5+ | a4   | axb5              | 0-0  | Qe2               |                   |
|           | ... | g6  | c5  | Bg7 | d6   | Bd7  | Bxb5 | 0-0               | Nbd7 |                   |                   |
| <b>15</b> | ... | ... | ... | Bf4 | Nb5  | e3   | h3   | Nc3               | Bd3  | 0-0               | a4                |
|           | ... | ... | d5  | Bg7 | Na6  | 0-0  | c6   | Nc7               | Nce8 | Nd6               | a5 <sup>11</sup>  |
| <b>16</b> | ... | ... | ... | ... | ...  | ...  | Nc3  | Bxa6              | Ne5  | b3                |                   |
|           | ... | ... | ... | ... | ...  | c6   | 0-0  | bxa6              | Qb6  |                   |                   |
| <b>17</b> | ... | ... | ... | ... | h3   | e3   | Be2  | 0-0               | Bh2  | a4                | Re1               |
|           | ... | ... | ... | c6  | Bg7  | 0-0  | Nbd7 | Re8               | a5   | b6                | Bb7 <sup>12</sup> |
| <b>18</b> | ... | ... | ... | e4  | Be2  | 0-0  | d5   | Be3 <sup>13</sup> |      |                   |                   |
|           | ... | ... | Bg7 | d6  | Nc6  | Nb8  |      |                   |      |                   |                   |

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<sup>1</sup> **12.Nd2** Nf6 13.a3 b6 14.0-0

<sup>2</sup> **12.Bh2** e5 13.Qc2 e4 14.Be2 Kh8 15.b4

<sup>3</sup> **12.Bb2** 0-0 13.0-0 Qc7 14.Nbd2 e5 15.e4 c4 16.Qc2 Rfc8 17.Rfc1 Bb4 18.Bc3 Bxc3 19.Qxc3 dx4

<sup>4</sup> **12.Bh2**

<sup>5</sup> **12.c4** e6 13.cxd5 exd5 14.g4 Bg6 15.f4 f5 16.exf6 gxf6 17.f5 Bf7 18.Nc3

<sup>6</sup> c4<sup>6</sup>

<sup>7</sup> a4<sup>7</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Bb7<sup>8</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Bxg5<sup>9</sup>

<sup>10</sup> 0-0<sup>10</sup>

<sup>11</sup> a5<sup>11</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Bb7<sup>12</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Be3<sup>13</sup>

# London System Like

|   |             |             |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | <i>d4</i>   | <i>Nf6</i>  |
| 2 | <i>Nf3</i>  | <i>e6</i>   |
| 3 | <i>Bf4</i>  | <i>d5</i>   |
| 4 | <i>e3</i>   | <i>c5</i>   |
| 5 | <i>c3</i>   | <i>cxd4</i> |
| 6 | <i>exd4</i> |             |
| 7 |             |             |



|          |    |        |      |
|----------|----|--------|------|
| 6...Nc6  | 61 | 60.7%  | 2020 |
| 6...Bd6  | 59 | 61.0%  | 2020 |
| 6...Be7  | 41 | 64.6%  | 2020 |
| 6...Qb6  | 13 | 46.2%  | 2018 |
| 6...a6   | 9  | 77.8%  | 2017 |
| 6...Nbd7 | 8  | 50.0%  | 2019 |
| 6...Bd7  | 3  | 66.7%  | 2002 |
| 6...Nh5  | 2  | 75.0%  | 2020 |
| 6...b6   | 1  | 100.0% | 2019 |
| 6...Ne4  | 1  | 0.0%   | 2006 |
| 6...g6   | 1  | 100.0% | 2005 |
| 6...h6   | 1  | 100.0% | 2017 |

# An Idea to Dwell Upon

- Let's Look at the beginning of numerous games – Here we go!
- What do we see in our examples?
  - Usually before move 15 the pawn structure essentially is the same in all the games. (no matter the opening)
- What does that mean?
  - It means that across all chess there are < 50 standard pawn structures within < 7 family structures.
- So What?
  - It means you can pick the openings that always give the structures that you want to play. From these structures, you will have standard plans. That means you can develop middle-game “standard plans” and now you don't have to ask: I'm at the end of my opening prep what should I do now? OR How do I memorize 800 (683 in my London repertoire) variations in this lifetime?



# Middle Game Position



London Middle Game Position



Exchange Caro Middle Game Position



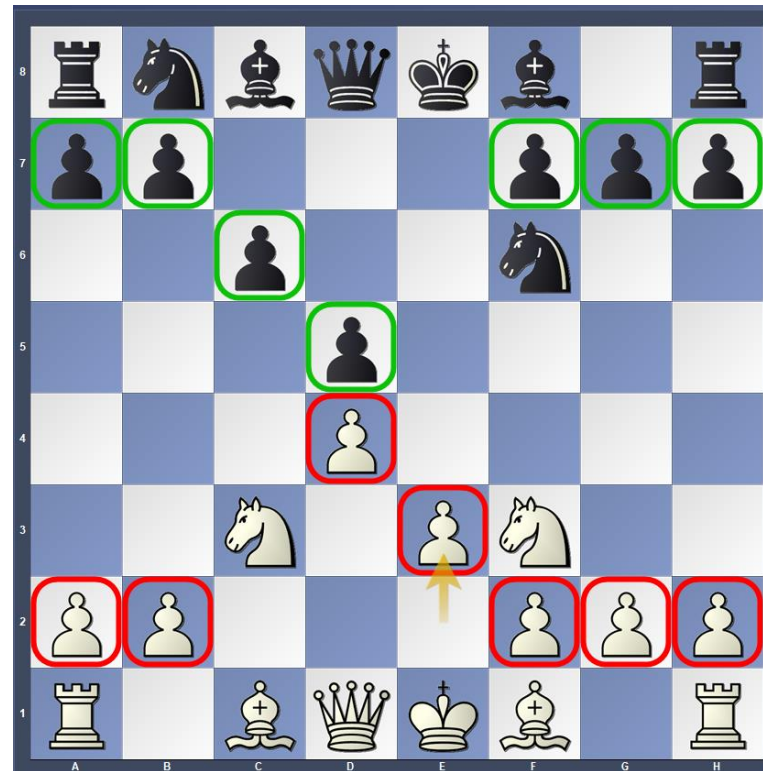
## Week 5 – 3/18/24



YOU ARE IN THE MIDDLE GAME.  
YOU HAVE YOUR PAWN STRUCTURE.  
WHAT SHALL YOU DO?



# Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation Pawn Structure







## Carlsbad – 5 Ideas from GM Mauricio Flores Rios

### Ideas for White

- **White's plans**

This position offers two main lines of attack for White:

1. Pursuing the so-called minority attack with **b2-b4-b5** to create a queenside weakness.
2. Pushing **f2-f3** and **e3-e4** (or sometimes **e3-e4** directly) gaining central space and creating tension.

### Ideas for Black

- **Black's plans**

1. The main plan is to place a knight on **e4** and to create a kingside attack, but this is not always possible. For example, White might choose a set-up in which **f2-f3** is included
2. The most common auxiliary plan is to play ...**b7-b6** and ...**c6-c5** to transpose into a hanging pawns position. Or sometimes just ...**c6-c5** is played directly, hence **dx c5** transposes into an IQP.
3. An important though far less common plan is to play ...**b7-b5** once White has played **b2-b4**, to obtain a firm outpost for a knight placed on **c4**. This plan is less common because ...**b7-b5** also creates a weakness - a backward **c6**-pawn, which could cause this plan to backfire.

# Carlsbad – 7 ideas from GM Cyril Marcelin

**Concept 1:** Develop the light-squared bishop from **c8** to **f5**.

As the black pawn structure is on the light squares, logically our light-squared bishop is bad, especially if it remains undeveloped on **c8**. To solve this problem, the easiest thing to do is to move it to **f5**.

**Concept 2:** Use the outpost on **e4**.

In many pawn structures, the goal is to create an outpost. In the Carlsbad structure, it is easier: the outpost **e4** is already there! With **Ne4** Black can exchange pieces more easily and attack on the kingside.

**Concept 3:** Place a knight on **d6** for stability.

In the Carlsbad structure, White has two possible breakthroughs: **e3-e4** and **b4-b5**. Placing a knight on **d6** is therefore a useful move for Black.

**Concept 4:** Attack with the h-pawn.

It is often underestimated, but in the Carlsbad structure, the king on **g1** can become weak easily. And this almost always happens when Black starts the attack with **h7-h5-h4** and sometimes **h3**!

**Concept 5:** Place a knight on **d7** to stay flexible.

For Black, the question is almost always: where to put the knight on **d7**? To **b6**, to protect the queenside, or to **f6**, to support the kingside attack? Sometimes the solution is simply to wait on **d7** to stay flexible!

**Concept 6:** Fight the breakthrough **f3, e4** with **c5**.

This concept is quite logical: if White wants to build a perfect center with **f3, e4**, Black must reply strongly! And in this case, **c6-c5** is the only breakthrough possibility. Unfortunately, this dynamic situation is not so easy to deal with in practice.

**Concept 7:** The best configuration.

The Carlsbad structure is strategically very rich, and it is not always easy to keep track of everything. As a general guideline, I try to exchange three minor pieces and keep the queen and the rooks.

Did I forget something? Yes! We also need a knight on **d6**, often with **a7-a6** to prevent **b4-b5**.

# Carlsbad – 5 Ideas for White from IM Ekaterina Atalik

## Plans for White

1. White launches a minority attack on the queenside.
2. White launches an attack with pieces on the queenside.
3. White attacks in the center with **f2-f3** and **e3-e4**.
4. White attacks in the center with a direct **e3-e4**.
5. White castles long and launches a pawn storm on the kingside.



# Week 5 – 3/18/24



OH NO!  
I GOT TRICKED OUT OF MY PAWN STRUCTURE  
WHAT SHALL I DO?  
POSITION EVALUATION & MINI-PLANS



# Week 5 – 3/18/24



## Steinitz Elements

### Static

1. Material Advantage
2. Bad King Position
3. Passed Pawns in the Middlegame
4. Weak Pawns for the Opponent
5. Strong and weak squares
6. Pawn Islands
7. Strong Pawn Center
8. Control of a Rank, File, or Diagonal
9. Bishop Pair

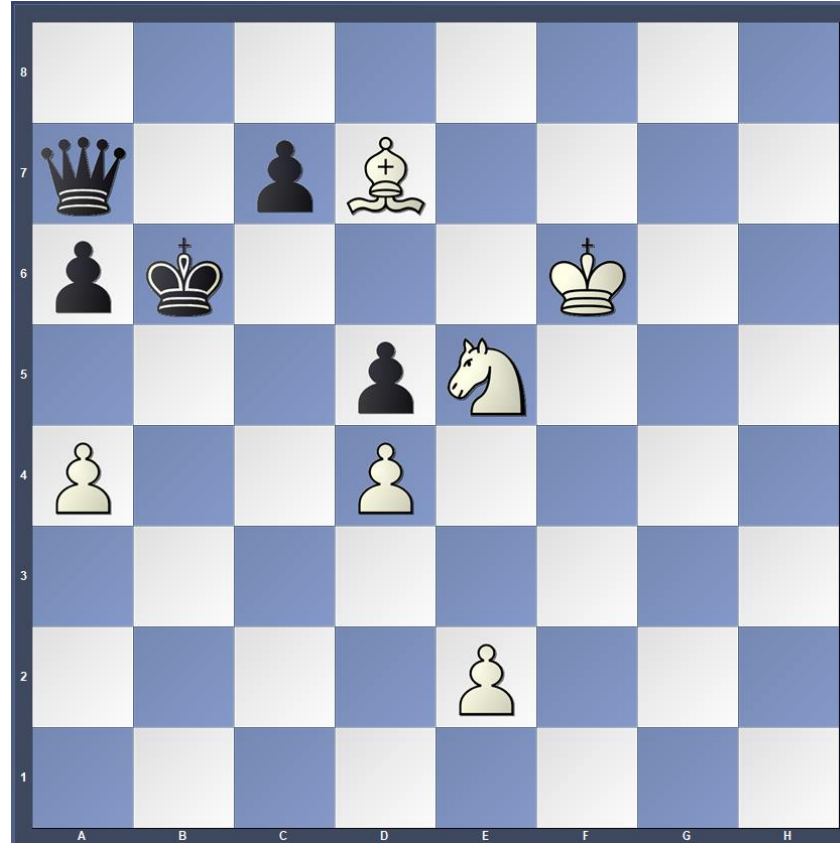
### Dynamic

10. Bad Piece Position
11. Inharmoniously Placed Pieces
12. Advantage in Development
13. Concentration of Pieces in the Center
14. Space Advantage



# Week 5 – 3/18/24

## # 10 Bad Piece Position



White to Move



# Week 5 – 3/18/24

## A Couple of other Positional Perspectives



Jacob Aagaard's three questions:

1. Where are the weaknesses?
2. Which is the worst-place piece?
3. What is your opponent's idea?

Silman's "IMPLODES"

Karpov's Reference Points:

1. Material relationships between forces.
2. Presence of direct threats.
3. Position of the King's – their safety.
4. Possession of open Lines.
5. Pawn structure, weak and strong squares.
6. The center and space.
7. Development and the position of pieces.

In the beginning, you can start with –  
Are there any checks, captures, or threats?



# Week 5 – 3/18/24

A Couple of other Positional Perspectives



Positional Chess = Position Evaluation  
Strategic Chess = Mini Plans





# Week 4 – 3/18/24

## Strategic Perspectives



### Steinitz's Four Rules of Strategy

1. The right to attack belongs to the side that has a positional advantage, and that side not only has the right but the obligation to do so, or else his advantage may evaporate.
2. If in an inferior position, the defender should be ready to make compromises or take other measures, such as a desperate counterattack.
3. In an equal position the opponents should maneuver, trying to achieve a position where they have an advantage. If both sides play correctly, an equal position will remain equal.
4. The advantage may be a big, indivisible one (for example a rook on the seventh rank), or it may be a whole series of small advantages. The goal of the stronger side is to store up the advantages and to convert temporary advantages into permanent ones.



# Week 4 – 3/18/24

## Strategic Perspectives



### **Johan Hellsten's Strategic Ideas**

1. Improving our pieces
2. Pawn play
3. Exchanges
4. Prophylaxis (with restriction and provocation).

### **Jacob Aagaard's "Strategic Play"**

1. Decisions where you know what to do
2. Simple decisions
3. Critical moments
4. Complex decisions

**"LONG PLAN = WRONG PLAN"**

**Mikhail Tal**

**I never think of the future. It comes  
soon enough – Albert Einstein**



# Week 5 – 3/18/24

## Improving our worst piece



Black to Move

This is an illustration of:

Positional

Aagaard's "Which is the worst-place piece?" and

Strategic

Hellsten's "Improving our pieces."



# Explanation of Aagaard's Ideas



## 1. Decisions where you know what to do

This includes opening preparation, endgame theory, and recaptures or similarly forced moves. There are two typical mistakes in this category: either spending too much time thinking over decisions that have already been made, or assuming that something is forced, when there are choices. A simple awareness that your next decision seems to belong to this category should be useful. You do not spend a lot of time thinking, you check for any surprising alternatives that would throw the position into another category, and if there are none, you execute the move.

## 2. Simple decisions

This includes decisions of limited significance. You may need to make two or three poor choices in this type of position before there is a noticeable deterioration in your position, and even then, it might only lead to long-term problems. A typical question may be whether to recapture with a knight or a bishop when there are no pressing circumstances, such as tactics, to suggest which one is the right one. A limited amount of tactics is a feature of this sort of decision. Generally, calculation cannot be used to solve the problem, and anyone trying to do so will feel endless frustration. Often those people will also characterize such positions as boring, which means that they do not know what to look for, and this frustrates them.



# Aagaards Idea Continued



## 3. **Critical moments**

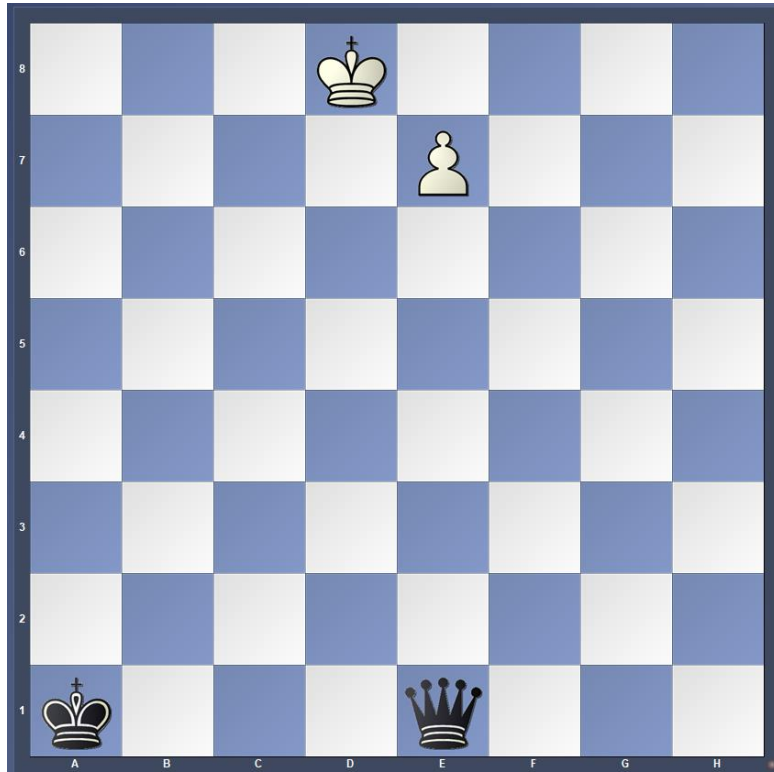
Critical moments refer to positions that are so tactical that this feature is naturally what we must focus on. You should quickly realize that a mistake will cost you dearly; if not the game, then at least the chance to use your advantage decisively.

## 4. **Complex decisions**

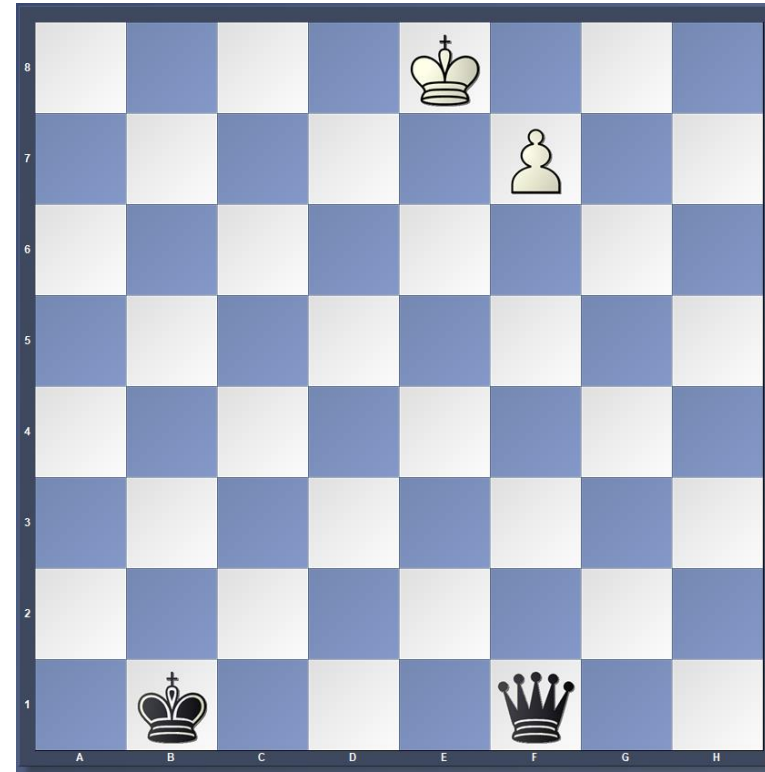
This is the most difficult group of decisions to describe. There may be a significant element of a “critical moment” about the position, but it cannot be solved exclusively with calculation or by positional judgment. The horizon is often too far away for computers to calculate everything to the end, leaving us poor humans entirely without hope of doing so. The necessary reaction can at times seem anti-positional, because it weighs some gains against losses, or because the positional gains are long-term, dependent on tactical circumstances



# A Little Endgame



Black to Move



Black to Move