

## Chapter 3

### After the Opening

A surprising number of players have, over the years, admitted to me that they feel most at a loss at that point in a game immediately after a balanced opening when they have to decide what to do next. Do they attack the opponent's king's position? Do they push on down the opposite flank to their own king? Do they shuffle pieces about and hope something will crop up?

*A lot depends on your temperament!*

If you are an attacking player (and I am not sure whether aggressive players over the board are the same away from the board), you will seek weaknesses or, if you cannot see one, try to create one – which we shall soon come to. If you are not by nature aggressive over the chess board, you should build up a solid defence and follow the general principles previously discussed. Then, either one of two things may happen .... Your opponent will attack you and beat himself to death trying to crack open your impregnable defence system or, your army will gradually build itself up into an unstoppable force, your attack almost playing itself. A third possibility here is that, if he is barren of attacking ideas too, you will play out an honourable draw.

There is no right or wrong method. Some of the greatest world champions have fallen into one camp or the other. It is the attackers, and perhaps, especially, the *unorthodox* attackers who draw the greatest admiration. I am glad that that is so but, some of the stodgiest defenders have still chalked up incredibly good results. There can be a lot of admirable chess required to make a successful defender!

The two factors which the reader needs to note are .... 1) Know which sort of player you are. And, 2) Play an opening which will favour *your type of game*.

I have long been aware that I am a very attacking player. It is my nature. This led to me dropping the Petroff Defence, although I achieved a good success rate using it (even *after* Korchnoi's venture with it), because I did not find it tactically aggressive enough.

Similarly, the old-fashioned but aggressive Giuoco Piano I dropped because it does not have enough *back-up* for the early threats it carries. An opening with a slower build up can carry more threats and more punch than one where there is an early sally of pieces up the board, as we have already discussed in the chapter on openings.

### Campaign plans.

I hope I do not give the impression that the opening phase is in some way entirely separate from the middle game. Ideally the middle game should follow on smoothly from what has gone on before, the opening being a part of the whole campaign. But chess, as is the nature of true conflicts in a war, does not always run to some grand design. Players, having made, perhaps, a dozen moves which may or may not have contained minor skirmishes or, even, more serious minor battles, will often take stock and decide *then* how the rest of the game (the war) should be conducted.

But, whenever that stock-taking is done, assuming a single moment arrives, **be clear about your strategy**. This does not rule out being flexible if your game plan in one direction is being thwarted or you come to a dead end. **And, that strategy must depend on how your opening has gone and how your opponent has played**. Unless you know

your opponent very, very well, do not go into a game with pre-conceived notions as to what you will do and how you will do it. Let us consider the following game where one player becomes indecisive about his game plan.

Game 28.      Leicestershire League game, 1975.  
                   K Morley v Author.    Opening: English – Dutch Defence.

1	c4	e6	
2	Nc3	f5	This is not the only game in the book where the author, having newly arrived at the Dutch Defence, misses the correct way of playing it ... Black must achieve his block on the e4 square earlier with ..d5 as well as ..f5
3	d4	Nf6	
4	Nf3		White has carried on with his usual English set-up and missed his chance of a freeing/attacking e4
	.....	Be7	
5	e3	c6	
6	Be2	0-0	
7	Qc2	d5	
8	cxd5	exd5	Let us analyse the game at this stage. Despite some inaccuracies in the opening, both players have reached a reasonable jump off point for their middle game play. Black still has to bring his Q-side knight out, of course. White has assisted Black by removing his main weakness, the backward e6 pawn. White should now castle before proceeding with his middle-game strategy but, he falls into the category of the reluctant castler and starts to show his intentions of a Q-side advance. The strategies which should be adopted are .... White should castle K-side (as his king will not be sufficiently covered if placed on the other wing due to the semi-open c-file. He should perhaps consider a Q-side pawn advance but needs to manoeuvre his minor pieces (particularly the knight on c3) onto better squares. Black's strategy goes with the Dutch ... his pieces are funnelled towards the white K-side and he should attack in that direction
9	Rb1	Ne4	
10	Bd2	Nd7	
11	b4	Ndf6	
12	h3	Nxc3	
13	Bxc3	Ne4	
14	g3		Looking at the early middle game play so far: Black has cleared his lines nicely and posted an advanced knight in White territory. He is 'on line' with the indicated strategy. White has, to put it bluntly, dithered in his plan. Starting with a Q-side advance, he has put a target pawn up the board for Black then switched back to some sort of K-side defence (yet with the

			king still uneasily sitting on his original square where he splits the rooks.) The text move White has made, intended, of course, to discourage the f-pawn from advancing further, has weakened his king's shield (should he ever want to use it!). Now, perhaps surprisingly to the reader, Black appears to change <i>his</i> plan. But, this is not dithering .... He has assessed that the greater weakness in White's position lies with Q-side pawn structure. This is an example of the flexibility previously advocated
	.....	a5!	Black takes on White's Q-side attack ... while the powerful knight is still well posted and White's rooks are separated by the king
15	a3	Nxc3	
16	Qxc3	axb4	
17	axb4		What happened to White's Q-side attack? It is now Black who has an open file for his rooks
	.....	Bd6	Black realigns his bishop and discourages Ne5
18	Bd1		White also re-adjusts but this is a poor move as it further splits the rooks and does not even threaten to come to a good square. Its sole purpose seems to be to prevent ..Ra4
	.....	Qe7	
19	Kf1		The king wisely heads for g2 and prevents any possibility of the queen being pinned
	.....	Bd7	
20	h4	Ra7	
21	Kg2	Rfa8	
22	Bc2	Ra3	
23	Qe1	Ra2	
24	Bb3		At last, and rather laboriously, White's pieces have found better squares. Black has not been able to make a break through or gain material during this process so must now probe for an advantage using his rooks
	.....	R(2)a3	
25	Bc2		This is where Black has to choose how he will continue to assert his slight advantage. A re-think and more flexibility are, perhaps, called for
	.....	Qf6	The strategy he has decided upon is a switch to a K-side attack!
26	Rg1	Qg6	
27	Kf1	Qh5	
28	Nh2??		At last, Black's Q-side/K-side probing has produced a crack in the defence. 28. Bd1, threatening Ng5 looks better
	.....	f4!	White is suddenly in great trouble
29	exf4	Bh3+	
30	Rg2	Bxg2+	<b>and wins at the time control</b>

Just a little background history to the next game .... A regular annual event in Leicestershire chess saw the losers in the first round of a knockout event for teams of five being entered in a subsidiary cup competition (the Birstall Cup). The author's village team, East Goscote, had progressed to the semi-final of this and, against a strong club in the Leicester district, Wigston, needed a win from my game to reach the final .....

Game 29. Author v Anthony Morley. Opening: Centre Counter.

1	e4	d5	
2	exd5	Qxd5	
3	Nc3	Qa5	
4	d3		White should play d4 here
	.....	Nf6	
5	Bd2	c6	
6	Nf3	Bg4	
7	Be2	Nbd7	
8	0-0	Qc7	
9	d4		Since Black has lost a tempo by retreating the queen, White corrects his earlier error
	.....	e6	
10	Ne5	Nxe5	
11	dxе5	Bxe2	
12	Qxe2	Nd5	
13	f4		Black can, of course, play a queen check thereby capturing the pawn on b2 but this is a so-called 'poison pawn', White immediately winning the pawn back (and with a better attack!) with Rb1. Also, with his K-side undeveloped, this would be an extreme case of a premature attack by Black
	.....	Nxc3	Black seems content to exchange pieces. Where is White's vital win going to come from?
14	Bxc3	0-0-0	
15	Kh1	Bc5	White assesses now just how his attack – obviously aimed at the weak side of Black's castled king - should be delivered. One piece badly placed for this assault is his bishop. It must be re-aligned
16	Be1	g6?	I cannot see a good reason for this move
17	b4		The foot-soldiers begin their attack. It is nice that, because of the placing of the black bishop, they can gain a tempo with this first move
	.....	Be7	
18	c4	c5	
19	b5		It will take some manoeuvring now to get the black bishop onto a good defensive square
	.....	b6	
20	a4	Rd7	

21	a5		White is hammering at the gate of the citadel! Black's defence is hampered by the diminishing space he has to manoeuvre but, at least his bishop will soon be brought back into service
	.....	Qb8	
22	Rf3	Bd8	
23	Rfa3	h5	Black can do little for the moment but sit and wait. Maybe ..Re8 – e7 was possible. Instead he makes rumbling noises on the K-side
24	axb6	Bxb6	
25	Ba5		The attack is building up to a climax .... And the queen is nicely placed to join in either along a diagonal or the a-file
	.....	Rhd8	
26	Bxb6	Qxb6	
27	Ra6	Qb7	
28	Rc6+	Rc7	
29	Rxc7+	Qxc7	
30	Ra6	Kb8	
31	h3		White has been mindful of the threat from Black of a back row mate during his attack. Now, needing the queen on the a-file, he makes a bolt-hole for his king
	.....	Qe7	
32	Qa2	Rd7	
33	Qa5!	Rb7	Black has struggled manfully to hold the attack but White now finds the key moves to smash the resistance
34	Rd6	Rd7	
35	b6	Rb7	
36	Rd8+!!	Qxd8	
37	bxa7+	Kc8	
38	a8=Q+		<b>And Black resigns</b>

As an addendum to the historical note preceding this game .... Yes, we managed to win the Birstall Cup, the author winning on time in a tense, hard-fought game.

In the previous game White had a clear and obvious objective. There are two main types of situation following on from the opening phase, however. One is, as in the previous game, where the forces are used in a coherent manner. The other is where one must **probe** to find or create weaknesses. To some extent this happened in game 28 but the *weaknesses were there to be probed*. In another type of contest, where no obvious weaknesses are there, single pieces may be 'sent on a mission' .... to disrupt; to cause an imbalance and upset the nicely laid out enemy formation. The following game is one of that ilk.

Game 30. Leicester Atkins Congress, 1972. Major Open (82 competitors)  
I Bourne v Author. Opening: Grunfeld-Indian

This was my round 4 game which concluded a good start with 2 draws and 2 wins. On Sunday it was all 'blown away' when I suffered 2 defeats.

1	c4	Nf6	
2	Nf3	g6	
3	g3	Bg7	
4	Bg2	c6	
5	Nc3	d5	
6	cxd5	Nxd5	
7	d4	Nxc3	
8	bxc3	0-0	
9	0-0	Nd7	
10	Qc2	Nb6	
11	Rd1	Be6	Rarely do I play a bishop in front of a pawn but here an attack on the c4 square is essential to hold back the c3 pawn and, perhaps, to create an outpost
12	Bf4	Nd5	
13	Bc1		Maybe not such a good square after all! But, can Black keep to his previous objective of strong-pointing the c4 square if he leaves the knight on d5 or must he also eat humble pie and retreat the knight?
	.....	Qa5	
14	Bd2		The bishop may have been intending a move to a3. The text move is intended to chase away the black queen but 'the lady is not for returning'
	.....	Nb6	Risky or provocative?
15	Ne1	Nc4	I cannot quite see why White didn't seize his chance to play c4. Whatever the reason, Black's probing has gained a good outpost for his knight
16	a4	Rac8	
17	Nd3	b6	
18	Nb4	Bd7	
19	Qb3	Be6	This bishop would sooner attack than defend!
20	Qc2	Bf5	
21	Qb3	Nxd2	
22	Rxd2	Be6	The royal harassment continues but Black's probing has achieved nothing. If he continues he may hand White the initiative – in fact he may already have done so as the white knight has moved around the board onto a useful square
23	Qc2	Bd7	
24	e4	Rfd8	
25	Rd3	e6	
26	Qa2	c5	At last!
27	Nc2	c4	
28	Re3	Bh6	The black knight and white-squared bishop have tried a little

			harassment, now the black-squared bishop joins in
29	f4	g5!	
30	fxg5	Bxg5	
31	Rf3	e5	
32	Raf1	Rf8	
33	d5	Bg4	
34	R(3)f2		A well-known technique for creating a weakness, known as 'overload', is shown here .... Using the bishops together with the queen's continuing menace on a5, Black, although now facing a passed pawn, has forced White to succumb to mounting pressure on two fronts – the vulnerability of the rooks and the weakness of the backward pawn on c3. Something had to give
	.....	Qxc3	
35	Bf3	Bh3	
36	Bg2	Bd7	
37	Rf3	Qa5	
38	Na3	Bxa4	Here again a player is faced with a choice of battle plans .... Does Black 'sit back' on his extra pawn or, as in this game, take an aggressive line to follow up on his success? The choice is yours. I prefer not to allow an opponent to re-group but to batter away at him while he is still off balance
39	Kh1		White could not play Nxc4 of course because of ..Qc5+
	.....	Bb3	
40	Qb2	Rce8	
41	Rf5	Bh6	
42	Qf2	Re7	
43	d6	Rd7	
44	Qf3		Black must be very careful here!
	.....	Bg7	
45	Rf6?		Hoping for .. Bxf6 46. Qg4+ picking up the valuable blocking rook on d7
	.....	Qxa3	
46	Bh3	Bxf6!	
47	Qg4+	Bg7	
48	Qxd7	c3	
49	Qc7	c2	<b>And White resigned.</b> (If 50. d7 then ..Qe7 wins comfortably)

To round off *Campaign Plans*, the following game illustrates that situation one sometimes meets where, it can almost be said, **there is no campaign plan**. A tactical player, as my opponent is, may have only one sort of plan ... get 'stuck in'; mix it; go for the jugular from move one!

Game 31.       Leicestershire County Championship, 1877/78.  
                   C F W Johnson v Author.       Opening: King's Gambit Accepted.

1	e4	e5	
2	f4	exf4	
3	Nf3	Be7	
4	h4!?		Typical of my opponent's style ..... White shatters his own king-side position for tactical reasons – the text move prevents Black from a) supporting his advanced pawn by ..g5 and b) by preventing the check from the bishop to stop White castling (it doesn't look as though he's too worried about that!). White has chosen his battle plan even before the opening is halfway completed: Black must now choose whether to 'mix it' or calmly develop
	.....	d6	
5	d4	Bg4	
6	Bxf4?		Perhaps this usual, but here delayed, re-take was played automatically. Now Black hits at the weakened K-side
	.....	Bxh4+	
7	g3	Bf6	
8	Bc4		A two-edged early position! White has good development and a strong centre but quite a few weaknesses
	.....	h5	
9	c3		It is a pity from White's point of view that he has had to use a valuable tempo to make this defensive move but the annoying pin on his knight stops the desired e5 move
	.....	Nd7	
10	Nbd2	Nb6	
11	Qb3	Nxc4	
12	Qxc4	g5?	Missing White's riposte
13	Nxg5!	Bxg5	
14	Qb5+	c6	
15	Qxg5	Qxg5	
16	Bxg5	Kd7	
17	Rf1	Rh7	
18	Nc4	Re8	
19	e5!?		Another risky-looking move by White (who revels in living dangerously)
	.....	dxe5	
20	Nxe5+	Kc7	
21	Kd2	f5	
22	Nxg4	fxg4	This campaign has not followed either of the two 'main-stream' ideas ..... the probe or the co-ordinated advance: it has been a tactical melee. A weaker player might now assess the game as pretty equal. Certainly it is from a material point of view. However, Black has one big advantage - it is easier to push on with a two to one pawn majority than it is a four to three

23	Rae1	Rxe1	
24	Rxe1	Kd7	
25	Kd3	Rf7	
26	Re3	Rf5	This is to force White to commit his bishop wherever so that Black can plan his next course of action
27	Bh4		The game is now delicately poised
	.....	Nf6	White's response now is critical. I would have favoured c4 but the text move hands the initiative to Black as well as leaving a 'good knight v bad bishop' ....
28	Re5	Rxe5	
29	dxe5	Nh7	
30	Ke4	Ke6	
31	c4	Nf8	
32	Bg5	Nd7	
33	Bf4	b5	
34	cxb5	cxb5	
35	a3	a6	
36	b4		Having provoked a weakness in White's Q-side pawns set-up and with White himself having given Black the target pawn on e5, it will now be very difficult for White to defend this position
	.....	Nb6	
37	Bc1		White can see the way the wind is blowing and opens a route for his king to attack the h-pawn
	.....	Nc4	
38	Kf4	Nxe5	
39	Kg5	Nd3	
40	Be3	Ke5	
41	Kxh5	Ke4!	Black would sooner bring his king to f3 than place it defensively on f5
42	Bb6	Kf3	<b>Here the game was adjourned and White resigned before resumption due to ill health.</b> Black should win however. Play might have continued ..... 43. Kh4, Ne5 (or b2) 44. Bd4, Nc4 winning the a-pawn. Then, for example 45. Bc5, Nxa3 46. Be7, Nc4 47. Bc5, a5 48. bxa5, Nxa5 49. Bd6, Nc6 shepherding the pawn through. If White brings his king across, the black knight switches to attack the g-pawn

So much for *Campaign Plans*. The following headings give some indication of how one should go about implementing your chosen strategies and some of the outcomes to be met during middle-game play.

#### **Gain space.**

Although this example could just as easily have been in the section on openings, it has to be theoretically correct *at any time in the game* that the more space you have to manoeuvre your pieces, the better you should stand. Here again, GMs may start a game by holding back their pawns to *encourage* their opponents to advance .... then, modern

theory has it, they have targets to aim at. They will undermine that strong centre and destroy it!

At our lower level in the chess hierarchy this policy can be fatal. It more often leads to a struggle to get pieces onto effective squares, whether for defence or attack.

The first game to illustrate this point is a case where White *has not gained the space he should have* after an otherwise good opening. Here, Black's campaign plan is to quickly seize upon that weakness ..... Do not leave your opponent 'leisure time' to sort out his mistakes. (A further point here could well be *Seize the initiative*).

Game 32. Melton Mowbray Club Championship, 1978.  
D Millard v Author. Opening: Dutch Defence.

1	b3	f5	
2	Bb2	Nf6	
3	e3	e6	
4	c4	c6	
5	Nc3	d5	
6	Nf3	Bd6	
7	Rc1	0-0	
8	Be2	Nbd7	
9	0-0		There isn't an awful lot wrong with this opening play and we have reached the moment where sides must decide on their campaign plans. One mistake made by White, I believe, was to signal if not commence <i>his</i> plan when he moved his rook at move seven onto the c-file. He may have done this prematurely <i>and at the expense of gaining central territory with d4 or even d3</i> . Black, considering the situation, seizes upon his chance to gain more space and hold the vital centre .....
	.....	e5	
10	Ng5		This forward advance of the knight, no doubt because of Black's belligerency, is ill-judged .... It threatens nothing (other than the obvious fork at e6) and sits very precariously on the edge of Black's territory
	.....	Qe7	
11	f4		The temptation here is for Black to push on up the board with the e-pawn. Although this gains space, it may lead to diagonals being blocked for both Black's bishops, which he does not want to happen. Also, there is a better way to gain territory .....
	.....	exf4	
12	exf4	d4	
13	Nb1	c5	

If one assesses the position now, it is very obvious that in the first few moves of the middle-game White's layout has been dramatically transformed. His c-file rook is on a

blocked file and his b2 bishop is also blocked. One knight has returned to base and the other still looks uneasy on g5. If ever a game cried out for determined action from an army in a superior position, this is it. How will Black capitalise on this - or White deal with the pressure?

14	d3	h6	Black could perhaps have played the sacrificial ..Bxf4 here (which he missed at the time) winning back the material with a queen check but, his attack winds up nicely anyway
15	Nh3	Ng4!	Offering the sacrifice of a pawn to open up the position. White later declines
16	Bxg4	fxg4	
17	Re1	Qh4	
18	Nf2	Bxf4	Deliberately inviting the move g3 forking the queen and bishop!
19	Nxg4	h5	If one considers the jumble of pieces on White's queen's flank, virtually out of play, the conclusion is that Black must have a forced win now
20	g3	Bxg3	
21	hxc3	Qxc3+	
22	Kh1	hxc4	
23	Rc2	b6	This quiet little move opens up a deadly threat
24	Nd2??		But other moves also lose
	.....	Rf2	<b>And White resigns</b>

If one looks at the final position, it is a fine illustration of what can happen when one player becomes badly cramped. White has an abundance of pieces but has allowed nearly all of them to become totally blocked off from the action. Black is able to end the game with just two active pieces.

Game 33.       Leicestershire County Championship, 1961.  
 Author v B T H Smith.   Opening: French Defence/Unorthodox  
 Continuation.

1	e4	e6	
2	d4	b6	
3	c4	Bb7	
4	Bd3	d6	
5	a3	Nd7	
6	b4		What a resolute line-up of foot soldiers!
	.....	Be7	
7	Nf3	Bf6	
8	Ra2	Ne7	
9	0-0	Ng6	
10	Be3	0-0	
11	Nbd2		Above I commented that this game could just as easily have

			been used in the section on openings: it could also have been used after the first general principle (about knowing what your opponent is up to). Here, it is obvious that Black's general plan has been to build up while letting his opponent have a free hand, then to unleash an attack on the advanced forces opposing him. The question is, how will he do it? I hadn't got a clue what he might do next. Would he carry on with his preparation with, say ..Re8 or by moving the a or h pawns? How would the reader proceed?
	.....	e5	At last! Black has strong-pointed this square so now he sends a foot soldier forward to occupy it
12	d5		White thinks, thank you very much; I'll have a bit more of your territory
	.....	h6	
13	Kh1	Bc8	In view of Black's opening play, his placing of the bishop on b7 was a failure leading to a loss of two tempi
14	Qb1	Nf4	
15	Bxf4	exf4	Black has, at last, opened up a useful diagonal ... but, at the cost of offering White a possible target pawn on f4
16	Nb3	Ne5	
17	Nxe5		White is prepared to give up the pawn target (guessing Black will play the following text move rather than re-take with the bishop). A white pawn majority on the Q-side looks a better bet, plus black's bishop pair being hampered by the pawn structure
	.....	dxe5	
18	c5!	Bg5	
19	f3	Bh4	Threatening a possible move to g3 at some stage with a strong attack on the white king
20	Rc2	Bd7	
21	Rd1?		White has become too focused on his own plans and become careless
	.....	Ba4!	Maybe mainly nuisance value but this move loses White valuable time
22	Rc3		(Do <i>not</i> leave a pin on!)
	.....	Bf2	An opportunist attack by the two bishops!
23	Rf1	Qh4	
24	Qb2	Be3	White has played badly ... All that space and yet he has allowed two intruders to infiltrate into his camp
25	c6		Shutting off the bishop
	.....	Rad8	
26	Qe2	Bxb3	
27	Rxb3	Rd6	
28	Ba6	Rg6	
29	Bb7	Rg5?	Black is certainly a patient piece-shuffler! This move, however, is premature. He should first have played ..Rd8 to

			deter the advance of White's d-pawn
30	Rxe3!!		A well-timed sacrifice which nips Black's attack in the bud (note that he was threatening mate with the rook after..Qxh2+). Also, with Black's queen and one rook out of the game, White looks set to force a pawn home
	.....	fxe3	
31	d6!	Rd8	
32	dxn7	Rd2	Desperate yet effective!
33	c8=Q+	Kh7	
34	Qxd2?		Would 34. Ba6 have won the game for White? Perhaps this is where our old friend (?) greed stepped in, after all White had 2 queens. White had not foreseen Black's clever play after the text move, however
	.....	exd2	
35	Qd8		All looked safe!
	.....	Qe1!!	But, again, White misses Ba6 – or Qd3. Where does Black go from there?
36	Rg1	Qe7	
37	c7??		Completely missing the significance of Black's last move
	.....	Rxg2!!!	
38	Rxg2	d1=Q+	
39	Qxd1	Qxd1+	
40	Rg1	Qxf3+	
41	Rg2		<b>And Black draws by perpetual check</b>

The lessons to be learnt from this titanic struggle are many .... 1. Of the theme itself: although Black was able to eventually get counter-play after being so cramped, this was due to White's poor play. Even so, the advanced Q-side pawns should have won the game for White. 2. Have a clear plan of campaign .... White's plan to get a queen from his Q-side pawn majority worked (he nearly had two!) and should have won the game. Black never had a clear *plan*. All he could do was to infiltrate and hope. 3. The last part of the game should be cut off and used in the end-game section where it nicely illustrates how one can (with a bit of luck) use a queen, a rook and an advanced pawn – as Black did – to save a lost game. Although White missed his own saving moves, Black certainly didn't.

### Vigorous play.

Another 'device' for securing a winning position is that of playing vigorously. One is not always allowed to do this, of course, but, where an opponent has given you some scope to be 'a little bit pushy' then take advantage of this and ***press as hard as you can***. With any luck something will give; cracks will appear .....

Game 34.       Leicestershire Individual Championship league, 1967; div 3 (?)  
 Author v A C Smith.       Opening: Alekhine's Defence.

1	e4	Nf6	As stated elsewhere, a defence I really like to play against
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2	e5	Nd5	
3	c4	Nb6	
4	Nf3	d6	
5	exd6	cxd6	
6	d4	g6	
7	b3	Bg7	
8	Bb2	Nc6	
9	Qd2	0-0	
10	Be2	Qc7	
11	0-0	e5	
12	d5	Ne7	White has the extra territory now and many players with the white pieces would simply develop. In this game White's whole strategy revolves around making forceful moves: in not letting his opponent catch breath and <i>choose what he will do</i>
13	Nxe5!	dxe5	
14	d6	Qd7	
15	dxe7	Re8	
16	Qxd7	bxd7	
17	Nc3	Bc6	
18	Rad1	Rxe7	
19	c5	Nd7	
20	b4	a6	
21	a4	Nf8	
22	b5	axb5	
23	axb5	Be8	
24	Nd5	Rd7	
25	c6		There is no let up in the harassment of Black's army!
	.....	bxc6	
26	bxc6		There will be none either after the rook moves onto a 'safe' square – White threatens to push the pawn on to c7 and possibly to threaten the a8-rook with Nb6 - so, Black bites the bullet and gives up material for some relief ....
	.....	Rxd5	
27	Rxd5	Bxc6	
28	Rc5		Although now material up, White has no thoughts of retreating the rook
	.....	Ra2	
29	Rxc6		This is not the time for White to be too clever ... he is material up so piece-for-piece swap-offs will suit him fine!
	.....	Rxb2	
30	Bc4		Ignoring the safer option of Bf3, White continues to find more attacking positions
	.....	Rd2	Black has to look to his defence (of f7) again
31	Rc7	Rd7	
32	Rxd7	Nxd7	

33	Rd1	Nb6	
34	Rd8+	Bf8	
35	Bb3		It may be temporary but Black's pieces are nicely tied up!
	.....	Kg7	
36	Rb8	Nd7	
37	Rb7	Nc5	
38	Rxf7+	Kh6	Avoiding a discovered check possibility after 39.Bc4
39	Bc2		White could have further simplified here with 39. Rxf8 and picked up the e-pawn following his next move but he has faith that his piece majority and position will lead to a quicker win
	.....	Bg7	
40	h4	Ne6	
41	g4	g5	
42	Re7		<b>Black Resigns</b> (Black could have struggled on with ..Nd4 but White had for example, 43. hxg5+ winning the bishop, and Black had had enough)

### 'Grandmaster draws' and longer, harder struggles.

It was often a feature of tournaments featuring many grandmaster-strength players that draws were sought or agreed far too readily. Of course, if a game being played by top experts is too simple then each player sees the other's intentions clearly and, because of the skills they possess, there is really no scope for one player to overcome the other. Similarly, where too many pieces have been swapped off. This latter factor can result in draws being agreed, sometimes after surprisingly few moves, at our lower skill-level. And, occasionally, both players can strive their utmost to achieve a win in a long drawn-out contest only to run out of ideas or pieces and where the only result is an honourable draw! Following are a few games in one or other of these two categories, the first with early swap-offs.

Game 35. Nottinghamshire League game, 2003.  
A Carlton v Author. Opening: Q's P/ delayed Dutch Defence.

1	Nf3	d5	
2	d4	e6	
3	Bf4		This is a powerful attacking diagonal for the bishop. For Black not to contest it would be unwise but this leads to the first exchange. White had a fair alternative reply to Black's text move in Bg3
	.....	Bd6	
4	Bxd6	Qxd6	
5	c3	Nd7	
6	Nbd2	f5	Black plays his usual Dutch now, forced by White's move
7	e3	Ngf6	
8	Be2	0-0	
9	0-0	c6	
10	Rc1	e5	

11	dxe5	Nxe5	
12	c4	Be6	
13	Ng5	Rad8	
14	Nxe6	Qxe6	
15	Qb3	Rf7	
16	cxd5	cxd5	
17	Nf3	Nxf3	To prevent the manoeuvre Nd4
18	Bxf3	g5	Black believes the a2/g8 diagonal with both his queen and king sitting on it looks vulnerable to White's bishop and decides, while he is making room for his king to move to g7, he may as well go the whole hog and attack thus gaining a tempo
19	g3	Kg7	
20	Rfd1	Rfd7	
21	Rd4	Qf7	
22	Qb5	g4	
23	Bg2	h5	
24	h4	Ne4	<b>At this point a draw was agreed.</b> Black is on the defensive but has everything well covered. If White tries a break-out, it could easily explode in his face

36. Leicestershire County Championship, 1976.  
B Foreman v Author. Opening: Q's P

We all meet players who, for reasons that are hard to define, always *seem* to be beat-able yet something about their style of play gives them a winning edge time after time. Brian Foreman was in this category as far as I was concerned. If I managed to salvage a draw from any of our encounters, I felt I had done reasonably well. 'Long, hard struggle' was invariably a fitting title for our games.

1	d4	Nf6	
2	c4	e6	
3	Nf3	c4	An unusual and vigorous response from Black that doesn't work too well
4	d5	exd5	
5	cxd5	d6	Instead of <i>gaining space</i> as advocated earlier, Black has allowed (rather easily) that luxury for White
6	Nc3	Be7	
7	e4	0-0	
8	Be2	a6	
9	a4	Re8	
10	0-0	b6	
11	Nd2	Bb7	
12	Nc4		One of those elements of 'style of play' mentioned above could be White's grasp of manoeuvring pieces onto good squares!
	.....	b5	

13	Nd2	b4	At least Black has more territory on the Qs-wing. Will this compensate for White's better grip in the centre?
14	Nb1	a5	
15	f3	Nfd7	Taking the cue from White's play and moving over to the stronger Q-side
16	Nc4	Nb6	
17	Bf4	Nxc4	
18	Bxc4	Nd7	
19	Nd2	Nb6	
20	Bb5	Rf8	
21	Qe2	Bf6	
22	Nc4	Nxc4	
23	Bxc4	Qb6	
24	Qc2	Bd4+	
25	Kh1	Ba6	
26	Bxa6	Qxa6	
27	Rac1	Rab8	
28	b3	Bc3	The short comings of this game, and it affects both players, is that, due to the interlocking pawn formations, neither side can break through easily to force through a pawn. Here, Black blocks off White's queen and rook, possibly with the intention of playing ..c4 when, hopefully, Black will have a passed pawn on the b-file. With so little else to concern him, White spots this, of course, and takes remedial action ..
29	Bd2	Bxd2	
30	Qxd2		The game is half played and already looking drawish – but, Black tries, with some risk, to force a more favourable result
	.....	f5!?	
31	Rfe1	fxe4	
32	Rxe4	Rbe8	
33	Rxe8	Rxe8	
34	Re1	Qa8	
35	h3		<b>(sealed move at adjournment)</b>
	.....	Rxe1	
36	Qxe1	Qf8	A difficult decision .... with good possibilities on the Q-side Black must, unfortunately, look to the defence of his king
37	Qe6+	Kh8	
38	Qd7		White would like to get his queen among those q-side black pawns
	.....	Qb8	
39	Qc6	Qd8	
40	Qa6	Kg8	Really, it is heading for a draw although both players are making a valiant attempt to get a full point. Sometimes one can try too hard and gift away what should be shared honours. It will take a bad mistake to resolve this conflict now, however

41	Kg1	Kf7	
42	Kf1	Kf6	
43	Qd3	g6	
44	Qe4	Qe7	
45	Qf4+	Kg7	
46	Kf2	Qf6	
47	Qe3	Qb2+	
48	Kf1	Qf6	
49	Qd3	Qe5	The white queen could certainly get among those black pawns now but, the cost would be too high. With a couple of checks, the black queen would have the b3-pawn off the board and be all set to queen on the b-file. White takes the safer drawing road
50	Kf2	Kf6	
51	g4		Here again there is a tempter, this time for the black queen. A check on h2 and it could pick up the h3-pawn – but at what cost? With the black queen out of the action on the h-file, the opposing royal member could wreak havoc and White would almost surely have a good passed pawn (something the black queen would not achieve with its capture)
	.....	h5	
52	gxh5	Qxh5	
53	Qe4	Qe5	
54	Qh4+		Not, of course, 54.Qxe5 when ..Kxe5 wins for Black
	.....	Qg5	
55	Qh8+	Kf7	
56	Qh7+	Kf6	<b>Draws by repetition of moves (and perpetual check)</b>

Well, no-one can say both players didn't try!

Game 37.      Leicestershire County Individual 'Challengers' Tournament, 1979.  
H R Smith v Author.      Opening: Petroff's Defence.

The ungraded player of the white pieces was unknown to me but admitted to having played against Roy Keene (with what result, I have not recorded).

1	e4	e5	
2	Nf3	Nf6	
3	d4	exd4	
4	e5	Ne4	This may look somewhat precarious to a player unfamiliar with Petroffs but it is one of the accepted lines
5	Qxd4	d5	
6	exd6 ep	Nxd6	
7	Nc3		The commencement of a line I did not know. More usually met here is 7. Bd3
	.....	Nc6	

8	Qf4	g6	
9	Bd2	Bg7	
10	0-0-0	0-0	
11	Bd3	Be6	
12	h4	h5	Afterwards my opponent said this was wrong (it certainly turns out that way)
13	Rde1	Qf6??	White quickly spots his chance ...
14	Qxf6	Bxf6	
15	Bxg6!	Bg4!	A clever attempt to get something back out of the pawn loss
16	Be4		Trying to avoid having his pawns doubled
	.....	Bxc3	The start of a risky combination which should have lost the game for Black
17	bxc3	Nxe4	
18	Rxe4	Bxf3	
19	gxf3	Kh7	
20	Rf4	f5	A shrewd defensive move – but, Black should still lose
21	Rg1	Nd8!	Black not only gets the knight away from the black squares threatened by the bishop but, if White plays his intended R-check to win the pawn on c7, the knight could then fork White's two rooks
22	Rg7+	Kh6	
23	Re7	Kg6	It is difficult for both sides to continue to find the right moves in this sort of position. White has a big plus due to his initiative but could easily slip up.....
24	Rd4??		Intent on doubling his rook power on the seventh rank, he does exactly that with an outright blunder.....
	.....	Nc6	
25	Re6+	Kf7	
26	Rxc6		As advocated previously, if you are going to lose material, do so at the highest price – White gains the bonus of doubling Black's pawns on the c-file
		bxc6	
27	Rd7+	Kg6	
28	Rxc7	Rfc8	With this move, I offered a draw which was declined. The reader may wonder at my offer .... I assumed that White would exchange the rooks and that my superior rook v bishop would be nullified by White's extra pawns which his king and bishop should hold. However .....
29	Rg7+		I had overlooked this (and White's next) continuation
	.....	Kh6	
30	Rg5	Rg8	
31	Rxf5	Rad8	A rather obvious mating threat
32	b3	Rg1+	
33	Kb2	Rg2	
34	Be5	Rd5	

35	Bf4+	Kg6	
36	Rxd5		The extra tempo gained by White because of the re-take gives him the chance to protect all his pawns – and, given his pawn superiority, will he now win?
	.....	cxd5	
37	Bg3	Rg1	
38	c3	Re1	
39	b4	Re2+	
40	Kb3	Re8	
41	a4	Kf5	The king must lend a hand – the rook will not be able to stop those Q-side pawns on his own
42	b5	Ke6	
43	a5		The situation would be critical for Black, maybe, if it wasn't for his pawn on d5. As the position is, he should comfortably handle White's two-to-one pawn advance given the power of the rook
	.....	Kd7	
44	c4		A risky move – for both players! If black is tempted (and it is a strong temptation) to push the pawn onwards, he could lose it to a combined attack by the bishop and king. White's Q-side pawns might then become a force to be reckoned with. Black finds a clever rebuttal ....
	.....	Rc8!	
45	cxd5	Rc5	
46	Kb4	Rxd5	<b>(sealed move at adjournment)</b>
47	Bb8	a6!	
48	bxa6		White's chances of forcing a pawn through on this wing have now totally evaporated
	.....	Kc6!	A much more commanding move than ..Kc8
49	Kc4		This seems to have no merit over the obvious-looking 49. a7 which would tie down either rook or king to stopping the pawn from queening and allow the white king some chance of trying to shepherd through a K-side pawn
	.....	Rxa5	
50	Bg3??		I would rate this move weird! White has totally abandoned the poor little chap on a6, obviously to save the one on h4 after the check which comes. Yet, he could still have protected his f-pawn's advance to f4 (blocking this capture) from the b8 square and the rook could not prevent this because it could not immediately leave the a-file to take the pawn
	.....	Ra4+	(Forcing the king backwards)
51	Kd3	Rxa6	
52	Ke4	Ra5	
53	f4	Kd6	<i>Always use your king in end-game play</i>
54	Kf3?		White probably has an impossible task but this backward step

			is no help with the g4 square denied to the king. He should have grasped the nettle and played the pawn on to f5
	.....	Ke6	Further moves up to the looming draw are now really irrelevant
55	f5+	Kxf5	
56	Bf4	Ra3+	
57	Be3	Ra4	
58	Bg5	Rg4	
59	Ke3	Rg1	
60	f3	Rg2	
61	Be7	Rb2	
62	Bg5	Rb3+	
63	Kf2		<b>Draw agreed.</b> The only slight danger in these final moves was for White in that Black might have sacrificed his rook by taking the bishop on g5 to run through his h-pawn but this could not, of course, be attempted with the white king able to catch the pawn

### Using the firepower of your pieces.

The converse of this heading will, of course, apply when you are under attack. By that I mean, you must seek to nullify the attacking potential of your opponent's pieces if they begin to threaten any part of your army such that they are threatening a) to mate your king, b) to win material or c) simply, to gain a significant positional advantage.

The ways to do this may be limited. Swapping off an attacking piece for a (similar value) defender is one way. Blocking off diagonals or files, usually with a pawn, is another. As we have already seen in several games – and this is a favourite ploy of all chess players – *contest open files against your opponent's rooks with your own*. The open file is the gateway to heaven as far as the rooks are concerned .... Open these for your own use but block them or contest them against your opponent's use.

Lastly, know the main assets of your pieces (besides their theoretical strengths) *and use these assets!* The main asset of the mighty queen is its utter manoeuvrability; its ability to switch from one side of the board to the other instantly and menacingly. The rook can do this also but in a more limited way, of course. Down the scale, the bishop can make its power felt a long range and this is why it is so effective on the long diagonal but, it isn't so manoeuvrable as the above pair. A single bishop is also limited in that it can never attack or directly defend a different coloured square to that it sits on (we saw an example of this in the previous game). This is why the bishop pair is so valued by so many players. The knight is slower getting to the action but, sometimes by complex manoeuvring, it can usually attack (or defend) any square on the board. Thus, the similar values attached to bishop and knight can differ widely in practical terms depending on *where they are and the state of the board*.

In the first game to illustrate this section the author comes under a dangerously threatening attack. The opponent's minor pieces, which can penetrate and do much damage are swapped off to limit this capability. An opportunity then arises for the author to co-ordinate the strengths of queen and rook beautifully in a mating attack.

Game 38.      Leicestershire County Individual Major Tournament, 1969/70.  
Miss A Smith v Author.      Opening: Reti Opening.

Andrea Smith made a brief appearance on the Leicestershire chess scene and soon proved herself a formidable opponent. One of an all-too-few number of female chess players (the only one featured in this book for that reason alone), she combined head-turning good looks with a natural flair for chess. Although the author, single and youthful at this time, was all too aware of the former, he had 'got the bit between his teeth' in the Leicestershire Individual Major Tournament of that year and just needed a win from this game to ensure the title.

1	Nf3		At this time the Reti epitomised the 'ultra-modern' approach .... leave central pawn advances until later. (I had to handle it by instinct!)
	.....	Nf6	
2	b3	c5	
3	Bb2	Nc6	
4	e3	g6	
5	Bb5	Bg7	
6	0-0	0-0	
7	Bxc6		Severely limiting Black's grasp on the central black squares and doubling pawns. Meeting point one in this chapter, White seems to have a clear plan
	.....	bx6	
8	d3		White might have played d4 here but wants to complete development before embarking on central skirmishes
	.....	d5	
9	Nbd2	Nd7	
10	Bxg7	Kxg7	
11	e4	e5	An exchange of pawns would not be good for either side so, these pawns 'eyeball' each other briefly
12	Re1	Re8	
13	Nf1	d4	Black gains territory and stops the knight now on f1 from coming to the planned square but, at the cost of weak pawns on the c-file
14	N(1)d2	Nb6	
15	Rc1		Black really has little option but to sit and await the inevitable attack along the c-file
	.....	a5	
16	c3	dx3	
17	Rxc3	Qe7	
18	Nc4	Nxc4	Forced! ..Nd7 is no reply
19	Rxc4	Bg4	Black must eliminate this last minor piece as it can attack the c5-pawn but Black's bishop cannot defend it
20	h3	Bxf3	
21	Qxf3		Black believes he can now defend his weak pawns ... will his

			strategy prove correct?
	.....	Rab8	
22	Qe3	Rb5	
23	Rec1	Rd8	Now, if Rxc5, ..Rxd3
24	Kf1		Realising that reinforcements may be needed to break the impasse
	.....	Rd4	
25	Qe2	Qd6	
26	R(4)c3	a4	
27	Qc2	axb3	
28	axb3	Rdb4	With the pawn exchange, White now has pawn weaknesses too
29	Rb1		So far, Black's defensive strategy is working well!
	.....	Rd4	
30	Ra1	Rdb4	
31	Ra4		A clever attempt to break the deadlock
	.....	Rxa4	
32	bxa4	Ra5	White's strategy has made Black's defence look more precarious but, White has some manoeuvring to do to capitalise on this
33	Rc4	f6	Black will have to shuffle his own queen too so he safeguards the e5-pawn first
34	Ke2	Qe7	
35	Qb3		<b>(Sealed move at adjournment)</b>
	.....	Qa7	
36	Qa3		(Manoeuvring)
	.....	h6	
37	Qa1	g5	
38	Qd1		Now keeping an eye on the K-side developments
	.....	Kg6	
39	Ke3	Qb6?	The strain of the prolonged defence is telling .... Black makes a poor move .....
40	h4?		And it is catching .... Here, White misses the powerful move, Qg4!
	.....	Qa7	(Back on a 'sensible' square)
41	hxg5	hxg5	
42	g3	Qd7	
43	Qc2	Kh5	Hello! What's this? With all the pieces tied up on the Q-side, can Black be trying an attack with a one-man army, that one man being the king?
44	Qd2	Qa7	
45	Qd1+	Kg6	
46	f4??		With White having failed yet again to get the queen into action, Black seizes his chance to smash back into the game....
	.....	exf4+	
47	gxf4	gxf4+	

48	Kxf4	Qc7+	
49	Kf3	Qh7!!	Seeing the opportunity presented by the alignment of the white king and queen
50	Qe1		Stopping the threatened loss of the queen but, also, threatening the black rook
	.....	Qh5+	
51	Ke3	Qg5+	
52	Ke2	Ra7	Having driven the white king onto an 'awkward' square, Black chooses the right moment to get his rook into the action
53	Kd1	Rb7	<b>The game was adjourned for a second time here and White resigned without resumption</b>

The ending illustrates the power of a queen-rook cross-fire. [If 54. Rc1, ..Rb2 55. Ra1 (or ..Qg4+ wins), Rg2 threatening to win the queen. If then, 56. Qc3, Qh5+ threatens mate or a queen won. If 54. Kc2, Qg2+ 55. Qd2, Rb2+ wins the queen. If 54. Qf2, Rb1+ wins].

Game 39.       Leicestershire Team KO Competition (The Forrest Cup), Rd 2, 1967.  
 Author v D Gould.                   Opening: Giuoco Piano 4 Knights Var.

I had never beaten Leicestershire County Team regular Don Gould before

1	e4	e5	
2	Nf3	Nc6	
3	Bc4	Nf6	
4	Nc3		I was a little bit more conservative in this opening than with my usual Giuoco, maybe because I was well aware of how strong my opponent was. My normal continuation here would be 4. d4 or 4. 0-0
	.....	Bc5	
5	0-0	0-0	
6	d3	d6	
7	Bg5	Na5	Strong players like Don Gould quickly seize upon the chance to create small weaknesses in their opponent's position. There is no way that Black can now avoid having his q-side pawns doubled on either the c or b files. However, with his black-squared bishop cut off by the pawn on d6, Black has left a similar weakness for White to exploit – and one which is potentially far more damaging because the weakness will be smack in front of the black king
8	Nd5!	Nxc4	
9	dxc4	c6	
10	Nxf6+	gxf6	
11	Bh6	Re8	If we look at how the 'using the firepower of your pieces' theme is developed in the following moves we will see how White utilises the weakened black pawn structure and the semi-

			open file in front of the black king. The converse is that Black <i>almost</i> succeeds in using <i>his</i> firepower to its best advantage in defence. White's task is to develop his queen, knight and rooks, the latter two being the most difficult to manoeuvre into an attacking position
12	Nh4	Kh8	(Black must be ready to play the defensive ..Rg8.)
13	Qh5	Be6	
14	Nf5	Rg8	
15	Rad1		There is a possible additional weakness for Black at d6 especially with this pawn being pinned against the queen but, White still has his attack against the king uppermost in his mind. I am not sure that the sacrifice of the c4 pawn was good for White as, since the capturing bishop will cover the d3 square, there is no gain in tempo
	.....	Bxc4	
16	Rfe1	Rg6	
17	b3	Be6	
18	Rd3	d5	
19	Rh3		With only one more white rook to position, Black's king is beginning to look very vulnerable
	.....	Qg8	
20	g3	dxe4	This may look very tempting for Black but he has assisted in the development of the second white rook!
21	Rxe4	Rd8	
22	Reh4		This is everything one could wish for in preparing the maximum firepower <i>potential</i> of one's pieces. White <i>should</i> now prevail but, will he?
	.....	Bxf5	Black assesses that this bishop is not fully contributing to the defence of his king and the exchange with the well-placed white knight is justified
23	Qxf5	Rd4	Black tries, by exchanging piece for piece, to eliminate yet another attacker
24	Rh5		Which White quite rightly resists. He has not set up this powerful rook attack to see it dissipated
	.....	Rd1+	
25	Kg2	Rd8	That little sally achieved nothing for Black, of course, but, sometimes when under severe pressure it gives one a slight psychological boost to give a 'cheeky' check. It says to your opponent, "Look, your king can be got at too"
26	Bc1		Now that his companion knight has gone, the bishop's best potential should be realised along the long diagonal aimed at the black king
	.....	Be7	
27	Bb2	Rg7	If the reader considers the position now reached ..... White, although he has Black in powerful 'neck-lock', is actually a pawn down and with his opponent apparently holding the

			attack What to do? White's plan should be to maintain his strong position by continuing to 'sit on his opponent's head' while starting up some threats on the queen-side with a pawn advance. The normal plan of bolstering the K-side attack by rolling up some pawns is difficult because the rooks are sitting in the way of the h-pawn and the king sits unhappily behind the g-pawn. White commences operations with a slight adjustment of his pieces
28	R(3)h4	Rg6	An earlier lesson <i>be flexible</i> comes into play now. White's plan may have been to free the rook for Q-side ops after playing 29. Qh3. He now decides, with Black's text move, to take a chance on a queen v two rooks endgame given that the two black rooks are badly split at the moment
29	Rxh7+ !?	Qxh7	
30	Rxh7+	Kxh7	
31	Qh5+		Further separating the rooks from each other. White has not only maximised his own firepower but is reducing Black's!
	.....	Kg7	
32	h4??		White has failed to see the consequences of the next couple of moves. But, with some irony, neither has Black
	.....	Rh8	
33	Qf5	Rxh4	In one of those strange quirks of fate that occurs in chess, the rook, having gained a pawn, is in fact not so well positioned as it was on d8: it has allowed the white queen to attack like a fox in a chicken coop
34	Qd7	Bc5	
35	Qxb7	Rf4	
36	f3	Bd4	
37	c3	Bb6	
38	Bc1	Rf5	
39	Qxc6	e4?	Was this a blunder? It seems to assume (for any Black advantage) that White will capture with the pawn. But, of course ....
40	Qxe4		White's gamble at move 29 seems to be paying off handsomely. The 'Big Q' is dining well
	.....	Re5	
41	Qd3	Re1	
42	Bf4	Rg1+	
43	Kh2	Ra1	
44	Qc2		(laying the trap of 45. Bc1 which Black spots)
	.....	Rf1!	A powerful move
45	Qe4		<b>(Sealed move at adjournment)</b>
	.....	Rf2+	
46	Kh3	Rxa2	

47	b4	Bg1	
48	g4	Rb2	
49	Qe1	Bh2!	A clever move designed to (at last) unite his rooks .... If, 50. Bxh2 then ..Rh6+
50	Be3	Be5	
51	f4	Rh6+	
52	Kg3	Bb8	
53	Qg1	Rc2	
54	Bd4	Rd2	
55	g5!		White seizes his chance to clinch the win
	.....	Rh7	
56	gxf6+		Normally here one would have played 56. Bxf6+ but White sees the chance of a winning follow-up if the rook is held back on the d-file
	.....	Kh8	
57	Qe3		Threatening pieces <i>and</i> mate!
	.....	Bxf4+	(Desperation)
58	Kxf4	Rh4+	
59	Kg3	Rdh2	
60	Qe8+	Kh7	
61	Qxf7+	Kh6	
62	Be3+		<b>Black Resigns.</b> An impressive display of the use of firepower by White. It was essential for Black, if he were to stand any chance in the endgame, to get his rooks acting <i>together</i> . This he never did until it was too late

### Fighting back.

***Don't give up!*** We have all played games where, for whatever circumstance, we have lost material or got into a poor position. Either of these situations points to a lost game. What do *you* do when this happens to you? There are only two possibilities (if it happens early enough) .... a) you mentally write off the game – but probably go through the motions until you can resign 'with honour'. Or, b) you mentally grit your teeth, go up into a higher gear, and look hard for some means of fighting back.

These mental states may not be related to how good a chess player you are but to your individual character. However, I would suggest that the weaker players, on the whole, may lack that determination to fight back in adversity. And yet, **I believe it is something which can be acquired.** The following three games illustrate just what can be achieved if you don't give up. Although this advice can apply to any phase of the game, it is often in the opening that we go astray yet we then still have the time to put things right.

The first game to illustrate this has to go down as the highlight of my chess career (although not the best game I have ever played!). The Leicestershire County Championship had been re-organised into four sections with the winners playing off for the title. In the second round of the section games I was drawn against Philip Wallis. He was the reigning County Champion, had finished second in the British Championship

...and went on, after this game, to win the county title yet again and to finish fifth in the British. I was very much an unknown even on the local scene.

Game 40. Leicestershire County Championship, 1962.  
Author v P N Wallis. Opening: French Defence, Winawer Variation.

1	e4	e6	
2	d4	d5	
3	Nc3	Bb4	This is the Winawer Variation of the French <i>of which my opponent was a leading expert</i>
4	e5	c5	
5	a3	cxd4	White did not expect this!
6	axb4	dx3	
7	bxc3		White is left with a terrible 'wodge' of Q-side pawns
	.....	Ne7	
8	Bd3	Nd7	
9	Nf3?		A poor move, blocking the f-pawn's advance
	.....	Qc7	
10	0-0		Abandoning the foot soldiers to their fate and settling for better development
	.....	Nxe5	
11	Nxe5	Qxe5	This is the moment when many players with the white pieces would mentally resign. White has lost material and been completely out-played in the opening. Against such an opponent it is hardly worth playing on ..... is it?
12	Bb5+	Bd7	
13	Qd3	Bc6!	Black is looking even more secure
14	Be3	Qb8	I cannot put a query against this move; where can it be faulted? It seems sound defensively and Black has obviously decided that, material up and with the way his opponent has played the opening, defence is adequate enough to cruise to an easy victory. Yet, in hind sight, this is the turning point .....
15	Bc5	a6	
16	Bxc6+	Nxc6	The earlier theme of <i>preventing your opponent from castling</i> is in evidence here
17	f4		A strong, aggressive move – controlling the centre and threatening to break it up
	.....	g6	
18	Qg3	b6	
19	Be3	f6?	Creating another target for White
20	Qh4	0-0	
21	Rae1	Ne7	
22	Qf2	b5	
23	Bc5		Black's defence now cracks completely ....
	.....	Re8	

24	Rxe6	Nf5	
25	Rfe1	Rxe6	
26	Rxe6	Kf7	
27	Rb6	Qe8	
28	Rb7+	Kg8	
29	Qd2	Qe4	
30	Rd7	a5	
31	Rxd5		Now White has mating possibilities and a game that looks 'won'
	.....	axb4	(Not enough time for counter-play)
32	Rd8+	Kf7	
33	Qd7+	Ne7	
34	Qe8+		<b>Black Resigns</b>

The second game to illustrate the 'never-say-die' theme was against an even higher achiever than P.N.Wallis but, no, this wasn't an even clash .... I had the "assistance" of 29 other players, for this was in a simultaneous at the Leicestershire Club's Open Evening in 1977. Our opponent was International Master and British Champion, J E Littlewood (grading 225) of Skelmersdale.

Game 41. J E Littlewood v Author (and others)  
Opening: Four Knights Game.

1	e4	e5	
2	Nf3	Nf6	
3	Nc3		(Not allowing my usual Petroffs)
	.....	Nc6	Against another opponent I had played ..Bb4 here and got a bad game. On a whim (remember the earlier advice and game illustrating the danger of such whims?) I decided to try this text move
4	Bb5	d6	This seemed a reasonable response but, now White plays an aggressive continuation to take advantage of my pinned bishop
5	d4	a6?	Here, ..exd4 followed by ..Bd7 look better
6	Bxc6+	bx6	
7	dxe5		Shades of the previous game! Now, ..dxe5 would give Black a hopeless game
	.....	Nd7	
8	exd6		I am not sure that this was best for White, even though he wins a pawn. He has no follow up to 8. Nd4 but 8.Bf4 or 0-0 looks more logical
	.....	Bxd6	Black resists the strong temptation to un-double his pawns and goes for development
9	Bg5	f6	
10	Be3	0-0	Black has made the best of a bad job. He is a pawn down and has the added cross of terrible Q-side pawns. Mentally very

			lowering but, what can he do?
11	Qe2	Qe8	
12	Qc4+	Rf7	
13	Qxc6		This may seem a little greedy but, White has yet to see Black make any meaningful replies
	.....	Rb8	
14	0-0-0		White, being two pawns up, goes, perhaps, into 'cruise mode'. But, one of the advantages of a simul opponent, balancing all that experience and skill, is <i>time</i> . More time not only to get into the game in depth but <b>time to set traps!</b>
	.....	Rb4!	
15	Rhe1		White has seen the threat to his e-pawn and set out to provide cover but, Black's last move had more sinister intentions which White has missed by being away from the board ....
	.....	Bb7	The queen is trapped!
16	Rxd6		White sells his queen at the dearest price
	.....	Bxc6	
17	Rxc6	Nb6	This move, apart from allowing the queen to attack the rook, blocks the progress of White's knight on c3
18	Rc5	Na4	Simplifying by forcing a swap-off of knights
19	Nxa4	Rxa4	
20	Nd2	Rxa2	
21	Kb1	Ra4	
22	f3	Qe6	
23	Nb3	Rd7	
24	Bd2???	Rxd2	
25	Nxd2	Qa2+	
26	Kc1	Qa1+	
27	Nb1	Ra2	
28	b3	Qb2+	<b>And White resigned.</b> (after 29. K moves, Qd4+ picks up the rook on c5)

This game could well have been used in the earlier section on trapping queens that have moved into enemy territory too soon.

The final game under the heading of fighting back also figures under my 5-star performances (though, as is often the case in my games, not in the early play). My opponent was another high performer on the Leicestershire Chess scene, eventually taking the coveted County Championship crown.

Game 42.        Leicestershire League game, 1983.  
                   Author v O Hardy.                    Opening: Stonewall Attack.

Otto Hardy became a Leicestershire Champion in 1972. His aggressive style of play also served him well in national competitions. Here he is playing for his home club team, Loughborough.

1	d4	Nf6	
2	e3	b6	
3	f4	Bb7	
4	Nf3	c5	
5	Bd3	Qc7	
6	c3	Nc6	
7	Nbd2		Strictly this was a careless mistake – if Black plays, as he does here, cxd4, White loses the f-pawn if he takes (ideally) with the e-pawn. Experience has shown, however, that the open f-file plus the gain in tempo by attacking the Black queen often compensates for the lost pawn. (But not necessarily against someone of Hardy's class)
	.....	cxd4	
8	exd4!?	Qxf4	
9	Nc4	Qc7	
10	0-0	d6	
11	Qe2	0-0-0	
12	Bf4	h6	
13	a4	g5	
14	bd2		Not a good retreat square but White does not want the bishop to be a target during Black's K-side attack
	.....	Bg7	
15	Na4	e5	
16	Nb5	Qe7	(Not, of course, ..Qd7?? where the queen can be skewered by the white-squared bishop after, say 17.Nxe5)
17	dxe5	dxe5	
18	Rfe1	Rhe8	Immediately after the game, Black thought he had missed a winning move here with ...e4 but 19. Nd4 may be possible for White
19	Bf5+	Kb8	
20	b4	Nd5	
21	a5		White's attack grinds remorselessly on
	.....	Qf6	
22	Be4	g4	(Oh dear! I had missed this)
23	Rf1		When material must be lost, always look to 'sell' it at the maximum advantage. This move improves White's position
	.....	gxf3	
24	Rxf3		Strangely enough, despite the loss of the knight, White's position is becoming quite dynamic
	.....	Qe7	
25	axb6	axb6	
26	Qf2!		With a double threat
	.....	Nf6	
27	Rxf6!!	Bxf6	(Qxf6 is no better)

28	Qxb6	Qd7	
29	Bxc6!!		White springs the trap
	.....	Qxc6	
30	Ra8+!!!	Kxa8	
31	Qa7 <b>Mate</b>		(Possibly my best-ever finish)

### Combinations win!

A factor that swings a game so often is *which player will find a winning combination first*. It is a match winner. A combination, as the reader will, I am sure, already know, is a sequence of moves, usually forced, that wins material. Very exceptionally, the combination may even lead to checkmate. If you or your opponent are hit by a combination then the person on the receiving end may well be facing a lost game. The middle game is the spawning ground of the combination: a tricky, crafty mind is the essential driving force.

Combinational chances frequently just crop up at our level of chess. Sometimes, though, they can be *set up*. Whichever, constantly be on the look out for the chance to put into effect this winning series of moves ....and, conversely, *be ever vigilant of your opponent's chance of one!* I said earlier that we would be looking to add to the list of basic principles as we go through the games. One factor that is not usually included in a beginner's list is this one of **always being on the lookout for a winning combination!** Some players have a natural ability, a knack, of being able to do this but everyone should keep a watchful eye on the potential for a sequence of moves, perhaps only two or three deep, which will win material.

Although there are several games in other sections (the previous game is one of the best) which also include winning combinations, some quite spectacular and unexpected, I have chosen a few more, below, to emphasise what match winners they can be. The first one could well have been placed in the preceding section because, it seemed, the game had been thrown away by the author just as the players were emerging from the opening .....

Game 43. Leicester Atkins Congress;  
Henri Wintermans Under 170 Tournament, 1978

Author v M Goll (Spilsby, 157) Opening: Stonewall, From Gambit

1	f4	e5	
2	fxe5	d6	
3	Nf3	Bg4	
4	exd6	Bxd6	Black has got superb early development in return for his pawn sacrifice. What was worse for White ....he did not know this gambit so, it had to be played by instinct and sticking to basic principles
5	e4	Nd7	
6	Be2	Ngf6	
7	d3	Qe7	
8	Nc3	0-0-0	

9	Bg5	Bb4	
10	0-0		There are other games where a player has walked blindly into a losing sequence just at the conclusion of the opening phase. Is this a critical moment in games to be wary of? This text move does not lose in itself but it sets up the position where mistakes can easily be made ..... <b>Watch out for those free-ranging queens!</b>
	.....	Bxf3	
11	Bxf3??		White should, of course, have played Bxf6
	.....	Qc5+	
12	d4	Qxg5	The other bad outcome for White is that he has no obvious immediate counter-play. His only game plan now must be to adopt the policy of all-out attack
13	Qe2		A quiet-looking move but White is already 'up a gear'. His plan is to open up the bishop's diagonal and then play Qb5
	.....	Rhe8	
14	Nb5	a6	
15	e5	Nb6	
16	Na7+!		To achieve a meaningful attack White must open up those black Q-side pawns: to do this he must sacrifice the knight
	.....	Kb8	
17	Nc6+	bxc6	At this point Black will have no comprehension of the impending danger
18	Bxc6	Ka7	
19	c3		White cannot allow ..Rxd4
	.....	Bf8	
20	b4	Re7	White relies on Black being greedy .... White does not really want to lose this precious attacking bishop in an exchange with the rook anyway!
21	a4	Nfd5	
22	a5	Qe3+	White had seen this possibility. Normally taking out the big Q stops an attack in its tracks and Black must have been quite content with this move
23	Qxe3	Nxe3	Yes, things look very secure now for Black.....
24	axb6+	Kxb6	A natural looking reply, but ....
25	Rxa6+ !!!	Kxa6	
26	Ra1+	Kb6	
27	b5		<b>And Black resigns.</b> A nice finish!

Game 44.           Leicestershire County Championship, 1974.  
                      G Lucas v Author       Opening: Petroff's Defence.

1	e4	e5	
2	Nf3	Nf6	

3	Nxe5	d6	(For anyone unfamiliar with Petroffs, a nasty surprise can burst in Black's face – nicely illustrating this section's theme – if he plays 3 .. Nxe4 instead of the text move. 4. Qe2, Nf6 5. Nc6+ winning the queen).
4	Nf3	Nxe4	
5	d3		d4 is more common here
	.....	Nf6	
6	g3	Be7	
7	Bg2		Each player has chosen to develop his king's bishop in a different way, White taking longer. However, the fianchettoed bishop is on a better diagonal ... and it almost wins the game for White!
	.....	c6	
8	0-0	0-0	
9	b3	Bg4	
10	Re1	Nbd7	
11	Bb2	Re8	
12	d4	d5	
13	Qd3	Bxf3	
14	Bxf3	Qa5	
15	Nd2	Bb4	
16	c3		So far a deceptively simple developing game! A player of the black pieces, not keeping his eye open for a sharp chance, might simply retreat the bishop
	.....	Rxe1!	Black has spotted a pawn winning combination
17	Rxe1	Qxa2	
18	Qb1	Qxb1	
19	Nxb1	Bd6	
20	Ba3		This is not a good move. Apart from swapping off material when material down, White's knight will be on a poor square
	.....	Bxa3	
21	Nxa3	Kf8	
22	Bg2	Re8	
23	Rxe8+	Nxe8	
24	c4	dx4	
25	Nxc4		It would normally be not keeping to the principles of good pawn structure to leave two isolated pawns by this re-capture with the knight but, the knight is certainly better placed now and the hanging b-pawn could help prevent Black's a-pawn from having an easy run through to queen
	.....	Ke7	
26	Kf1	Nf8	
27	Ke1		White is correct to bring his king across to where the end-game action should be fought.
	.....	f6	

28	Kd2	Nd6	
29	Kd3	Nd7	
30	b4	Nxc4	
31	Kxc4	Kd6	
32	b5		Black can hold this thrust by White but miscalculates and his advantage gradually dissolves
	.....	Nb6+?	Kc7 was correct
33	Kb4	Nd5+	
34	Kc4	cxb5+	Tempting but Black is mishandling his army and gradually weakening his Q-side
35	Kxb5	a6+	One check too many?
36	Ka5		Black caps his poor moves with a complete blunder .....
	.....	b5??	
37	Kxa6	b4	
38	Kb5	b3	
39	Kc4	b2	
40	Be4		If only .... Black had done something with his K-side pawns before initiating the b-pawn advance he might have stopped the preventative bishop move <i>and not left a vulnerable h-pawn</i>
	.....	Ne7	With the forlorn hope that White might grab the h-pawn
41	Kc3	f5	
42	Bb1	Kd5	
43	f3!		A thoughtful move. White intends to take his bishop off the b1-h7 diagonal and wants to prevent the Black king from infiltrating the K-side pawns
	.....	Nc6	<b>(Sealed move at adjournment)</b>
44	Ba2+	Kd6	
45	Bb1	Kd5??	g6 was a must
46	Bxf5	Nxd4	
47	Be4+	Ke5	
48	Kxb2	g5	A clever attempt to get 2 pawns for one (if Bxh7) and a certain draw as he can then sacrifice the knight on the remaining pawn
49	Ba8		I'm not too sure about that square
	.....	h5	
50	Kc3	Ne6	
51	Kd3	h4	Black must smash White's pawns while his king is still nearer to the action
52	gxh4	gxh4	
53	Ke3	Nf4	
54	Be4	Nh5	
55	Bc2	Nf4	<b>Draw agreed</b>

The next game was an excellent tactical struggle. Here, the author's opponent, a strong player of county standard, shows how a game should be finished off!!!

Game 45.      Leicestershire County Championship, 1970/71.  
                   B G Wallis v Author.    Opening: Petroff's Defence

(I needed a win here to maintain a 50% score and, having beaten Wallis (Basil, no relation to county champion Philip) in our last encounter, I had high hopes.)

1	e4	e5	
2	Nf3	Nf6	
3	Bc4	Nxe4	(Here, I usually played d6, which invites the aggressive d4.)
4	d3	Nf6	
5	Nxe5	d5	
6	Bb3	Bd6	
7	d4	0-0	
8	0-0	c5	
9	c3	Qc7	
10	f4		Bolstering the knight's position – which was to prove so deadly
	.....	Nbd7	
11	Qf3	Nb6	
12	a4	a5	
13	Na3	Bf5	
14	Nb5	Qd8	
15	Nxd6	Qxd6	
16	dx5	Qxc5+	
17	Be3	Qc7	
18	Rfd1	Rad8	
19	Qf2	Nc8	
20	h3	Ne4	
21	Qh4	Nxc3!?	A clever attempt which shook White but, unfortunately for Black, he had plenty of time to work out his replies
22	Rd2		Here, Black should have 'rested on his laurels' and played ..Ne4 giving up the d-pawn (which was weak anyway). However, over-emboldened ...
	.....	d4	
23	Bf2		(If Bxd4, Rxd4 24. Rxd4, Ne7+)
	.....	d3	(Last chance to save the game gone!)
24	bxc3	Qxc3	Overlooking the wonderful resource ....
25	Bxf7+!!	Rxf7	
26	Qxd8+	Rf8	(I was still under the illusion I could wriggle out of it)
27	Qd5+	Kh8	
28	Nf7+	Kg8	
29	Nh6+	Kh8	
30	Qg8+ !!!		<b>Wins</b> (Rxc8 31. Nf7 mate). This combination is the famous "Philidor's Legacy"

The next game saw me progress to having my name on a 'pot' for the first time – joint winner of division three of the Leicestershire Individual County Championship in 1966. This was my last (round 8) game.

Game 46. Author v R C Cook. Opening: Caro-Kann Defence.

1	e4	c6	
2	d4	d5	
3	Nc3	dxe4	
4	Nxe4	Bf5	
5	Ng3	Bg6	
6	Nf3	Nd7	
7	Be2	e6	
8	c3	Bd6	
9	Be3	Ngf6	
10	Nh4	Nd5	
11	Nxg6	Nxe3	
12	fxe3	hxg6	
13	Kd2		A little unorthodox!
	.....	Qc7	
14	Qe1	0-0-0	
15	Ne4!?	Bxh2	
16	g3	Nf6	
17	Nxf6	gxf6	
18	Qf2	Bxg3	
19	Qxf6	Be5	Ingenious!
20	Qg5	Bg7	
21	Raf1	Rd5?	
22	Rxh8+	Bxh8	
23	Qh6	Rd8	
24	Qh7	Rf8	
25	Bc4		Because of Black's ill-thought out 21 <sup>st</sup> move, White has probed steadily for an advantage. Notice how Black's pieces and pawns are dependent on each, hanging together like the loosely fastened rings of a chain. This is often the recipe for a combination cake. But, not yet.....
	.....	Qe7	
26	Qh3	Bg7	
27	Qh7	Bf6	
28	Qh3	Rh8	
29	Qf3	Rh2+	
30	Kc1	Bg5	
31	Qg3		<b>(Sealed move at adjournment)</b>
	.....	Rh7	
32	Qe5!	a6	A tentative move towards a Q-side advance? Black was happy

			with his K-side defence
33	Rxf7!!!		A beautiful combination. There is no way back for Black although he struggles on
	.....	Bxe3+	(If ..Rxf7 34. Bxe6+ threatens mate after ..Kd8 with 35. Qb8)
34	Kc2	Rh2+	
35	Kb3	Rxb2+	
36	Kxb2	Bc1+	
37	Kxc1	Qa3+	
38	Kd2	Qb2+	
39	Kd3	Qb1+	
40	Ke2	Qc2+	
41	Kf1		<b>And Black resigned.</b> His hopes of a perpetual finally ran out

The next game featuring a combination just fails to illustrate this section in quite the way it should simply because, after finding a clever combination which should have won, the author let the win slip away. Perhaps the section's title ought to be, "*Combinations should win*".

Game 47.       Leicestershire County Championship, 1970/71.  
P Hogan v Author.       Opening: Queen's Gambit, Grunfeld-Indian.

I always found Pat Hogan's usually sound game difficult to beat but I think it came as a surprise to many players that he achieved the distinction of winning the Leicestershire County Championship. Under the Swiss system run during this year's campaign I would not have met Pat if the results of his earlier games had been known and included in the draw.

1	d4	d5	
2	c4	c6	
3	Nc3	Nf6	
4	e3	g6	
5	Nf3	Bg7	
6	Be2	0-0	
7	0-0	Nbd7	
8	b4	a6	
9	a4		Referring back to remarks at the opening of this chapter on how to choose a plan of campaign .... White has developed solidly and commenced a Q-side pawn advance. A slight minus for Black after the opening is that his Q-side bishop looks more firmly rooted than its counterpart and, since White already has one pawn attacking on the fourth rank, Black decides that this wing offers the best opportunity for counter-play. Black doesn't like the look of four foot-soldiers in a continuous, menacing line so, he immediately breaks up that formation ....
	.....	dx4	

10	Bxc4	Nb6		
11	Ba2	Nfd5		
12	Nxd5	Nxd5		
13	Bd2	Bg4		
14	h3	Bxf3		
15	Qxf3	e6	Black seems to have handled the threatened attack quite well. The balance now looks fairly even	
16	Rfc1	Qe7		
17	Bxd5	exd5?	The reader may wonder why this earns a 'mistake' mark. The reason is that by taking with the e-pawn – done to prevent handing White's rook an open c-file - Black invites what is known as a <i>minority attack</i> . This is where a smaller number of pawns is used to engage and weaken a larger number making it difficult for them to be defended successfully	
18	Rc5		As a first step, White seizes a strong outpost	
	.....	Rfd8		
19	Rac1		Apart from the bishop, biding his time on d2, White's pieces have quickly been moved to squares giving them optimum fire-power	
	.....	Qg5	But the ..Bxd4 winning the bishop is quickly spotted by White	
20	Qe2	Qe7		
21	Qd3		To avoid a similar but even deadlier ..Bxd4	
	.....	Bf8	This would have been very effective if Black had played ..Qf5 at move 20!	
22	b5		White launches his minority attack	
	.....	axb5		
23	axb5	Qe8		
24	R(5)c2	cxb5	Black may be a pawn to the good but the mess his pawns are in means that that will not last for very long	
25	Rb1	Rdc8		
26	Rcb2	Qd7		
27	Rxb5	Ra3		
28	Qe2	Rc7		
29	Qf3	Bd6!	Realising that he has been outplayed on the queen's wing and now faces a theoretically lost game, Black sets up a trappy combination which White walks into .....	
30	Qxd5		Now he is 'set-up'	
	.....	Rc2		
31	Bb4	Rb2!	The ingenious idea behind the trap. 32. Bxa3 loses to ..Rxb1+ stripping off the queen's protector (33. Rxb1 is forced) allowing ..Bh2+ capturing the queen: But, White misses 32. Bxd6! which not only saves material loss but wins .....	if Black tries to get the bishop back by ..Rxb1+ 33. Rxb1, Ra6 then 34. Rxb7 stops Black re-capturing because of the attack on f7 leading to mate. Fortunately for Black, White only sees the

			former ....
32	Bxa3	Rxb1+	
33	Rxb1	Bh2+	
34	Kxh2	Qxd5	Although the queen is facing two pieces, its manoeuvrability should now win the game for Black
35	Rc1	Qd8?	Why not the attacking ..Qa2?
36	Bc5	b5	
37	Bb4	f5	
38	Rc5	Qd7	<b>(Sealed move at adjournment)</b>
39	Re5?		A mistake Black had not expected. He now considered but discarded ..Qc7 then to c4 which should at least have drawn
	.....	Kf7	
40	f4	h6	
41	d5	g5	
42	d6		Referring this stage of the game to the later chapter on end-games, it shows clearly some of the 'does and don'ts' of end-game technique .... White has blockaded the black passed pawn while at the same time advancing his own up the board: Black has placed his powerful queen back in a defensive role when he should have used it in a more attacking way. The position now illustrates where these alternative tactics lead
	.....	Kf6	
43	Re7	Qd8	
44	Bc3+	Kg6	
45	Rg7+	Kh5	
46	d7	Qf8	
47	Ba5	Qxg7	
48	d8=Q	gxf4	
49	Qe8+	Qg6	
50	Qxg6+	Kxg6	
51	exf4	h5	<b>And resigns.</b> A combination, which although flawed should have pulled a win out of the hat, was wasted by poor end-game play

Finally, to end this section on the power of the combination, I have chosen one that I am quite proud of because, though it may not be the cleverest I have ever produced, it is almost certainly the deepest!

Game 48. East Goscote (Leics.) Club Championship, 1972.  
B Walker v Author. Opening: English Opening.

1	c4	Nf6	
2	Nc3	c6	
3	d4	d5	
4	e3	g6	

5	g3	Bg7	
6	cxd5	cxd5	
7	Bg2	0-0	
8	Nge2	a6	
9	Nf4	e6	
10	0-0	b5	
11	Nd3	Nbd7	
12	a3	Ra7	
13	b4	Qb6	
14	Bb2	Bb7	
15	Nc5		After a slow and patient build-up by both players (almost an exemplary opening?), White makes the first forward advance
	.....	a5	Black risks a weak, backward b-pawn to break open the rather deadlocked position
16	Qe2		Nxb7 first might have been better
	.....	Bc6	
17	Rfc1	Nxc5!?	Black takes the gamble of allowing a passed pawn in order to block the c-file against the incursion of White's rooks
18	dxc5	Qb7	
19	Rd1	Rfa8	
20	Qe1		This queen move is not good, as Black's next manoeuvre makes clear
	.....	Ng4	
21	Qe2	ne5	
22	f4	Nc4	An excellent outpost for the knight
23	Rab1		The position now looks little more than the usual tangle of sparring pieces one meets as the opening 'order' breaks up into the start of the middle game battle. But, here the author spent quite some time (he hasn't the high-powered mental ability of a GM!) in working on a possible combination .... Here we go ....
	.....	axb4	
24	axb4	Nxb2	
25	Qxb2	Ra3	
26	Rd3	Bxc3	
27	Rxc3	Ra2	
28	Qc1	Rxc2+ !!!	The point and penultimate climax of the combination
29	Kxg2	d4+	
30	Kg1	dxc3	
31	Qxc3		Black's combination has produced a winning material advantage, now he must convert this into that win. Fortunately White has no immediate prospects of counter-play
	.....	Qd7	
32	Re1	Ra2	
33	e4	Rd2	

34	g4	Qd4+	Although Black's attacking force will miss the queen, the possibility of any meaningful counter chances for White go with the exchange of queens. The winning of more vital pawns is a bonus
35	Qxd4	Rxd4	
36	f5	gxf5	
37	exf5	Rxd4+	
38	Kf2	Rf4+	
39	Kg3	Rxf5	
40	Rd1	Rd5	
41	Ra1	Rd7	One could offer slight criticism of both players in the endgame. Although White was correct to seek some sort of counter-play by pushing forward his pawns, he should have placed the rook and, certainly, the king in closer attendance before doing so. The result has been that they have been annihilated. Now, Black is being too defensive perhaps, but he is facing a potential queen in the passed pawn. He is not taking the slightest chance with a win within his grasp
42	Ra6	Rc7	
43	Kf4	f6	
44	Rb6	Kf7	
45	h4	h5	
46	Rb8	Be8	
47	Ke4	Ke7	
48	Kf4	e5+	
49	Kf5	Kf7	
50	c6		White had undoubtedly worked out that if ..Rxc6, then 51. Rxb5 was playable: if ..Bxc6, then 51. Rh8 with the twofold threat of Rxh5 and Rh7+. However, Black had calculated more accurately ....
	.....	Rxc6	
51	Rxb5??	Bd7+	<b>And White resigned.</b> For when the king steps back, ..Rc4+ wins the white rook

### Setting traps.

The reader may have noticed in the six preceding games on combinations that only one was truly set up (game 47, the Hogan game). However, as well as looking out for 'naturally occurring' combinational chances, the reader should also seek to *set them up*. Get into the habit of setting your traps wherever possible. Some wary opponents won't bite but, you can bet your life some will. Here is just one example .....

Game 49.       Leicestershire League game, 1976.  
                   Author v J Glover.               Opening: Sicilian Defence.

1	e4	c5	
2	Nf3	a6	

3	d4	cx d4	
4	Nxd4	Nf6	
5	Nc3	e5	A variation I did not often meet
6	Nf3	Bb4	
7	Bc4!?	Qc7	
8	Bb3	Bxc3+	
9	bxc3	Qxc3+	
10	Bd2	Qc5	
11	0-0	h6	Although I do not like this move (remember my comments early in the book?), with his black-squared bishop gone it is reasonable for Black to not wish the knight to be attacked for, although it would not be pinned, it has no natural square to move to. The tempo White gains here gives him the chance to set a trap. Have you seen it too?
12	Rab1!		And, with castling an obvious part of his development, Black misses the significance of this move.....
	.....	0-0	
13	Bb4		Black must lose material! If he plays ..Qxb4 then the queen is lost after 14. Bxf7+
	.....	Qc7	
14	Bd6		White is greedy but not unduly so – this move ensures that after he takes the rook he can also win the e5-pawn with a nice follow-up move
	.....	Qa5	
15	Bxf8	Kxf8	
16	Qd6+	Kg8	
17	Nxe5	Nc6	
18	Bxf7+	Kh7	
19	Bg6+	Kg8	
20	Nxc6	dx c6	
21	Qe7	Bd7??	But Black has no easy moves and has, probably, mentally resigned
22	e5	Ng4	
23	Qxd7	Nxe5	
24	Qe6+		Qxb7 looks good also
	.....	Kh8	
25	Rxb7	Nxg6	
26	Qxg6	Rg8	
27	Rfb1	Qd5	The game is won and lost but it is always nice to finish off an opponent with, perhaps, a little style
28	Rxg7!	Rxg7	
29	Rb8+	Rg8	
30	Qxh6 <b>Mate</b>		

So much for winning combinations.

**Miscalculated or unsound combinations.**

Sometimes a player may launch his combination just on a gut feeling, an instinct, that there 'must be something there'. But, ideally, one should – as the author did in the previous game – *calculate* the outcome of any combination. Even so, mistakes are inevitable in a small percentage of games. Here are a few where calculations went awry.

Game 50.      Leicestershire League game, 1972 (?)  
                  Author v R H Smith.      Opening: Kings Pawn, Unorthodox.

1	e4	e6	
2	g3	c5	
3	Bg2	Nc6	
4	Ne2	Nf6	
5	d3	Be7	
6	0-0	0-0	
7	Nd2	d5	
8	exd5	exd5	
9	c3	Bg4	
10	h3	Bh5	
11	Nf3	Re8	
12	Nf4	Bxf3	
13	Bxf3	Qd7	
14	Bg2	d4	
15	Qb3	Bd6	
16	Bd2	Rac8	
17	Rae1	Na5	
18	Qa3		One should tread warily before making such moves, especially when, as in this case, your opponent can make a move which immediately nullifies your own attacking chances. Here, White is forced into permanently conceding the territory gained by Black in his advance to d4 ....
	.....	b6	
19	c4	Nc6	
20	Kh2		The obvious point of this move being to free up the bishop to use in an attacking role
	.....	Ne5	
21	b4		This seems somewhat risky as the only two pieces guarding the pawn on d3, the queen and the knight, can now apparently be forced away from that duty
	.....	cxb4	Yes, Black has spotted all this and 'goes for it'
22	Bxb4	Bxb4	
23	Qxb4	g5	
24	Nd5	Nxd5	

25	cxd5	Nxd3	This climax to the combination had been seen by Black but, <i>he had not foreseen the full ramifications</i> .... That both forked pieces had a 'get out' especially, because he had been forced to take the knight after its enforced move to d5, that White's re-take with the c-pawn would allow the queen a strong capture for White in return!.....
26	Rxe8+	Rxe8	
27	Qxd4	Nc5	
28	Qf6	Qe7	
29	Qf5	Qe5	
30	Qg4		White resists attempts to force a queens swap-off
	.....	Kh8	
31	f4!		Launching the rook powerfully into the action with threats along the f-file
	.....	gxf4	
32	Rxf4	Rg8	
33	Qf3		<b>Adjudicated a win for White.</b> White must win the f7-pawn and has a much superior position. Note that if Black tries ..f6 hoping for an immediate 34. Rxf6, when Black can play ..Rxc3!, White would play first 34. Rf5

Game 51. Leicester Forrest Cup team tournament, Round 1. (1970/71).  
 Author v Andrew Morley. Opening: Centre Counter.

As the reader will have seen in game 2, I had a remarkable win against Andrew Morley shortly after he won the East Midlands title. Here, in a much earlier encounter he was already a strong and forceful player and his fluid attacking style soon put my hopes of a win in doubt ....

1	e4	d5	
2	exd5	Qxd5	
3	Nc3	Qa5	
4	d5	Nf6	
5	Bd2	c6	Living dangerously?
6	Ne4	Qc7	
7	Nxf6+	exf6	
8	bd3	Be6	
9	Ne2	Bd6	
10	g3	g5	Preventing White from launching an attack from f4
11	0-0	h5	
12	c4	h4	
13	Qe1		A trap inviting ..Bh3
	.....	Nd7	
14	d5		Looks strong!
	.....	Ne5	And even stronger!!

15	Be4	Bh3	
16	Bg2	hxc3	
17	fxg3	Bc5+	
18	Kh1	Nd3	White has got in a right pickle against the onslaught. However ....
19	Qb1	Qd7??	Black deliberately sacrifices a piece because he believes he has a winning continuation but, <i>he has miscalculated White's defensive resources</i> . Castling Q-side first was vital to Black's chance of success
20	Qxd3	Bxc2+	
21	Kxc2	Qh3+	
22	Kf3	Qh5+	Was ..g4+ better?
23	g4	Qh3+	
24	Ng3	Rh4	
25	Rae1+	Kf8	
26	Qf5	Bd6	
27	Rg1	cxd5	
28	cxd5		White's defence is formidable and he knows that, with careful play, he should win
	.....	Rd8	
29	Bc3	Bc5	
30	Bxf6!	Bxc1	
31	Be7+!!	Kg8	
32	Qxc5+	Kh7	
33	Qf5+	Kg8	
34	Bxd8	Qxh2	
35	Re8+		<b>And Black resigned.</b> A let off for White!

Game 52. Nottinghamshire League, division one game, 2004.  
T Lavelle v Author. Opening: Sicilian Defence.

1	e4	c5	
2	Nc3	Nc6	
3	f4	d6	
4	Nf3	Bg4	
5	Be2	Bxf3	
6	Bxf3	e6	
7	0-0		Although Black has developed on the Q-side, his pieces on the opposite flank are gathering cobwebs. White is threatening soon to push on to f5 so Black chooses to develop his bishop to g7, the move allowing this also deterring the white pawn advance
	.....	g6	
8	d3	Bg7	
9	Ne2	Nf6	

10	c3		White is building up cautiously and sensibly. No signs of any impatient attack yet
	.....	0-0	Phew! Black has completed his development too
11	Ng3	Qc7	
12	h4		The white attack is launched. Black, though, is quite well-placed to defend against it
	.....	h5	
13	Nh1		White's original plan here may well have been 14. Nf2 followed by g4. However .....
	.....	Nh7	
14	Bxh5?		I have put a question mark to this move rather than !? because it seems far too speculative. Almost as though White was in the mood for a rumble and to hell with the consequences. Certainly, at this stage, White clearly does not have the immediate back-up to capitalise on this sacrifice. <i>One should not start a sacrificial combination without having a clear superiority of fire power in the region of the attack</i>
	.....	gxh5	
15	Qxh5	f5!	This move not only gives Black's defenders more space (a crucial factor in any defence) but, vitally, it blocks out an essential attacking piece, the remaining white bishop
16	Qe2	Rae8	
17	Rf3	Kh8	
18	Rh3		This becomes a bad posting for the rook
	.....	Qf7	
19	Ng3	Ne7	
20	h5	Bh6	
21	e5	dxe5	
22	Qxe5+	Nf6	
23	Qxc5		On rule of thumb factors White has now got material compensation for his sacrificed bishop (three pawns) but, if one studies the board position now, Black is better placed to use his extra piece .... and, White's king's position looks none too secure!
	.....	Nc6	This single piece takes on the role of all-round defender while its colleagues manoeuvre for attack
24	Qf2	Rg8	
25	b3		Wisely but belatedly trying to use the long diagonal to Black's king
	.....	Rg4	
26	c4	Kh7	
27	Qc5	Reg8	
28	Kh2	Qg7	Black now has an unstoppable attack
29	Bb2	Rxg3	
30	Bxf6		Perhaps overlooking Black's resource .....

	.....	Rxg2+	..Rxh3+ also wins and more decisively
31	Kh1	Qxf6	<b>And White resigned.</b> White, two pieces down, has no counter-threats

Game 53. Leicester Atkins Congress; Henri Wintermans Major (gradings below 170)  
J Fetterlein v Author. Opening: Dutch Defence.

Fetterlein, from Gloucester, was the second highest graded in this section of the tournament at 167.

1	b3	f5	
2	Bb2	Nf6	
3	e3	e6	
4	Nf3	Be7	Here the author abandons his usual ..d5 to allow a more flexible pawn structure
5	Nc3	0-0	
6	h4		White's attack is not premature in terms of development but it does throw his plans onto the table
	.....	b6	
7	Bd3	Bb7	
8	h5	Ng4	Usually a little precarious at such an early stage in the game but not easy to shift given the present set up – and, of course, White's N to g5 or h4 is covered
9	Qe2	e5!	Yes, this does lose a tempo. It would have been easier to sit on the initial structure but Black wants to 'mix it' while the White king is still exposed
10	e4	fxe4	
11	Bc4+	d5	Two white pieces en prise but White has seen a clever way of avoiding a piece loss ..... or has he? There is a simple refutation
12	Qxe4	Nf6	..Rf4 also looks good
13	Nxd5		Again an ingenious attempt by White .... If ..Nxe4, then 14. Nxe7+, Kh8 15. Ng6+, hxg6 16. hxg6+ wins
	.....	Bxd5	
14	Qxe5	Bxc4	At last Black is material up! Despite his obvious ingenuity, White has miscalculated his chances in this game
15	bxc4	Qd6	Black now sets out to reduce White's threats by swapping off the queens
16	Qc3	Qb4	
17	Nd4	Qxc3	
18	Bxc3	Re8	
19	0-0-0	Ba3+	
20	Bb2	Bxb2+	
21	Kxb2	Re4	
22	Kc3	c5	
23	Nb5		Tempting but this proves a poor square for the knight

	.....	Nc6	
24	h6		Looking at the recent moves and the position, White has the huge handicap of being material down with no obvious counter-play and, therefore, plan. His advance of the isolated h-pawn does not tie in at all with his placement of the knight
	.....	g6	
25	f3	Re2	
26	g4	Rd8	
27	Rhe1	Rde8	
28	Rxe2	Rxe2	
29	Kd3	Re7	
30	Kc3	Ne8	
31	Na3	Nd4	
32	Rf1	Rf7	
33	Nb5	Nxf3	
34	Nxa7 ???	Rxa7	
35	Rxf3	Ra3+	<b>And White resigned</b>

Game 54.       Leicestershire County 2nds v Nottinghamshire County 2nds, 1976.  
 Author v A J Gillam.   Opening: Sicilian Defence, Najdord Variation.

Around this time, due to some good results, I was given the honour of representing the Leicestershire County Second Team at board one. On this occasion my opponent was A J Gillam (graded 170, which was eight points higher than the highest I ever achieved). I had managed to beat Gillam in a previous encounter but, could I do so a second time?

1	e4	c5	
2	Nf3	d6	
3	d4	cxd4	
4	Nxd4	Nf6	
5	Nc3	a6	
6	Bg5	e6	
7	f4	Be7	
8	Qf3	Qc7	
9	0-0-0	Nbd7	So far following our previous game
10	h3	0-0	
11	g4	b5	The attack now passes into black's hands
12	a3	Bb7	
13	Bd3	Qb6	
14	Nde2	Nc5	
15	Ng3	b4	
16	axb4	Qxb4	
17	Qe2	Rab8	(Just as the tension was mounting, the tea interval was called!)
18	Na2	Qa5	

19	Kb1	Bc6	
20	f5	Qa3	
21	Bc1		Black has assembled some imposing fire-power in front of the white king. He now decides that a sacrificial combination can be initiated. Tempting for anyone but, <i>have a pretty good idea that you will succeed or a likely win will slip away!</i>
	.....	Rxb2+ !?	
22	Bxb2	Rb8	
23	c3		The white queen is the only defender
	.....	Nfxe4!	This knight is not attacked by three pieces as it appears to be for the white queen is glued to the second rank on her defensive mission
24	Bxe4	Nxe4	
25	Nxe4	Bxe4+	
26	Ka1		The smoke clears and Black, under some time pressure, has failed to penetrate White's defence. True he could regain some of his sacrificed material but he will still be losing. He is now stuck for a really telling move
	.....	Qa4?	When a player realises the dreadful truth that a combination was unsound it is easy to go further astray....
27	Rd4	Qc2	
28	Qxc2		<b>Resigns.</b> Tony Gillam thought after the game that instead of the sacrificial move 21 he should have played then, 21.. Nfxe4. If then, 22. b3, ..Qxa2+ winning the queen back with a knight check and picking up the rook on h1. At the very least, with other continuations, Black should have won the pawn on e4

That concludes the games illustrating miscalculated (or, misconceived) combinations. This ties in very neatly with the next section .....

### Blunders lose!

What a senseless observation you, the reader, may be thinking; we all know that. The real point to make here is that some blunders tend to be made at critical points in a game and *could possibly be avoided!* Yes, I know we all make them and will continue to do so. If we didn't, we would be on a par with computers. Let's stay human. Let us continue to drop clangers on occasion but, *let us blunder because we are tired or because a close friend has just passed away and we haven't got our minds on the game...* not, for one example, because we have got into a winning position and become complacent or careless. Time pressure, already dealt with to some degree, is the other big 'blunder causer'.

In the next game, I miss, possibly, a famous victory simply because I fell for this 'double whammy'. Certainly, I had played well above my normal form and yet it was all to be thrown away .....

Game 55.      Leicestershire County Championship, 1977.

Alfred Lenton, former several times Leicestershire County Champion and one of the strongest players in that county before the crop of young grand masters-to-be came to the fore shortly after this game, shows his class here in a Petrovs/3-Knights Game and finishes off the author in some style ... but, in earlier play ....

1	e4	e5	
2	Nf3	Nf6	
3	Nc3	Bb4	
4	d3	Nc6	
5	Bd2	0-0	
6	Be2	d5	
7	exd5	Nxd5	
8	0-0	Nxc3	
9	bxc3		Many of the stronger players prefer to keep their bishop pair
	.....	Be7	
10	Re1	f5	
11	Bf1	Bf6	
12	Rb1	b6	
13	Qc1	h6	
14	h3	Bb7	I would assess this as almost immaculate opening play by both players. Both have carried out the basic principles in the opening and an aggressive performance by Black has created some weaknesses in White's Q-side pawn structure. Now begin the manoeuvrings to turn the positions into a more positive advantage
15	Nh2	Ne7	
16	Be2	c5	
17	Bf3	Bxf3	The bishop pair has gone but so has one of Black's most promising-looking lines of attack
18	Nxf3	Ng6	
19	c4	Qc7	
20	Rb3	Rae8	
21	a4	a5	
22	Qb1	Bd8	
23	Bc3	Qd6	c6 looks a good alternative square
24	g3	Bc7	White has probed patiently and gradually placed his pieces on squares to maximise their potential. Black has responded well but maybe, around this time, should have played the forceful ..e4 instead of being so cautious (perhaps with a ..Qc6 first)
25	Nd2	Re6	
26	Nf1		Black now decides this is his moment to pounce... White's Q's-rook is certainly ill-placed to defend the king....
	.....	f4	

27	g4	Nh4	
28	Qd1		Forgotten is the b-file for the moment, back clouds are gathering around the white king
	.....	f3	A pity to block the inviting-looking a8-h1 diagonal but ..Qc6 can be blocked with 29. Re4 which is chosen, anyway
29	Re4		Here, Black had to play two moves almost instantaneously .... with the inevitable blunder! A game well-played by Black rapidly becomes a lost cause
	.....	Rg6???	
30	Ne3		Even the ex-champion missed his chance the first time. Or was this defensive move vital?
	.....	h5	But not the second time! .....
31	Bxe5	Qxe5!?	Black decides to accept two pieces in compensation and hopes that his attack can still gain some reward. The present balance of material <i>at the scene of action</i> is certainly promising as White is a rook short!
32	Rxe5	Bxe5	
33	Kf1	hxg4	
34	Nxg4	Re8	
35	c3	Rge6	
36	d4	Bf4	
37	dx5	bxc5	
38	Rb7	Rd6	
39	Qb1	Rd2	It looks almost as though Black strategy might just prevail in spite of the material disadvantage – he certainly has something of a stranglehold on the white king! However, his opponent had not earned County Champion laurels without something a little bit special in the way of tactical skills .....
40	Nf6+!!		<b>And Black resigned</b>

This game still leaves some questions unanswered ..... Could Black, with a more watchful eye on his opponent's tactical play and with a more accurate response, have got more out of the bind he had imposed? The laborious black moves 38 and 39 were obviously aimed at doubling the rooks on the second rank to attack the pawn on f2 but would 39 ..Ng2 have been better?

The following game doesn't *quite* fit the sub-heading: neither player actually lost. White *should* have lost following on from the first mistake but I returned the favour and, though material up, failed to find the win.

Game 56.      Leicestershire Individual Tournament 1966, division 3 game.  
L A Edwards v Author.      Opening: Petroff's Defence

This year the format for the Leicestershire County Championship was that of a league of three or four divisions. My opponent, Alan Edwards, was one of a crop of fast-improving junior stars and he was destined to become County Champion despite the setback of a

nervous breakdown. The loss of half a point in this game cost him promotion to the second division but he was not to be denied for very long. In these early years (he was 16 or 17 years old) his naturally emerging talent sometimes suffered from the occasional careless move .....

1	e4	e5	
2	Nf3	Nf6	
3	Nxe5	d6	
4	Nf3	Nxe4	
5	Qe2		This move helps Black to gain equality (and often leads to a drawn game) because the queens usually get exchanged
	.....	Qe7	
6	d3	Nf6	
7	Bg5	Qxe2	
8	Bxe2	Be7	
9	Nc3	c6	In another game played just prior to this I had played ..0-0 here. White castled queenside and play led to a draw
10	0-0-0	Be6	
11	Rhe1	0-0	
12	Nd4	Nbd7	The game was fairly evenly poised here but now Black proceeds to lose his way ....
13	f4	Rae7	
14	Bf3	Bd8	
15	f5	Bd5	
16	Nxd5	cxd5	
17	Nb5		Black's doubled pawns would have been a weakness but now he goes a pawn behind: easy-peasy for White!
	.....	h6	
18	Bxf6	Nxf6	
19	Nxd6	Re7	
20	Rxe7	Bxe7	
21	Nxb7		A second pawn down! Someone with White's talent really doesn't need this sort of help
	.....	Rb8	
22	Na5	Rb6	
23	Nb3	Bd6	
24	g3	h5	
25	Kd2	g5	
26	fxg6 ep	fxg6	
27	c4	dx4	
28	dx4	Be5	
29	Kc2	h4	
30	c5	Rb4	
31	Rd8+	Kg7	It is in loose positions like this that mistakes can easily be made. White, perhaps complacent with his winning position,

			makes a – to a weaker player - not too obvious blunder .....
32	Ra8???	Bb8	White has stuck his piece in a trap and Black gratefully slams the door shut
33	c6	hxg3!	Black, knowing he could lose his bishop in an exchange, coolly makes sure his opponent doesn't go another pawn up. The white rook isn't going anywhere
34	hxg3	Ne8	
35	Kc3	Rb6	
36	a4	Nc7	
37	a5		It seems that White may equalise after all by attacking all the b-file squares ... but, of course, Black still has a deadly counter .....
	.....	Rxb3+!	
38	Kxb3	Nxa8	Now it is Black's turn to hold a winning position. Can he manage to cook White's goose without dropping a clanger. The position is now much simpler so he should ....
39	Kc4?		Perhaps a little shell-shocked, White gives Black a bonus pawn
	.....	Bxg3	
40	b4	Nc7	
41	b5		(The author has lost several 'won' games to these pawn advances. Can he hold one this time?)
	.....	Bf2	
42	b6	axb6	
43	axb6	Bxb6	The beauty for Black this time is that the white king is nicely shut out of the action
44	Kd3	Kf6	
45	Ke4	g5	
46	Bg4	Ke7	
47	Ke5	Be3	
48	Bf3	Bf4+	
49	Kd4	Kd6	
50	Kc4	Ne6	
51	Kb5?		Black is in cruise mode for, of course (?), the game is won. In his blinkered attempt to eliminate the c-pawn, however, it simply doesn't register where White has placed his king (or, did he wrongly believe that after a check, the white king's move to b6 would shepherd the pawn through if he takes the bishop?). Now, it is Black who returns the favour of a blunder ....
	.....	Kc7???	
52	Kc4	Kb6!	Nicely forcing the king away from the pawn on the b-file allowing ..Nd8
53	Kd5	Nd8	
54	Bg4	Nxc6	Black cannot lose the game now!
55	Bh3	Ne5	
56	Ke4	Kc5	

57	Bc8	Kc4	
58	Bh3	Kc3	
59	Kf5	Kd3	
60	Ke6	Ke3	
61	Bf5	g4??	Black should have tried to manoeuvre his knight to block the white bishop from a take. Now he has set himself the always difficult knight and bishop against a king endgame. The secret here, but not easy, is to drive the opposing king into a corner with the same colour square as the bishop. Without this little gem of knowledge, Black used up the moves of the 50-move draw to share the point. <b>Drawn after 62. Bxg4</b>

### Getting into a winning position for the endgame.

Some games pass through the opening phase and a greater part of the middle game without a decisive advantage having been reached in terms of material being won or, perhaps, a passed pawn being readied for its race to the eighth rank. Maybe no conclusive assault on the king's position is looming. In fact, without a very positive approach, the game could well peter out into a draw. Some players are quite satisfied with that, indeed they play a drawish game and should anything better present itself along the way, so much the better!

Let us consider the following game in this light.

Game 57.       Leicestershire County 2nds v Derbyshire County 2nds, 1971(?)  
M Thornhill v Author.       Opening: Petroffs/ 3 Knights

1	e4	e5	
2	Nf3	Nf6	
3	Nc3	d6	
4	Bc4	Be7	
5	d4	exd4	
6	Nxd4	0-0	
7	0-0	c6	
8	Qf3		I don't like this move by White. The queen is a little exposed here to knight moves onto e5 and it doesn't immediately threaten anything. It also takes up a retreat square for the knight on d4 and blocks an f-pawn advance
	.....	Nbd7	
9	Bf4	a5	
10	Nf5	Ne5	
11	Bxe5	dxe5	
12	Rad1	Qc7	
13	Nxe7+	Qxe7	
14	be2		I think I would have preferred to keep the bishop on the king's diagonal, playing instead 14. a3
	.....	b5	
15	a4	b4	

16	Nb1		This is the second 'backward step' by White
	.....	Be6	
17	Rfe1	c5	
18	h3	h6	
19	Nd2	Rfd8	
20	Nc4	Bxc4	
21	Bxc4	Rd4	
22	Rxd4	cx4	
23	Qe2	Rc8	
24	Bd3	Nd7	
25	f3	Nb6	
26	b3	Rc3	This is almost a reflex action .... Holding the backward pawn on c2 and entering deep into enemy territory. If one assesses the game and its resulting position now, however, it would seem to be heading for a draw. White has played soundly (and still plays quite accurately despite increasing time-pressure) yet with a certain negative style – a 'draw will do me, thank you' kind of style. Certainly his defence, although restricted for space, looks rock solid
27	Qf2	Nd7	
28	Bc4		Although it is not clear just what the rook on c3 could achieve for Black, because it is a 'nuisance bind' White sets out – despite his increasing time trouble – to eliminate it .... and he plays quite accurately again to achieve this ....
	.....	Qc5	
29	Rd1	Qc7	
30	Rd3		White has gained the position with his manoeuvring where he can eliminate the black rook. A draw looks on the cards but Black studies the position for between 10 and 15 minutes ..... and decides otherwise.....
	.....	Rxc4!!	A material sacrifice for ..... a winning endgame position!
31	bxc4	Qxc4	
32	Rd1	Nb6	
33	Rd3		I am not sure why White decided to bring the rook back again onto this square. Perhaps he thought that after 33. Ra1 to defend the a4-pawn, ..Qc3 would split his rook/queen combination and place the rook in jeopardy
	.....	Nxa4	
34	Qf1	Nb2!	Unusually, a 'non-take' (not capturing the pawn on c2) makes it impossible for White to co-ordinate his defence
35	Rd2	Qc3	
36	Qc1		A time-troubled White reaches the control
	.....	Qe3+	
37	Kf1	a4	
38	Qe1	Qxe1+	

39	Kxe1	a3	<b>And White resigned</b>
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Game 58. Coventry Congress, Major Open 1960.  
A Crilly v. Author. Opening: English Opening.

This game was in the final round and my opponent was about 16 years old.

1	c4	Nf6	
2	Nc3	d5	
3	e3	Bg4	
4	Nf3	e6	
5	cxd5	exd5	
6	d4	c6	
7	Be2	Bxf3	
8	Bxf3	Be7	
9	0-0	0-0	
10	e4		After an even opening phase, White makes the first move to try to exploit his f3-bishop's diagonal but this is not easy with the white c-pawn off the board
	.....	dxe4	
11	Nxe4	Nbd7	
12	Bf4	Nxe4	
13	Bxe4	Nf6	
14	Bf3	Nd5	
15	Bg3	Bf6	
16	Be5		White nips in the bud Black's attempt to attack his only weakness, the isolated pawn on d4. Black does not want to help White, he wants that weak pawn left where it is, hence the next move
	.....	Nb6	
17	Re1	Re8	
18	Rc1		If one assesses the position now; fairly cautious opening play by both has led to an apparently even position. But, this is where a player should look for that slight advantage which may swing a game ... Black spots a possible sequence of moves which may lead to a winning position, the key square being c4
	.....	Bxe5!	
19	dxe5	Qxd1	Now, if White recaptures with either rook he loses a pawn. (His saving moves are 20. Bxd1 then, if ..Nd7 21. f4)
20	Rcxd1		Why, oh why?
	.....	Nc4	
21	e6		White realises he has slipped up and, maybe, panics slightly. Why not play Rd7 with counter-chances?
	.....	Rxe6	
22	Rxe6	fxe6	

23	b3	Ne5	
24	Rd6	Kf7	
25	Be4	Ke7	Necessary, to protect d7 freeing the knight
26	Rd4	g6	
27	f4	Nd7	
28	a4	Rd8	Following the theme of this section; Black has a vital pawn majority – he now sets out to neutralise White's forces to leave a won endgame
29	Kf2	Nf6	
30	Rxd8?		(Playing into Black's hands)
	.....	Nxe4+	
31	Ke3	Kxd8	
32	Kxe4	Ke7	
33	Ke5	c5	The white king must back-pedal now if he wishes to join in the fray on the Q-side
34	g3	b6	
35	h3	a6	
36	g4	b5	
37	axb5	axb5	
38	h4		Black must now break up this formidable line of white pawns before he proceeds with his immediate objective of getting a Q-side pawn through
	.....	Kf7	
39	Ke4		39. g5 would do what Black wishes (leaving a hole at f5)
	.....	Kf6	
40	g5+	Kf7	
41	Kd3?		Moving too far away from the action
	.....	Kg7	
42	Kc3	h6	
43	Kd3	hxg5	
44	hxg5	Kf7	
45	Ke4	Ke7	
46	Ke3	Kd6	
47	Ke4	b4	
48	Ke3	Kd5	
49	Kd3	c4+!	
50	bxc4+	Kc5	Chess uses the German word <i>Zugswang</i> to describe this situation. It means that White really doesn't want to make a move at all but you can't "pass" at chess. Any move he makes will be a losing move
51	Kc2	Kxc4	
52	Kb2	Kd4	Black should leave the lone foot soldier to fend for himself now: he has winning business on the other flank. Instead he wastes moves but the game is won anyway
53	Kb3	Kc5	Unnecessary

54	Kc2	Kc4	<b>White Resigns</b>
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This win gave me joint first place with four others on 3/5.

**Missed chances allowing a game to slip away.**

To end this chapter on middle game play I give two examples of the type of game which afflicts all chess players .... where a great chance of winning is missed. It is easy to be self-critical in after-game analysis but, considering the thousand-and-one calculations our brains have to make and the decisions we have to take during the course of a chess game, it is small wonder that we sometimes go astray. But, how infuriating when a possible win is thrown away. There are other examples of this in the book used to illustrate other themes but this one is particularly interesting .....

A modest young man, still a boy really, took on a bunch of good Leicestershire players of which none I am sure would have guessed that their adversary that day would eventually be just one step away from becoming World Champion.

Game 59. Nigel Short v 30 Leicestershire Players, 1979 simultaneous.

Nigel, age 14, was soon to become an International Master. Here he plays white against the author's Dutch Defence.

1	b3	d5	
2	Bb2	f5	
3	f4	e6	
4	Nf3	Nf6	
5	e3		An early lesson in control of the centre squares, White the black squares ; Black the white squares. Soon one or other player will have to dispute this
	.....	Bd6	
6	d3	0-0	
7	Be2	c5	(Normally I play ..c6 with this system but I thought White's apparently passive play called for a more aggressive reply.)
8	Nbd2	Ng4	
9	Nf1	d4!	With White a little 'tangled up', Black proceeds aggressively
10	exd4	Bxf4	
11	dx c5	Be3	
12	Nxe3	Nxe3	
13	Qd2	f4	..Nxg2+? would be very dangerous for Black after 14.Kf2
14	Rg1	Nc6	
15	Qc3	Rf7	
16	Bc1		The bind of the knight on e3 must be removed
	.....	Nd5	
17	Qc4	b5	An interesting plan with White's queen quite exposed. Qf6 was, perhaps, an alternative
18	cx b6 ep	Qxb6	
19	d4	Ncb4	

20	Bd1		White sees the impending attack on the c2-pawn and takes appropriate defensive steps. Black, however, has good attacking prospects now
	.....	Rc7??	..Ba6 was the correct move. Although White can make the immediate reply Qc5, after ..Qd8 he would be hard pressed to save the queen!
21	Qe2	Ba6	(Too late)
22	c4	Ne3	
23	Qd2	Nxd1?	Again Black misses a more forceful move, .. Bb7 threatening ..Be4. The text move helps White to 'untangle' and the black bishop sits on a useless square
24	Kxd1	Rf7	The tide has turned. Black's missed opportunities cost him the game. Let us see now how the budding genius redeems his earlier play with smooth end-game technique
25	Ba3	Nc6	
26	Bc5	Qc7	
27	Re1	Bc8	
28	Kc1	a5	
29	a4	Rb8	
30	Kb2	Qb7	
31	Qc3	Bd7	
32	Ka3	Rf6	
33	Ra2	Qc8	
34	Ne5	Nb4	
35	Rf2	Be8	
36	Ref1	Na6??	(Gifting White an unstoppable bunch of Q-side pawns)
37	Qxa5	Nxc5	
38	Qxc5	Qb7	Although normally a defender would not swap off his queen here, the doubling of White's pawns on the c-file might have helped Black
39	b4		The threatening advancing line of pawns looks ominous
	.....	Ra8	
40	a5	g5	
41	h4	h6	
42	Ng4		A lesser player might have been totally caught up in the Q-side pawns advance but Nigel knows this can happen any time so, he switches his attentions to the other flank
	.....	Rg6	
43	h5	Qd7	An empty threat
44	hxg6	Qa4+	
45	Kb2	Bxg6	
46	Qe7		<b>Black Resigns</b>

The second game comes from the only venture the author made into 'the big time' – an open tournament! Out of curiosity I entered for my first and only time a congress open, the Nottingham Congress of 1977.

Having been put in my place in the first round by the Irish champion A T Ludgate (grade 205) and, perhaps slightly disheartened, I lost my next four games also to face a young but skilful attacking player in the final round. Could I salvage some pride?

Game 60. Author v J S Pratt. Opening: Pirc Defence.

1	e4	d6	
2	d4	Nf6	
3	Nc3	g6	
4	Bc4	Bg7	
5	f3	0-0	
6	Be3	Bd7	
7	Qd2	Nc6	
8	a3	a6	
9	Nge2	b5	
10	Ba2	e5	Suddenly Black is all action
11	d5	Ne7	
12	0-0	Bc8	
13	Nb1		The knight is doing little on c3 except blocking his own pawns
	.....	Nd7	
14	c4	f5	
15	Nbc3	f4	
16	Bf2	bxc4	
17	Bxc4	g5	
18	g4	fxg3 ep	
19	Bxg3	Nb6	
20	Ba2	Bh3	
21	Rf2	Ng6	
22	Kh1	h5	
23	Ng1		If one studies the position now, all looks quite defensible from White's viewpoint. His only misplaced piece is the bishop on a2 but this is balanced by Black's b6-knight. However, given the author's temperament, White was not happy to be on the defensive and with no obvious counter-chances and was already preparing himself mentally for a tournament white-wash
	.....	Bd7	
24	h3?		Placing a target pawn that is impossible to defend
	.....	h4	
25	Bh2	Bh6	
26	Raf1	Qc8	
27	Qc1	Bxh3	

28	Nxh3	Qxh3	
29	Ne2	Rf7	
30	Ng1	Qd7	
31	Rc2	Kh7	
32	Qd1	Raf8	
33	Rg2	Na4	
34	Bb3	Nc5	
35	Bc2		White has had a miserable game so far .... He has had to push pieces around almost aimlessly and be at Black's beck and call. Black is a pawn up and all he needs to do is simplify down to a won endgame. However, Black's aggressive attacking nature has led him to manoeuvre his Q-side knight around and, although this may now seem to be sitting on a reasonable square, this knight shuffle will, perhaps surprisingly, prove fatal for Black
	.....	Nf4	
36	Rg4	Qb5	Black is conducting an attack on two wings. Although there is some co-ordination of pieces due to this (Black's queen and two knights look good), these forces are split from the rooks and bishop. The queen move – again, perhaps surprisingly – gives White his big chance
37	Bxf4	Rxf4	
38	Rxf4	Rxf4	
39	b4	Nb7	
40	Bd3	Qb6	
41	Qa4		Entirely due to Black splitting his forces ( <i>please note this lesson</i> ), the tables are turned with a vengeance!
	.....	a5	Black struggles to defend on the Q-side but White now has great opportunities elsewhere ....
42	Qd7+	Kg6	
43	Nh3	Rf7	
44	Qe6+		Although White has a wonderful initiative the attack must be faultless or all will slip away
	.....	Kg7	
45	Nf2!!		Allowing a wicked-looking and inviting ..Rxf3 but then, 46. Ng4 is a crushing reply ..... if 46 ...Rh3+, 47. Nh2 leaves White in control of the f-file with his rook. If 46...Rxf1+, 47. Bxf1 allows White an unstoppable winning Qxh6+
	.....	Nd7	
46	Qc8	c5??	At first glance a clever defence but....
47	bxc5	dx5	
48	Ng4	Qd6	
49	Qa8	Qf8	
50	Qa6!	Kh7	
51	Nxe5	Rf6	

52	Qxa5	g4??	
53	Nd7		<b>Black Resigns</b>

This time the game slipped away for my opponent. Although it wasn't due to a single missed move as in the previous game, my opponent missed the *correct follow up strategy* after winning the pawn.