



FRED REINFELD CHESS CLASSICS Bruce Alberston, General Editor

HOW TO
PLAY CHESS
LIKE A
CHAMPION

Fred Reinfeld

Foreword by Bruce Pandolfini

21st Century Edition



How to Play Chess like a Champion

**by
Fred Reinfeld**

21st-Century Edition

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Bruce Alberston, General Editor

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Chapter Eight

How to Improve

Five Ways to Better Play

Once upon a time there was a banker who was a wizard at banking but a duffer at chess. As he was anxious to become a better player, he hired a chess master to instruct him in the fine points.

The master, who was no fool, thought up a clever system for demonstrating the value of his instruction. At their first session he gave the banker queen odds and trounced him. At the second session he gave the banker the same odds but, by means of a few judiciously feeble moves, allowed him to escape with a draw. The next session, still at queen odds, ended in victory for the banker.

“See?” said the master encouragingly. “You’re getting better with every lesson. Now that you’re too strong for queen odds, I can only give you odds of a rook.”

So they went through the same rigmarole at rook odds, and after three more sessions, the banker was “able” to win at these odds. As a result, the odds were progressively reduced, until at last the master confessed that his pupil had improved so much that giving him odds was now “impossible.” They would have to play on even terms. Once more they went through the whole ritual until the banker “succeeded” in beating the master on even terms.

“Well,” said the master, “from now on we can continue the lessons playing without odds.”

But at this point the banker’s canny commercial instincts asserted themselves. “Now that I’ve beaten you playing even, I don’t need any more lessons.”

“Is that so?” the enraged master bel-lowed, “Just sit down and I’ll give you queen odds all over again and beat the pants off you!”

The moral of this story is that we mustn’t underestimate the difficulties of improving. And yet it would be wrong to go to the other extreme and conclude that improvement is altogether beyond our reach. What’s important above all is method – some notion of what you want to achieve and how to go about it. Here are some helpful hints:

Thoughtful Development

The amateur brings out his pieces any old way in the opening, giving little or no thought to the problem. Then, after the opening stage, he’s disheartened or baffled to find that his prospects are slim because his pieces are not very efficient.

What’s good development and what’s bad development. This is not a technical treatise, and in any event I know from experience that examples are more useful than abstract definitions. Go back once more to Chapter Three and see how badly the players develop their pieces, unaware of the middle game tasks those pieces will have to perform.

How to Improve

Or turn to Chapter Four and see how the amateurs mishandle the opening so badly they lose in twelve moves or even less. That's bad development. As you review these games, you will see how bad development leads to disaster. When you played these games over for the first time, you followed the play for amusement. Go over it now with a purpose – the desire to observe, to study, to foresee, to draw conclusions.

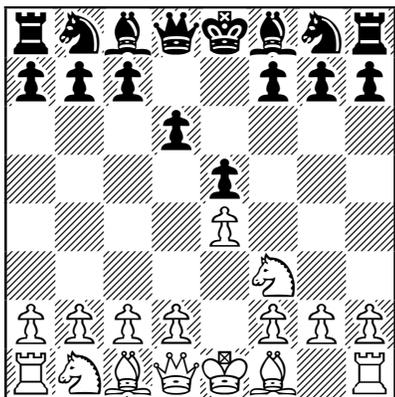
To play the opening thoughtfully means to play with a purpose, to play for the future.

But general principles are not enough: let's look at the game which shows how bad development is punished. The comments will not only show why the bad moves are bad; they'll also indicate what *should* have been played.

This game is one of the most famous in chess history. It was won by the great Paul Morphy against the Duke of Brunswick and Count Isouard in a box at the Paris Opera during a performance of *The Barber of Seville*.

Morphy – Allies
Philidor Defense

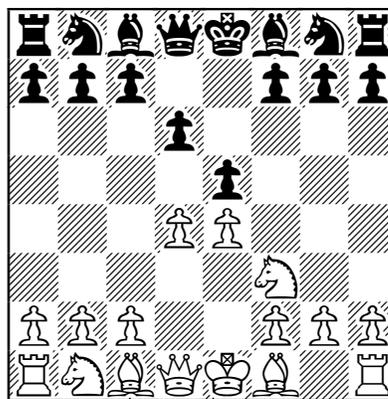
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 d6 (D)



First wrong move: he neglects to develop a piece. The right way was 2...Nc6, defending his e-pawn by developing a piece. Another acceptable method is 2...Nf6, counterattacking against White's e-pawn by developing a piece.

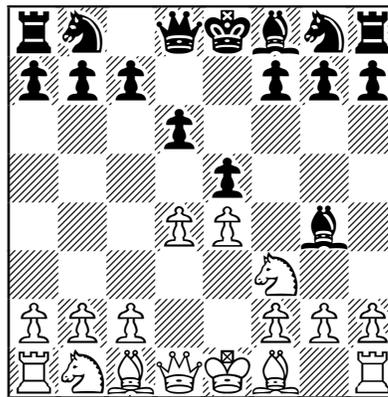
3.d4 ...

White opens up the diagonal for his queen bishop and at the same time threatens to win a pawn. (D)



A good reply for Black is 3...Bg4, developing a piece with counterattack against the e-pawn. Another valuable feature of the knight's development is that it helps to prepare for Black's castling. As you've seen in several games in this book, neglecting to castle leads to serious trouble.

3...Bg4 (D)



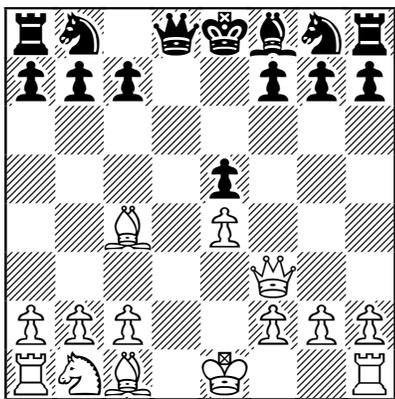
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Black's last move was a developing move, but not a good one. He thinks that by pinning White's knight he avoids the loss of a pawn. This is correct as far as it goes but it doesn't go far enough. Now watch the perfectly simple but convincing way that Morphy demonstrates the faulty character of 3...Bg4.

4.dxe5! ...

If now 4...dxe5 5.Qxd8+ Kxd8 6.Nxe5 and White has won a pawn. So Black must exchange his bishop.

4...Bxf3 5.Qxf3 dxe5 6.Bc4! ... (D)



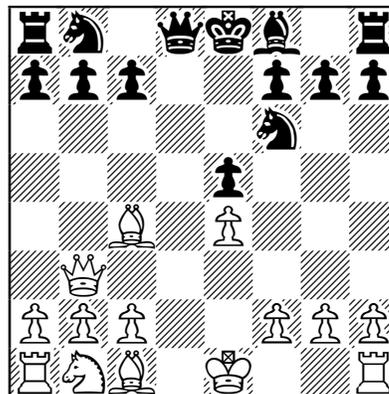
Developing a new piece and threatening Qxf7 mate. White has seized the lead in development and maintains it to the end.

6...Nf6

At last he develops the knight – but too late to avoid trouble.

7.Qb3! ... (D)

Double attack: he threatens 8.Bxf7+ K-moves 9.Qe6 mate. And he also threatens 8.Qxb7. Black must lose a pawn.



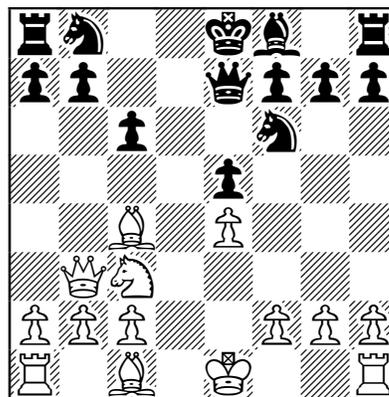
7...Qe7

A defense of sorts. At first sight the reply 8.Qxb7 looks devastating, but Black replies 8...Qb4+, saving his threatened rook by swapping queens.

8.Nc3! ...

Winning the pawn was good enough, but Morphy prefers to keep developing.

8...c6 (D)



Losing more valuable time to protect his b-pawn. Meanwhile, Black has only two pieces developed to White's three. Worse yet, the development of his bishop is blocked by his queen. Charge this up to Black's faulty 3...Bg4.

9.Bg5! ...