

**Mihail Marin**

OLD  
IN WINE  
NEW  
BOTTLES



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## Foreword

When the Chess Informant staff suggested the idea of gathering together all my articles from the "Old wine in new bottles" cycle within a book covers, I felt enormously pleased. It is always rewarding to have your name on a new book's cover. Besides, it may be no secret for the reader that the inheritance of the classics, the core of this whole series, is one of my favourite themes.

But at the same time I could not avoid the feeling that a book should be a bit more than just a collection of articles. Therefore I suggested to my Serbian friends that it would be better to allow me grouping the existing chapters into thematic categories (or parts of the book), writing short introductions to them and not least adding a few new articles (we should actually call them chapters by now) to the sections where too few previous articles would be classified. This is how the following new chapters were born: *Strong king in the centre*, *The strength and weakness of the double pawns in static positions* and *The necessity to attack*. Their significance for each section will be explained at the due moment.

The editors kindly accepted idea, displaying understanding for the fact that this would cause some delay, as I was going to compete in two tournaments, including the București 2019 World Senior Championship. But I hope that in the end things have turned out well for all the involved parts, editors, readers and (actually this is obvious) the author himself.

It is worth explaining what the reader could expect from this book.

I may be old-fashioned, but I keep using for my inspiration (as an author and as a player alike) the treasure of the past. It does not make sense to speculate whether, for instance, Carlsen is stronger than Fischer or Korchnoi, as matches between players separated in



time by so many decades are impossible. But this book aims to prove that some of the basic aspects of our game did not change over the generations. The same kind of brilliant ideas and mistakes are played again and again in specific situations.

The idea expressed in the previous paragraph may seem to have a purely historic significance but there is more about it. I actually launch an invitation to examine the games of the classics, featuring ideas thought over only by human brains, and by no means less deep than those used today. We all use computer assistance when preparing or writing, but at the chess board we are all alone with our opponent, so educating our mind to work along the classical values is essential.

But even to those who think that modern players are closer to the truth than their predecessors, the book should have instructional value, as the 25 included chapters are aimed at offering insight into specific aspects of the enormously complicated chess fight.

It is virtually impossible to write a "complete" chess course, as the general themes and examples to each of them are practically inexhaustible. But I hope that after studying the book the reader will feel enriched, technically and aesthetically.

I remember my enthusiasm when receiving my first original copy of the Chess informant in 1987 (number 43) after having annotated some of my games from the Warszawa zonal tournament, ending in my first qualification to the Interzonal. Almost a third of a century has passed since then, but I am looking forward to hold this new book in my hands with no less excitement.

*Mihail Marin*

București, November 2019

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## SYSTEM OF SIGNS

±	white stands slightly better	/	diagonal
∓	black stands slightly better	⊕	centre
±	white has the upper hand	»	king's side
∓	black has the upper hand	«	queen's side
+—	white has a decisive advantage	×	weak point
—+	black has a decisive advantage	⊥	ending
=	even	♖♗	pair of bishops
∞	unclear	♖♗	bishops of opposite color
∞	with compensation for the material	♖♗	bishops of the same color
⊙	development advantage	○○	united pawns
○	greater board room	○-○	separated pawns
→	with attack	♚♚	double pawns
↑	with initiative	♚	passed pawn
↔	with counter-play	>	advantage in number of pawns
⊙	zugzwang	⊕	time
#	mate	75/199	Chess Informant
!	a very good move	E	12 Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings
!!	an excellent move	♚	3/b Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings
?	a mistake	N	a novelty
??	a blunder	(ch)	championship
!?	a move deserving attention	(izt)	interzonal tournament
?!	a dubious move	(ct)	candidates' tournament
△	with the idea	(m)	match
□	only move	(ol)	olympiad
⊂	better is	corr.	correspondence game
↔	file	RR	editorial comment
		R	various moves
		L	with
		┘	without
			etc
		—	see





# **Part One**

## **BASIC PRINCIPLES**

# Basic principles

Despite its scientific and sportive character, chess is also an inspirational game. When we sit at the board, our intention is to display our technical knowledge and personal strength, of course, but the way I feel it expressing one's own taste and preference, as a true artist, is of no lesser significance.

One of the highest secrets leading to success is keeping the balance even between these aspects. Knowledge does not guarantee anything without inspiration and ambition, for instance. But the reverse statement is also valid as illustrated in the chapters from this section.

There are certain situations when we should make a clear difference between what we wish or dream of and what we should do depending to the circumstances. I found a statement by Alatortsev in his old book "Taktika i Strategiya Shakhmatii" very enlightening. According to him, before making our choice we should identify in which stage we find ourselves, meaning what we have accomplished so far and what still need doing within the general frame of our main plan. Anyone can be tempted by winning a pawn, occupying an open file, creating weaknesses in the enemy territory, but there might simply be essential, more urgent things to do at that specific stage.

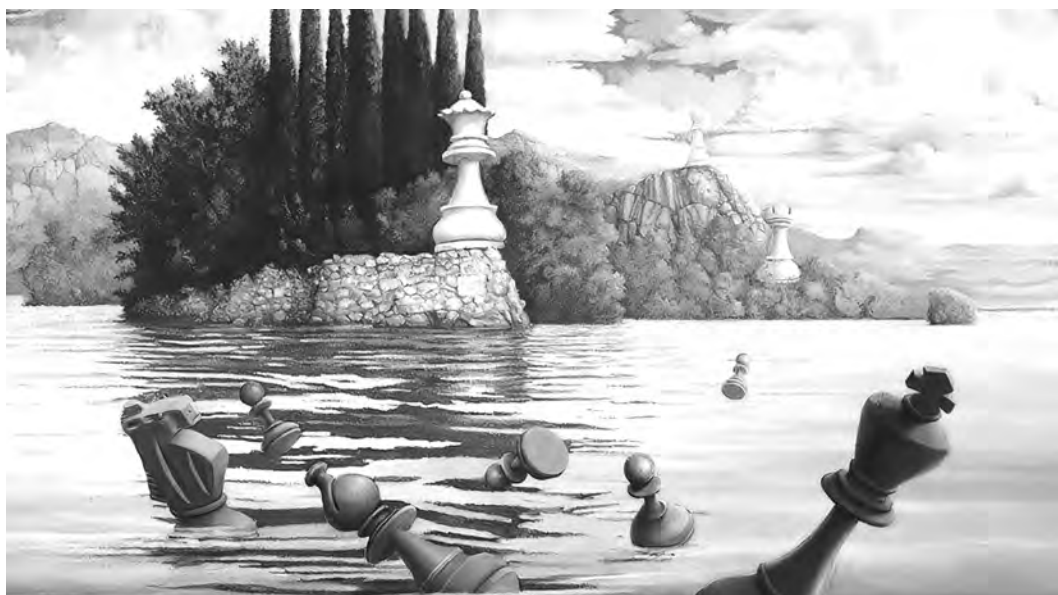
From this point of view things are clearer in the opening. As children we have been told again and again to move with a few pawns, develop knights and bishops, get castled and connect rooks. But practice shows that players (including very strong ones) are never safe of falling into such false temptations as mentioned above.

All chapters from this section are tightly connected with the initial phase of the game, namely the opening. There is one focusing on development in general, while that one referring to the king's delay in the centre presents a particular case of it. But the truth in chess is never one-sided and, as written by Kortchnoi, those knowing the basic rules in depth can afford to break them. This is how the idea of the chapter Strong king in the centre was born.

# Chapter One

## A FEW TWIN GAMES AND ONE GOLDEN RULE - DEVELOPMENT!

Ever since Botvinnik's time, chess players of all levels have been with thorough opening preparation. The critical analysis of the existing theoretical and practical material, combined with the discovery of new original ideas, became essential in order to avoid starting the middlegame with a marked positional or material handicap. While making the analytical investigation easier, computers have also brought in a negative practical problem. We are all familiar with the feeling that we would never be able to remember the hundreds of lines we go through during our pre-game preparation. Much in the general spirit of this column, this feeling is not new at all. Remembering his only over-the-board encounter with Fischer, Botvinnik wrote that until the unpleasant surprise on move 17 he mainly had to remember his home analysis, mentioning that this is not an easy task at all.



Paul Jonkers - Lost at sea

But long before Botvinnik developed his system of working on opening theory, handbooks for beginners (among which Lasker's and Capablanca's are the most famous, but by far not the oldest ones) insistently recommended following the golden

principle in the first phase of the game: development! Do not repeatedly move the same piece when a big part of ones own army is placed on the initial squares; do treasure development more than material; and do not open the position, nor embark in concrete actions with an incomplete development. All these are long-known corollaries.

By following this golden rule, one can hardly go wrong in the opening. But ignoring them by falling into concrete temptations such as winning a pawn or starting an optically promising attack could provoke major setbacks. This classical inheritance provides us with a wealth of examples illustrating these issues and, unlike the monstrous mass of ever-growing theory, requires a moderate memory's effort to offer us a reliable guideline in the opening.

Forgetting one of the myriads of recently studied variations is understandable and not really uncommon. But ignoring the moral of a classical game, tightly connected with our own ideas, used to be considered a major chess sin in the pre-computer era. On top of that, refraining from studying the values of "the reliable past" for the sake of dedicating all our time to "finding the truth" with the help of the engines is, how should I say it, a matter of personal choice. In this article I will try illustrating one by one the need for permanently taking into account the three corollaries mentioned above.

I happened to be a live commentator on the first rounds in Saint Louis and was highly intrigued by the following game, which caused me a strong feeling of *deja vu*, even though my perception was somewhat distorted, as you will soon find out.

**A 34**  
**Wesley So 2779 —**  
**Maxime Vachier Lagrave 2731**  
*Saint Louis 2015*

**1. ♖f3**

1. c4 e5 2. ♘c3 ♗f6 3. g3 c6 4. ♕g2 d5 5. cd5 cd5 6. ♜b3 ♘c6 7. ♗d5 ♗d4 8. ♗f6

**1... ♗f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 d5 4. cd5 ♗d5 5. g3 ♕g7 6. ♕g2 c5 7. ♜a4**

Wesley So played this move after almost ten minutes, making me wonder whether it was part of his preparation. It is more likely that when preparing this anti-Grünfeld variation he simply was not aware of this concrete move order. According to the classical principles, the queen incursion initiated with the last move

is premature. White is incompletely developed and the old rules say that the queen should be one of the last pieces to bring into play. But in concrete terms, there is a strong temptation to use the queen for the purpose of attacking the relatively weak c5-pawn or preparing a kingside attack after transferring it to h4.

Of course, the move is not really wrong, even though not the best either. Due to his extra tempo, White has the right to waste some time in the opening without necessarily being punished for it.

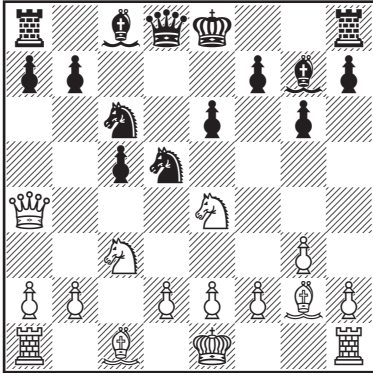
But pushing things too far in this direction can accumulate into an opening fiasco.

**7... ♗c6 8. ♗g5**

This and the next move were played rather quickly, but they follow the same risky policy.

**8... e6 9. ♖ge4**

The c5-pawn experiences some discomfort, but the main question remains whether a pawn is worth neglecting the development that badly.



**9... ♗b6!**

Dotting the 'i' and crossing the 't': what is the queen doing coming out so early?

**10. ♖b5**

White played this consequent move after another roughly ten minutes' thought.

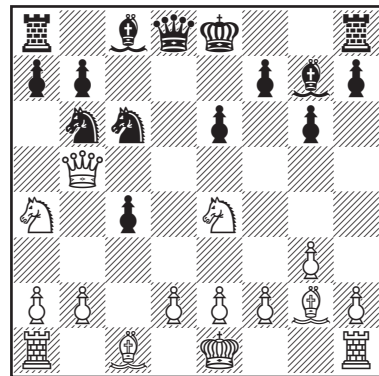
The other way of attacking the pawn is 10. ♖a3, but the queen would not feel too happy after 10... ♗f8 11. b3 (11. ♗c5 ♗d4) ♗e7 (11... ♗d4 12. ♖b2!) 12. 0-0 0-0 13. ♗c5 This is risky, but otherwise White's previous play does not make any sense. 13... ♖d4 14. b4 a5!; By way of suggestion, the engines' slight favourite is 10. ♖d1, as if trying to correct the previous inaccuracies; 10... ♖e7!?= △ ♗d4

**10... c4 11. ♗a4?**

Even though from the classical point of view the entire series of previous moves has been a bit too provocative, only this last one crosses the border of admissible risk. White once

again moves with an already developed piece while half of his army is still undeveloped.

The time has come to think of the other pieces, too, abandoning the illusory dreams of winning the c-pawn and not shying away from temporarily sacrificing one with 11. d3 (♗c1-h6), even though Black would have at least comfortable play: 11... cd3 (Possibly more principled is to continue developing with 11... 0-0 12. ♗g5 f6 13. ♗e3 f5 14. ♗c5 a6 15. ♗b7 ♗b7 16. ♖b6 ♖b6 17. ♗b6 cd3 18. ed3 ♗ab8∞ but 11... cd3 takes a pawn without the involvement of any major commitment.) 12. ♗g5 f6 13. ♗e3 f5 14. ♗c5 (14. ♗g5 ♖c7 15. ♗f6? ♗f7 traps the knight.) de2∞



**11... 0-0!**

With this simple and strong move, Black keeps developing without paying attention to White's over-ambitious intentions.

**12. ♗b6 ab6!**

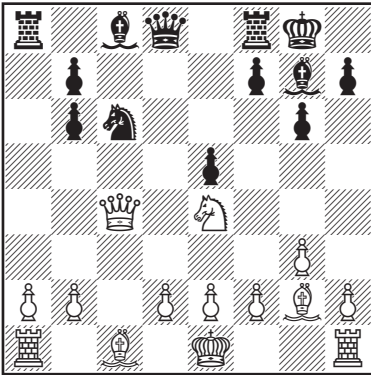
Black takes his chance to develop his queen's rook without even moving it, thus proving that ...♗b6 was not a waste of time.

**13. ♖c4**

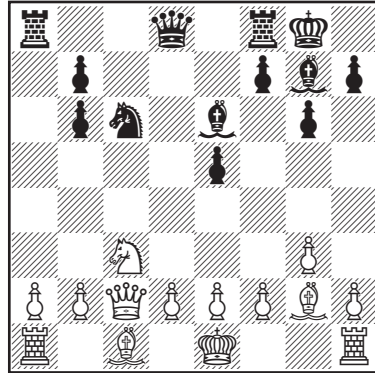
White has finally won the pawn, but he played most of his moves with only three pieces: the queen and the knights. It is little wonder that

he is in serious trouble already.

**13... e5**



♞d4 ×b3) ♙d5 (×♞b5, ♙g2, ♜h1) 18. f3 e4 19. fe4 fe4 20. ♞c3 (20. ♙e4 ♜a4! 21. d3 ♙e4 22. de4 ♞b6 ×♙e1—+; 20. a4 ♞b6 21. e3 ♞b4—+) ♞b6—+



Around this moment I already had the *deja vu* feeling. In my live comments I referred to an old game, Tatai — Karpov, in which White got crushed after wasting lots of time to win a pawn. But I added that the opening had been different in that case, mentioning the move order 1. c4 e5 2. ♞c3 ♞f6 3. g3 c6 4. ♙g2 d5 5. cd5 cd5 6. ♞b3 ♞c6! 7. ♞d5 ♞d4. I later discovered that I was partly right but also partly wrong. As a commentator, I did not have the right to use any the engines, but when one of the spectators asked me why So chose such an opening line I received confirmation that White's position is as precarious as it looks.

**14. ♞c2**

White begins a general retreat of his exposed pieces, involving new losses of time.

**14... ♙e6 N**

14... ♞d4 see next game Stefano Tatai 2480 — Anatoly Karpov 2690, Las Palmas 1977 — 23/86

**15. ♞c3**

15. ♞b1 f5 16. ♞c3 b5 17. ♞b5 (17. ♙c6 bc6 is similar to the game continuation; 17. a3

**15... b5!**

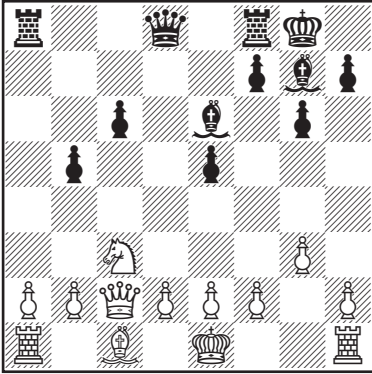
Increasing the pressure by exploiting the dynamic force of the double pawns. One of them defends its own knight; the other questions the stability of the errant white knight. (♞g1-f3-g5-e4-c3). The tempting 15... ♞d4 16. ♞b1 ♙b3?! fails to 17. ♙e4! defending c2 and threatening ab3, thus forcing the enemy bishop's retreat. After the last move White loses ground completely.

**16. ♙c6**

White desperately attempts to save the game. He exchanges his strongest piece in order to eliminate the danger of ...♞d4 and ...b4.

16. ♞b5 ♞b4 17. ♞d1 ♙d5! (×♞b5, ♙g2, ♜h1) 18. f3 ♞b6 19. ♞c3 ♙a2 20. ♞a2 ♞a2 21. ♜b1 ♜fd8 (△ ♙h6, ♞c3) 22. d3 ♞c3—+; 16. 0-0 b4 17. ♞b5 (17. ♞a4 ♞d4 18. ♞d1 b3—+) b3—+; 16. b4 ♞d4!± (16... ♞b4 17. ♞b1∞) 17. ♞b1 (17. ♞b2 e4 18. ♙e4 ♜e8; 17. ♞d1 ♙b3 18. ab3 ♜a1—+) ♙f5 18. e4 (18. ♙e4 ♙e4 19. ♞e4 f5 20. ♞b1 e4±; 18. ♞e4 ♜c8; 18. d3 e4! 19. ♞e4 ♜c8—+) ♙e6 19. 0-0 ♞d6± △ ♜f8

16... bc6



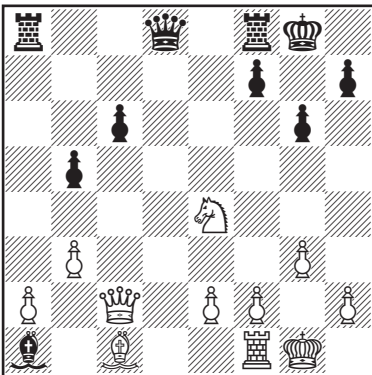
17. b3 ♖f5

This is the beginning of the end. White has no way of neutralizing pressure exerted by the enemy bishop.

18. d3

18. e4 ♖h3 ≠ ×♗e1; 18. ♖b2 b4 19. ♗a4 e4—+

18... e4! 19. de4 ♖e4 20. ♗e4 ♖a1 21. 0-0



21... ♖e8—+

Black has won the exchange and remains better coordinated. What is even worse for White is that his a2-pawn is a permanent source of worries.

22. f3 ♖d4

22... f5—+

23. e3

After this move, the weaknesses of the first and second ranks become an important issue. 23. ♗g2 f5

23... ♖g7 24. ♖d1 ♖c7 25. ♖d6 c5 26. ♖d5

26. ♖c5 ♖c5 27. ♗c5 ♖f8 28. ♖c6 ♖c5 29. ♖c5 ♖a2 30. ♗f1 ♖d8 31. ♗e1 ♖h2—+

26... ♖e5 27. ♖d1

27. ♖e5 ♖e5 28. ♗c5 ♖c8 29. b4 ♖f8—+

27... c4 28. a3 ♖e7 29. bc4 ♖c4 30. ♖d2 ♖b3 31. ♖d6 ♖c8 32. ♗f2 ♖ec7 33. ♖d2 ♖f8 34. ♖d4 ♖a3 35. ♗g2 ♖b2 0:1

Immediately after the round was over I was curious to check Karpov's game. At first, I thought I was under some sort of illusion, caused by the late hour in Romania, but then I resigned myself to the obvious. Judge for yourself!

A 34

**Stefano Tatai 2480 — Anatoly Karpov 2690**

*Las Palmas 1977 [23/86]*

1. ♗f3 c5 2. c4 ♗f6 3. ♗c3 d5 4. cd5 ♗d5 5. g3 g6 6. ♖g2 ♖g7 7. ♖a4

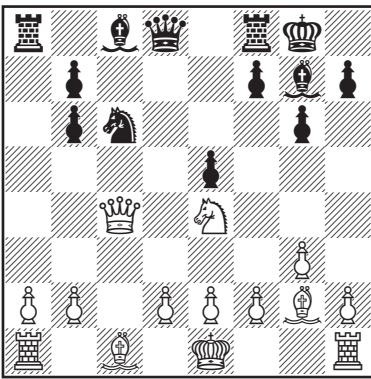
Later, Karpov developed his initial comments in his game collection *Izbranniie Partii* (Selected games) 1969-1977. Here is his somewhat mild evaluation of White's plan: "An interesting idea. White tries to immediately take advantage of his slight advance in develop-

ment and the relative lack of harmony of the black pieces."

**7... ♖c6 8. ♗g5 e6 9. ♗ge4 ♖b6! 10. ♖b5 c4 11. ♗a4 0-0 12. ♗b6 ab6 13. ♖c4**

After mentioning the already familiar elements of the position, Karpov concludes that Black should have a definite advantage.

**13... e5**



Indeed, it was precisely the same opening, not just a similar position to that from the previous game! My concrete memory proved wrong, but I was pleased by the way its abstract side worked.

This situation perfectly illustrates the widely known (but frequently forgotten) truth that those who do not know history tend to repeat its mistakes.

Karpov confesses that he pondered for about one hour when choosing between the game move and 13... ♗d7 "in order to activate the rook along the c-file as soon as possible."

**14. ♖c2**

RR 14. d3 ♗e6 15. ♗g5! ♗c4 (15... ♖d7 16. ♖c1 Bent Larsen. There are a few comments by Larsen to this game. The highly original

Danish legend enjoyed playing systems with a fianchetto and frequently embarked on provocative operations, so we can understand, if not his sympathy, at least his indulgence with respect to White's plan.) 16. ♗d8 ♖fd8 17. dc4 f5 18. ♗c3 e4 ♖±/± Mihail Marin; 14. 0-0 ♗e6 "and the queen has no good squares for retreat" (Anatoly Karpov).

**14... ♗d4**

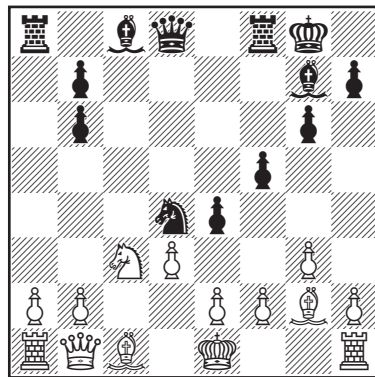
I slightly prefer Vachier's non-committal 14... ♗e6

**15. ♖b1**

15. ♖d1? ♗e6 △ ♗b3, ♗b3

**15... f5 16. ♗c3 e4 17. d3**

17. e3 ♗f3 (17... ♗c6!? △ ♗e5) 18. ♗f3 ef3 Anatoly Karpov.



**17... b5 18. ♗e3**

RR 18. de4 b4 19. ♗d5 fe4! (19... b3 20. 0-0 Bent Larsen 20... ♗e2 21. ♖h1 fe4 22. ♗c3 ♗c1 23. ♖c1 ♗c3 24. ♖c3 ba2 25. ♖c4 ♖g7 26. ♖a2 ♖a2 27. ♖a2 ♖d4= Mihail Marin) 20. ♗e4 b3 21. ♗c3 (21. 0-0 ♗e2 22. ♖g2 ♗e6 23. ♖d1 ♖a5—+) ♗f5± Mihail Marin; 18. e3 ♗f3 19. ♗f3 ef3 20. ♗b5 ♖a5 21. ♗c3 b5± Anatoly Karpov.

**18... b4 19. ♗d1 ♖e8 20. de4 fe4**