



There are between eight and eleven key themes of attacking chess. The uncertainty about the numbers is just a discussion about three of the themes, whether you want to put them in the top tier or not. The two most important themes are "momentum" and "include all the pieces in the attack."

This column is not the manual, so I will treat these themes in shorthand. Including all the pieces is quite self-explanatory. You do it when you can, and if you cannot, **don't forget to do it later**. A superiority in pieces in a small area of the board is what decides attacks.

The feeling for momentum is what separates natural attackers from players with a more technical approach to chess. In chess you cannot gain time the way you can in other sports. You cannot outrun the opponent. Where you can gain time is by making threats, sacrificing pieces and seizing the moment in other ways.

While it will be possible for GMs to solve a lot of these exercises by calculation, that is not the best way to solve them. What do I mean by this? I mean that the players I train, who develop a strong feeling for dynamics, solve more of these exercises correctly and are more successful in attacking games. Everyone misses important things in a complicated game. However, having a feeling whether or not you are going in the right direction will make a big difference in decision making.



CHESS WARFARE

# THIS IS SPARTA!

FURIOUS RUSH ATTACK EXERCISES

by GM Jacob Aagaard

## Two Upcoming Titles on Attacking Chess

Quality Chess will be publishing two books on the topic of attacking chess this year. I will publish an accessible manual, while Sam Shankland and I will co-author an exercise book titled 'Grandmaster Training Camp II - Attack!'

Photo by David Llada



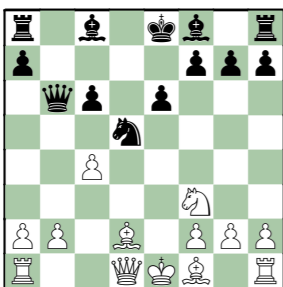
**Note about the solutions:** A number of them are long and detailed, for instructional purposes. Don't think you have to see all of these things to solve them. Going in the right direction for 2-3 moves is usually enough, unless there is a major important twist you would have needed to see to head in that direction, and you didn't see it.

1	Jorden Van Foreest	2664
	Aravindh Chithambaram	2584



**GM Jacob Aagaard** won the 2007 British Championship; but is mostly known as a trainer and writer. He co-founded Quality Chess and killerchesstraining.com. His books include the Grandmaster Preparation series, the Decision Making series with Boris Gelfand and latest A Matter of Endgame Technique. Jacob works day and night to help players of all levels improve their game and achieve their goals.

World Blitz Championship, Samarkand 2023

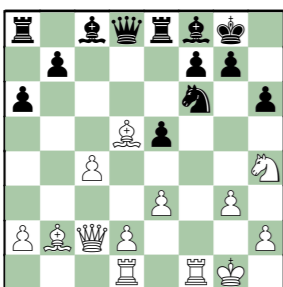


The principle of **momentum** in a raw form comes from the recent World Blitz Championship in Uzbekistan.

12...♙c5! 13.cxd5? 13.♙d3 was necessary, but Black remains a healthy pawn up. 13...♙xf2+ 14.♙e2 ♖f6 15.♙f1 ♙c5 etc. 13...♙xf2+ **White resigned** as 14.♙e2 runs into 14...♙a6 mate.

2	Jan-Krzysztof Duda	2775
	Parham Maghsoodloo	2660

World Blitz Championship, Samarkand 2023

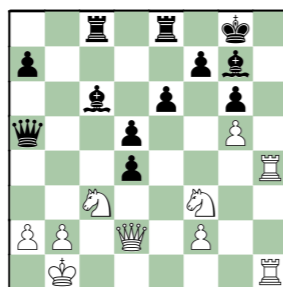


When the pieces are ready, it is time to strike. You can argue that this is a combination and not an attacking puzzle, with some justification, but no aspiring attacking player should ever miss such a shot, so it is included!

17.♙xf6! ♗xf6 17...♙xf6 18.♙f1 also wins for White.  
18.♙g6+ White wins a pawn. The rest of the game is usual blitz rubbish.  
18...♙g7 19.♙xf7+ ♙h8 20.♙xe8 ♙h3 21.♙f7 ♙d7 22.♙d5 ♙c8 23.♙e4 ♙g8 24.♙f5 ♙xc4 25.♙d5+ ♙h8 26.♙xc4 ♙xf5 27.♙f7 1-0

3	Dmitry Andreikin	2741
	Teimour Radjabov	2664

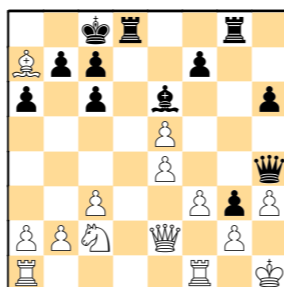
World Blitz Championship, Samarkand 2023



The theme here is “**the killzone**”. The black king needs to escape from the kingside to survive. By ignoring Black’s threats, White can prevent him from doing so. 22.♙f4!! 22.♙xd4? ♙b6 would give Black a serious advantage. 22...♙b8 Black could avoid immediate mate with 22...♙d8, but White would then have time to organize an attack, either with 23.♙h7!?, or 23.♙e5 ♙c7 24.♙h7 with many threats. 24...dxc3 25.♙h4 would be mate, for example. White gained time to create this attack by not caring about his opponent’s threats. 23.♙f6!

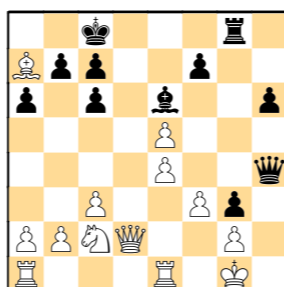
4	Vladislav Kovalev	2603
	Le Tuan Minh	2557

Game variation, Internet 2023

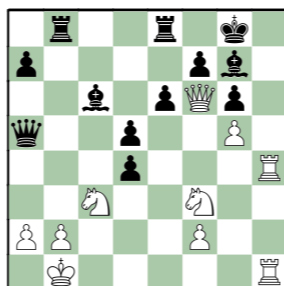


This position is taken from a sideline to an exercise on Killer Homework 164, January 10. We have some of the most promising U.S. juniors as members. One of them suggested a brilliant idea, but one that did not quite work for reasons we shall ignore here.

His idea ended with 21...♙hx3 22.♙g1 ♙d2!! A typical example of **momentum**. White has to accept the sacrifice, which is based on an advanced diversionary tactic. The important point is that 22...♙e6? would fail to 23.♙fd1!, when Black no longer has the tactic. 23.♙xd2 ♙e6 With the threat of mate. 24.♙fe1



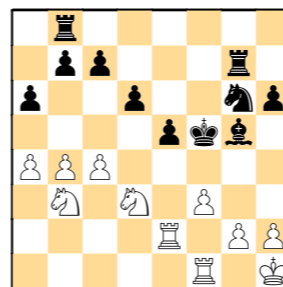
24...♙c4! “**Killzone**”. White’s king wants



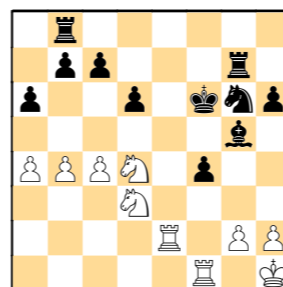
Checkmate follows on h8. **Black resigned** without giving the spite check 23...♙xb2+, which White can meet with 24.♙a1!, getting his own king out of the killzone.

5	Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu	2738
	Bogdan-Daniel Deac	2701

Douglas 2023



**Attacking the strongest square** is an idea formulated by Zaitsev. He used it frequently in his work on openings for Karpov. When I heard about it, I understood that it is an important attacking technique, too. By attacking a square fully under the control of the opponent, you can divert his forces, giving you a chance to attack the real weaknesses in the opponent’s position. Here Black has full control over the f4 square. At the same time, his king is quite badly exposed. 30.f4!! Taking advantage of the poor placement of the black king. 30.g3?!, followed by a rerouting of the knight to e4, would also give White a nice position, but would nevertheless be much weaker. 30...exf4 31.♙d4+ ♙g4 Walking straight into the monster’s mouth. 31...♙f6 was more resilient, but would also fail.

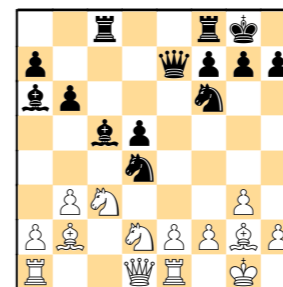


White now has 32.h4!!, again attacking a square that Black has totally under control, while gaining time. Upon 32...♙hx4 33.♙xf4 White’s attack is winning. There are too many knight forks on the way. 33...♙gg8 34.g3 ♙g6 35.♙h5 mate, is a principal variation.

At this time, there were many ways to win the game. You have already solved the exercise if you made it up to here. Let’s see how Pragg did it. 32.h3+ ♙h5 33.♙f5 ♙gg8 34.g4+ ♙fg3 35.♙xg3+ ♙h4 36.♙e4+ ♙hx3 37.♙f5 Black is mated. 1-0

6	Wolfgang Uhlmann
	Vasily Smyslov

Moscow 1956



15...♙c2!! **Momentum**, here in the style of a combination for higher-rated players, and a difficult attacking problem for those less so. 15...♙b4?! would also give some advantage, but is far weaker.

15...♙c6!? 16.e3 ♙e5! would also give Black an advantage, and in this case, a rather big one.

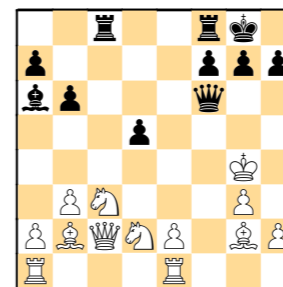
16.♙xc2 Uhlmann played 16.♙f1, which still lost instantly after 16...♙xa1 17.♙xa1 ♙fd8 18.♙f3 ♙a3 0-1, but did not allow Smyslov to show the point of his combination.

16...♙xf2+ 17.♙xf2 17.♙h1 ♙xe1 18.♙xe1 d4-+ leaves Black with more material.

17...♙g4+ 18.♙f3 Or 18.♙g1 ♙e3+ 19.♙h1 ♙f2+ 20.♙g1 ♙h3+ 21.♙h1 ♙g1+ 22.♙xg1 ♙f2 mate.

Black can win in many ways. The shortest is quite attractive.

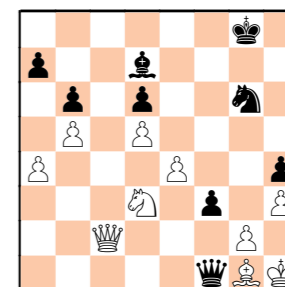
18...♙f6+ 19.♙xg4



19...♙c4+ White can do nothing to stop ...♙c8+ with mate to follow. 20.bxc4 ♙c8+ 21.♙h5 ♙h6 Mate! 0-1

7	Boris Chatalbashev	2522
	Dorian Dalaud	2299

Game variation, Munich 2023

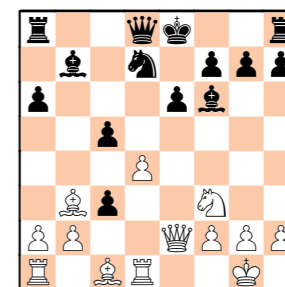


Another sideline from a difficult exercise in Killer Homework that several GMs missed. The theme of this one is called “**attack the strongest square**”.

41...f2!! White controls f2 more than any other squares, while the bishop on g1 is standing on a vital, but weak square. By attacking f2 with a pawn sacrifice, Black gains time and access to f4 – the decisive square on which to transfer his knight. 42.♙xf2 ♙f4 43.♙g4 ♙e2 White can only resign. The endgame with two pieces for the queen is hopeless. **Black wins**

8	Vasily Smyslov
	Paul Keres

Zurich 1953

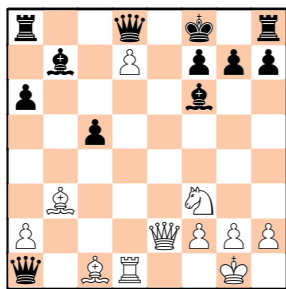


A classic game that one or two people may recall from reading the famous Zurich 1953 tournament books.

14.d5! **Momentum!** The other big theme here is the “**king in the centre**”.

14...e5 A horrible move to make. This is also a part of being an attacker, to use attacking ideas to gain a big positional advantage. Your opponents can always cop out with some sort of concession somewhere, and then you have to bring it all home. 14...cxb2 is the critical move. White has two similar ways to decide the attack. 15.dxe6 (15.♙xb2 ♙xb2 16.dxe6!

♙xa1 17.exd7+ ♖f8 18.♖c4 ♗f6 19.d8♖+ also wins. The theme is the same.)  
15...bxa1♖ The only move to fear.  
16.exd7+ ♖f8

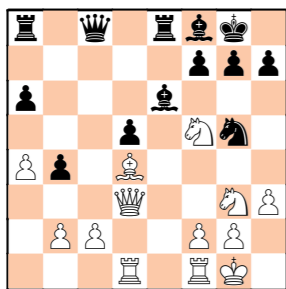


17.♖c4 ♗e7 18.d8♖+! Black is checkmated.  
15.bxc3 0-0 16.♖d2 White is positionally winning and indeed **won** on move 41.

9

Elizaveta Solozhenkina	1997
Aleksandra Maltsevskaya	2258

Moscow 2016



This position is taken from the soon-to-be-published book by GM Galkin called *The Mental Game*. The book is an in-depth description of Galkin's work with the greatly talented Aleksandra Maltsevskaya. Worts and all.

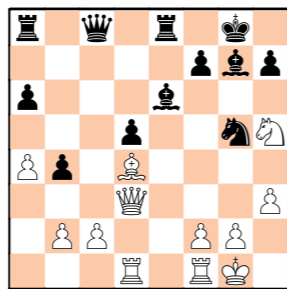
She eventually won the World Junior, the 2022 European Rapid (silver in the blitz) and took 3<sup>rd</sup> place at the 2023 European Championship. When this game was played, she was 14 years old.

After 23.♖e3? ♖e4 the game was equal. **White won** later, after many happenings.

**SOLUTION**

White missed the chance to play 23.♖xg7!!  
The most difficult thing with this exercise is finding the idea. Do not be confused by the variations; they are an illustration of what is happening, not something you should have seen.  
23...♙xg7 24.♖h5! This combination can be described with different themes. It

definitely is **momentum**, which lies at the core of almost all attacking play. It is also "destruction of the king's position". And to some extent, it is focused on the dark squares exclusively ("color").

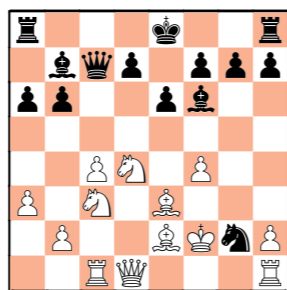


24...f6!? 24...♙xd4 25.♖xd4 leads to immediate material gains. After 24...♙xh3!? 25.♙xg7 ♙xg2 26.♖f6+ White wins the exchange. In case of 24...♙f5 25.♖g3 ♖e6! 26.♖xg5 ♖g6 27.♖e3 ♙xh3 28.♖f4 ♖g4 29.f3 ♖g5 30.♖f2 White is winning, but there is a lot of play left.  
25.♙xf6 25.♖g3! is also strong, but rather strange.  
25...♖e4!? 26.♙xg7 ♙f7 27.♖f6+ ♙xg7 28.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 29.♖d4+ ♙g8 30.f3 **White has a winning position.** But the game will continue for a while before Black will call it a day.

10

Mayukh Majumder	1602
Renier Castellanos	2478

Internet 2023



This game was played in the 2023 Club Championship at killerchesstraining.com. White is a young Indian player, 11 years old. Black is one of the trainers at the Academy, currently chasing his final GM-norm, so he will no longer be our only trainer without the GM title.

This puzzle relates to **defense**. For every attack, there is a defense. Even if sometimes poor, or in other ways inadequate.  
16.♙f3? would give Black a chance to destroy the dark squares in White's position after 16...♖xe3 17.♖xe3 0-0? 18.♙xb7

♖xb7. The game ended in a **draw**, but after 19.♖e4, White is simply winning, although the position is not at all simple...

17...g5!! would have given Black strong counterplay. Then, 18.♙xb7 ♖xf4+ 19.♖d3 ♖xd4+ 20.♖c2 ♖xd1+ 21.♖cxd1 ♖a7 would lead to a complex endgame, where Black does not look worse to me.

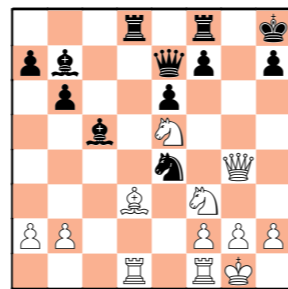
**SOLUTION**

16.♖d5!! is the key move. The intruder will have to perish.  
16...exd5 17.♙xg2 dxc4+ 18.♙f3 **White has repelled his opponent's attack and retains a massive positional advantage.** The material is equal, but for all practical purposes Black is lost.

11

Daniel Dardha	2568
Dommaraju Gukesh	2657

World Blitz Championship, Samarkand 2023



The idea of "evolution/revolution" is that we build up our position (evolution), and then do something to change it (revolution). The difficult thing to do emotionally is to return to evolution mode, as after the position has changed we may need to build up again.

In this position, Black has to do something regarding the attack on his knight.

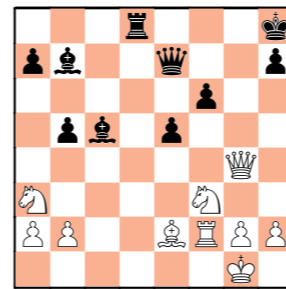
19...f5?! was played in the game. After 20.♖h5 ♖f6 the game is kind of level, although Black managed to lose quickly. **White won.**

19...♖g8? looks natural, but after 20.♖h5! it is suddenly Black who is unable to defend against too many threats.

**SOLUTION**

19...♖xf2!! This capture has a nice forcing nature to it. The difficulty is to then play on as if nothing has happened and we have not just sacrificed a piece. All great attackers have a strong feeling for the rhythm of an attack.

20.♖xf2 f6! Taking it easy.  
21.♖c4 e5! The strongest. But there were other good moves too. White now has a choice of many moves, but his position is seriously weakened and Black will eventually strike  
22.♙e2 ♖xd1+ 23.♙xd1 b5 24.♖a3 ♖d8 25.♙e2 We have now reached the moment for more forcing play.

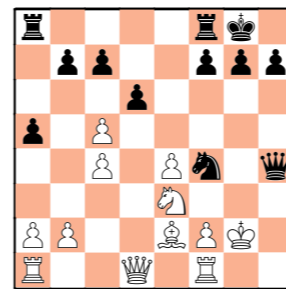


25...e4 26.♖h4 ♙xf2+ 27.♖xf2 ♖c5+ 28.♖f1 ♖c1+ 29.♖f2 e3+ 30.♖g3 ♖g8 **Winning the queen. Black wins.**

12

Levan Pantsulaia	2579
Alexander Grischuk	2699

World Blitz Championship, Samarkand 2023



**Killzone** also need to be understood through the eyes of a defender.  
20.♖g1? This led to a boring repetition in the game, but should have lost quickly. The king has gone for a rest in a minefield.  
20...dxc5! was the winning move, including the rook via a6-g6/h6. 20...♖h3+ 21.♖g2 ♖f4+ 22.♖g1 was **the game** continuation, and **ended in a draw.**

20...♖g5+!? also wins, with similar ideas.

21.♖g2 Trying to eliminate the strong black knight. 21.♖f5 ♖h3 22.♙f3 ♖a6 and the axe is falling.

21...♖xg2 22.♖xg2 ♖g5+ White is dead lost.

For example, 23.♖h3 runs into 23...♖a6!; 23.♙g4 is met by 23...h5; and 23.♖f3 by 23...f5.

**SOLUTION**

For this reason, White had to travel to find safety.

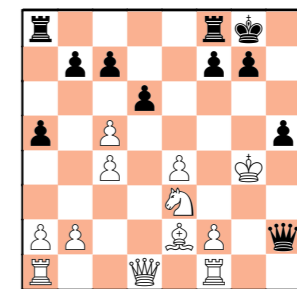
20.♖f3! Black can force a draw with a number of moves. None of them are simple.

20...♖h3+!? 20...dxc5?? would lose to 21.♖f5 ♖h3+ 22.♖xf4! and the king soon returns via e3.

20...f5?! 21.exf5 ♖ae8 22.♖h1 does not improve Black's attack at all. The pawn on f5 is an asset for White.

20...♖ae8! is more human. Bring up the pieces! 21.♖h1 ♖h3 22.♖f1 ♖xe4+ 23.♖g3 ♖f4 24.♙f3 ♖e5 25.♖g4 ♖e2+ 26.♖g2 ♖f4+ 27.♖g1 ♖g5 with roughly even chances.

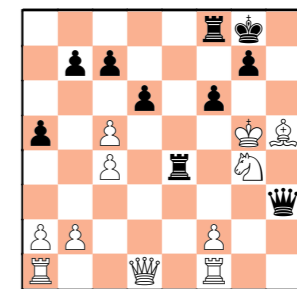
21.♖xf4 ♖h2+ 22.♖g4 h5+



Now 23.♖f3 is an immediate draw.  
23.♖g5!? reveals a death wish, but Black also has to be accurate to make the draw.  
23...♖ae8 (or the other rook).  
24.♖d3 24.♙xh5 ♖xe4 25.♖g4 ♖f4+ 26.♖h4 ♖h2+ with a perpetual.  
24...♖e6 25.♙xh5 ♖h3! 25...♖h6? 26.♖f5! ♖xh5+ 27.♖g4 and the king escapes the killzone. We can now see the point of 24.♖d3.

26.♖d1! 26.♖f4? ♖f6+! 27.♖g5 ♖h6! and the white king is in deep trouble.

26...♖xe4 27.♖g4 f6+



28.♖g6! ♖xg4+! 29.♖xg4 ♖d3+ 30.♖f5 ♖xc4 31.♖f3 ♖c2+ 32.♖f5 ♖c4 with a repetition of moves.