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# FOREWORD

Computers have revolutionized the world we live in. Technology has evolved exponentially over a relatively short period of time, and most of us can barely keep up with the advances. Chess, being the model of life, has also evolved hand in hand with the computer revolution. We see a dramatic response in chess to the changes in technology. Here, we are not just talking about digital clocks and electronic chess boards. We are talking about enormous databases and computational power that computers bring. The fundamentals of what it takes to become a strong player have changed drastically over the past few decades.

This immediate access to information was largely responsible for the ever-growing number of strong young players. The ever-increasing databases have fundamentally changed the way one prepares to play against a particular opponent. Think about it; before, players would have to look up games in various archives, possibly hand copy the relevant ones and spend a great deal of time aggregating the relevant information. Now, we live in a different world. Enormous chess databases, with a plethora of diverse information are easily accessible by all. Widespread access to them allows one to search for a particular opponent, and within minutes, find only the relevant information. You can now search someone's entire chess history, figure out his or her favorite openings, and learn about their chess personality.

If you wish, with a few easy strokes, you can download the entire collection of chess classics or have the latest advances in the opening theory be readily available at your fingertips. Computer evolution propelled chess evolution as well, and now we see stronger and stronger players at younger and younger ages. Jokingly, in the old days, one would be considered very precocious if he/she attained the Grandmaster title prior to their wedding day; whereas now it seems getting it in kindergarten would be right on track.

If you look at the history of computers in chess, they started out playing a subordinate role. They always lacked strategic power. However, from their inception they would always surprise tactical players with their perspicacity. People were generally leading the fight against the computers, but now, the situation is unclear. It was a person who would set the direction, while the computer would follow commands, while making small corrections/clarifications along the way. Now, computers became more and more sophisticated, and the dynamics have drastically shifted. Now, it is the computer which has the upper hand on most humans. Computer memory is becoming virtually limitless, and they

have enough power to see a variation through to infinity. Human talent and intuition pale in comparison. Even the leading grandmasters cannot keep up, and look behind the times when unable to answer the latest strategy questions from computer-savvy chess enthusiasts.

The modern chess community has increasingly adopted a hypothesis that if one's move corresponds to the top choice provided by a reputable computer, it must be the right move. It was tempting for a while to replace God's creation with the human creation. Even many years post Kasparov vs. Deep Blue match, we still see a large gap between human capacity and computer calculation speed and memory storage. For a while, we saw a rise of tournaments between machines. Unfortunately, or possibly fortunately, we are not at a point yet where we can just install a memory chip and a processor on our bodies. Movies like *The Matrix* are still a distant fantasy, and we must rely on our own internal computer—the brain.

The only way forward is to figure out how to cooperate peacefully between men and machine. We can start with the preparation for competition. One can research and commit to memory the opening theory and endgame theory. You can also utilize the Internet to the fullest and research the games of your possible opponents. Now, one can be tempted to enter the chess match so overly prepared against your opponent, that all you have to do is regurgitate all moves from memory down to the very end.

One can now argue that if all you do is repeat at the tournament board what you have previously memorized at the computer board, your strength is simply a demonstration of your ability to memorize, and not necessarily that of imagination, intuition and creativity. Why is this a temptation and not a long-term strategy? Because, it is not enough to simply rely on your memory.

Memory is just one of the components you need to advance your game. You also need to be able to evaluate independently a variety of problem situations arising at the board, using only your own head. That is why we probably should not expect a full replacement of humans with computers in the near future. It will still be the people who keep competing in chess tournaments, and there will always be the presence of the human factor when it comes to chess. A person, unlike a machine, has the right to make mistakes, learn from them and correct them in the future. Those mistakes are often unavoidable in the present, because we cannot predict the future.

Quite often, we are simply amazed at the plethora of reasons players are guided by in their desire to reach the same ultimate goal. They also search for the truth in chess or the ultimate philosopher's stone and just

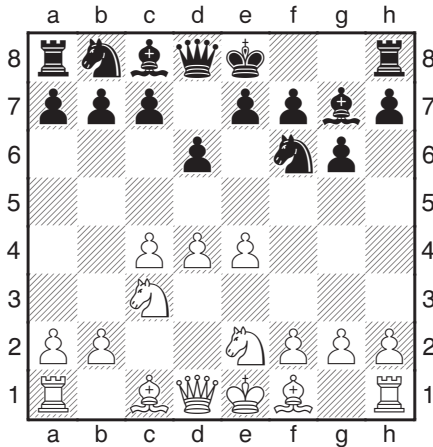
like us search for that right move. You always assume that your opponent is a strong player. All of your opponents will dig deep in their memory and review all the moves and variations with which they can bombard you. Our advice is to be kind to such opponents, and let them unload their memory banks and relieve any built-up stress. Do not refuse them the pleasure of regurgitating whatever it is they memorized. These types of players represent a movement of computational chess. Everything is well defined for them. They strongly rely on their memory, and hope that this alone will take them to the top. It is useless to suggest to those players to try to identify the strongest and best move for a given position. Trying to find the strongest move using just their imagination and intuition as opposed to computing skills, might cause their heads just to explode.

Here, we will provide numerous examples why the human factor is still relevant. Just memorizing openings and even various algorithms is simply not enough. In this book, we will also try to answer a few more age-relevant questions. Does it make more sense for humans to become more like machines going forward? Can a person ever catch up or surpass a computer in calculations? Could it be that only the strongest people will be able to be on par or above the computers and the rest of us will die out like dinosaurs? Do we need to be able to perform a certain number of calculations per second to catch up? How can I best improve my game and utilize computers the most?

# CHAPTER 1: IMPROVEMENT VS. FREESTYLE

**Palatnik – Booth [E70], Atlanta Open, 1996**

**1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. Nge2. Diagram**



It is rather seldom that you can solve all the problems with a single, even a very strong, move. You always have a plethora of choices at your disposal. A chess game is often a perpetual problem of choice. Even a checkmate in one is still one of the choice moves to be made. You can always choose a more creative checkmate in two. However, let us talk about choices that are more realistic. For example, in King’s Indian Defense, and in many other openings, a single side cannot comprehensively resolve all of their issues immediately. You have to prioritize how to improve your position, and make a choice of what is more important to you.

White can focus primarily on seizing control in the center, while Black can first address the problem of development of the kingside. Now White has a challenge of establishing an advantage in the center, and simultaneously catching up to his opponent in development.

Black in turn has to answer the question if the price they paid to have the Bishop on g7 and short castling is too high to pay. White’s last move is an attempt to prepare their position to possible counter attacks in the center. They seem to give preference to the development of the Knight against the theoretical development of the Bishop to e3.

For example, take this variation: 5. f3 0–0 6. Be3 e5 7. dxe5 dxe5 8. Qxd8 Rxd8 9. Nd5 Nxd5 10. cxd5 c6 11. Bc4 b5 12. Bb3 Bb7 Black is OK.

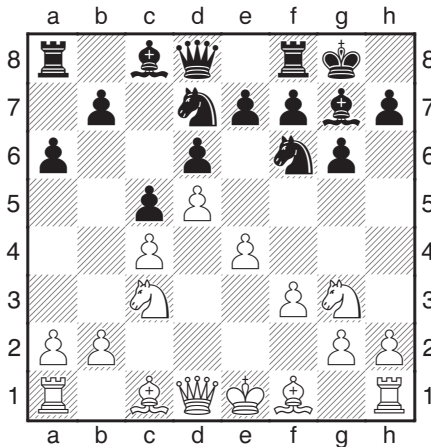
### 5...Nbd7?!

If Black plans to undermine the center in the future with the “c” pawn, then this looks somewhat clumsy. In this variation 5...0–0 6. f3 6...e5 7. dxe5 dxe5 8. Qxd8 Rxd8 9. Nd5 Nxd5 10. cxd5 c6 11. Nc3 White has better prospects in the endgame. You can see the ideological difference between developing the Bishop on “e3” in favor of developing the Knight on “e2”.

### 6. f3 c5

Other possibilities include 6...0–0 or 6...e5

### 7. d5 0–0 8. Ng3 a6. Diagram



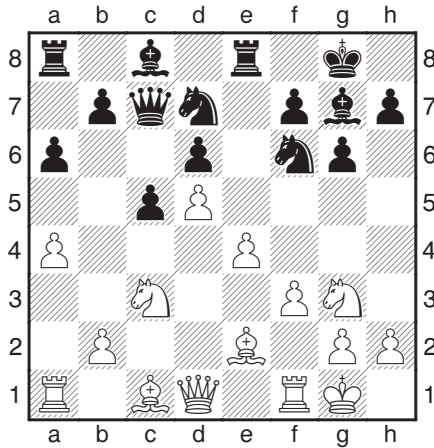
### 9. a4!?

This looks like yet another loss of time to move the pawns in the opening. However, if 9. Be2 it will be followed by 9...b5!?!—and the position will be transformed into an altogether not bad interpretation of the Benko Gambit for Black. White’s last move works better to improve their position.

### 9...Qc7

Now we see the after effect of the Black’s 5<sup>th</sup> shortsighted move. In order to undermine the center through e6, they are forced now to spend a tempo on a move by a Queen. 9...e6? 10. dxe6 fxe6 11. Qxd6.

### 10. Be2 e6 11. 0–0 exd5 12. cxd5 Re8?! Diagram



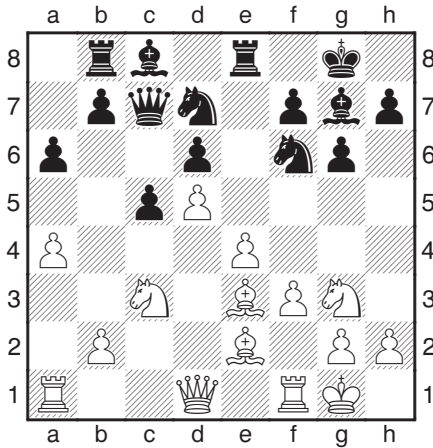
It could seem that a move by a Rook to a semi-open file does not even need to be commented on. However, it would be useful to explain why White greeted this natural move with a rather warm reaction. The overall impression is that the last move by the Rook does not work towards improving Black's position. The Rook would be hitting its head against the wall if it wants to get past the pawn on e4. Black's pride and joy is their fianchetto Bishop on g7. However, it will only acquire any worth, if the Knight on f6 will block it. The Rook on e8, in turn, takes up a space where this Knight could move away to, and thereby is keeping the Bishop on g7 passive. A whole tempo was just wasted. Instead of Re8, it would have been better to play 12...h5, freeing by the Knight, the Bishop and the f-pawn. The Rook, in turn, could have been more useful on f8, in preparation for f5, with the goal of expanding the space for Black on the King's side. Briefly, this would have been a better plan for improving Black's position.

**13. Be3**

Without poking the bear, 13.Bg5 h6 could have led Black to the right path for improving the position.

**13...Rb8. Diagram**

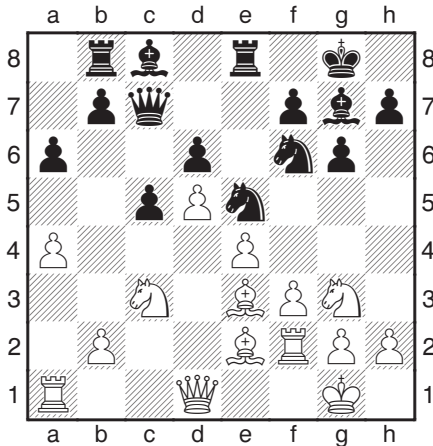




### 14. Rf2!

This is a mysterious move. It is multifunctional and useful. First, it weakens Black's potential threats on the a7-g1 diagonal. In the case of a gutsy b5, the Rook will become the defender of the b2 pawn. White is already prepared for the doubling up of the Rooks. You never know when it might become useful. This move is definitely done in the interest of improving one's position.

### 14...Ne5. Diagram



### 15. h3!

If you do not perpetually think of how to improve your position, your hand would not even rise to make such an abstract move. Black is now threatening to implement a liberating breakthrough on the Queen's side by going b5. In order to do that, all Black has left is to go Bd7. However, this timid move by a pawn on the h-file prevents that threat.

### **15...b6**

The undesirable 15...Bd7 would be followed by 16. f4, and the Knight would be trapped on e5. Here, we can stop to draw some conclusions from the course of the game thus far. Black's last move is basically an acknowledgement that White has an advantage over his opponent's unplanned freestyle game.

### **16. Rc1**

In turn, White does not deviate from the strategy of improving his position, and continue to accumulate small advantages. The Rook has completed its mission on the a-file, and has now been transferred to the c-file. It went further away, as to not be skewered on the a1-h8 diagonal.

### **16...Qd8**

White's last move made Her Majesty the Queen a bit nervous.

### **17. b3 Bb7 18. Qd2**

Without rushing, White continues to gradually improve his position. It is especially sweet when your opponent is completely pacified and must await his fate buried deep in the trenches.

### **18...Ra8 19. Bh6**

Yet another improvement.

### **19...Bh8**

We can agree with this move. After exchanging his only active piece, you can say that the shooting from the trenches is completely stopped.

### **20. f4 Ned7**

It turns out that the Knight on e5 only had a temporary working permit, and is currently being deported back to his motherland.

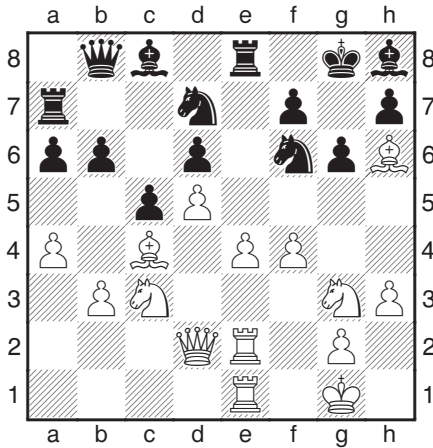
### **21. Bc4 Ra7 22. Re1**

Now, it is easy to imagine where the main efforts have to be concentrated in order to have a breakthrough on e5. As far as doubling the Rooks goes, White had the foresight for it long ago.

### **22...Qb8**

This is an attempt to hold on to the e5 square with his teeth.

### **23. Rfe2 Bc8. Diagram**



**24. e5!**

This position is a just outcome of White's systematic way of improving his position, as opposed to Black's infirm of purpose game. Now, onto the finale.

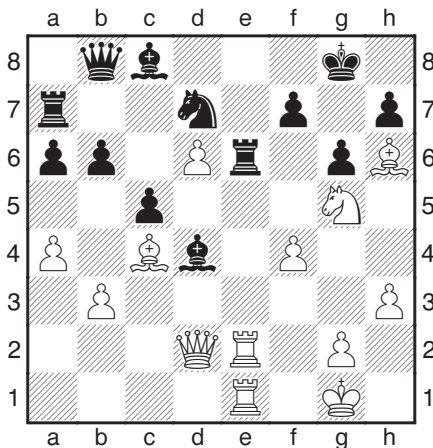
**24...dxe5 25. d6**

The weak point of defense on f7 is self-evident now.

**25...e4 26. Ngxe4 Nxe4 27. Nxe4 Re6**

If 27...Bd4+, then 28. Qxd4 cxd4 29. Nf6+ Nxf6 30. Rxe8+ then next Rxe8#

**28. Ng5 Bd4+ Diagram**



**29. Qxd4!**

Chess is quite a rewarding game. In return for the intricate and successful strategy, the game will reward the winner with an aesthetically pleasing finale. For example, it can reward one with a possibility to

sacrifice a Queen. We would like to stress that this possibility does not arise out of nothing. It comes up as a result of acquiring enough advantages or a decisive improvement of the position.

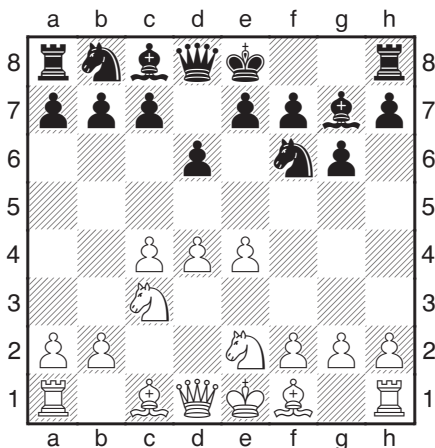
**29...cxd4 30. Rxe6 fxe6 31. Rxe6!**

Checkmate cannot be avoided. **1-0**

The next game is very much similar to the previous one. To find different games, which exhibit similar patterns and ideas, is a key on which the authors build this book. The importance of the development of such patterns was already discussed in the introduction.

## Palatnik – Berelouse [E81], Huntsville, 2001

1. d4 e6 2. c4 Nf6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. Nge2. Diagram



We can recognize this position from the previous game.

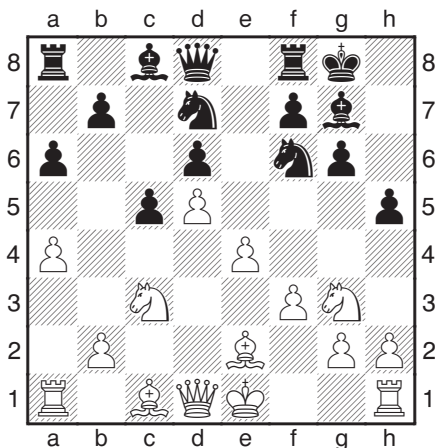
5...0-0 6. f3 c5

This looks like an improvement next to the game against Booth. It makes one think that Berelouse has used computer preparation and is familiar with the previous game.

7. d5 e6 8. Ng3!? exd5 9. cxd5 a6 10. a4

This is played automatically here.

10...Nbd7 11. Be2 h5!?



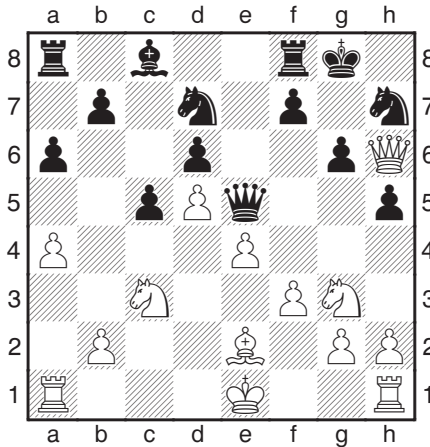
Here we see one more example of thorough home preparation. White can no longer automatically castle here, and remember that chess is a

game of choice. Here White can make a choice towards making the most important move in order to improve his position.

### 12. Bg5

In comparison with 12. 0-0, 12. Bg5 does not allow the h-pawn to advance any further, forces the Knight into a corner, ties up the Knight on f6 and simultaneously prevents both the Knight and the B on g7 from becoming active. It allows the possibility of focusing the efforts of the Q & B battery on c1-h6, which is in itself an accomplishment, but also creates the possibility of a King’s Indian Defense Fianchetto on g7. This seems like a lot of positives for just one Bishop move. Here, we can make yet another generalization. We will try to rely on the opinion of the highly authoritative chess thinker—Mikhail Botvinnik, who said, “if you are ready to castle, look around. Maybe you will find something more useful at the moment.”

12...Qe8 13. Qd2 Nh7 14. Bh6 Bxh6 15. Qxh6 Qe5. Diagram



### 16. Nf1!?

Again, this is a good time and place to pay tribute to Botvinnik. The automatic move of 16. 0-0 would take away the Knight’s time and the Knight’s path from g3 to f1 to e3 to c4. This in turn would give Black the ability to simplify the position with exchanging the Queens after 16... Qg5

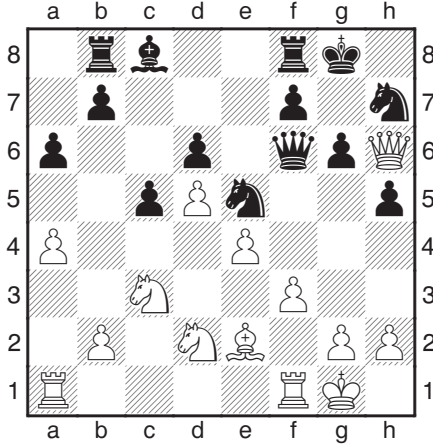
### 16...Rb8 17. Nd2!?

Again, White has made the right choice on the path to improving his position. It could seem that c4 square could be reached even through e3. However, GPS is showing that this way is mined, since after 17. Ne3 b5 18. axb5 axb5 19. Bxb5 will be an explosion Rxb5! 20. Nxb5 Qxb2 and Black is winning.

### 17...Qf6

Now, 17...b5 does not work, since after 18. axb5 axb5 19. Bxb5 19...Rxb5 20. Nxb5 Qxb2 will be followed by 21. Rb1 and White is winning. It is also too late for 17...Qg5 18. Qxg5 Nxg5 19. Nc4 and it becomes hard for Black to hold on to all his weaknesses.

### 18. 0-0 Ne5. Diagram

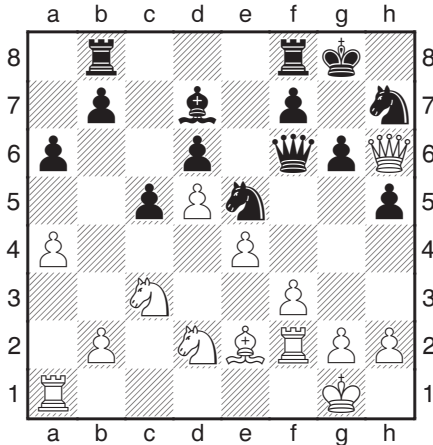


This is the right time for White to prove that he can make the right decision to improve his position based on his experience.

### 19. Rf2!

It seems that we have already met this multifunctional move somewhere.

### 19...Bd7. Diagram

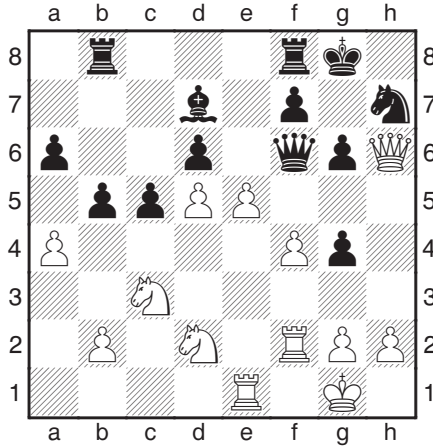


### 20. Re1!

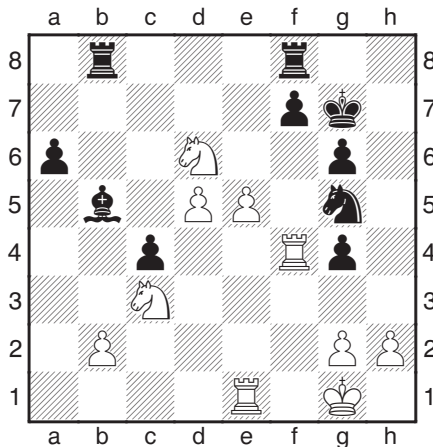
20. a5 would not have improved the White's position. 20...b5  
 21. axb6 Rxb6 has some counter play.

**20...b5 21. f4 Ng4 22. Bxg4 hxg4 23. e5!**

White has collected enough advantages. This breakthrough in the center, which was set up by his 20th move, will bring White much deserved success. **Diagram**



**23...Qg7 24. Qxg7+ Kxg7 25. axb5 Bxb5 26. Nde4 dxe5 27. fxe5  
 27...c4 28. Nd6 Ng5 29. Rf4. Diagram**



Now comes the time for collecting the harvest.

**29...Bd7 30. Re2**

Simply orderly.

**30...Rb4 31. Ref2 f5**

Just checking the knowledge of the “en passant” rules.

**32. exf6+ Kg8 33. Rxc4 Rxc4 34. Nxc4 Bf5 35. Ne3 g3 36. hxg3**



36...Kf7 37. Nxf5 gxf5 38. Rxf5 Kg6 39. g4 Nh7  
39...Rxf6 40. Rxc5+ Kxc5 41. Ne4+  
40. Ne4 Rb8 41. f7 1-0