

The thinking process

An important question one could ask about the game of draughts is: how should one think to be able to play the best moves? In other words: how does the thinking process of a disciplined, strong player proceed?

In draughts literature hardly anything is written about this subject. This is strange, since this subject is not only very interesting, but also very helpful in your own games.

In chess literature there are some books covering the subject of how to think. We used the thinking process described by chess authors to formulate a thinking process for draughts. The key of a good thinking process is finding and evaluating *candidate moves*. Before calculating starts, one has to decide which moves one should analyse and which ones can be neglected. The calculation process can't begin until the candidate moves are found. This way you will not forget to look at possibilities you otherwise wouldn't have considered, especially if surprising moves are concerned. In the first step of looking for candidate moves, tactics are very important. Tactical possibilities of both yourself and of the opponent should be taken into account.

The first chapter will give you an idea of how players think, using the thinking process.

The second chapter of this section deals with ways to find candidate moves. There are several clues that will help you find the right candidate moves.

Another important aspect of the game that is rarely covered in any book is how to use your time. Sensible time management is something to be aware of. Time trouble can spoil a game you have been working on for hours in a few seconds. That's a pity and you should try to avoid it.

We will not forget fair play. Fair play is as important as developing your draughts skills. Fair play benefits all players in the draughts world.

Since psychology is crucial in competitive games, we will consider psychological aspects of the game in the last chapter.



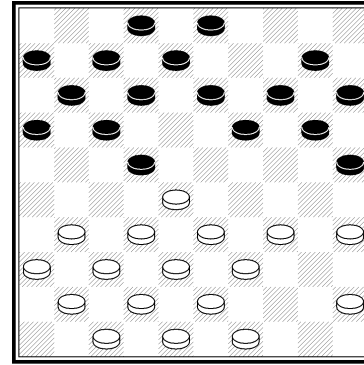
Strategic thinking ...

1. The thinking process

Important skills for playing a strong draughts game are spotting good moves, evaluating them quickly and accurately and to choose the best of them to play on the board.

There is little known about how grandmasters and masters choose their moves. In draughts literature there is no scheme presented that one can use to search for the best move. With the help of chess literature I constructed such a scheme.

In order to find the best or most attractive move you can use a standard thinking scheme.



N. Watering – H. van Gijssel

Let's try to describe and judge the position first. White has a central pyramid and the Drenth pyramid. His distribution of pieces isn't optimal, piece 41 could do a better job at the right wing. Black has occupied <22>, but has no space there.

Step 1: Finding candidate moves, that is: which moves are and which aren't a serious possibility to play?

From the possible moves white should spot that 49 – 44 is a dangerous move. Why? Because it opens the track to king 20 x 49. Looking more closely it appears that 49 – 44? is punished by 22 – 27 13 – 18 20 x 49 B+. So during step 1 you already have to spot moves that can be tactically punished!

What about 31 – 26 trying to lock black's right wing? Or should white play 34 – 29? Maybe just 31 – 27 x 27 is best? Maybe even 32 – 27? To decide what move is best let's look at them and compare the results.

After 1.31 – 26 12 – 18 2.37 – 31 black has a surprising tactical possibility, due to the opened square 37, the Mountain shot: 2... 25 – 30!! 3.34 x 25? will be punished by 19 – 23! 28 x 19 14 x 23 25 x 5 22 – 28 33 x 22 17 x 46 and black's king is caught. 3.35 x 24 20 x 40 4.45 x 34 weakens white's right wing.

Playing 1.31 – 26 12 – 18 3.36 – 31 isn't successful either, actually the plan to lock black fails due to white's lack of formations at his right wing. After 3... 7 – 12 4.41 – 36 black can play 18 – 23 and white has no advantage.

1.34 – 29 will be fine after 19 – 24? or 25 – 30? 35 x 24 19 x 30 but what about 1.34 – 29 13 – 18

The thinking scheme:

- 1. Finding candidate moves**
Which moves are serious moves to play and which moves are not possible?
Don't forget tactics!
- 2. Selecting the best move**
Calculate the consequences of each candidate move. Compare the results and choose what is the most attractive continuation.
- 3. Check your move**
Did you really go to steps 1 & 2?
Have you checked your move tactically? Do you really want to play this move?
PLAY!

Let's look at a game position to show how to find candidate moves.

2.39 – 34 19 – 23 3.28 x 19 14 x 23 ? White could play 4.31 – 27 22 x 31 5.36 x 27 with a good position, while black can make some mistakes, like: 5... 10 – 14? 6.33 – 28! 14 – 19 7.27 – 22! 18 x 27 8.29 x 18 12 x 23 9.32 x 1 W+.

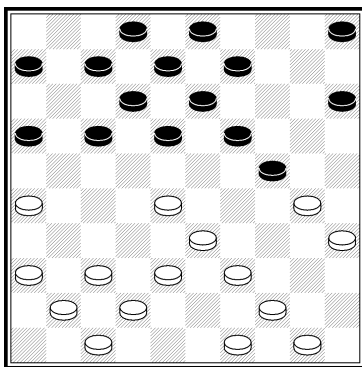
After 5... 8 – 13 white has more than one option, he can play safely 6.34 – 30 or the sharp 6.43 – 39, preventing black from playing 13 – 19 (7.27 – 22! W+), but you don't need to bother about that yet.

1.31 – 27 22 x 31 2.36 x 27 is also fine, after 17 – 21 white can build a strong construction: all pieces are working together after playing 49 – 44 – 40 et cetera.

Even 1.32 – 27 is possible. This also leads to a better position for white after 3 – 9 2.27 x 18 12 x 32 3.37 x 28.

White has to choose between either 1.34 – 29 or 1.31 – 27. 1.31 – 27 x 27 is the most solid move and guarantees some advantage. 1.34 – 29 on the other hand gives a more complicated game and more ways to go wrong by black. So it's a matter of taste what to choose.

This is often the case in draughts. The style of a player decides what moves he plays. However, what is most important, is that you spot that 49 – 44? isn't allowed. As a matter of fact, in the game this move was played and white immediately lost.

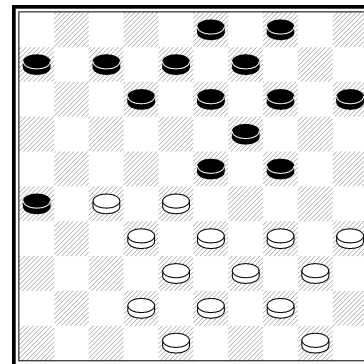


M. Langeveld – E. van Muijen

Black was to move in this game situation. Black's position looks better than the white one. Why? Black's pieces are working together well in formations, except for piece 5. White has weaknesses in her position. The Drenth zone is affected by the missing pieces <43 & 48>. Pieces 26 and 30 aren't positioned very well as

they are at the edge of the board. The 26 / 28 / 30 bond is vulnerable without a strong centre.

Black's plan is simple: because piece 5 isn't active yet, she should play 5 – 10 – 14. After 1... 5 – 10 white has no shot with 28 – 23 18 x 29 which you should check immediately. In the game black played 1...16 – 21? That is not a candidate move at all. Why not? Black loses space playing this move. She can't change 17 – 21 x 21 anymore. Because there are many white pieces at the left wing, black will not get to <27> so easy, so her wing may be blocked.



G. Kolk – J. Lemstra

Black to move. How to judge the position? It's a classical position, white occupying <27 & 28>, black occupying <23 & 24>. White has strong formations at the right wing, but at the left wing he has little power. He can't exchange piece 26 in order to get control over the left wing. Black has to take care for tactics if he plays at <18>. He has to try to keep the position closed classical, minding possible shots for white introduced by the 34 – 29 move. Possible moves are 12 – 18, 13 – 18, 7 – 11 & 14 – 20. The 6 – 11 move can be eliminated immediately because it is not logical to give up the possibility to use the Olympic formation 7 / 11. In the game black went wrong.

- 1... 12 – 18?
- 2.34 – 29 23 x 45
- 3.35 – 30 24 x 35
- 4.27 – 22 18 x 27
- 5.32 x 21 26 x 17
- 6.28 – 23 19 x 28
- 7.33 x 2

Black had seen the shot for white, but miscalculated the consequences. He thought he would be able to catch the king, but was surprised by white's reply.

7... 13 – 19
8.2 x 30!! 35 x 24
9.44 – 40 45 x 34
10.39 x 10

Black should also have spotted that 1... 13 – 18? is punished by a shot:

1... 13 – 18? 2.34 – 29! 23 x 45 3.27 – 22 18 x 27 4.32 x 21 26 x 17 5.28 – 23 19 x 28 6.33 x 13 9 x 18 7.44 – 40 45 x 34 8.39 x 10 W+.

So 12 – 18 and 13 – 18 are no candidate moves. Therefore black has to choose between 7 – 11 and 14 – 20.

1... 7 – 11 2.50 – 45 12 – 18 3.34 – 29 23 x 34 4.40 x 29 leads to equality. 1...7 – 11 thus doesn't yield anything positive.

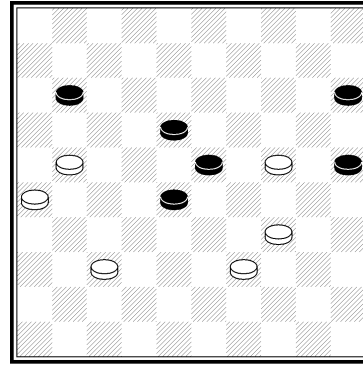
Let's look at 1... 14 – 20. 1... 14 – 20 2.50 – 45 could be met by 24 – 29 x 29 but 35 – 30 29 – 33 x 31 42 – 37 x 27 doesn't give an advantage. Therefore you should look at 1... 14 – 20 2.50 – 45 12 – 18 – now there are no shots for white – and black achieved that white can't change to <29>, so white's space is limited. If he plays 34 – 30 the piece at <44> will be dangling. After 3.34 – 30 8 – 12 4.30 – 25 9 – 14 white has a lost position. After 3.42 – 37 8 – 12 black has a good classical position (Dirod = 0) because white doesn't control the left wing.

What about 1... 14 – 20 2.42 – 37 ? Black has to take care for shots again:

1) 2... 12 – 18? 3.34 – 29 23 x 45 4.27 – 21! 26 x 17 5.28 – 22 ad lib. 6.32 x 1 W+.

2) 2... 13 – 18? is punished by a shot that loses a piece but still forces a winning breakthrough: 3.34 – 29 23 x 45 4.35 – 30 24 x 35 5.28 – 23 ad lib. 6.33 x 11 6 x 17 7.38 – 33! Because of the 37 – 31 break through threat black has to give back the piece playing 7... 26 – 31 8.37 x 26 but after 9 – 13 9.32 – 28 3 – 9 (preventing the 28 – 22 x 22 breakthrough by 13 – 18 =) 10.43 – 38 (check yourself that 27 – 22? isn't correct) white has a winning position, for example: 10... 13 – 18 11.28 – 22 17 x 28 12.33 x 13 9 x 18 13.26 – 21 20 – 24 14.38 – 32 followed by 21 – 17 x 16 etc. W+.

3) Black therefore has to play 2... 7 – 11 and 3.50 – 45 can finally be met by 12 – 18, leading to a good classical position for black. Only spotting the relevant tactics of the position allows black to play the correct moves! In the game Kolk was rewarded for evaluating the tactical features of the position better than his opponent.



W. Chogoliev – A. Petuchow

White has surrounded a black centre attack successfully. Piece 24 is very strong, keeping pieces 15 & 25 at the edge of the board.

Now the time has come to finish off the game correctly. Accurate calculation is needed. Without looking at all possible moves it's hardly possible to find the winning continuation.

The game went: 47.21 – 16? 11 – 17 48.37 – 31 18 – 22 49.31 – 27 22 x 31 50.26 x 37 17 – 22 51.16 – 11 22 – 27 52.11 – 7 27 – 32 53.37 – 31 32 – 38 54.7 – 1 15 – 20 55.1 x 42 20 x 40 56.42 – 24 40 – 45 57.31 – 27 28 – 32 draw.

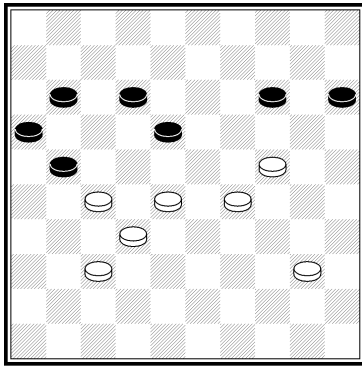
White could have won by a sacrifice. That's why you have to consider all moves, also seemingly illogical moves, searching for candidate moves.

47.21 – 17!! 11 x 22
48.37 – 31!!

A possible end of the game is:

48... 25 – 30
49.34 x 25 22 – 27
50.31 x 13 28 – 32
51.13 – 8 32 – 37
52.8 – 2 37 – 41
53.39 – 33 23 – 29
54.25 – 20 29 x 38
55.24 – 19 15 x 13
56.2 x 36 W+.

We will give an example from a game to show how a player should think.



K. H. Leijenaar – S. Schaaf

White has a great right wing attack. Precise play should result in winning the game. The candidate moves are 40 – 34 and 40 – 35. White doesn't want to play 28 – 23, because after 11 – 17 piece <27> is threatened.

Which candidate move would be best? 40 – 34 allows 14 – 20 threatening 18 – 23 = 1.40 – 34? 14 – 20 2.24 – 19 11 – 17 is terrible for white. Therefore white needs to play 1.40 – 35! Since 14 – 20 can't be played because of 28 – 22 W+ in that case.

The logical way the game develops is: **1.40 – 35 11 – 17 2.35 – 30 21 – 26**

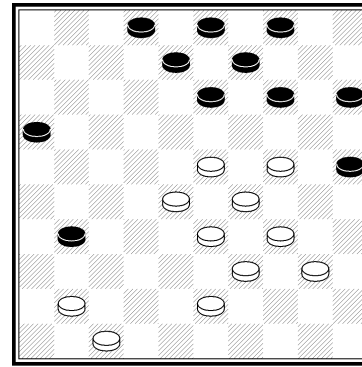
White now shouldn't play 3.28 – 22? 17 x 28 3.32 x 23, since 16 – 21 4.27 x 16 18 – 22 5.16 – 11 22 – 27 etc. leads to no more than a draw. However, he simply plays **3.30 – 25 17 – 21 4.28 – 22** (even 4.28 – 23 wins, provided that white keeps playing precisely) **14 – 19**.

White now needs to make a calculation now to choose the best capture. In this case white has two options:

1) 5.24 x 13 18 x 9 6.29 – 23 9 – 13 7.22 – 17! 13 – 18 (7... 26 – 31 8.17 x 19 31 x 42 9.32 – 28 21 x 32 10.28 x 48 W+) 8.17 x 8 18 x 29 9.8 – 2 29 – 33 10.37 – 31 26 x 28 11.2 – 24 21 x 32 12.24 x 27 28 – 33 13.27 – 43 W+.

2) 5.22 x 13 19 x 8 6.29 – 23 12 – 17 7.23 – 19 17 – 22 8.27 x 18 21 – 27 9.32 x 21 16 x 27 10.18 – 13 27 – 31 11.13 x 2 31 x 42 12.24 – 20 15 x 13 13.2 x 47 W+

Logical thinking, comparing candidate moves and calculation are needed to find the correct way to play the position. We will now show an example in which the position isn't winning so clearly. In this case you should look for ways to get winning chances. Ideally tactics and strategy go hand in hand.



J. van Meggelen – A. Bakker

Black to move is playing against white's attacking position with outposts at <23 & 24>. The black piece at <31> gives black some control at the left wing. Having the untouched Drenth pyramid gives black good possibilities to play against the outposts. Black wants to surround the white centre position. Therefore it is sensible to enlarge the control at the left wing. That makes 31 – 36 certainly not a candidate move, because it decreases white's grip on the left wing. 16 – 21 isn't a candidate move either, because it fails to 23 – 18 W+.

Candidate moves are 14 – 20, 14 – 19 or 8 – 12. In the game black played 38... 14 – 20? but after 39.40 – 35 8 – 12 40.24 – 19! 13 x 24 41.34 – 30 25 x 34 42.39 x 19 black has lost his grip on the white attacking position. This line shows the importance of the 34 / 39 / 43 tail for white.

Usually it is a good idea to change one of the outposts. If black plays 8 – 12 followed by 13 – 19 x 18 (threatening 31 – 37 12 – 17 16 x 49), he can force white to play 43 – 38, which breaks the 34 / 39 / 43 tail. Therefore 8 – 12 is a move that should be investigated.

38... 14 – 19 39.23 x 14 9 x 20 can also be considered, after 40.28 – 23 8 – 12 41.33 – 28 12 – 17 (threatening 31 – 37 13 – 18 16 x 49) 42.43 – 38 3 – 8 white has to go to <19> sometime, while black moves his pieces in the direction opposite from the blocked (right) wing: 43.23 – 19 13 – 18 44.28 – 23 (44.29 – 23 18 x 29 45.24 x 33 4 – 9 loses the piece at <19>; at 46.28 – 22 17 x 28 47.33 x 22 31 – 36! & 9 – 13 B+) 44... 8 – 12 looks good for black, for example: 45.38 – 32 31 – 36 (now white can't take <27> anymore it isn't bad to go to <36> which together with a piece at <21> will give control at the left wing) 46.41 – 37 16 – 21 47.39 – 33 2 – 7 (moving away from the blocked wing again!) and white faces huge problems because he risks being frozen out completely.

What about 38... 8 – 12? White can play 39.24 – 20 or 39.40 – 35. Black doesn't need to be afraid of 39.41 – 37? 31 x 42 40.47 x 38 because after 40... 13 – 19! 41.24 x 13 9 x 18 white can't play at his left wing anymore and has to take care for black breaking through. Black can perform a similar idea by playing 40... 12 – 17, also with a bad position for white.

39.40 – 35 13 – 19 40.24 x 13 9 x 18 41.43 – 38 14 – 20 42.35 – 30 gives black an attractive position; he can try to block white's attack completely. Black has more than one plan here.

Do note that you actually don't have to calculate the precise lines yet, more important is to judge the position correctly. If the position eventually ends up on the board black has to calculate the right plan. We will give some hints how to think to be able to find a good plan.

In order to block white's attack black could bring a piece at <14> after which white can't go to <19> because of 12 – 17! But black has to take care of tactics involving the piece at <31>! He shouldn't play 42... 4 – 9? because of 43.38 – 32! and black can't play 31 – 37 because of 23 – 19 37 x 46 28 – 23 46 x 28 33 x 4 W+. Black can play 42... 3 – 9 though and 43.30 – 24 9 – 14! brings white in huge problems... He has to sacrifice a piece or allow a breakthrough after 47 – 42 (a move you don't like to play of course) 31 – 36 41 – 37 16 – 21 38 – 32 2 – 7! (some patience is needed!) 42 – 38 7 – 11 23 – 19 14 x 23 28 x 19 21 – 26 followed by 26- 31 37 x 26 36 – 41 etc.

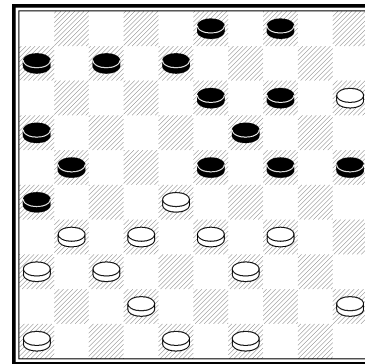
Another solution is 42... 3 – 8 43.30 – 24 8 – 13. This also takes care white can't take more space going to <19>: 23 – 19 is punished by the stick-move 31 – 37! B+. So, also in this case, white faces big problems.

Instead of 38... 8 – 12 39.40 – 35? White has to play 39.24 – 20 15 x 24 40.29 x 20 and it is hard to find a concrete plan for black.

Black thus has to make a difficult choice between 38... 8 – 12 and 38... 14 – 19. Because after 38... 8 – 12 39.24 – 20 seems unclear, we would like to play 14 – 19, but we do have to check our calculation: 38... 14 – 19 39.23 x 14 9 x 20 40.28 – 23 8 – 12 41.33 – 28 12 – 17. We saw that 42.43 – 38 3 – 8 is good for black, maybe white has to play 42.23 – 19 at once? After 42... 3 – 8 white has to play 43.28 – 23 in order to avoid our calculated line. It is not such a big problem for black (although it is the best defense for white) not to play this line. Black can make a shot leading to a draw in this position by 43... 31 – 37 44.41 x 32 25 – 30 45.34 x 14 4 – 9

46.14 x 21 16 x 49 47.19 x 8 49 x 44 48.9 – 3 = or play on with something like 43... 16 – 21. We don't need to bother too much about this yet. After checking if we have gone through steps 1 and 2 correctly, we can (finally) safely play 38... 14 – 19...

A very complex decision making indeed, but we showed a realistic example. Often it is not completely clear what is the best move. Because you have a limited amount of time, you will have to use your intuition and experience sometimes and try to judge the positions that arise after a couple of moves.



This game situation shows how players could think during a game.

We see a classical position with an edge piece at <15>. White's left wing isn't developed well and he has a gap at <38>.

The opened square <38> should alarm white for tactics. White must be alarmed black using piece <15> for a shot. Actually white has to discover the threat of 4 – 10 15 x 4 24 – 29! 4 x 1 29 x 47 1 x 29 47 x 15 B+. So his choice is clear: to eliminate the shot he has to put a defending piece at <38>.

1.42 – 38

Black has to make up his mind: What is the best plan? In order to find the best plan he should wonder what are white's next moves? Logical moves for white are 48 – 43, 49 – 44 and 44 – 40, creating several formations. After these moves black will face the 34 – 29 threat, so he has to find something against this threat. Black makes up a plan and plays.

1... 7 – 11

2.49 – 44 13 – 18

White sees black's intentions now. 3.48 – 43 is

met by 18 – 22! 4.27 x 18 11 x 22, acquiring control over the left wing. White rather doesn't allow black to play this, so he plays the natural

3.31 – 27 8 – 12

Black wanted white to go to <27> to be able to take a shot if white plays 48 – 43 and 44 – 40. 4.48 – 43 is met by 3 – 9! and now 5.44 – 40 is punished by 25 – 30! 34 x 25 14 – 20 25 x 3 23 – 29 3 x 17 11 x 42 38 x 47 29 x 49 B+.

If white is very clever he not only spots this shot, but notices that 4.44 – 40 will rule out the 3 – 9 possibility because of a great Grand Prix shot!

4.44 – 40!

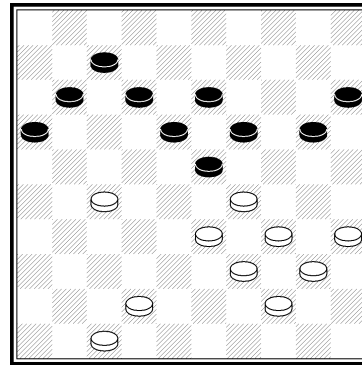
4... 3 – 9 is punished by the astonishing 5.15 – 10!! and now 5... 4 x 15 is punished by a coup Weiss with 27 – 22 18 x 27 28 – 22 27 x 18 37 – 31 26 x 28 33 x 4, while 5... 15 x 4 opens the door for the Grand Prix shot with 27 – 22! 18 x 27 36 – 31 27 x 36 46 – 41 36 x 47 37 – 31 26 x 37 32 x 41 23 x 43 41 – 37 47 x 29 34 x 3 43 x 34 40 x 20 25 x 14 3 x 26 W+.

4... 12 – 17!

The gifted black player spotted white's magnificent trap and builds the power block, threatening 17 – 22. White sees that 5.48 – 42? can be punished tactically (both by 17 – 22 28 x 17 11 x 31 36 x 27 4 – 10 15 x 4 24 – 30 4 x 22 23 – 28 32 x 23 21 x 43 39 x 48 30 x 17 B+ and 26 – 31 37 x 26 4 – 10 15 x 4 14 – 20 4 x 22 25 – 30 34 x 14 19 x 10 28 x 30 17 x 48 26 x 17 11 x 31 36 x 27 48 x 25 B+) and therefore has to play

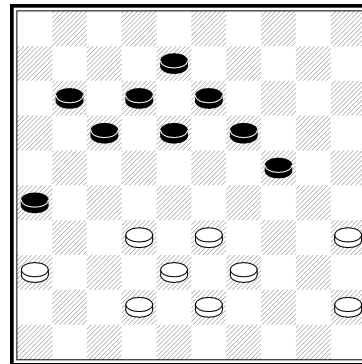
**5.28 – 22 17 x 28
6.33 x 13 19 x 8**

and black has a better position because of the inactive pieces at 36 & 46 at white's left wing. The game went on, but we will stop here.



J. de Boer – W. Wolff

Exercise 1.1: Black is to move. What are black's candidate moves? Which move do you choose to play?

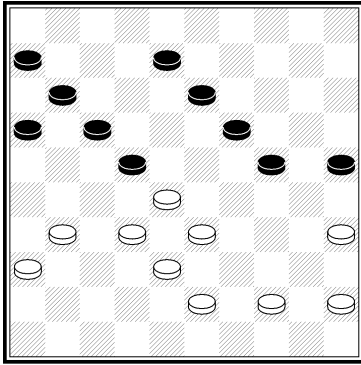


K. Overes – H. Verheul

White is to move in this game situation. With black pieces at <15 & 25> and white at <34 & 40> white has just changed 34 – 30 25 x 34 40 x 20 15 x 24.

Exercise 1.2: What are now the candidate moves and which move would you choose to play?

Never forget to look at surprising moves!



U. Koster – M. van den Esker

Black has just played 18 – 22?, threatening 24 – 29, but white can force a chain-lock. It is nevertheless hard to see how white must continue after 2.32 – 27 13 – 18. After 3.38 – 32 8 – 12 white faces the 24 – 29 (33 x 13 22 x 33 etc.) threat. 4.43 – 39 and 4.45 – 40 are met by 19 – 23.

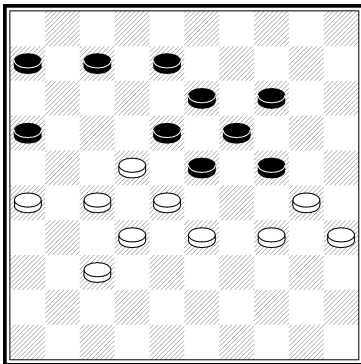
After 3.44 – 39 8 – 13 is obliged, but how to continue? It seem white stands empty-handed and must change 31 – 26 because of the 24 – 29 threat. But there is a surprising way to keep the lock at the board freezing black out:

1.32 – 27 13 – 18
2.44 – 39 8 – 13
3.35 – 30!!

Sacrificing a piece is the solution!

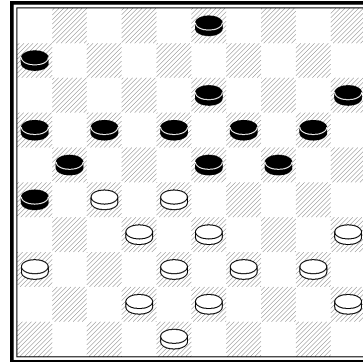
After 3... 25 x 34 4.39 x 30 24 x 35 5.43 – 39 black is out of moves at once and has no proper way to give back a piece. 19 – 24 is met by 28 – 23 18 x 29 27 x 9 W+.

After 3... 24 x 35 4.45 – 40 35 x 44 5.39 x 50 black has one playable piece left. 5... 25 – 30 6.43 – 39 30 – 35 7.50 – 45 forces black to give back two of them (17 – 21) with a winning advantage for white.



A. Baliakin – K. Thijssen

Ex 1.3 Try to find the surprising forcing white can play in order to win. Don't forget the sacrifice!



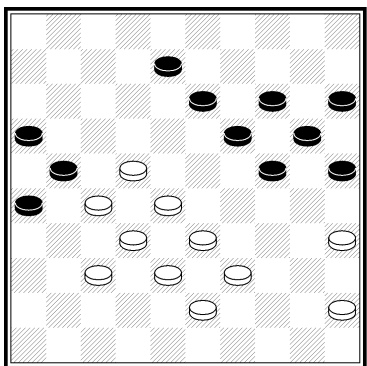
J. M. Ndjofang – W. Van der Wijk

White to play faces the 26 – 31 threat in a classical position. The simple move to prevent this is 42 – 37, but white didn't want an inactive piece at <36> and looked for another solution. He thought he could use tactics to face black with problems. 1.39 – 34 prevents 17 – 22 x 12 by a coup Philippe and at 26 – 31 he wants to attack 34 – 30 – 25... But in order to be able to play this you have to check this line on tactics of course!

1.39 – 34? 26 – 31
2.34 – 30 31 x 22
3.30 – 25

Black should have looked for a shot, since white attacks a piece: 3 – 9 ! 25 x 3 24 – 29 33 x 24 22 x 33 38 x 29 19 x 30 35 x 24 23 x 34 40 x 29 21 – 26 3 x 21 16 x 49 B+.

Black probably didn't realize he had to look for a shot as he played 3... 24 – 29?? and eventually lost the game...



A. Chizhov – A. Silva

Black to move has a couple of candidate moves: 8 – 12, 24 – 29, 24 – 30 and 25 – 30. From these moves 25 – 30 has priority, because it reduces the number of white replies to one. Only piece 45 can still play. This makes the calculation concrete. It is not so hard to see this line: 1... 25 – 30 2.45 – 40 20 – 25 3.40 – 34 14 – 20 4.34 – 29 30 – 34! 5.29 x 40 19 – 23 6.28 x 30 25 x 45 B+. This means that white has to sacrifice a piece at the 4th move.

Black did play 25 – 30! and white sacrificed a piece playing 4.22 – 17 21 x 12 5.28 – 22 and after a fierce fight in which black didn't take his best chance, he managed to make a draw. But the Brazilian still made a good impression finding the nice 25 – 30 move!



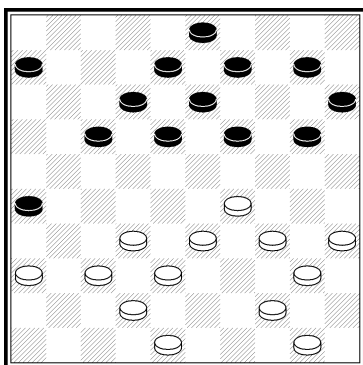
Allan Silva from Brasil

2.Candidate clues

In this paragraph we will discuss ways to find the right candidate moves. There are several clues you can use in order to find the right move.

- **The opponent's move**

The last move of your opponent gives you important information how to continue. It often helps to ask yourself the question: what are my opponent's intentions? Sometimes the last move gives you a clue what strategy to follow.



R. Boomstra – M. Amrilloew

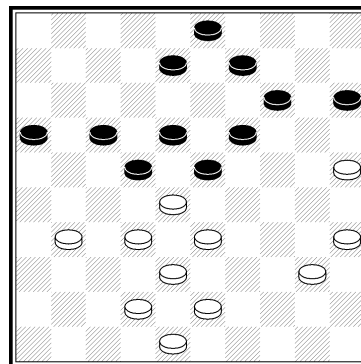
Amrilloew is a strong Russian grandmaster, so he has a lot of knowledge of the game. However, as this game (played during the Wch 2011) will show, the most important knowledge one has, is your opponent's last move.

25.34 – 30

This move reduces black's candidate moves. 19 – 23 isn't possible (30 – 25 W+) and black doesn't want to allow white to play 30 – 24 x 24 getting a strong outpost at <24>, especially when one has no formations to play against it. That leaves black's choice to 20 – 24 x 24 & 19 – 24 x 24.

25... 19 – 24 26.30 x 19 13 x 24 seems a good move, because black gives shape to the semi-fork. While having active formations at the other wing. But since the piece at <13> disappears he should take care for tactics! Indeed, white has a trap shot: 27.35 – 30!! 24 x 35 28.44 – 39 35 x 44 29.37 – 31 26 x 28 30.33 x 2 44 x 24 31.2 x 35 W+. This means 20 – 24 x 24 is the right continuation, black taking <24> in possession.

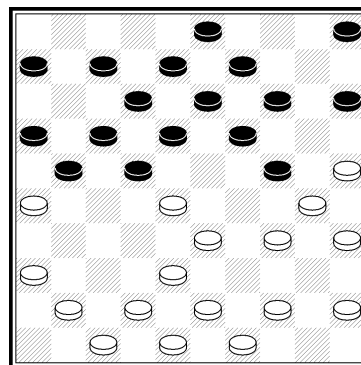
25... 20 – 24! 26.29 x 20 15 x 24



F. van Eenennaam – E. Hoogendoorn

37.40 – 34

Black has chain-locked his opponent, but has a weakness at <13>. He should have spotted that white introduces a threat to make a kingshot, since the gap at <13> often allows shots as we have learned. Black should respond to the 31 – 27 28 – 22 35 x 2 shot by closing <13>. So black's candidate moves are 9 – 13 and 8 – 13. In both cases black can meet 38.34 – 30 with a kingshot himself, removing the piece at <38>: 23 – 29 22 x 33 14 – 20 16 x 49, although this shot probably isn't winning.



G. Kolk – N. Hoekman

18... 5 – 10?

Black creates a dangling piece at <10>. White starts a strategy helped by tactics. The 5 – 10 move gives white many ideas for kingshots to <5>. Black should have broken the position playing 18 – 23 immediately. White's next move anticipates on the 18 – 23 move, getting ready for a 34 x 5 shot.

19.44 – 40! 18 – 23 20.38 – 32!

White closes <32> having calculated black can never play 21 – 27. At this moment 20... 21 – 27 21.32 x 21 16 x 27 is punished by 22.42 – 38! 23 x 32 23.41 – 37 32 x 41 24.25 – 20 14 x 25 25.38 – 32 27 x 29 26.34 x 5 25 x 34 27.40 x 20 15 x 24 28.5 x 46 W+.

20... 7 – 11 21.41 – 37!

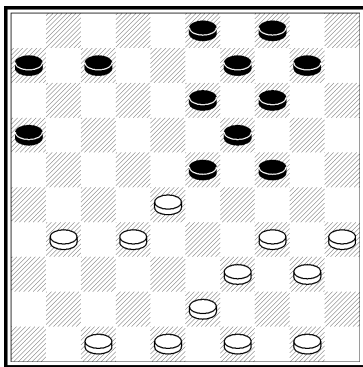
21 – 27 x 27 can be met with the same shot now.

21... 12 – 18 22.37 – 31!

22... 22 – 27 23.31 x 22 18 x 29 24.25 – 20! W+

**22... 8 – 12
23.43 – 38! 3 – 8
24.47 – 41!**

21 – 27 still can't be played ... Black's position is very bad and after 24... 22 – 27 25.31 x 22 18 x 27 26.41 – 37 13 – 18 27.34 – 29 23 x 34 28.40 x 20 15 x 24 29.45 – 40 18 – 22 30.40 – 34 8 – 13 31.37 – 31 13 – 18 32.34 – 29 10 – 15 33.29 x 20 15 x 24 34.33 – 29 24 x 33 35.28 x 39 18 – 23 36.30 – 24 19 x 30 37.35 x 24 9 – 13 38.24 – 20 14 – 19 39.39 – 34 she resigned.



A. Baliakin – I. Kirzner

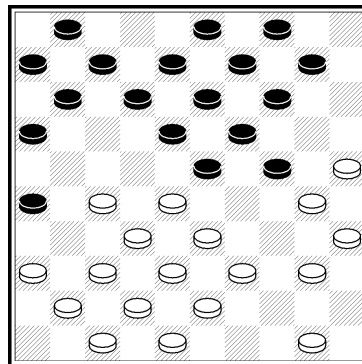
24... 24 – 29?

White used the last move of his opponent to play a strong strategy against <29>. Black wants to change after 25.43 – 38 playing 29 – 33 =.

25.28 – 22!

The 24 – 29 move allows white to take more space at the left wing, while black's pieces behind <29> are blocked. The following moves were: 25... 7 – 12 26.43 – 38 19 – 24 27.31 – 26

12 – 17 28.22 x 11 6 x 17 29.39 – 33 13 – 19 30.47 – 42 9 – 13 31.49 – 43 4 – 9 32.50 – 44 17 – 22 33.44 – 39 10 – 15 34.26 – 21 16 x 27 35.32 x 21 and white won.



1... 11 – 17

This move triggers the question: can I take a kingshot introduced by 27 – 22? The answer is clearly a yes:

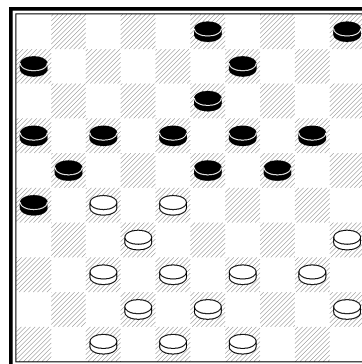
2.27 – 22 18 x 27 3.32 x 21

1) 3... 16 x 27 4.37 – 31! 26 x 46 5.50 – 45 23 x 32 6.47 – 41 46 x 37 7.42 x 2 W+

2) 3... 23 x 32 4.37 x 28 16 x 27 5.28 – 23 19 x 28 6.33 x 2... This looks OK, but now white has to spot black's response: 6... 13 – 19!! 7.2 x 31 26 x 46 B+.

It thus turns out that 11 – 17 was a snare, trying to trap white! 2.27 – 22? Is losing. So we have to play another move. We have to look at the positional aspects of the position. If black can play 17 – 22 28 x 17 12 x 21 our left wing with a dangling piece at <41> will be out of play for a long time. We rather won't allow this, so 27 – 21 16 x 27 32 x 21 23 x 32 37 x 28 can be played to activate piece 41. Black has no tactical way to punish the move, so white plays best 2.27 – 21.

• **Positional desirability**

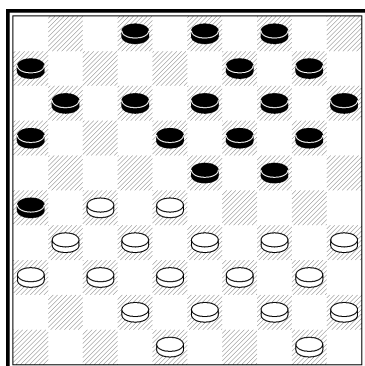


S. Rijgersberg – V. Doumesh

A closed classical position with Dirod -11. Because white trails 11 temps in development, she wants to keep the position closed. Black's last move 24... 15 – 20 introduces the 18 – 22 change. White doesn't want black to make this exchange, because it breaks the position.

In order to keep the position closed, square 33 should be occupied. The candidate moves are 39 – 33 and 38 – 33. We can make this choice without any deep calculation. We just have to decide which of the candidate moves is positionally desirable.

Remember that in a classical game, each player will want to control the wings. Therefore 38 – 33 is better than 39 – 33. The latter weakens white's right wing, while after the former white can go on 40 – 34 and use the 34 / 39 / 43 tail to get control over the right wing (for example 38 – 33 20 – 25 40 – 34 5 – 10 34 – 30 x 30).



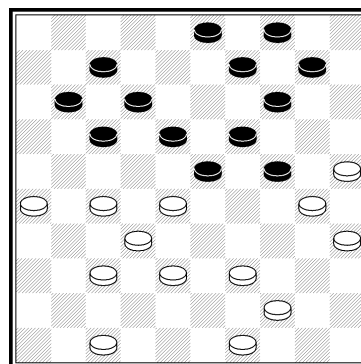
R. Keurentjes – B. Socha

White built a solid centre position with lots of formations. How to continue? There are only 2 candidate moves. 27 – 22 isn't one of them because it loses a piece after 27 – 22 18 x 27 31 x 22 23 – 29 34 x 23 24 – 30 35 x 24 20 x 27 etc. B+1. 1.34 – 30 also doesn't yield anything after 20 – 25! White must therefore choose between 34 – 29 x 29 and 34 – 29 x 30.

1.34 – 29 23 x 34 2.40 x 29 is okay, but actually 1.34 – 29 23 x 34 2.39 x 30 will give white an advantage. Black will want to develop his left wing by playing 20 – 25, but this is made impossible because of 28 – 23! 19 x 39 30 x 17 etc. W+1. This means that white can go to <25> while black has a dangling piece at <10>. Black then can't go to <29> easily, because white can attack the piece at <29>, without black being able to defend the outpost by the standard (if 10 is at <5> for example) 14 – 20 et cetera. So:

16.34 – 29 23 x 34
17.39 x 30! 18 – 23
18.30 – 25

And after 18... 12 – 17 19.27 – 22 24 – 29 20.33 x 24 20 x 29 21.35 – 30 3 – 8 22.40 – 35 17 – 21 23.31 – 27 8 – 12 24.44 – 39 the outpost at <29> couldn't be defended anymore. White won.



K. Thijssen – S. Winkel

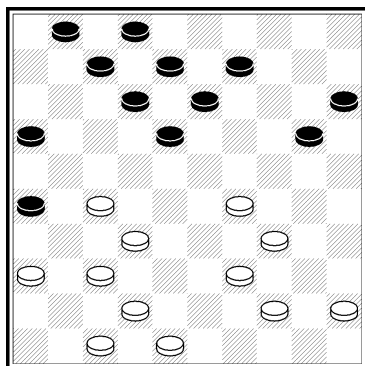
Black to move should consider what white's strategy is. Clearly white wants to control both wings. He already holds <25 & 26>. Black therefore should change piece 26. He has to build the 8 / 12 / 17 tail to do that. He shouldn't waste time and play 28... 11 – 16 29.39 – 33 3 – 8 30.44 – 39 (if white plays 36 – 31 black can take the Ghestem lock with 23 – 29!) 17 – 21 31.26 x 17 12 x 21 and since black is trailing in development by 5 temps, the classical position is fine, although pieces 4 & 10 aren't active yet. In the game black was too slow, giving white the opportunity to keep control over both wings.

28... 9 – 13
29.39 – 33 3 – 8
30.44 – 39 11 – 16
31.28 – 22! 17 x 28
32.33 x 22

White launches an attack at the left wing. This kind of minority attack is usually aimed at freezing the opponent out instead of breaking through. The rest of the game was:

32... 7 – 11 33.26 – 21 11 – 17 34.22 x 11 16 x 7 35.39 – 33 24 – 29 36.33 x 24 23 – 28 37.32 x 23 18 x 20 38.38 – 33 13 – 18 39.33 – 28 7 – 11 40.28 – 22! 8 – 13 41.21 – 16 19 – 23 42.16 x 7 12 x 1 43.37 – 32 1 – 6 44.22 – 17! 13 – 19 45.47 – 42 4 – 9 46.42 – 38 9 – 13 47.38

- 33 10 - 15 48.33 - 28 20 - 24 49.49 - 43
 23 - 29 50.43 - 38 14 - 20 51.25 x 34 6 - 11
 52.30 x 8 11 x 42 53.8 - 3 42 - 47 54.34 - 30
 15 - 20 55.3 x 25 47 - 36 56.25 - 9 36 x 22
 57.30 - 24! and white won the game.



J. Krajenbrink - A. Gantwarg

White is more active in this game (played during the Wch 2001). The 27 / 29 bond is no problem. Black's division of pieces isn't optimal, since he has too many pieces at his right wing. White has two candidate moves: 45 - 40 & 44 - 40, creating the 29 / 33 / 40 tail. It looks like 45 - 40 is more logical, because it centralizes piece 45. But in order to get control over <24> the piece at <45> should stay at its spot!

28.44 - 40! 9 - 14? 29.34 - 30!

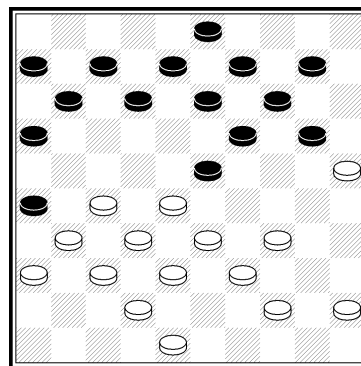
The punch line of the 28.44 - 40 move is revealed: black can't play 14 - 19 because of 30 - 24 29 - 23 40 - 34 45 x 14 with a very strong piece at <14>. 13 - 19 is also impossible because of 29 - 24 27 - 21 42 x 22 W+1. Tactics helped white to reach his strategic goal!

29... 7 - 11 30.30 - 24!

White conquered <24> getting a strong right wing attack. He later won the game.

• **Following your strategy**

Usually you are looking for moves that fit in the strategy you play. Without a proper reason to do something else, you should stick to your strategy.



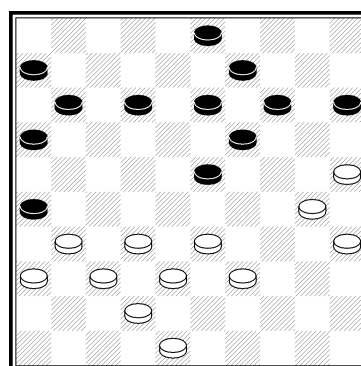
I. Koepman - H. Berkers

White built a compact position, with many formations. White's strategy is to break open the classical structure of the position. Her wants to meet 20 - 24 with the 33 - 29 24 x 22 27 x 29 exchange. Choosing between 44 - 40 and 45 - 40 becomes easy from this point of view.

**26.45 - 40 20 - 24
 27.33 - 29 24 x 22
 28.27 x 29 19 - 23
 29.29 x 18 12 x 23**

After black takes <23> white is going to try to perform the podkowa strategy, surrounding black's weak centre.

**30.39 - 33 7 - 12
 31.34 - 30 10 - 15
 32.40 - 35 13 - 19
 33.44 - 39 8 - 13**



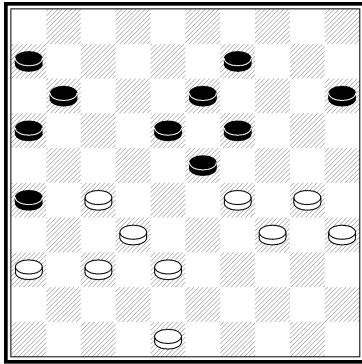
White's candidate moves should fit in his plan. So he can choose from 31 - 27 & 30 - 24 x 34. Changing back will weaken black's centre, so this is a logical move to play.

**34.30 - 24 19 x 30
 35.25 x 34 14 - 20**

36.31 – 27 20 – 24
 37.34 – 30 13 – 19
 38.39 – 34 12 – 18

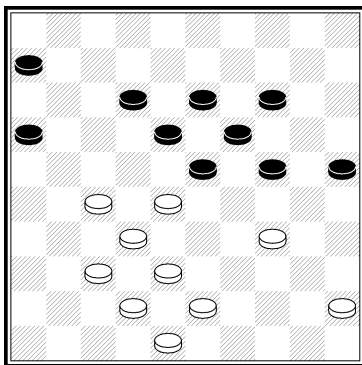
White built a typical podkowa structure. Now he can conquer <29>, surrounding black's centre position.

39.33 – 29 24 x 33
 40.38 x 29 8 – 13
 41.42 – 38 3 – 9



The position has become concrete. White should be looking for a tactical continuation, for 11 – 17 will be punished already by 27 – 21 32 x 12 37 – 31 48 – 42 30 – 25 25 x 4 W+, while 9 – 14 is also impossible because of 27 – 22. White should wonder how he could tactically punish 18-22. This can be done by playing 42.48 – 42! and 18 – 22 is met by 29 x 18! 22 x 31 36 x 27 13 x 31 32 – 27 31 x 22 37 – 31 26 x 48 30 – 25 48 x 30 35 x 4.

42.48 – 42 15 – 20 43.30 – 25 9 – 14 44.27 – 22 is also losing for black, so after 42.48 – 42 lack has no good move left. In the game white played 42.38 – 33? After a mistake from black he won anyway.



White's right wing is weakened. Black wants to launch an attack at this wing. White should defend with 34.45 – 40 23 – 29 35.34 x 23 18 x

29 36.40 – 35.

White however played 34.37 – 31?, giving black the opportunity to follow his strategy successfully, using a tactical resource.

34.37 – 31? 24 – 29!

Since white can't play 35.45 – 40 because of 29 – 33!! white's right wing is weakened even more.

35.31 – 26 29 x 40
 36.45 x 34 23 – 29
 37.34 x 23 18 x 29
 38.42 – 37 19 – 24

Black couldn't play 38... 25 – 30 because of 39.38 – 33! 29 x 49 40.28 – 23 19 x 28 41.32 x 23 49 x 21 42.26 x 10 W+.

39.43 – 39 25 – 30
 40.38 – 33 29 x 38
 41.32 x 43 30 – 35
 42.43 – 38

Hoping for the cheap trick 42... 35 – 40?? 43.39 – 34 40 x 29 44.38 – 33 29 x 38 45.48 – 43 38 x 49 46.28 – 23 49 x 21 47.26 x 10 W+.

Heusdens stays concentrated and prepares the breakthrough by closing the gaps in his position.

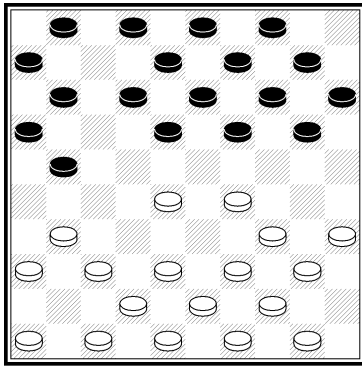
42... 12 – 18
 43.39 – 34 24 – 30
 44.34 x 25 35 – 40

Black won after 45.38 – 33 40 – 45 46.33 – 29 45 – 50 47.28 – 23 50 – 45 48.23 x 12 45 x 42 49.48 x 37 6 – 11 and white resigned.

• Building up

Before you take action, you usually have to build a solid construction. Strong players want to build a construction in which all pieces are working together. In the opening of the game you will often want to develop both wings and strengthen the center position.

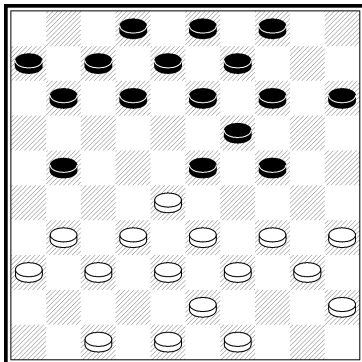
Building up often is the beginning of a strategy, as we will see in the next example. All white's move fit in his desired strategy.



A. Georgiev – I. Kristek

White develops his wings and strengthens his centre before he takes action. First piece 46 must be developed.

9.37 – 32 21 – 26 10.39 – 33 26 x 37
 11.42 x 31 16 – 21 12.44 – 39 1 – 7
 13.46 – 41 20 – 24 14.29 x 20 15 x 24
 15.41 – 37 12 – 18 16.50 – 45 10 – 15



White built a solid centre construction. He doesn't play 47 – 42, because it doesn't add anything to his plan, putting pressure at <24>. Now it is important to immediately play 34 – 29 and not delay this by playing 47 – 42, giving black more time to defend the piece...

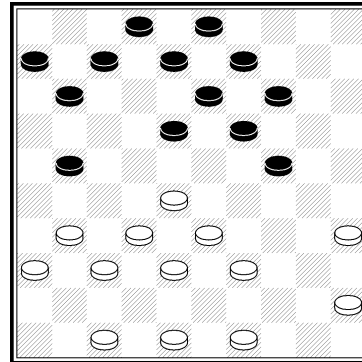
17.34 – 29! 23 x 34
 18.40 x 20 15 x 24

White plays moves that continue his plan of removing the piece at <24>.

19.39 – 34 4 – 10
 20.43 – 39 12 – 18
 21.34 – 29 10 – 15
 22.29 x 20 15 x 24

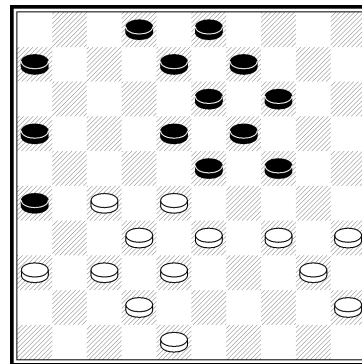
One could consider 14 x 25, because 15 x 24

loses control over <15>. Without a piece at <15> it is hard to control <24>.



White will build a solid position with all pieces working together with his 5 next moves.

23.49 – 44 18 – 23 24.44 – 40 7 – 12
 25.47 – 42 12 – 18 26.31 – 27 11 – 16
 27.39 – 34 21 – 26



We could have predicted white to build this position. He continues his strategy: breaking <24> in order to get control over the centre.

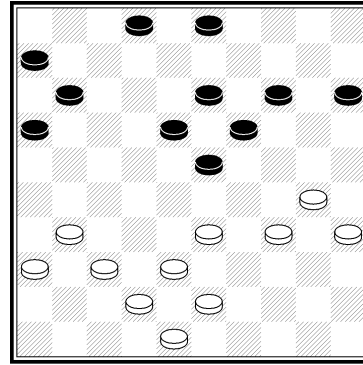
28.34 – 29 23 x 34 29.40 x 20 14 x 25
 30.45 – 40 19 – 14 31.40 – 34 13 – 19
 32.34 – 29

What is the right move now for black: 8 – 13 or 9 – 13? Because white attacks at the right wing black should reinforce this wing by playing 8 – 13. In the game the beleaguered wing is weakened even more.

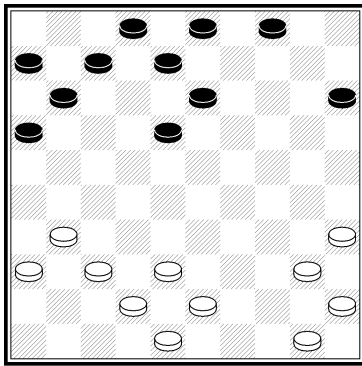
32... 9 – 13? 33.29 x 20 25 x 14
 34.33 – 29! 14 – 20 35.28 – 23! 19 x 28
 36.32 x 12 8 x 17 37.35 – 30!

Georgiev splits the black position while taking the strategic squares under control.

The game went on 37... 3 – 9 38.30 – 24 20 – 25 39.38 – 32 17 – 21 40.27 – 22 6 – 11 41.32 – 28 2 – 8 42.28 – 23 11 – 17 43.22 x 11 16 x 7 44.42 – 38 7 – 11 45.23 – 19 11 – 17 43.22 x 11 16 x 7 44.32 – 28 2 – 8 45.23 – 19 11 – 17 46.19 – 14 9 x 20 47.24 x 15 13 – 19 48.29 – 23 19 x 28 49.15 – 10 50.10 – 5 30 – 34 51.5 x 16 34 – 40 52.16 – 2 8 – 12 53.2 – 35 and black resigned.



White has played these moves without spending too much calculation on it. The construction he built is quite suitable for classics or podkowa. The 30 / 34 / 35 arc often gives control over the right wing. Now it is time to play more concrete moves, unfolding the strategy.



J. Krajenbrink – I. Koeperman

After a big exchange the position was simplified. The position isn't concrete and players have to build up their positions again. This is a situation which often occurs in draughts games. You have to consider what construction you want to build. Usually it makes sense to build a position in which your pieces work together. Usually pieces work together in formations. Especially attractive are constructions in which all pieces are connected.

GMI Johan Krajenbrink saw the position that will emerge after 8 moves already in this moment. Piece 50 goes to <33> and at the right wing white puts down the 30 / 34 / 35 arc. At some point he will play 31 – 27.

31.31 – 27

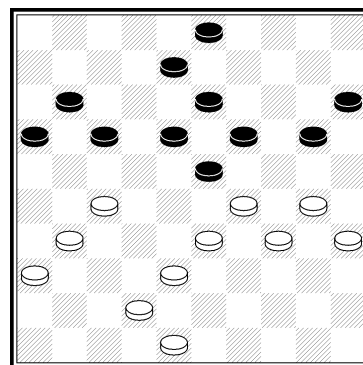
White occupies the right strategic square. It is needed for both classics and podkowa. Notice that black doesn't have any serious weaknesses yet, so it will be hard to win the game. Black just plays his pieces to the centre.

31... 11 – 17

Now white has to make a real decision. This will take some calculation, trying to find out what move will realize the right kind of position. Candidate moves are 37 – 31, 38 – 32, 33 – 29 and 30 – 25. Actually it is hard to calculate all these moves, so intuition is needed. Not every player will make the same move here, it also depends on the style of the player. Krajenbrink likes to play podkowa, so he prepares the 33 – 29 move.

- 24.50 – 44 4 – 9
- 25.44 – 39 9 – 14
- 26.35 – 30 13 – 19
- 27.39 – 33 8 – 13
- 28.40 – 34 7 – 12
- 29.45 – 40 18 – 23
- 30.40 – 35 12 – 18

- 32.37 – 31 2 – 8 33.33 – 29 6 – 11
- 34.38 – 33 14 – 20 35.43 – 38



Black is being surrounded and doesn't feel comfortable. Under such unpleasant psychological circumstances people tend to make mistakes. Black fears 20 – 24 x 24 33 – 29 x 29 because he loses control over <24>. Still this was a proper defense, because white can't keep both wings under control after 3 – 9 (threatening to change 19 – 24 18 – 22 =) 30 – 25 17 – 22.

35... 17 – 22
36.38 – 32 11 – 17

Black doesn't want to play an endgame with a piece less after 36... 22 – 28 37.33 x 22 16 – 21 38.27 x 7 18 x 47 39.29 x 9 3 x 14 40.7 – 1.

37.42 – 38

White's move all fit in the surrounding strategy. Now black has gone to <22>. He can't change 20 – 24 x 24 anymore.

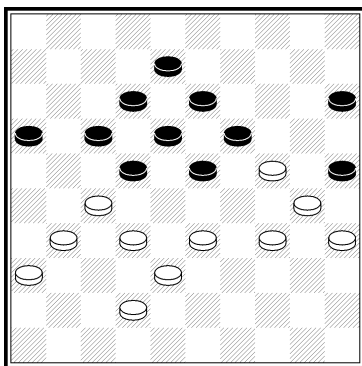
37... 8 – 12 38.48 – 42!

Building the strong 33 / 38 / 43 tail again.

38... 3 – 9? loses due to 39.31 – 26! 22 x 31 40.36 x 27 and the 26 – 21 27 – 22 28 x 7 breakthrough threat is lethal since 17 – 22 can't be played. 38... 3 – 8 39.30 – 25 doesn't look too safe either, so black logically plays 20 – 25.

38... 20 – 25 39.29 – 24!

Now black has to make a crucial decision. 3 – 8 or 3 – 9? He should have played 3 – 9, calculating that after 40.34 – 29 23 x 34 41.30 x 39 19 x 30 42.35 x 24 9 – 14 43.39 – 34 he has the 22 – 28!! 44.33 x 11 16 x 7 pseudo-sacrifice to draw.



Now white has a crucial decision to make.

Candidate moves are 31 – 26, 33 – 28 and 34 – 29. This is a best-move-situation that needs accurate calculation and a good positional feeling.

The game was **40.34 – 29? 25 x 34 41.29 x 40 19 x 30 42.35 x 24 16 – 21! 43.27 x 16 23 – 28 44.32 x 23 18 x 20 45.31 – 27 22 x 31 46.36 x 27 20 – 24 47.33 – 29 24 x 33 48.38 x 29 15 – 20 49.27 – 22 17 x 28 50.16 – 11 28 – 32 51.11 – 6 13 – 19** and the players agreed on a draw. White was too optimistic about the breakthrough.

The best move would have been 40.33 – 28 22 x 33 41.38 x 29 This continuation looks attractive. The right wing is blocked, so white removes one of black's active pieces while putting a strong piece at <29> himself. This piece makes <18> vulnerable and also helps freezing black out.

Black has two possibilities:

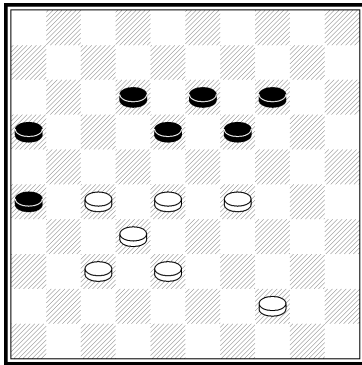
1) 41... 17 – 21 42.42 – 37!!
 42.31 – 26 allows 23 – 28! 43.32 x 14 21 x 32 and black can still defend.

At 42... 21 – 26 43.27 – 22 18 x 38 44.29 x 9 wins. 42... 12 – 17 43.31 – 26 8 – 12 44.27 – 22 also wins and 42... 23 – 28 43.32 x 14 21 x 41 44.36 x 47 also loses, for example: 12 – 17 45.31 – 26 17 – 22 46.47 – 42 22 – 28 47.42 – 37 8 – 12 48.24 – 19 13 x 33 49.14 – 9 33 – 38 50.26 – 21! 16 x 27 51.9 – 3 W+.

2) 41... 17 – 22 42.31 x 26 22 x 31 43.36 x 27 12 – 17 44.42 – 38 17 – 22 45.38 – 33 22 x 31 46.26 x 37 8 – 12 47.37 – 31 12 – 17 48.33 – 28 17 – 21 49.31 – 27 21 26 50.28 – 22 26 – 31 51.27 x 36 18 x 38 52.29 x 9 19 – 23 53.9 – 3 38 – 43 54.3 – 14 and white will win.

- **Waiting moves**

A mistake beginning players often make is to take decisions too soon. Sometimes it is better to wait before taking action.



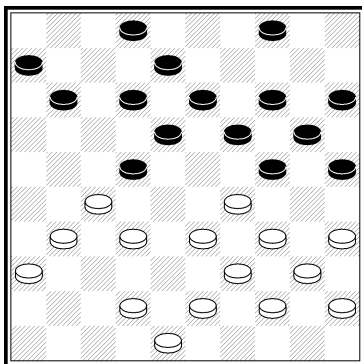
R. Smedinga – P. Leijenaar

White controls <27 & 28>, while black has no active formations at all. 50 moves have just been played, so white could calculate the right continuation to win the position. Candidate moves are 28 – 23, 44 – 39 & 44 – 40.

51.28 – 23 19 x 28 52.32 x 23 13 – 19 53.38 – 32 19 x 28 54.32 x 23 14 – 20 55.44 – 39 16 – 21 56.27 x 16 18 – 22 isn't a clear win, 57.39 – 33 20 – 25! 58.23 – 18 22 – 27 is only a draw.

Therefore you should consider playing 51.44 – 39 or 51.44 – 40. Such a waiting move eliminates the 13 – 19 attack after 28 – 23 x 23, spoiling the white defense.

51.44 – 39! 14 – 20 52.28 – 23! 19 x 28 53.32 x 23 leaves black with no defense. 51.44 – 40 is winning too actually, but 51.44 – 39 is more logical because it leaves white's defense at his left wing intact.



J. Kos – R. Kromhout

White is fork-locked and should take care to keep enough space. In a couple of moves he will have to change 31 – 26 22 x 31 26 x 37.

24.42 – 37?

This is a positional mistake. White eliminates the 31 – 26 exchange himself. Black only has to wait a couple of moves before white runs out of sensible moves...

24... 2 – 7 25.48 – 42

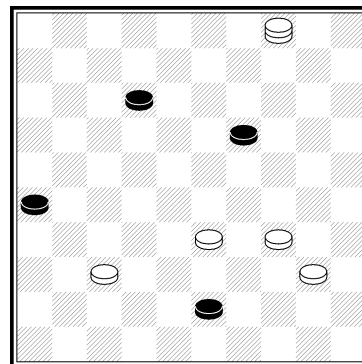
White might have found out too late that 33 – 28 isn't possible because of 24 x 33 28 x 17 12 x 21! 27 x 16 20 – 24 39 x 28 24 – 30 35 x 24 19 x 50 B+.

25... 4 – 9 26.43 – 38 11 – 16

White has to lose a piece. 28 – 23 is met by 24 – 30 after capturing. 31 – 26 can be met by both 18 – 23 B+1 and 19 – 23 B.

• **Defending**

If you are in a bad position you have to take care you don't play a move that loses quickly, especially in the endgame. So you check which moves lose and pick the move that isn't losing in a clear way.

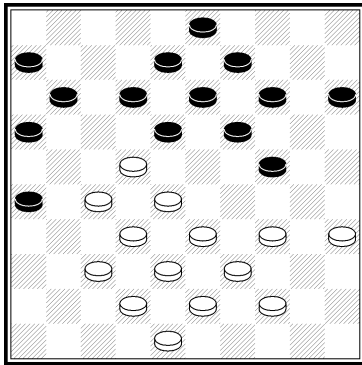


E. Prosman – M. Barkel

Black to move has to defend a bad endgame with a piece less. He played too quickly and lost:

**51... 43 – 49? 52.4 – 36! 49 x 35
53.34 – 30 35 x 31 54.36 x 24**

Black should have been more alert, for attacking a piece is dangerous. White got a free move to catch his king. He should have played 51... 19 – 23! and drawing the game, for example: 52.4 – 36 44 – 49, now 53.34 – 30 49 x 31 isn't winning and 54.40 – 35 49 – 44 55.33 – 29 44 – 40 56.29 x 1 40 x 46 leads to a quick draw.



J. Wiering – R. van Marle

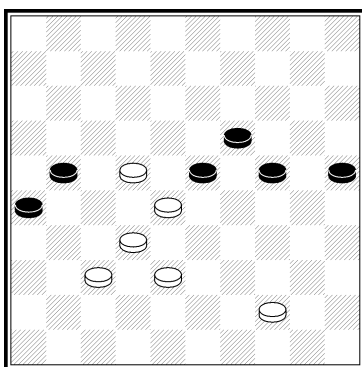
White has a closed Highland attack and played

27.34 – 29! 12 – 17?

Black discovered that the logical move 14 – 20 would have been punished by a kingshot: 29 – 23 22 – 18 35 – 30 33 x 4 W+. He also spotted that 27... 11 – 17? 28.29 x 20 15 x 24 29.22 x 11 also loses both after 29... 6 x 17 30.27 – 22 18 x 27 31.32 x 21 16 x 27 32.28 – 23 19 x 28 33.33 x 11 W+ and 29... 16 x 7 30.27 – 22 18 x 27 31.32 x 21 26 x 17 32.28 – 23 19 x 28 33.33 x 2 W+.

Black panicked and decided to give a piece: after 27... 12 – 17, white won a piece via **28.29 x 20 15 x 24 29.27 – 21 18 x 27 30.21 x 12 8 x 17 31.32 x 12.**

However, black didn't look at all possible moves. You always have to check all moves before concluding that your position is lost. Sometimes there is a hidden way to defend your position. In this case 27... 16 – 21!! would result in a big exchange: 28.27 x 7 12 x 1 29.29 x 20 18 x 27 30.32 x 21 26 x 17 =.

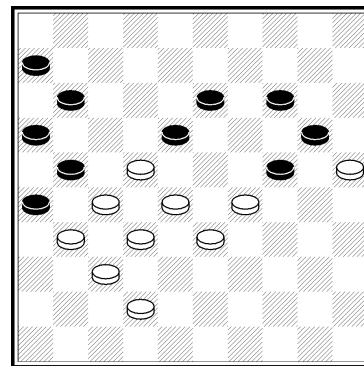


R. Misans – A. Georgiev

White was under pressure during the entire game and collapsed. The game was

**53.38 – 33 23 – 29 54.22 – 18 29 x 27
55.28 – 22 27 – 31 56.18 – 12 31 x 42
57.22 – 17 42 – 47 58.17 – 11 47 – 33
59.11 – 7 33 x 50 60.7 – 1 24 – 29!
61.1 – 7 19 – 24**

and white resigned. White could have defended the position by waiting for better circumstances to break through: 53.44 – 40! 25 – 30 54.40 – 35 30 – 34 55.38 – 33 23 – 29 56.22 – 18 29 x 27 57.18 – 12 27 – 31 58.12 – 7 31 x 42 59.7 – 2 and the 28 – 23 threat guarantees a draw.



O. Kamysleeva – K. Thijssen

White has a lack of space due to the arrow lock of her left wing. She should use the tactical resources of this position to defend herself.

Playing 1.28 – 23? gives black the opportunity to make a shot: 1... 24 – 30! 2.23 x 12 (2.25 x 34 is met by 20 – 24 3.29 x 9 18 x 47 4.9 x 18 47 – 36 +) 14 – 19 3.25 x 23 30 – 34 4.29 x 40 11 – 17 5.22 x 11 16 x 47 6.27 x 16 B+.

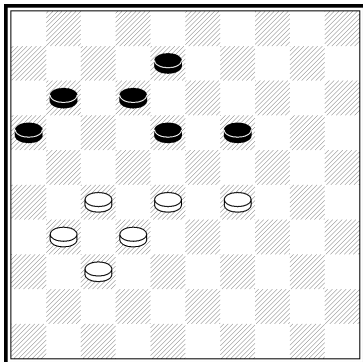
White could have defended by playing 1.42 – 38 11 – 17 2.22 x 11 6 x 17 3.28 – 22!! 17 x 39 4.38 – 33 39 x 28 5.32 x 12 21 x 41 (creating two free moves) 6.12 – 7 26 x 37 7.7 – 2 24 x 33 8.2 x 36 =.

Never think your position is lost. Always look for a hidden defense!

• **Best move situations**

Best move situations are situations in which the best move can be calculated objectively. These situations often occur in the late middle game or

the endgame. Accurate calculation is needed to find the best move with a sharp eye for tactics. In such situations in which you can force a win, there usually is only one solution, so you will have to calculate very precisely.

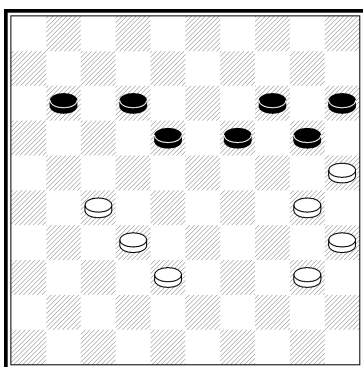


In this case white has to spot the tactical resources the black position has. An immediate 1.28 – 23 19 x 28 2.32 x 23 looks winning at first sight, but 2... 11 – 17! 3.37 – 32 8 – 13 4.31 – 26 will not secure the win. Black doesn't play 4... 17 – 22? 5.29 – 24! W+, but 4... 18 – 22!! followed by 12 – 18 or 13 – 18, drawing the game.

The solution for white is playing a waiting move. **1.31 – 26! 8 – 13 2.28 – 23 19 x 28 3.32 x 23 11 – 17 4.37 – 31!!**

Now white is well prepared for black's tactical resources.

4.... 18 – 22 5.27 x 9! 12 – 18 6.23 x 21 16 x 36 7.9 – 4! 36 – 41 8.4 – 10 and black's king is ambushed.



G. Valneris – A. Chizhov

Black to move (in this Wch match 1991) has a superior position. Precise play will result in a win. Candidate moves are 11 – 17, 12 – 17 and 18 – 23. 11 – 17 & 12 – 17 are both threatening 17 – 22 27 – 21 & 11 or 12 – 17 giving a

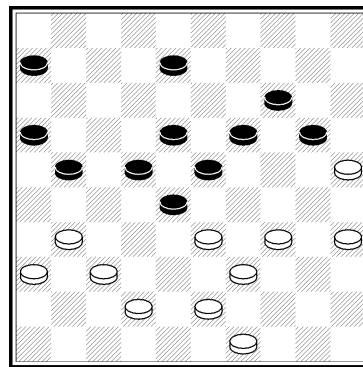
breakthrough. In both cases white is forced to play 32 – 28.

50... 12 – 17? 51.32 – 28 18 – 23

Black supposed 52.38 – 32 12 – 18 53.30 – 24 (53.40 – 34 20 – 24 would follow and white is frozen out) 20 x 29 54.35 – 30 18 – 22 55.27 x 18 23 x 12 with a winning position for black. But white had a surprising defense.

**52.28 – 22! 17 x 28
53.27 – 21 20 – 24
54.40 – 34**

White profits from the vulnerable piece 11. Due to this piece attacking 24 – 29 is met by 21 – 16 & 16 x 7 =. 54... 15 – 20 55.38 – 33 28 x 39 56.34 x 43 23 – 28 57.43 – 39 28 – 32 58.39 – 33 32 – 37 59.33 – 28 doesn't win either. 50... 11 – 17! would have avoided this defense, since now the piece would be at <12> instead of <11>. So 50... 11 – 17 51.32 – 28 18 – 23 52.38 – 32 20 – 24 will win as is shown. Because 50... 18 – 23 51.27 – 22 12 – 17 52.30 – 24 17 x 37 53.24 x 13 already looks less convincing, you don't even need to calculate the 18 – 23 lines anymore.



J. van den Akker – G. Heerema

There are three candidate moves here: 40.31 – 26, 40.42 – 38 & 40.43 – 38.

43 – 38 is more logical than 42 – 38, for after 40.42 – 38? 20 – 24 41.31 – 26 8 – 13 41.26 x 17 22 x 11 42.33 x 22 18 x 27 white has no advantage. But with 40.43 – 38! this variation gives him an attack at black's left wing. White needs a piece at <42> for this purpose: 40.43 – 38 20 – 24 41.31 – 26 8 – 13 41.26 x 17 22 x 11 42.33 x 22 18 x 27 43.37 – 31! 16 – 21 44.31 x 22 23 – 29 45.34 x 23 19 x 17 46.39 – 33! The 33 / 38 / 42 tail is built to change 33 – 29 x 29 at

the next move, breaking through at the right wing.

Another reason why 40.43 – 38 looks good is that 40.43 – 38 21 – 27 41.31 – 26! 8 – 13 42.26 – 21! wins a piece for white, also after 27 – 31 or 27 – 32.

40.43 – 38 6 – 11 41.31 – 26 11 – 17 42.38 – 32 leads to a strong chain-lock (as well as threatening 34 – 29) for white:

1) 42... 8 – 13 can be met by the superb forcing 43.49 – 44!! 20 – 24 44.33 – 29! 24 x 33 45.34 – 29 23 x 43 46.32 x 12 17 x 8 47.26 x 48 W+2.

2) 42... 8 – 12 43.37 – 31!! 28 x 48 44.33 – 28 22 x 44 45.49 x 40 48 x 30 46.35 x 11 16 x 7 47.26 x 8 W+

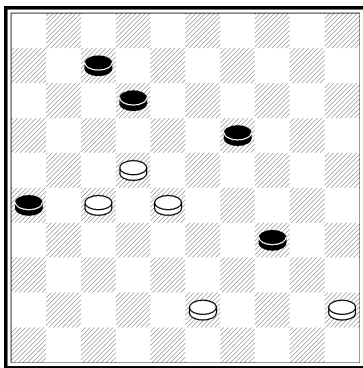
3) 42... 22 – 27 43.33 x 15 27 x 47 44.35 – 30 14 – 19 45.37 – 32 with a bad macro-endgame for black.

An immediate **40.31 – 26** was played in the game, but this is too slow: After **40... 8 – 13 41.26 x 17 22 x 11 42.33 x 22 18 x 27 43.37 – 31 20 – 24 44.31 x 22 23 – 29 45.34 x 23 19 x 17 46.39 – 34 13 – 19** white was too late to make a breakthrough, 43 – 38 is met by 19 – 23 =.

It is thus clear that 40.43 – 38 is the best move.

• Tactics

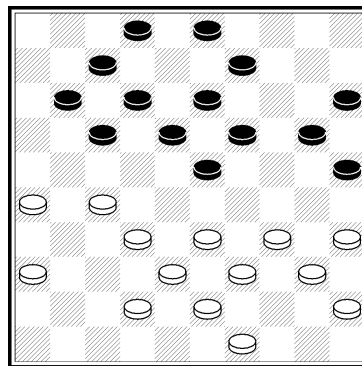
While making exercises, you usually know where to look for. The task is often to find a shot, forcing or sacrifice. But if such a possibility occurs in a game, there is no one who puts a sign up with a text like: search for the shot! Many times draughts players miss a tactical opportunity because they simply forget to look for it! So, looking for candidate moves, don't forget to look for tactical possibilities all the time!



G. Jansen – A. Georgiev

White just played 51.32 – 28? after which the

brilliant Georgiev overlooked that he could win by a shot. Probably the players weren't focused on tactical possibilities anymore with few pieces on the board. Black could have won by playing 51... 12 – 17! 52.22 x 2 26 – 31 53.2 x 39 31 x 44 B+. Black instead played **51... 7 – 11?** and the game was drawn.

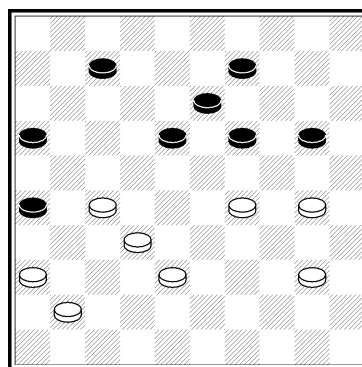


H. Meijer – Dolfing

During the Dutch championship 2002 two very strong players overlooked a simple shot. They just weren't aware that tactics could be involved in this seemingly easy position...

27.33 – 28? 2 – 8?

Neglecting the coup Philippe by 27... 23 – 29! 28.34 x 14 18 – 22 29.27 x 18 13 x 44. The 23 – 29 move isn't standard at all for a coup Philippe!



M. Seck – A. Getmanski

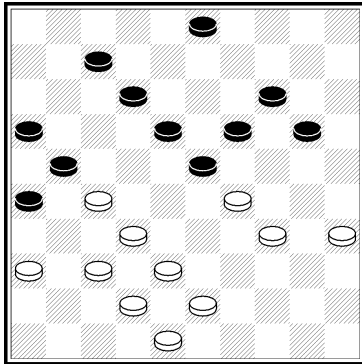
It looked like black started a nice forcing in this game played during the Wch 2011.

**51... 20 – 25!
52.40 – 34 7 – 11
53.29 – 24**

After 53.38 – 33 black plays 11 – 17 & 26 – 31 winning a piece at the next move.

53... 19 – 23?

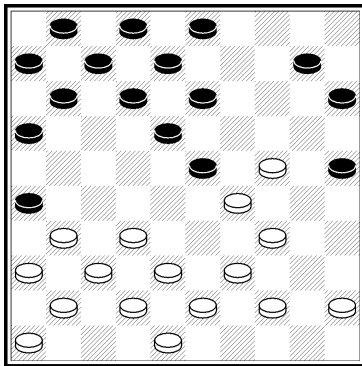
The strong grandmaster from Russia doesn't notice the modest shot to finish his forcing: 53... 18 – 22! 54.27 x 18 13 x 22 55.24 x 4 22 – 27 with king at <46>.



White is surrounding the black centre but faces the 23 – 28 threat while after 38 – 33 19 – 24 white is chain-locked. But white has a tactical solution:

1.38 – 33!

It turns out that 19 – 24? Is punished by a shot: 2.37 – 31! 26 x 30 3.42 – 38! 24 x 42 4.35 x 15 21 x 32 5.48 x 10 W+. You can investigate yourself that white has a winning position.



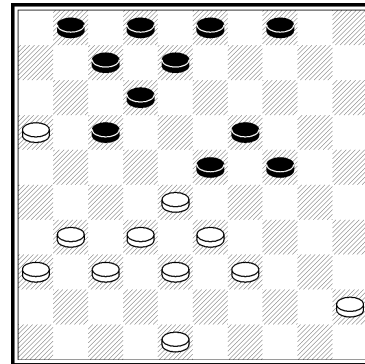
E. Prosman – J. Mondt

This position stems from the analyses of a blindfold game. In 2008 Prosman broke Sijbrands' blindfold record by playing blindfolded against 27 opponents simultaneously, achieving a higher than 70% score. Later Sijbrands succeeded in reclaiming the record against 28

players.

White wants to attack the piece at <23>, so the natural move is 38 – 33. Since this move creates a gap at <38>, white has to be extra alerted for a tactical reply! You should spot the 16 x 47 track to king for black. Even having noticed this the shot isn't easy to find: 38 – 33? 15 – 20! 24 x 4 13 – 19 4 x 31 (or 4 x 27) 12 – 18 31 x 35 11 – 17 29 x 18 8 – 13 35 x 21 16 x 47 (taking 7 pieces) B+.

This means that white has to wait playing 38 – 33. He should play 45 – 40.



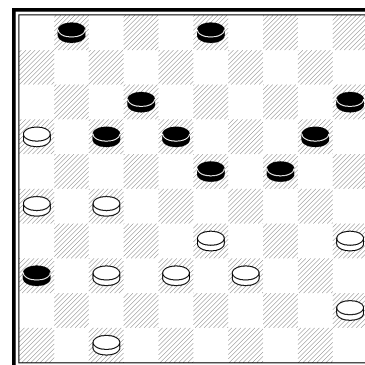
J. Veerman – H. Jansen

GMI Hans Jansen is very strong tactically. He anticipated on white's next move. It is very logical that white will play 31 – 27?.

30... 3 – 9!

This is also a good positional move. Black transports a piece to <25> controlling the right wing. White fell victim to the prefabricated shot.

31.31 – 27 24 – 29 32.33 x 13 9 x 18
 33.28 x 19 18 – 23 34.19 x 28 7 – 11
 35.16 x 18 17 – 22 36.28 x 17 8 – 12
 37.17 x 8 2 x 44



A. van den Berg – M. Dolfing

White suffers from a lack of formations and has some gaps in his position. Black to move can profit from these weaknesses by tactical means.

1... 3 – 8! 2.37 – 32

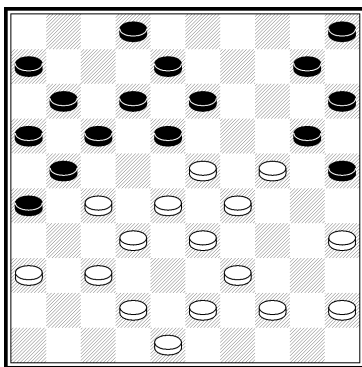
2.27 – 21 would have been too passive. Black plays 18 – 22! and white is frozen out in a few moves. Now 27 – 22 38 – 32 comes into play, but black can allow this kingshot, since the king must take 2 x 30 at the next move.

2... 20 – 25!

Now 27 – 22 17 x 37 38 – 32 37 x 28 33 x 2 12 – 17 2 x 30 25 x 43 can't be played. Also, 3.33 – 28 is met by 36 – 41! 4.28 x 30 25 x 43 and one of the two black pieces at <41 & 43> is breaking through. So the next move seems logical, but black surprises by taking a great shot.

- 3.45 – 40 24 – 29**
- 4.33 x 24 15 – 20**
- 5.24 x 15 25 – 30**
- 6.35 x 24 23 – 28**
- 7.32 x 23 18 x 20**
- 8.15 x 24 17 – 21**
- 9.26 x 17 12 x 45**

This nice combination led to a winning endgame: **10.24 – 20 40 – 45 11.20 – 14 50 – 28! 12.14 – 9 8 – 13 13.9 x 18 28 – 11! 14.16 x 7 1 x 23 B+.**



A. Scholma – P. Hoopman

Black to move has to check the tactical possibilities of this position. There is no piece at <38> and the piece at <35> isn't positioned well. In the game black blundered, playing 25... 2 – 7?? Black should have eliminated this as a

candidate move going to step one of the thinking process. 25... 2 – 7 isn't a nice move anyway, moving base piece <2>. White took a shot with 24 – 19 28 – 22 37 – 31 33 x2 and black resigned. The logical continuation is

25... 10 – 14!

introducing the 25 – 30 threat. Both ways to eliminate the threat, 39 – 34 & 35 – 30 x 30 fail:

1) 26.39 – 34 17 – 22 27.28 x 17 11 x 31 28.36 x 27 26 – 31 29.37 x 17 12 x 21 30.23 x 3 5 – 10 31.3 x 26 16 – 21 32.26 x 19 14 x 23 33.29 x 18 20 x 47 B+

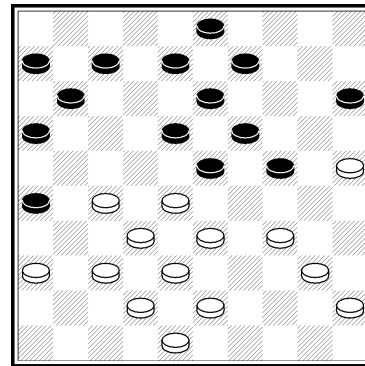
2) 26.35 – 30 25 x 34 27.39 x 30 13 – 19! 28.24 x 2 12 – 18 29.23 x 3 26 – 31 30.37 x 26 20 – 25 31.3 x 20 25 x 23 32.28 x 19 17 x 50 33.26 x 17 11 x 31 34.36 x 27 15 x 13 B+

White's best choice is to allow black to gain a piece, getting positional compensation:

26.37 – 31 26 x 37 27.42 x 31 25 – 30 28.24 – 19 13 x 24 29.31 – 26. Black can try to trap his opponent now by playing 29... 8 – 13?! If white bites with 30.28 – 22!? 17 x 37 31.26 x 10 15 x 4 32.23 x 12, black slams with 32... 2 – 8! 33.12 x 3 37 – 42 34.3 x 34 42 – 47 35.29 x 20 47 x 21 B+.

• **Best-chance-situations**

Most of the time the best move is hard to establish objectively. In this case you want to play the move that gives the best chances for a good result. In this case you often have to judge the most likely reaction to your move from your opponent .



E. Prosman – J. Kolfort

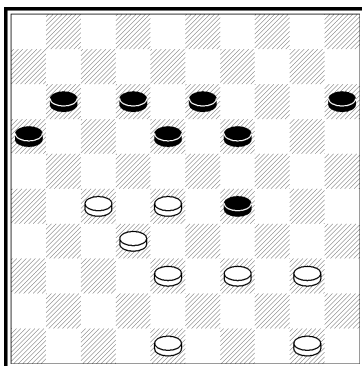
This is another position from a blindfold

simultaneous game in Prosman's successful world record attempt against 27 opponents in Delft.

Normal moves like 37 – 31, 25 – 20 & 43 – 39 will not give white enough advantage to impress black. The best chance to get a significant advantage is the surprising 40 – 35! Although this move breaks the 34 / 40 / 45 tail, it introduces a kingshot threat by 34 – 29 28 – 23 38 – 33 32 x 1 +. 1.40 – 35 7 – 12 is met by 2.25 – 20! and both 24 – 29 and 24 – 30 lose a piece for black! This means that black should change:

1) 1... 24 – 30 2.35 x 24 19 x 39 3.43 x 34 15 – 20 4.25 x 14 9 x 20 5.28 x 19 13 x 24 6.33 – 29! 24 x 33 7.38 x 29 7 – 12 8.32 – 28 with a big advantage for white, since he has a strong centre position.

2) 1... 24 – 29 2.33 x 24 19 x 39 3.43 x 34 15 – 20 4.25 x 14 9 x 20 5.28 x 19 13 x 24 6.34 – 29 23 x 34 7.38 x 29 with a clear advantage for white.



A. Georgiev – A. Tolchikau

It's hard to win this position, although white clearly has the advantage. Black has no formations. White saw a variation in which black could go wrong if he would underestimate the situation...

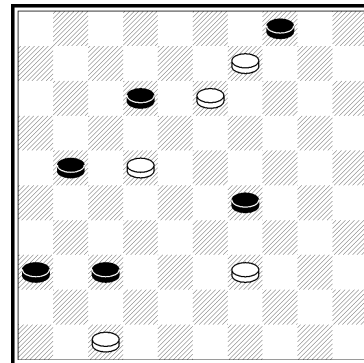
43.27 – 21! 16 x 27
44.32 x 21 11 – 16

44... 18 – 23 45.28 – 22! 11 – 16 46.22 – 18! 13 x 22 47.39 – 33 16 x 27 48.33 x 13 looks risky for black. Therefore he chooses a variation in which he loses a piece, but can make a draw by breaking through at the cost of another piece.

45.39 – 34 16 x 27
46.34 x 14 13 – 19
47.14 x 23 18 x 29
48.50 – 45 27 – 31?

A huge mistake. The simple plan 12 – 17 – 21 – 26 27 – 31 etc. draws the game. But now black plays 27 – 31?? first, and white can win by triple opposition!

49.48 – 42 12 – 17
50.28 – 22! 17 x 28
51.40 – 34 29 x 40
52.45 x 34



I. Kirzner – A. Georgiev

Black played a nice surrounding game, but white defended well and the endgame will give no more than a draw it appears... But Georgiev takes his last chance to fool his opponent.

56... 21 – 26?!
57. 9 – 3??

White didn't check his move well and loses. He should have given a piece first by 57.22 – 18 12 x 23 58.9 – 3 with an easy draw.

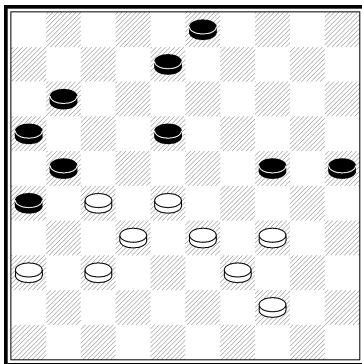
57... 4 – 9!
58.3 x 31 26 x 9



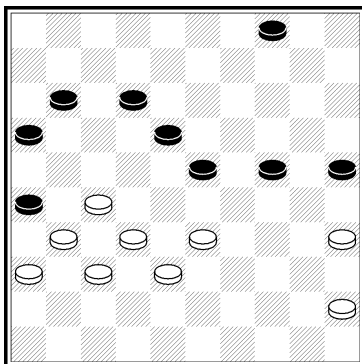
Fivefold world champion Alexander Georgiev

Exercises 2.1 – 2.20

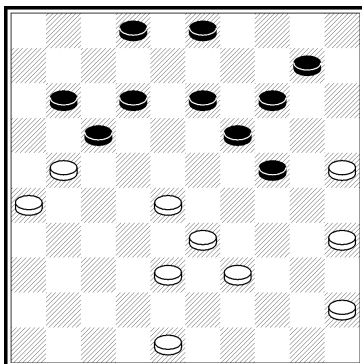
You have to search for the best move using the thinking process in the next positions. What would you play? Don't forget to consider the candidate clues we discussed in this lesson!



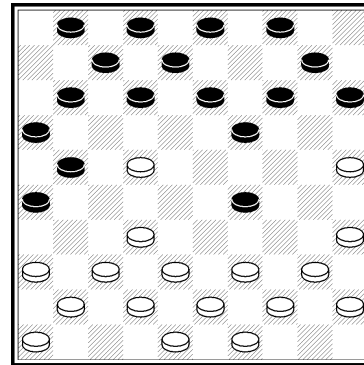
2.1



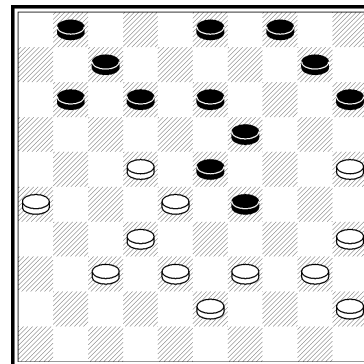
2.2 Black to move



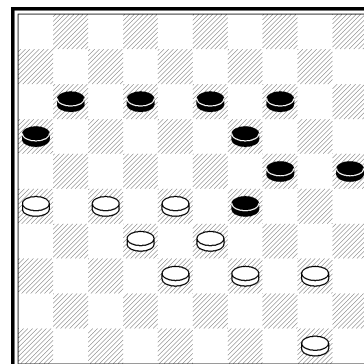
2.3



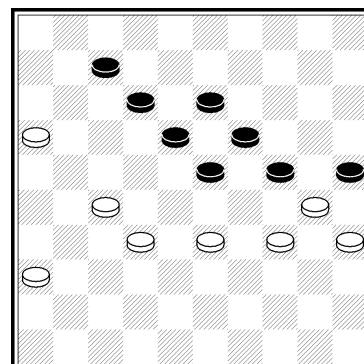
2.4



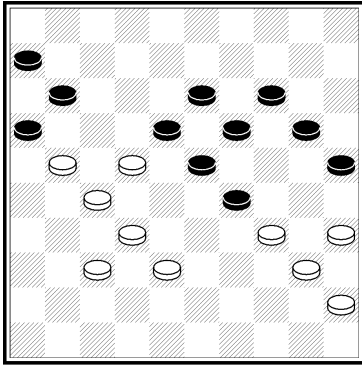
2.5 Black to move



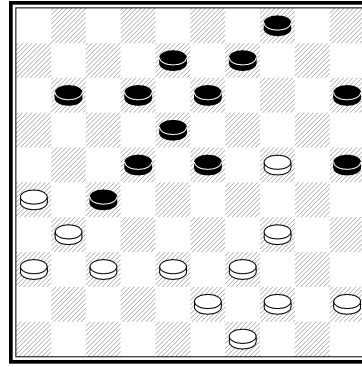
2.6



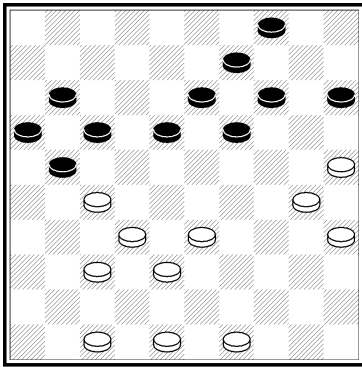
2.7



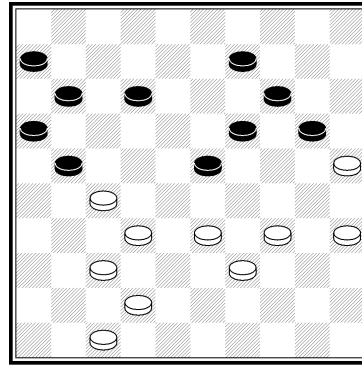
2.8 Black to move



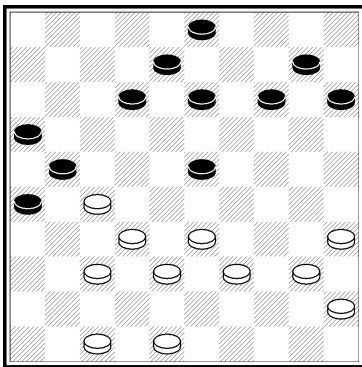
2.12



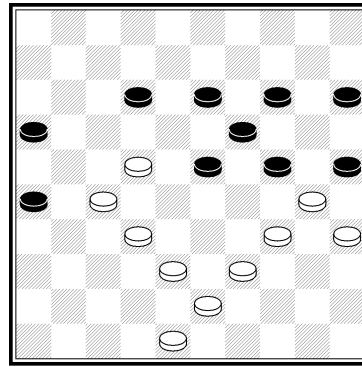
2.9



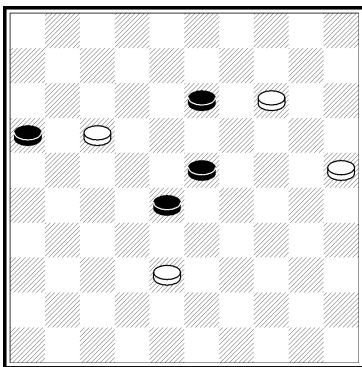
2.13



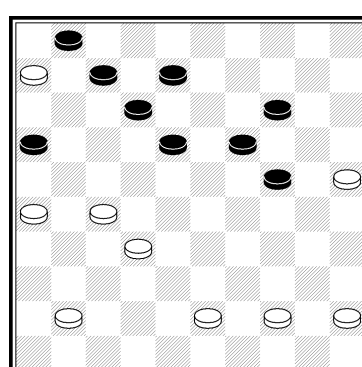
2.10



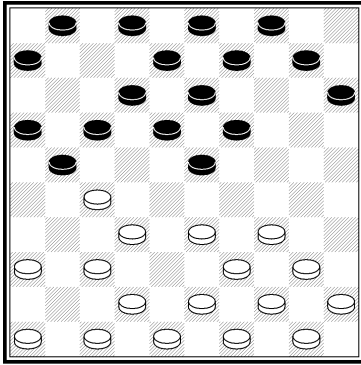
2.14



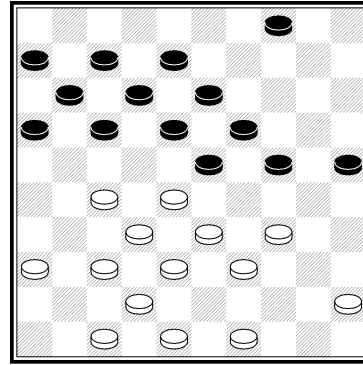
2.11 Black to move



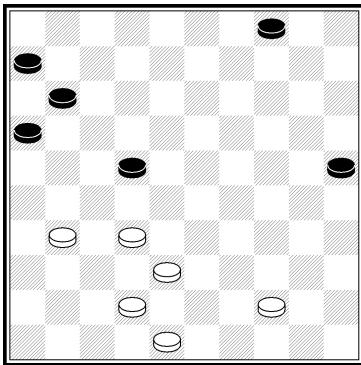
2.15 Black to move



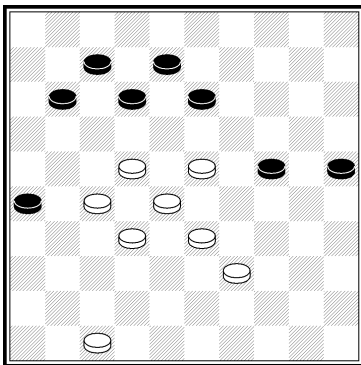
2.16



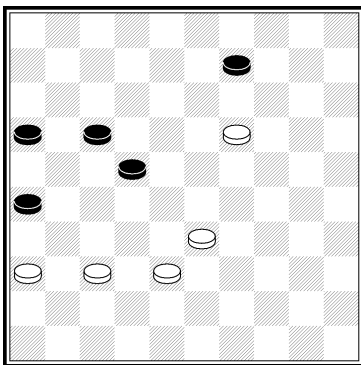
2.20



2.17



2.18



2.19

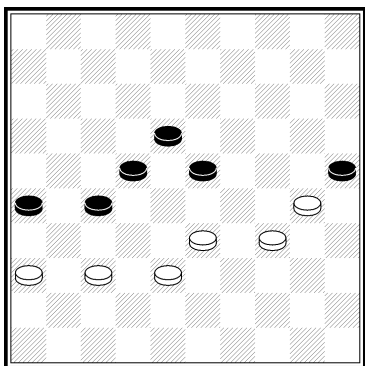


Alexei Chizhov (1994)

3. Time management

It is important to use the time you have properly. It makes sense to keep enough time for the late phase of the middle game, between the 35th and 50th move. This is the phase calculations are needed. Many games are decided in the late middle game. In the opening a game is rarely decided already, so this phase of the game should cost less thinking time. You can use your knowledge and intuition to play the opening. Preparation of your opening can save you a lot of time you need later on in the game!

In many games players have to play 50 moves in two hours. If the 50 moves are played in time, players receive another hour for 25 moves. Sometimes games are played with the Fischer-clock. In this case you get extra time each move you make. For example, players get 1 hour and 20 minutes for the entire game and each move one minute is added. In this case it makes sense to save some extra time for the endgame. If all your time has run out, you will have to make every move within a minute, which gives you a constant feeling of being in a hurry. Having more time will give you more peace of mind and the opportunity to calculate at crucial moments.



J. van den Akker – R. Clerc

Both players had been in time trouble and the 50 moves have just been played. Both players had time enough to calculate again.

51.37 – 32?

Something went wrong in white's calculation. He should have played 51.30 – 24 23 – 28 52.24 – 19 28 x 30 53.37 – 32 and a draw is still possible.

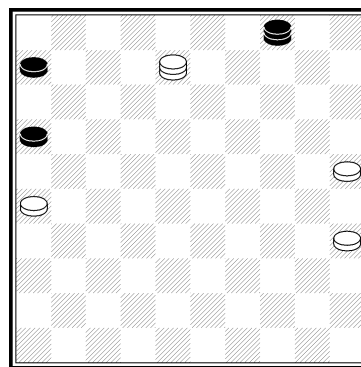
51.... 27 – 31? 52.36 x 27 22 x 31

After **53.33 – 28 31 – 36 54.28 x 19 36 – 41 55.30 – 24 18 – 23 56.19 x 28 41 – 47 57.28 – 22 47 x 17 58.24 – 19 17 – 3 59.19 – 13 26 – 31 60.32 – 28 31 – 37 61.28 – 22 37 – 41 62.22 – 17** the players agreed on a draw.

Calculating the correct line to win wasn't so difficult. The alternative candidate move was 51... 23 – 29. So black calculates 51... 23 – 29! 52.34 x 12 25 x 34 53.32 x 21 26 x 8 and this looks very promising, so black should proceed calculating this line: 54.38 – 32 34 – 40 55.33 – 29 (55.32 – 28 40 – 44 – 50 B+) 40 – 44 56.29 – 24 44 – 49 57.24 – 20 49 x 16 (the black king can also stop at <27 or 21>) 58.20 – 14 8 – 13 49.14 – 10 16 – 32 B+.

The most important aspect of being able to play this line is to spot **all** candidate moves! Once a grandmaster spots 51... 23 – 29 he will be able to calculate this line correctly. So black must have overlooked the 23 – 29 possibility at all! This example proves that even with enough time, things can go wrong, so without proper time to think it could go even worse!

If you don't have time to note down the moves any more there are two options to be able to know when exactly the 50th move has been played. You can note down a hyphen (-) for every move, but the best way is to take a couple of pieces and put away a piece every move. Take care you don't get confused when capturing. You have to get away the captured piece first and then put away the right number of 'counting-pieces'.



I. Koeperman – J. van der Wal

The black player was famous for frequently being in big time trouble. This game was no exception. Black had been in time trouble again,

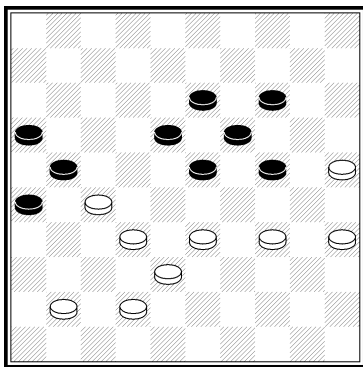
having no time to write down his moves.
 White has just played his 51th move, but black,
 not knowing how many moves had been played,
 kept on playing fast...

51... 4 – 10 52.8 – 13 10 – 28 53.13 – 27

The game is completely drawn, since black holds
 the main diagonal, but he still didn't stop playing
 fast.

53... 6 – 11 54.25 – 20 28 – 10??

A terrible blooper! After **55.20 – 14 10 x 21 56.26
 x 6** black was still so obsessed making moves
 that he even played **56... 16 – 21** quickly before
 resigning...



M. Seck – J.M. Ndjofang

Both players have had time trouble for a couple
 of moves and didn't have time to note down the
 moves anymore. White played on fast until his
 flag fell. He was punished severely for this lack
 of discipline.

Even without much time he should have spotted
 the 33 – 29 x 29 exchange which is winning.

50.33 – 29 24 x 33 51.38 x 29 14 – 20 52.25 x
 15 19 x 10 53.35 – 30 10 – 14 54.42 – 37 14 –
 20 55.30 – 25 (30 – 24 also wins) 13 – 19 56.25
 x 14 19 x 10 57.29 – 24 10 – 15 58.41 – 36 W+

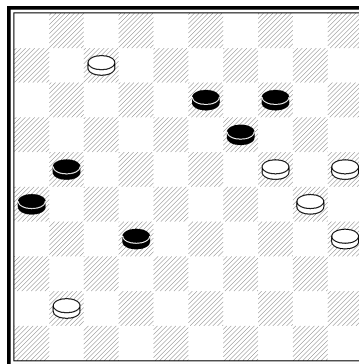
White should have played this move, because it
 is a standard move for podkova. The game
 went:

50.34 – 30? 24 – 29?

For no clear reason white receives an extra
 piece. 50... 23 – 28 would have drawn the game.

**51.33 x 24 23 – 28
 52.32 x 12 21 x 43
 53.42 – 38 43 x 32**

54.12 – 7 16 – 21?



Now 54... 32 – 38 55.24 – 20 would be bad for
 black, but 54... 26 – 31! would have been the
 best defence. At this moment white should have
 calmed down and wait till his flag fell. Then he
 could have calculated the position, spotting the
 13 – 18 21 – 27 threat and playing 55.7 – 1! with
 nice tactical points:

- 1) 55... 32 – 38 56.41 – 37 38 – 43 57.1 – 34! 43
 – 49 58.37 – 32! 49 x 27 59.25 – 20 14 x 25
 60.34 – 45 25 x 34 61.45 x 36 W+.
- 2) 55... 26 – 31 56.41 – 36 31 – 37 57.1 – 34 and
 shots starting with 25 – 20 are decisive.
- 3) 55... 21 – 27 (reactivating the 13 – 18 threat)
 56.41 – 36 and white plays 1 – 34 at the next
 move with the 25 – 20 threat again.

But white was still in a hurry and went wrong.

55.7 – 2? 21 – 27?

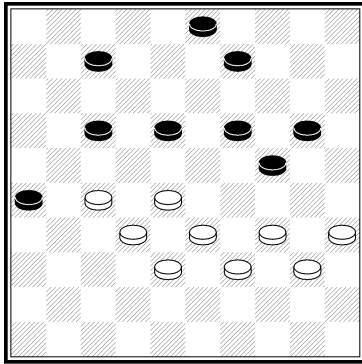
Neglecting the draw after 13 – 18 24 x 22 21 –
 27 22 x 31 26 x 46 =.

**56.2 – 16 26 – 31
 57.41 – 36 31 – 37
 58.16 – 7?! 37 – 42
 59.1 – 34??**

A ridiculous move with only one explanation.
 White still played extremely quickly... 59.1 – 45
 was a draw, but now white is going to face
 serious problems, for he loses piece 24.

After **59... 42 – 47 60.25 – 20 14 x 25 61.34 –
 45 47 x 15 62.45 – 34 32 – 38 63.34 – 45
 25 x 34 64.45 x 14 38 – 43 65.35 – 30 43
 – 48 66.30 – 25 48 – 26 67.14 – 23 26 – 8
 68.23 – 37 8 – 12 69.37 – 28 12 – 7 70.28 –
 37 7 – 16** black has put his kings at the right
 squares to chase white away from the main
 diagonal. At 70.37 – 46 15 – 20! 71.25 x 14 27 –
 31 72.36 x 27 16 x 5 wins.

The last moves of the game were **71.37 – 48 27 – 32 72.36 – 31 32 – 38 73.31 – 26 16 – 2 74.48 – 39 38 – 42 75.26 – 21 42 – 48 76.39 – 44 48 – 34 77.44 – 6 34 – 1 78.21 – 16 13 – 18 79.6 – 28 15 – 20 80.25 x 14 2 – 19**. White resigned. This kind of a disaster is the risk for not knowing how many moves are played.



P. van der Stap – T. Sijbrands

Sijbrands played a very strong classical game and is now controlling both wings. White has just conquered <27>, and now black could have forced a win by sacrificing a piece, exploiting the weak pieces at white's right wing: 45... 26 – 31!! 46.27 x 36 18 – 23 47.36 – 31 9 – 13 48.31 – 27 7 – 11 49.27 – 22 3 – 8!

Black must be patient and not play 20 – 25, since white can give back a piece 35 – 30 24 x 44 39 x 50 then, black losing control over <24>. 50.34 – 30 20 – 25 51.40 – 34 8 – 12 and white loses, also after 52.33 – 29 24 x 44! 53.34 – 29 25 x 34 54.29 x 16 44 – 50 55.22 x 11 50 x 6 B+.

Black, however, was in time trouble and didn't time to calculate this line. The consequence was dramatic:

45... 18 – 23??

Allowing white to perform a simple kingshot:

**46.28 – 22! 17 x 37
47.27 – 21 26 x 17
48.38 – 32 37 x 28
49.33 x 2**

and white won.

The reason some players get into time trouble frequently is described well by N. Krogius in his book *Psychology in chess*. Dutch draughts trainer and coach Rik Keurentjes selected the

following interesting quotes from this book.

“An attempt to find the best and strongest continuation should not be regarded as something that is absolute, but should be measured against what is feasible.”

“It should be kept in mind that in chasing after the unattainable the player tries to analyse a comparatively large number of variations, which he tries to calculate as far as possible. Such a player shows an unwillingness to abandon calculation or to make a critical judgement about the positions arising in his calculation.”

“A chess player gets into time trouble not, as a rule, because he cannot regulate his time, but because he is not very sure of himself, does not trust his own calculations and checks over the same variation several times.”

“At the selection of a final decision the possibilities that arise are examined and re-examined many times and only after an over thorough check, which necessitates an increased expenditure of time, is the move made. It is a systematic refusal to take decisions, a constant lack of confidence even in the most obvious, it is doubt and hesitation.”

“If you have to choose from several moves that look equally good, do not become involved in endless comparisons. Do not forget that in most positions there are several good moves, but that you have to choose only one of them or else it will soon be too late.”

“[The player] will search for the objectively best move, but soon he will lose all chance of orientation amongst the chaos of all the possible advantages and disadvantages. Valuable time is lost forever and ultimately, in the majority of cases, he will have to decide upon a move suggested by intuition rather than by calculation, but by this stage his imagination has been poisoned by thousands of doubts and a poor move will suggest itself to him.”

Botvinnik: “I schooled myself to use time economically and so solved the problem satisfactory, sometimes even consciously lowering the quality of my play.”

4. Fair play

The French chess team once was caught cheating during a team tournament¹. The coach of the team received information on the best moves of his team players. Someone outside the playing room sent these moves by mobile phone. The coach used this information to secretly advise the players by using codes. After they were caught, the players of course denied, but their reputation was damaged forever. Instead of having a one time advantage, they blew their entire chess careers by acting unfair.

This story should warn you to use such unfair play. Draught is a game of honor and cheating is shameful behavior. Your reputation could be spoiled for the rest of your life. Many players will get a troubled conscience later if they cheat. Moreover, if you don't play fair, aren't you actually accepting then that all others can play unfair too?

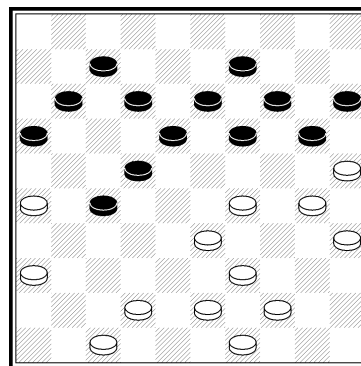
Making deals is never advisable. Even if you agree on making a draw, you can get into trouble. There are cases known the deal was broken by the other player. What to do then? You won't find much sympathy if you confess that you made a deal that was broken. The deal itself isn't fair play.

According to the rules it is forbidden to distract your opponent during a game. This is logical, because concentration is needed to calculate properly. So, it is not right to talk with other people during the game. It's also not fair to read anything during the game or leave the building without approval of the arbiter. Before the 40th move you are not allowed to agree on a draw. Moreover, once you offered a draw and it's rejected, you can't offer one again.

Gentlemen agreements are that you shake hands with your opponent before and after the game.

Just sticking to the rules will create the best atmosphere for all draughts players to enjoy the game and competition.

We will show some examples from games in which the question arises: is this fair play or not?



H. Wiersma – A. Andreiko

Wiersma played against the right wing attack, using tactics as a weapon. White could have frozen black out tactically.

32.43 – 38!

All black replies are losing due to tactics. 32... 19 – 23 is met by 33.29 – 24! 20 x 29 34.33 x 24 14 – 19 35.36 – 31 27 x 36 36.26 – 21 16 x 27 37.47 – 41 36 x 47 38.38 – 32 47 x 20 39.25 x 3 27 x 38 40.3 x 47 W+.

32... 18 – 23 33.29 x 18 12 x 23 34.26 – 21! loses a piece, and finally 32... 12 – 17 is punished by 33.29 – 24 20 x 38 34.43 x 1 W+.

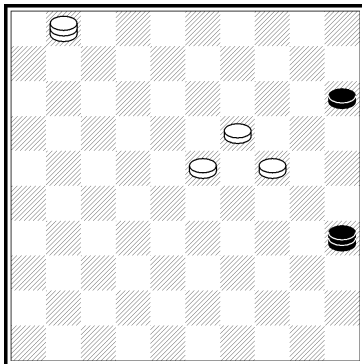
32... 11 – 17

White could have forced a win making a sacrifice: 33.38 – 32! 27 x 38 34.30 – 24 19 x 30 35.35 x 24 and the 24 – 19 threat can't be stopped.

White spent a lot of time already and overlooked this opportunity. Wiersma played **33.29 – 24? 20 x 29 34.33 x 24 18 – 23** and black's right wing attack was okay again. Wiersma had to play quickly and didn't note down his moves anymore. He checked the notation of his opponent Andreiko and decided that since Andreiko had noted 50 moves, he must have made the time control and then just let the time run. Then Andreiko claimed the victory, because only 49 moves had been played, since he had made a 'mistake' in his notation! Wiersma trusted on the notation of the opponent and was punished for this. The lesson you can learn from this incident is that you are responsible for counting the number of moves yourself. Not every opponent can be trusted. Moreover, the opponent is not there to help you, you should realize that...

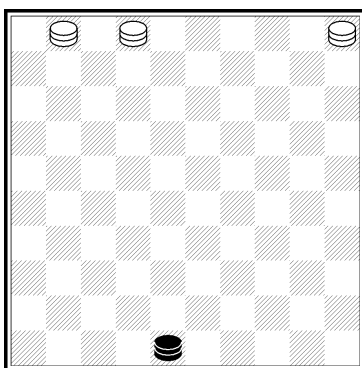
Some people get angry after such an incident,

but Wiersma accepted it, learned his lesson and never checked the moves with the notation of the opponent again...



D. Merkus – J. Fokkink

Black played **66... 15 – 20 67.24 x 15 35 x 2** and offered a draw, but Merkus refused. Although the endgame is a theoretical draw, white has the right to play on for 16 moves, since there is a situation of 3 pieces of which (at least) one is a king against a king. Fokkink was irritated by this, thinking that the game would be a draw easily. This is a mistake. You should be very concentrated not to be tricked by the three kings and pay attention to the quadrants! Remember: it is not wise to put your king in a quadrant where enemy kings are located! Some moves later the following position arose.



74.1 – 12 48 – 25?

Putting the king at the edge of the board and in the 3 / 25 / 48 / 26 quadrant, while a white king is also located in this quadrant (the king at <12>).

75.12 – 3!

Only now black saw his mistake. Next move his king is caught by **2 – 30 & 5 – 14 W+...**

This scenario has occurred many times, so don't underestimate this type of endgame! Don't get dominated by emotions, but stay cool and find a challenge in defending correctly!



Harm Wiersma, Rob Clerc and Jannes van der Wal (on the back of the horse)

5. Psychological aspects

Which skills make someone a strong player? There are both mental and technical skills. According to professional coaches important mental skills includeⁱⁱ:

- Ambition / drive
- Discipline
- Concentration
- Stress resistance
- Fighting spirit
- Decisiveness / determination
- Fearlessness
- Broadmindedness
- Resilience

You have to have the desire to win and to develop yourself to becoming better and better. This needs practice and discipline. A disciplined trainings program is needed combined with a disciplined attitude during the game. This means that you put in all efforts to play your best game, you use your time in a proper way and you are emotionally stable. If you become aware of any negative thoughts, try to stop them immediately and focus on the game. Concentration is crucial for playing your best game.

Playing games on a higher level can give you stress. You have to be able to deal with the tension of the game. Meditation and yoga are well-known techniques of improving your concentration and peace of mind. It helps reduce stress. Yoga isn't used only in eastern countries anymore. The Dutch coach Rob Clerc uses meditation and yoga as tools to be able to relax and improve the concentration of the players.

Fighting spirit is important. Without a fierce fight winning is hard. It puts psychological pressure on the opponent if he feels that you put a lot of energy in the game.

In order not to get in time trouble you need to have enough confidence to decide what move to play and what strategy to follow. Having followed the thinking process, you have to take a decision without spending too much time doubting. Players who doubt what to do, not being able to decide, will get in time trouble frequently. This has a very negative effect on the quality of your games.

To be able to play your best game, you have to be fearless, or at least don't have too much fear losing. Players like Schwarzman and Georgiev are highly respected for their fearlessness. They dare to take risks, sometimes with the result of

losing a game, but many times with good results! Broadmindedness helps put things in perspective. Losing a game isn't fatal. You have to show resilience and go on, without being emotionally broken.

Important technical skills are:

- Calculation
- Recognizing patterns
- Using knowledge
- Intuition
- Creativity

It is important to be able to make correct calculations. Players who can make very deep calculations have an advantage, although they ought to be right off course. You have to calculate at the right moments and include what you think your opponent most probably will play. Georgiev is a genius in calculation. He not only can calculate very deep, but also has a good feeling what the opponent is thinking! Sijbrands' calculation is probably the best of the world, since being able to play against 28 players simultaneously blindfolded, shows a nearly unrestricted deepness of calculation... The difference with Georgiev is that Sijbrands tries to play the best technical moves, while Georgiev is willing to take extreme risks just to improve his chances to win in complex situations.

Knowledge isn't worth much if you aren't able to use this knowledge in practice. You need some intuition for what positions are favorable and what kind of play causes the most trouble for your opponent. Recognizing patterns is important to be able to profit from knowledge. You seldom have exactly the same position at the board as a position you studied from a book. It's therefore crucial to recognize patterns that you have learned. According to a research on chess skills, a central feature of a chess-master's skill is his ability to access an extensive set of recognizable chess patterns, or 'chunks'ⁱⁱⁱ. This feature is considered more important than the depth of your calculations!

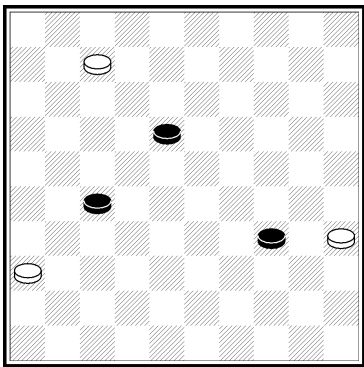
Strong players are creative. They can invent their own openings, strategies and plans. In new situations you will want come with good solutions quickly.

A very important advice is: don't put any energy in thinking about the result of the game. Put your energy in playing the most attractive moves!

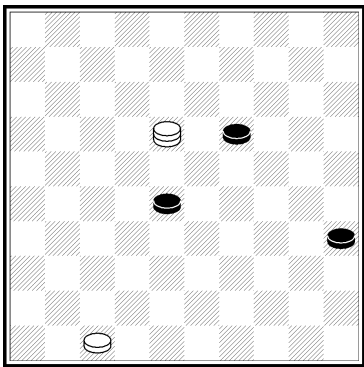
This advice is very hard to follow, since human nature has a tendency towards result-thinking. But in reality thinking about the result ("I am

going to win!") will distract your concentration from the game itself. This wisdom was already stated in the famous Bhagavad Gita (2.47): "Be focused on action and not on the fruits of action." You don't have a direct influence on the result, but you can influence the moves you play! Moreover, if you have done your best to play a good game, why be dissatisfied with a bad result? This is just something that can be accepted as a normal thing in sports. Paradoxically, the less you think about the result (concentrating on the game), the better the results will be...

Try not to think about the result of the game until the game is over!



White had been thinking about his victory for a long time already and without much thought he played 7 – 1?? It was not until after black played 27 – 32! he realised his mistake... He should have played 35 – 30 34 x 25 before going to <1>, winning easily.



A. Dibman – J. Ermakov

Even the greatest players spoil a winning

position once in a while. Dibman played carelessly: 55.47 – 42?? 28 – 33 56.18 – 22 33 – 38 57.42 x 33 19 – 23! and white had to resign himself to a draw.

If white had taken enough time, he would have discovered the winning plan: 18 – 12 and at the next move white attacks piece 33 from behind.



Always keep concentrating till the end, also if your position is clearly winning! Rock singer Lenny Kravitz already sang about this phenomenon: It ain't over till it's over... 😊

Solutions

Lesson 1: The thinking process

1.1 Because of the 27 – 22 threat, the number of black moves is limited. To eliminate this move, you can play 1... 20 – 24 or the surprising 1... 16 – 21! 2.27 x 16 followed by 2... 19 – 24, taking a chain lock and threatening 24 – 30.

1... 20 – 24 2.29 x 20 3.15 x 24 4.42 – 38 11 – 17 5.38 – 32 leads to a lost position for black, 17 – 22 is punished by 33 – 29! 22 x 31 29 x 20, with white breaking through. After 5... 17 – 21 6.33 – 29! 24 x 33 7.39 x 28 black has lost control over <24> in a classical position and loses, white will play 35 – 30 & 44 – 39 with the 30 – 24 threat.

1... 16 – 21 2.27 x 16 19 – 24 is always better for black. There is no shot or good way to give back the piece. 3.42 – 38 is met by 23 – 28! and 4.47 – 41 24 – 30 gives black a breakthrough. So it is clear that 1... 16 – 21 is the best move.

1.2 In order to attack <24>, white can play 45 – 40 or 39 – 34 and you can also look at 32 – 28.

Which move gives the best result?

1) 1.45 – 40 18 – 23 2.40 – 34 12 – 18 3.34 – 29 23 x 34 4.39 x 30 is a bit slow. 4... 18 – 23 5.43 – 39 gives black several ways to defend. In the game was 5... 23 – 29 6.30 – 25 8 – 12 with a draw later.

2) 1.39 – 34! is a much more direct approach, activating the 33 / 38 / 42 tail in order to change 33 – 29 x 29 and break through. A possible variation: 1.39 – 34 19 – 23 2.33 – 29 24 x 33 3.38 x 29 13 – 19 4.35 – 30 8 – 13 5.32 – 27! (29 – 24? 23 – 29 34 x 14 13 – 19 24 x 22 17 x 39 =) 17 – 22 6.30 – 25 22 x 31 7.36 x 27 11 – 17 8.25 – 20 17 – 22 9.27 – 21 26 x 17 10.20 – 15 22 – 27 11.15 – 10 27 – 31 12.10 – 5 31 – 36 13.42 – 37 17 – 22 14.34 – 30 23 x 25 15.5 x 3 etc. W+

3) Because 1.32 – 28 leads to nothing special, white should therefore play 1.39 – 34!

1.3 22 – 17! 14 – 20 (otherwise black is frozen out) 17 – 12! 8 x 17 26 – 21! 17 x 26 30 – 25 W+.

Lesson 2: Candidate clues

2.1 A. van Berkel – A. Kosior

- 1) 34 – 29? 18 – 23 28 x 30 25 x 43 B+
- 2) 44 – 40 8 – 13 =
- 3) 28 – 22! 8 – 13 33 – 29 24 x 33 39 x 28 3 – 9 34 – 29 and there is nothing to meet 28 – 23 W+

2.2 A. Gantwarg – F. de Koning

1) 4 – 9? 33 – 28 23 – 29 27 – 21! 26 x 17 38 – 33 29 x 27 31 x 4 W+

2) 25 – 30? 33 – 28 23 – 29 27 – 21! 26 x 17 28 – 22 W+1

3) 24 – 29 33 x 24 23 – 28 32 x 23 18 x 20 with a small advantage for black.

4) 23 – 29! and now

4.1) 45 – 40 25 – 30! 40 – 34 30 x 28 32 x 34 24 – 29 34 x 23 18 x 29 35 – 30 12 – 17 B+

4.2) 32 – 28 25 – 30 38 – 32 29 x 38 32 x 43 with big advantage for black because of the strong invader at <34>

4.3) 33 – 28 29 – 34 27 – 22 18 x 27 31 x 22 24 – 29 and black will break through soon, for example 22 – 18 12 x 23 28 x 19 34 – 39 45 – 40 29 – 33 38 x 29 39 – 43 19 – 13 25 – 30! 35 x 24 43 – 49 B+

2.3 R. van der Wal – J.T. Dekker

1) 48 – 42 13 – 18 28 – 23 18 x 29 35 – 30 24 x 35 33 x 13 11 – 16 13 – 9 16 x 27 9 x 20 10 – 14 20 x 9 3 x 14 with a better position for black.

2) 38 – 32! and now

2.1) 13 – 18 32 – 27 18 – 23 27 – 22! 23 x 32 33 – 28 32 x 23 21 – 16 17 x 28 16 x 9 3 x 14 35 – 30 W+

2.2) 11 – 16 (at other moves white has the same plan) 32 – 27 and black can't play 13 – 18 because of 35 – 30 28 – 22 33 x 24 W+1. White can wait long enough for black going to <18>, for example 2 – 8 45 – 40 10 – 15 48 – 43 3 – 9 43 – 38 and black has run out of sensible moves.

2.4 H. Meijer – A. Presman

Most important is to notice that 39 – 33? isn't good because of 29 – 34 40 x 29 14 – 20 25 x 5 7 – 12 5 x 12 8 x 50 B+. You can choose from 32 – 28, 32 – 27 x 28 and 35 – 30.

2.5 R. Heusdens – E. Milshina

15 – 20 25 x 5 29 – 33 38 x 9 4 x 13 5 x 23 12 – 18 23 x 12 7 x 49 B+

2.6 T. Goedemoed – J.T. Dekker (analysis)

White can force a win by 27 – 21 16 x 27 32 x 21 25 – 30 40 – 34!! 29 x 40 50 – 44 40 x 49 21 – 16 49 x 23 16 x 18 W+

2.7 H. Jansen – T. Hage

27 – 21! White takes his best chance: both 7 – 11 & 18 – 22 lose:

1) 18 – 22 32 – 28 23 x 32 34 – 29 25 x 23 33 – 28 22 x 33 21 – 17 12 x 21 16 x 9 W+

2) 7 – 11 16 x 7 12 x 1 21 – 17 1 – 7 32 – 28! 23 x 32 17 – 12 etc. W+

3) 23 – 28 32 x 14 13 – 19 14 x 23 18 x 40! 30 x 19 40 – 44 and black has chances to draw.

2.8 S. Winkel – M. Barkel

Black has a piece more, but the game was drawn after 19 – 24? 38 – 33 29 x 43 38 x 49. Black could have won via 20 – 24! and now

- 1) 37 – 31 23 – 28 32 x 12 13 – 18! etc. B+
- 2) 21 – 17 25 – 30 (to prevent the counter shot with 34 – 30) 34 x 25 29 – 33 38 x 9 13 x 4 22 x 24 11 x 41 B+

2.9 T. van den Bosch – C. Jacobs

30 – 24 x 24 gives an advantage but even stronger is the played 37 – 31!! This move is based on the shot 21 – 26 25 – 20 26 x 39 27 – 21 14 x 34 21 x 3 W+. White will therefore get a winning lock, with 31 – 26 at the next move, while still having control over the right wing with the active 25 / 30 / 35 formation.

2.10 G. Kolk – R. Heusdens

In the game 48 – 43 12 – 18 40 – 34 23 – 28 followed with an advantage for black. White wants to keep the position closed, not allowing the 12 – 18 & 23 – 28 break: 40 – 34! 12 – 18 33 – 28! Black can't take the 15 – 20 temp, because of 15 – 20 28 x 19 14 x 23 27 – 22! 18 x 27 37 – 31 26 x 28 39 – 33 28 x 30 35 x 4 W+. Therefore he must give up the idea of the 23 – 28 break, playing 3 – 9 28 x 19 14 x 23 and white has a good position, for example 35 – 30 8 – 12 38 – 33 10 – 14 45 – 40 14 – 19? 33 – 28 15 – 20 30 – 24 20 x 29 27 – 22 18 x 38 37 – 31 26 x 37 39 – 33 23 x 32 34 x 3 38 x 29 3 x 8 W+.

2.11 A. Kooistra - J. Sterrenburg

White has to defend, but it's not easy. The lines that appear to lose you have to reject, and play the move after which you don't see how the opponent can win:

- 1) 23 – 29 14 – 10 29 – 34 38 – 33!! 28 x 39 10 – 4 13 – 19 4 – 10 19 – 24 10 – 15 24 – 30 15 – 29! 34 x 23 25 x 43 W+. This is the beautiful way in which white won the game!
- 2) 28 – 32 38 x 27 23 – 29 14 – 10 29 – 33 (29 – 34 10 – 4 13 – 19 4 – 18 34 – 39 18 – 34 W+) 10 – 4 13 – 19 4 – 15 33 – 39 15 – 24 19 x 30 25 x 43 W+
- 3) 13 – 18 and white can't win, for example: 14 – 10 28 – 33 38 x 29 23 x 34 10 – 4 16 – 21(!) 4 x 16 34 – 40 = or also 17 – 12 18 x 7 14 – 10 16 – 21 10 – 5 28 – 33 5 x 2 33 x 42 =

2.12 J.M. Ndjofang – S. Winkel

45 – 40!! is the winning move. This threatens 34

– 30 24 – 20 44 – 40 39 x 6, while 23 – 28 is met by 34 – 29 and black can't stop the 38 – 32 threat.

2.13 A. Tolchikov – V. Nikitsjoek

33 – 29! 23 – 28 32 x 23 21 x 41 47 x 36 19 x 28 35 – 30 9 – 13 30 – 24, winning back the piece and breaking through soon, white won.

2.14 A. Gantwarg – A. Chizhov

White has to defend.

- 1) 48 – 42? 23 – 29 34 x 23 19 x 48 30 x 17 26 – 31! 27 x 36 48 – 26 B+
- 2) 38 – 33? and Chizhov forced a nice win by 15 – 20 33 – 28 24 – 29 48 – 42 29 x 40 35 x 44 25 x 34 39 x 30 20 – 24 and white sacrificed a piece, since 30 – 25 loses due to 12 – 18! 22 – 17 26 – 31 27 x 36 16 – 21 17 x 26 18 – 22 28 x 17 24 – 30 25 x 34 23 – 29 34 x 23 19 x 50 (17 – 12 50 – 45) B+
- 3) 39 – 33 is the best move, for example: 14 – 20 33 – 28 12 – 17 22 x 11 16 x 7 43 – 39! 24 – 29 39 – 33 29 x 40 35 x 44 25 x 34 33 – 29 =

2.15 18 – 23! (threatening 24 – 30 23 – 29 B+)

39 – 33 (41 – 37 24 – 30 25 x 34 23 – 29 34 x 23 19 x 28 32 x 23 7 – 11 6 x 17 12 x 41 B+) 23 – 29 43 – 38 29 – 34 and a breakthrough can't be stopped. The game went: 27 – 22 24 – 30 32 – 28 8 – 13 22 – 17 12 x 21 26 x 17 7 – 12 17 x 8 13 x 2 28 – 22 30 – 35 41 – 37 19 – 24 38 – 32 35 – 40 etc. and black won.

2.16 N. Samb – J.M. Ndjofang

37 – 31! Threatening to take a right wing lock, while 21 – 26 is punished by 33 – 29 26 x 28 27 – 22 18 x 27 29 x 7 1 x 12 36 – 31 27 x 36 47 – 41 36 x 38 43 x 5 W+. Black's best reply is 1... 17 – 22 and after 2.31 – 26 22 x 31 3.26 x 17 12 x 21 4.36 x 27, white has a good classical game with Dirod = -5 and black having no strong formations to break open the position.

2.17 P. Oudshoorn – B. Derkx

White can attack the badly protected piece at <22>: 32 – 27 22 – 28 42 – 37 25 – 30 (11 – 17 31 – 26 25 – 30 48 – 43 30 – 34 (4 – 9 38 – 32 28 – 33 43 – 39) 27 – 22 W+) 38 – 32 28 – 33 32 – 28 33 x 22 27 x 18 4 – 9 37 – 32 11 – 17 31 – 26! and black is frozen out (30 – 34 48 – 42 16 – 21 42 – 38).

2.18 J. Lemmen – S. Buurke

White has a strong attacking positions with outposts at <22 & 23>. Black's defence is weak, since he has no base pieces. White can profit

from this by playing 39 – 34 24 – 30 27 – 21! 26 x 17 32 – 27 30 x 39 33 x 44 with a winning position: 25 – 30 44 – 39 17 – 21 27 x 16 12 – 17 47 – 42 8 – 12 42 – 38 W+. White can also begin (from the diagram) by making the sacrifice: 27 – 21 26 x 17 39 – 34 etc. W+.

2.19 O. Lognon – B. Feret

38 – 32 17 – 21 32 – 28 22 – 27 28 – 22 27 x 18
19 – 13 21 – 27 18 x 31 16 – 21 31 – 27 21 x 41
36 x 47 W+

Sources:

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10x10.org (<http://10x10.dse.nl/>) – W. Wesselink

Notes:

ⁱ Chessbase (www.chessbase.com)

ⁱⁱ Meerjarenopleidingsplan – KNDB
Talentontwikkeling

ⁱⁱⁱ Time pressure, skill, and move quality in chess
– R. Calderwood, G. A. Klein & B. W. Crandall