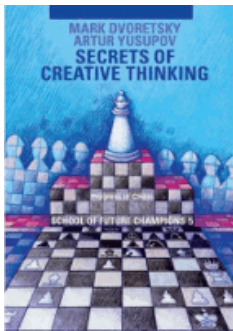




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The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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Pay Attention to your Opponent's Resources Part One

Your opponent also has a right to exist – Savielly Tartakower remarked with his characteristic irony. Absorbed in our own thoughts, we sometimes forget this, for which we have to pay dearly. As Viktor Korchnoi wrote – "Well, if you do not check what your opponent is doing, you will end up complaining about bad luck after every game." No chess player has managed to completely exclude this kind of mistake, but some make it less often and others more often. Many who are over-self-confident optimists make it with unenviable regularity.

The key word in the title of this article is attention, attentiveness. It's no accident that a significant proportion of mistakes (we call them "oversights" and "blunders") are by no means associated with your own failed ideas, but with strong opposition on the part of your opponent. You don't notice them because your attention is mainly directed towards looking for and studying your own strongest moves. You should put yourself in the position of your partner a little more often, and think about how he's going to react to the idea you have in store for him. However, this very important skill that forms the title of this article (then again, like any other skill) doesn't appear by itself, you have to develop and train it with the aid of specially-selected exercises.

Let's have a look at a few practical examples and think about the reasons why mistakes happened in them.

Vallin - Nielsen  
1968



[FEN "6R1/1P6/P1b2p2/2p2k2/2P5p2/1r5P/4R1K1 w - - 0 1"]

1.?

Does 1.b8Q win?

White has an overwhelming advantage and there's no way he's going to allow the blow f3-f2+. Simplest of all are 1.Rf1! or 1.Kf1! – his opponent would have to capitulate immediately.

In completely winning positions, when almost all roads apparently lead to Rome, it's easy to lose your caution and concentration, which, obviously, also happened to the person who was playing White. The classic formula: "Winning a won position is the most difficult thing of all" warns against dangerous complacency. In situations like this you have to be a "predator," trying to choose from out of several possibilities the path on which your opponent won't get even the tiniest chance.

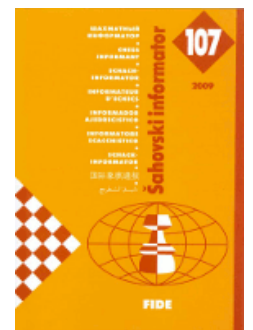
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### 1.b8Q? f2+ 2.Kf1 Bg2+!!

White probably overlooked this ingenious thrust, which should have put him on his guard, but didn't do so. By taking with the rook on g2 he would have forced a transfer into a rook ending, in which he retained a big advantage. But he didn't want to drag out the battle.

### 3.Kxg2?

In the variation 3...feQ+? 4.Qxb2 the king easily gets away from the checks: 4...Qe4+ 5.Kh3 Qf3+ 6.Rg3 Qh5+ 7.Kg2. But here a new surprise follows.

**3...f1Q+!! 4.Kxf1 Rf2+!**, and the rook pursues the king on the squares f2, g2, and h2 – taking it leads to stalemate.

The answer to the question under the diagram is: yes! In the rook endgame, White wins.

3.Rxg2! feQ+ 4.Kxe1 Rxb8, and now either 5.a7 Rb1+ 6.Kd2 Ra1 7.Rg7 Ke6 8.h4 f5 9.h5 Kf6 10.h6+-, or 5.Ra2 Ke4 6.a7 Ra8 7.h4 Kf4 8.Kf2 Kg4 9.Ke3 f5 10.h5+-.

### Taimanov - Vorotnikov

Leningrad, 19788



[FEN "3rr1k1/ppp1qp1p/3b2p1/4np1P/1P1N2n1/P1P4R/1B1NBP2/R2Q1K2 w - - 0 21"]

1.?

### Evaluate 21.f4.

Black only has two pawns for the piece with no direct threats, and that means that he should probably lose. But sometimes a single careless move is enough to change the evaluation to its diametric opposite.

### 21.f4?

Commenting on one of his games against Mark Taimanov, Mikhail Botvinnik remarked: "He didn't like doubt, which often led to rushed decisions."

Taimanov himself also acknowledges the fairness of that characterization: "I often make 'only' moves without thinking, and sometimes even completely let my opponent's 'time trouble rhythm' draw me in."

White was reckoning on 21...Nc6 22.Bxg4 fg 23.Qxg4+-, and missed the very strong counter-blow.

### 21...Nf3!! 22.Rxf3?!

"Mistakes never come singly!" 22.N2xf3?! Ne3+ 23.Kg1 Nxd1 24.Rxd1 Bxf4 didn't promise chances for salvation either, but 22.Nc4! was considerably more stubborn. Then again, in the variation 22...Nfh2+! 23.Kg1 Bxf4 24.Bc1 Bxc1 25.Rxc1 b5! Black retained an overwhelming advantage.

**22...Qh4! 23.Rg3** (the only defense from the threat of mate on h1) **23...Qh1+ 24.Rg1 Ne3+ 25.Kf2 Qh2+ 0-1**

The center of gravity in these examples isn't in determining the strongest continuation (there may be several good moves), but in avoiding the tempting but erroneous path. Still, let's try to make the best choice for White.

Taimanov recommends 21.Nc4! +/- (you can also play this way after a preliminary exchange of pawns on g6). Being a piece up, in principle simplifying the position is favorable. The ingenious try 21...Nxc4 22.Bxc4 Bg3! (and if 23.Rxg3?, then 23...Qh4 24.Rxg4 Qh1+ 25.Rg1 Qh3+ with perpetual check), suggested by Artur Yusupov, is refuted by means of 23.hg 24.Qb3!, preparing the decisive blow 25.Bxf7+!

Another way to force a simplification, 21.Ne4 fe 22.Bxg4 looks worse: after 22...Nd3 Black is left with good compensation for the piece.

The most energetic and strong decision is associated with switching to a counterattack: 21.hg hg 22.c4!, and if 22...c5, then 23.Nxf5! gf 24.Bxg4 fg 25.Qxg4+! with unavoidable mate.

It's much more difficult to evaluate the following position than the two previous ones.

### Hodgson – M. Gurevich

European Team Championship, Haifa 1989



[FEN"1r3r1k/p6p/2q2b1P/3p1Pp1/2P1p3/QP2P3/P1B3P1/1K1R3R b - - 0 31"]

1...?

#### Is 31...Rfc8 worth playing?

It's clear that Black's initiative compensates for being two pawns down, especially as he can immediately win one of them back (only not by 31...Qxc4?? because of 32.Qxf8+!). The only question is whether he'll find a way to convert his activeness into a decisive attack.

The move 31...Rfc8!, creating the difficult-to-repel threat of 32...Qxc4, at first glance solves the problem convincingly. But Mikhail Gurevich rejected it, finding the ingenious refutation: 32.Rxd5! Qxc4 33.Qb2!! Qc6 (33...Bxb2? 34.bc is bad), and now not 34.Rc5? Qa6! 35.Rxc8+ (35.Re5 Rxc2!-+) 35...Rxc8 36.Qc1 Qa5+, but 34.Rd4! – here White at least isn't worse.

He could play simply 31...dc!? 32.Rd6 (32.Qd6 Qc8) 32...Qc7, intending 33...cb 34.ab Qc3. The initiative remains in Black's hands, although breaking through his opponent's defenses won't be easy.

The consequences of the move that the grandmaster made, **31...Rfd8!?** are rather unclear as well. The variation 32.cd Qc3 33.Rd4 Rbc8 34.Qb2 Qxb2+ 35.Kxb2 Bxd4+ 36.ed Rxd5 37.Bxe4 Rxd4 led to the best endgame for Black (the only question is by how much). However, White had the defensive resource 32.Kc1! at his disposal, repelling the threat 32...Qxc4 and simultaneously preventing 32...dc? because of 33.Rxd8+ Rxd8 34.Rd1+-. Black would have maintained the tension by means of 32...a5!?

**32.c5?! Rb5 33.Bxe4 Rxc5**



[FEN"3r3k/p6p/2q2b1P/2rp1Pp1/4B3/QP2P3/P5P1/1K1R3R w - - 0 34"]

White's position looks alarming both after 34.Rc1 Rxc1+ 35.Rxc1 Qb6 with a subsequent 36...Qxe3, and after 34.Bd3 Qd6! (preventing the move 35.Rc1 and pointing the queen in the direction of e5). Then again, both of these were much better than the capture of the a7-pawn that occurred in the game. Julian Hodgson clearly underestimated the danger his king was facing.

**34.Qxa7? Rc8 35.Bxd5 Qb5**

35...Rxd5! 36.Rc1 Rd1!! 37.Rh:d1 Qe4+ decided matters more quickly and impressively.

**36.Rd2** (36.Qf7 Rc1+!; 36.Be4 Qe8!) **36...Rxd5 37.Qf7 Rd6! 38.Rc2 Qxf5 39.Rhc1 Qxc2+! 0-1**

It often happens that when a player is enthusiastic about the combinational idea he's found, he doesn't have the time or the patience to check it. As a result he doesn't notice a refutation, and sometimes fairly a simple one.

**Simagin - Beylin**  
Vilnius, 1946



[FEN"r4rk1/1b2qpp1/p3pn1p/1pN1N3/3P4/1Q6/PP3PPP/2R1R1K1 w - - 0 1"]

**1.?**

**Find a combination and evaluate its correctness.**

Vladimir Simagin was seduced by the tactical idea **1.Ng6? fg 2.Rxe6 Qf7 3.Nxb7**. His opponent replied **3...Nd5!**, and taking the knight leads to mate **4...Qxf2+ 5.Kh1 Qf1+**, and otherwise Black retains his extra piece. There followed **4.Re2 Qxb7 5.Rc5 Rad8 6.Re5 Qf7!**-+ (again the same motif; then again, **6...Rf5**-+ was also enough).

White should have recognized that he didn't have an advantage and limited himself to a peaceful move: most likely it made sense to exchange off the strong bishop, **1.Nxb7=**.

Then again, when you find an apparently strong retort by your opponent, you don't always have to reject your idea immediately. Sometimes that retort in its turn runs into a refutation.

A sharp opening duel unfolded in the following game.

Sax – Veingold  
Tallinn, 1979

**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cd 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.Bg5 e6 7.Qd2 a6 8.0-0-0 h6 9.Bh4** (more often the bishop retreats to f4 or e3) **9...Nxe4 10.Qf4 Ng5 11.Nxc6 bc 12.Qa4 Qb6 13.f4 Nh7 14.f5 Rb8 15.fe Bxe6 16.Bc4 Be7 17.Bxe7 Kxe7 18.Bxe6 fe 19.Qg4 Qe3+**

A slightly unusual situation: in the course of the last few moves Black could have taken on b2 with check, but he didn't do so, and he was right! For example, in the game Vasiukov – Zurakhov, 1960, after 19...Qxb2+?! 20.Kd2 Ng5? (20...Rhf8 is better) 21.Rb1 Qa3 22.h4 Nf7 23.Rhe1 e5 24.Rf1, White created a winning attack.

**20.Rd2 Ng5**



[FEN"1r5r/4k1p1/p1ppp2p/6n1/6Q1/2N1q3/PPPR2PP/2K4R w - - 0 21"]

**1.?**

Gyula Sax played carefully, **21.Nd1?!**, and didn't get anything out of it.

**21...Qe4 22.Qg3 Qe5 23.Qxe5** (he has to exchange queens: after 23.Qf2 Ne4 24.Qa7+ Kf6 the advantage is on Black's side) **23...de 24.Re1 Nf7** with approximate equality. It's no worse for Black either with 24...Rhd8 25.Rxd8 Rxd8 26.Rxe5 Rd5, as occurred in the game Westerinen – Csom, Las Palmas, 1978.

Natural and best was the move 21.h4!. I'll risk suggesting that Sax rejected it because of the counter-blow 21...Rxb2?, which, however, can be refuted, and even in two ways: 22.Rh3! Qe1+ 23.Rd1+- or 22.Qd4! Qxd4 23.Rxd4+-.

That's why Black had to reply 21...Nf7, on which 22.Nd1 or 22.Rh3 are possible with a complicated battle.

Next month, the continuation of this article will be published. But now I suggest for training that you solve by yourself a comparatively straightforward test associated with the theme we're looking at. I'll make a couple of preliminary comments, which could be useful in solving the exercises in this and subsequent publications.

Bearing in mind the theme of the training, don't forget to check your ideas, and to constantly look for a dirty trick on the part of your opponent. As a matter of fact, this skill should also develop in you as a result.

There isn't necessarily just one solution to some of the exercises. Don't waste too much effort on exposing a microscopic difference (sometimes even a nonexistent one) between approximately equivalent-looking continuations, but just be concerned with not missing something that really is important.

**Test One**

**1. Sneider – Agzamov**

Soviet Championship, First League, Telavi, 1982



[FEN"2r1q1k1/3R1p1p/2P1r1p1/2BQ4/  
1p1b4/5P1P/6P1/5R1K b - - 0 27"]

1...?

### 2. Dworakowska – Calotescu

European Team Championship, Gothenburg, 2005



[FEN"r4rk1/5p2/p1p4P/3p1b2/3Q4/  
6q1/PPP1B1P1/R4K1R b - - 0 21"]

1...?

### 3. Shamkovich – Sherwin

Lone Pine, 1976 (variation from the game)



[FEN"r1r3k1/5q1p/p5p1/3bB3/P1B5/  
2p4Q/1PP3PP/R6K w - - 0 27"]

1.?

### 4. Shtukaturkin – Shkarov

USSR, 1981



[FEN"5rk1/p4p2/1pr3pp/5P2/2qP2QR/6P1/P3P2P/R5K1 w - - 0 29"]

1.?

### 5. Giorgadze – Polugaevsky

Soviet Championship, Tbilisi, 1978



[FEN"r1q1rbk1/1b1n1ppp/1B2p3/PpP5/5P2/4Q3/6PP/1NRR1BK1 w - - 0 32"]

1.?

### 6. Seirawan – Lobron

Arnhem/Amsterdam, 1983



[FEN"6k1/p4pp1/5q1p/8/4B3/1rr1P1Pb/RQ3P1P/2R3K1 w - - 0 22"]

1.?

## Solutions

### 1. Shneider – Agzamov

Black was left a healthy pawn up by choosing the simple **27...Bxc5! 28.Qxc5 Rexc6-/+**.

The attempt to obtain more with 27...Re1? counting on 28.Rxe1? Qxe1+ 29.Kh2 Be5+ didn't work. White would have replied either 28.Bxd4! Rxf1+ 29.Kh2 Rc1! 30.Be5 b3 31.Ba3 R1xc6 32.Re7 Qf8 33.Rd7=, or 28.Qxd4! Rxf1+ 29.Kh2, threatening 30.Qf6 or 30.Bxb4, from which only 29...Rc1!= is a reliable defense.

## 2. Dworakowska – Calotescu

Black carelessly played 21...Rae8?, on which followed the artless 22.Bd3? Bxd3+ 23.cd Kh7 24.Rh3 Qg5=. The players missed the simple but elegant blow 22.Bg4!!, which combined tactical blocking, enticement, deflection and a pin:



```
[FEN"4rrk1/5p2/p1p4P/3p1b2/3Q2B1/6q1/PPP3P1/R4K1R b - - 0 22"]
```

22...Bxg4 23.Qg7# or 23.h7#;

22...Qxg4 23.h7+;

22...Qe5 23.Qxe5 Rxe5 24.Rh5

22...Re5 23.Rh3!

And now let's look for the best continuation for Black.

Taking the pawn 21...Bxc2? is refuted most simply by means of 22.Rh4+-.

On 21...Be4? the reply 22.Bf3+- is strong, as the black bishop is pinned down by the need to control the h7 square.

It's possible to play 21...f6?!, but after 22.Qf2 or 22.Bd3 the advantage remains on White's side.

But with **21...Kh7!** the position almost equalizes: 22.Bd3 Bxd3+ 23.Qxd3+ Qg6!? or 23...Qxd3+.

## 3. Shamkovich – Sherwin

The tempting 27.Rf1? (hoping for 27...Qb7? 28.Qe6+!) is a mistake because of 27...Bxg2+!! with a subsequent 28...Qxc4.

The simple **27.Bxd5! Qxd5 28.Bxc3=** maintains approximate material equality (two pawns for the exchange). 27.Bd3!? cb 28.Bxb2 unclear, isn't bad either.

## 4. Shtukaturkin – Shkarov

It might seem that **29.Rxh6!** is refuted by the double blow **29...Qc3** (threatening both 30...Qxa1+ and 30...Qe3+). However, White is right to disregard the loss of the queen's rook: after **30.Qh4!** he has created an irrefutable attack.

**30...Qxa1+ 31.Kg2 gf 32.Rh8+ Kg7 33.Qh7+ Kf6 34.Qh6+ 1-0**

## 5. Georgadze – Polugaevsky

The simple **32.Bxb5!** secured White a healthy extra pawn. For example, 32...Bc6 33.Qd3 Nf6 34.Nc3+-, and so on.

That didn't seem like much to Tamaz Georgadze. He preferred 32.c6? Bxc6



33.Bxb5, underestimating the queen sacrifice 33...Bxb5! 34.Rxc8 Rexc8 35.  
Rc1 Bc4!



[FEN"r1r2bk1/3n1ppp/1B2p3/P7/2b2P2/  
4Q3/6PP/1NR3K1 w - - 0 36"]

The threat of 36...Nxb6 forced him to part with the passed pawn on a5, which led to a complete equalization of chances: 36.Bd4 (36.Kh1?! Nxb6 37.ab Bc5 38.Qf3 Bd5) 36...Rxa5 37.Nd2 Ra3 38.Rc3 Ra1+ 39.Kf2 Ra2 40.Kg1 Ra1+ 41.Kf2 Ra2 ½-½

## 6. Seirawan – Lobron

The American grandmaster decided to win a pawn: 22.Rxa7?, exploiting the fact that the queen was invulnerable because of mate.



[FEN"6k1/R4pp1/5q1p/8/4B3/1rr1P1Pb/  
1Q3P1P/2R3K1 b - - 0 22"]

1...?

He had overlooked the brilliant counter-blow 22...Qxf2+!! After 23.Kxf2 Rxb2+ 24.Kf3 Rxc1, White had to resign.

22.Qa1! was necessary (or 22.Qd2!) 22...Rxc1+ 23.Qxc1 Qb6 with a probable draw.

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