

A WORLD CHAMPION'S GUIDE TO CHESS

Step-by-Step Instructions for Winning Chess the Polgar Way



Internationally Acclaimed Chess Trainer!

GRANDMASTER SUSAN POLGAR

Women's World Chess Champion

AND PAUL TRUONG

A World Champion's Guide to Chess

**Step-by-Step Instructions for
Winning Chess the Polgar Way!**

by

Susan Polgar

and

Paul Truong



2015

Russell Enterprises, Inc.
Milford, CT USA

A World Champion's Guide to Chess
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ISBN: 978-1-941270-32-5 (print)
ISBN: 978-1-941270-33-2 (eBook)

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Published by:
Russell Enterprises, Inc.
P.O. Box 3131
Milford, CT 06460 USA

<http://www.russell-enterprises.com>
info@russell-enterprises.com

Cover design by Janel Norris
Editing and proofreading by Peter Kurzdorfer
Photo of Susan Polgar by Timea Jaksa

Printed in the United States of America



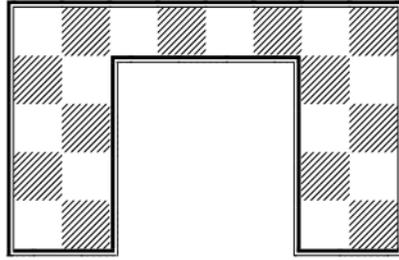


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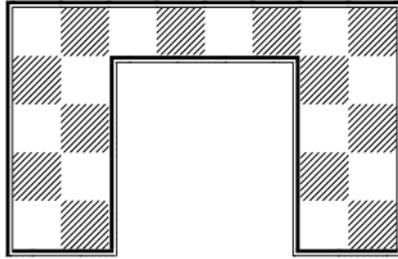
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Introduction

My First Chess Experiences

I discovered the game of chess by accident when I was not quite four years old. While exploring a closet in search of a doll, I found some funny-looking figurines that looked like horses, castles, and a queen's crown. I asked my mother what they were, and she answered, "They are chess pieces. When your father comes home tonight, he will explain how to play with them."

It was through my father that I started to learn the basics of chess. He made the game so fascinating that I became deeply interested. Later my two younger sisters, Judit and Sofia, also learned the game and became very strong players. While I was only four years old, I competed in the chess championship for girls under 11 years old in my home city of Budapest, Hungary. Although I was by far the youngest participant, I ended up winning the championship with a perfect 10-0 score! That was the beginning of my long and successful chess career.

During the past 40-plus years, I have been fortunate enough to accomplish quite a bit. I won my first world championship (girls under 16 years old) when I was 12. I became the highest ranked woman player in the world at the age of 15 and have been ranked among the top three women in the world for the past over 20 years. I participated in four Chess Olympiads (team championships), in 1988, 1990, 1994, and 2004, winning five gold medals, four silver medals, and one bronze medal in team and

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individual competition. My sisters and I ended the Soviet Union's total dominance in Women's Olympiads. In 1991, I became the first woman ever to earn the men's grandmaster title. In 1992, I won my next two world championships (World Blitz and Rapid Championships). In 1996, I won my fourth world championship, becoming the first world champion (male or female) to win the Triple Crown in chess (World Blitz, Rapid, and Traditional World Championships).

What this Book Will Teach You

In this book I would like to share with you what I have learned and what has made me a successful player. This book includes not only methods that I have learned when I was growing up but also exclusive training methods that I have developed and used to train thousands of students over the years. An exclusive pattern recognition chapter will help you understand the foundations of dozens of patterns that will recur constantly in your games. Recognizing these patterns will let you see checkmates and other combinations three, four, five, and even six moves ahead.

In my lectures to parents, coaches, and young players across the country, I strongly recommend exactly what I have put into this book. I have come to realize that in the United States, too many players are not being taught properly. Too much emphasis is placed on the opening and not enough on other areas.

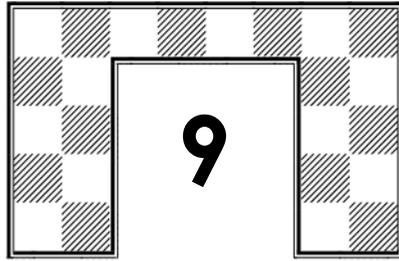
I highly recommend that beginners and intermediate players work mostly with tactics and endgames and solve tactical exercises every day. Tactics and endgames are the foundations of chess. Opening study is important only at much higher levels such as expert, master, and beyond. It is enough for beginner and intermediate players to understand only the basic principles of chess openings.

All the puzzles in this book are my original compositions. I feel these are the most important ideas for players to know. You can find more advanced puzzles in my book *Chess Tactics for Champions*.

How to Use this Book

To get the most value from this book, record the time it takes you to solve each puzzle by making pencil notations in the margins or in a separate notebook. Also note whether or not you've been able to find the correct move. When you have finished the entire book, go back and solve the puzzles again. Then compare the times and results. You should be faster and more accurate the second time. Repeat the same procedure a third time and see your solving time improve.

My father used to say: "Repetition makes a master. Repetition makes you a better chess player." And he was right. Solving thousands of puzzles really helped me become the player that I am today. The point is not to memorize the actual positions but to remember the ideas, to recognize the patterns. Chess is largely a matter of pattern recognition. The more patterns you know, the better player you will be. It is said that an average grandmaster has a mental library of 20,000 patterns, which includes tactical, strategic, and endgame patterns. The main aim of this book is to help you build your own library of ideas.

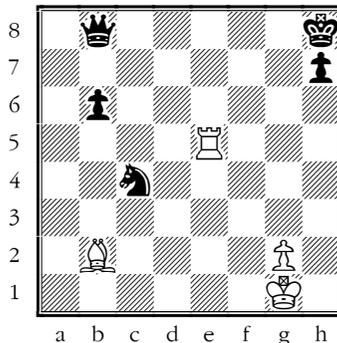


DOUBLE CHECK

A double check, a kind of discovered check, places the enemy king in check by two pieces at the same time. This is a very lethal tactical motif because there is no way to block it. A player in double check is unable to block both checks at the same time or capture both checking pieces. The only possibility is to move the king. In some cases even that is not possible, which means checkmate. When I started out in chess, I thought double check was a great weapon. I always wanted to do more and more double check puzzles. All the work you put in, even though at times it may feel tough, eventually pays off.

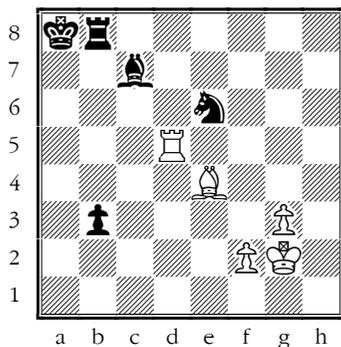
Below are some examples of double check. Some are checkmate in one move and some win material. Toward the end of the chapter, you will also learn how to use double check to set up checkmate in two moves.

1. White to move. Can you find a checkmate by double check in one move?

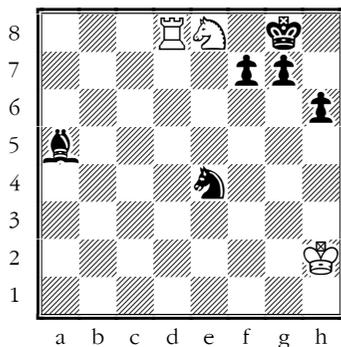


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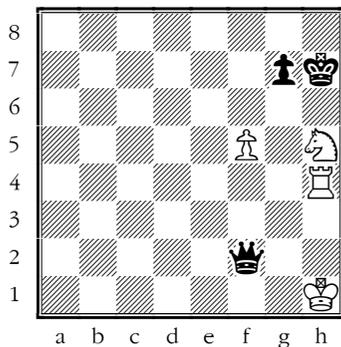
2. White to move. White has a checkmate by double check in one move. Can you find it?



3. White to move. What is White's checkmating move?

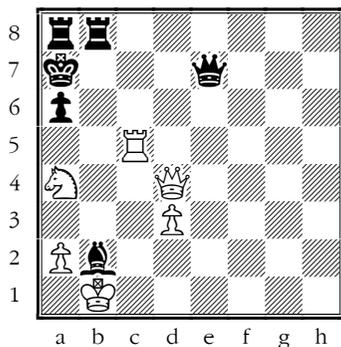


4. White to move. Can you find checkmate in the next move?

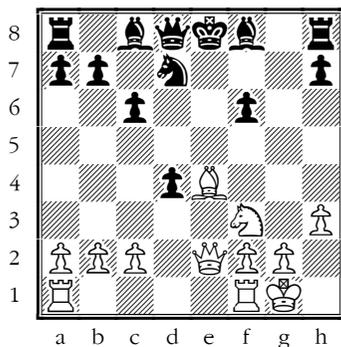


Double Check

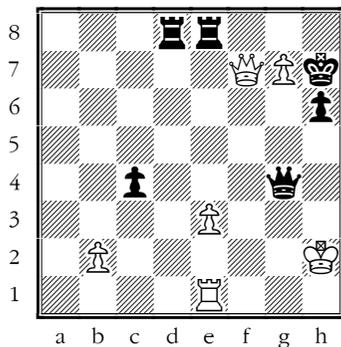
5. White to move. What is White's checkmating move?



6. White to move. How can White checkmate with a double check?



7. White to move. Can you find the unusual and lethal double check?



Solutions

1. 1.Re8#. The beauty is that even though both the white bishop and rook are under attack, neither can be captured.
2. 1.Ra5#. by double check.
3. The white rook is under attack, but it doesn't matter after 1.Nf6#.
4. 1.Nf6#.
5. White's queen is under attack, but that doesn't stop White from checkmating by double check with 1.Rc7#.
6. 1.Bg6#.
7. Here the solution is to promote the pawn with 1.g8=Q#.
8. There are two tries but only one works. After 1.fxe7+ Black can recapture with 1...Kxe7. But after 1.fxg7# the game is over.
9. There are two ways to give double check. 1.Rh4+ does not achieve much after 1...Kg8. The correct move is 1.Re7+ winning Black's rook.
10. 1.Nc5+ wins the black queen.
11. Yes, 1.Be6+.
12. 1.Bd6+ wins the rook on f4.
13. 1...Rg3#.
14. 1...Nc3#. But 1...Nb4+ is a mistake, as the white king escapes through b1.
15. 1...fxe3+ and White loses the queen.
16. 1...Nd3+!. The discovered check 1...Nc4+ seems at first to be just as good, but then the white queen escapes by 2.Qe2.
17. Double check by 1.Nxf7+ Kg8 followed by 2.Nh6#.
18. 1.Nc6+ Kc8 2.Rd8#. But 1.Ne6+ does not get there, as Black has a better choice by playing 1...Ke7.
19. 1.Nb5+ forcing 1...Ka8 and now 2.Nxc7#.
20. 1.Re8+ Kh7 2.Rh8# or 2.Qh8#.