

Grandmaster Training Camp 2

Attack!

By

Sam Shankland



Quality Chess
www.qualitychess.co.uk

Contents

Key to Symbols Used	4
Preface	5
Introduction	7
Chapter 1 – Theme Introductions	21
Chapter 2 – Momentum	35
Chapter 3 – Include all the Pieces in the Attack	49
Chapter 4 – Color	63
Chapter 5 – Size	71
Chapter 6 – Attack the Weakest Square	79
Chapter 7 – Attack the Strongest Square	93
Chapter 8 – Evolution/Revolution	101
Chapter 9 – Killzone	111
Chapter 10 – Concrete is Underrated	119
<i>10a – Destroying The King’s Position</i>	119
<i>10b – King in the Center</i>	131
<i>10c – King Hunt</i>	144
<i>10d – Attack without Queens</i>	150
Part 2 – Exercises by Level of Difficulty	157
Chapter 11 – Level 1 Exercises	157
Chapter 12 – Level 2 Exercises	169
Chapter 13 – Level 3 Exercises	181
Chapter 14 – Level 4 Exercises	189
Chapter 15 – Level 5 Exercises	195
Chapter 16 – Solutions	201
<i>to Level 1</i>	202
<i>to Level 2</i>	265
<i>to Level 3</i>	329
<i>to Level 4</i>	372
<i>to Level 5</i>	405
Name Index	445

Preface

As a professional chess player, your top priority is to consistently train and keep yourself sharp in between events. But this is not always easy to do! Unlike in a team sport, no teammates will yell at you for not showing up to practice. The motivation to solve exercises and work to improve your chess has to ultimately come from within. But I have found that I do a much better job of consistently getting work done when I have a deadline to meet. When I must complete a certain number of problems by a specific date.

Thus, the concept of *Grandmaster Training Camp* was born.

Writing a puzzle book, at least the way I do it, requires a lot of hours of work. But most of those hours simply involve me doing my own training. Jacob comes up with the exercises for me, then I solve them to the best of my ability. I did over 700 of them in total before choosing my favorites to publish for the world to see. I probably spent something like 150 or 200 hours “writing” this book. Something like 80% of that time was useful for my own selfish purposes.

After the great success of the first volume, *Grandmaster Training Camp 1 – Calculation!*, I was excited to get to the second volume of the series, this time on attacking chess. This project gave me a chance to spend a lot of time training a part of the game that I am not naturally great at. At the highest level in chess, you don't get to attack too much. When I play 1.e4, the most common response, by far, is 1...e5. People are not playing the Sicilian nearly as often. And it is just not as easy to get attacking chances against the Berlin, the Marshall, or the Petroff, as it is against the Najdorf.

But when those positions come, you really want to bring your A-game. Attacking can be very – very – tough! It takes a lot of training to improve your attacking play, much more so than any other element of chess. Improvement like this can often be tedious but, luckily, attacking chess is fun! Throwing pieces at the king, sacrificing stuff, blowing open lines, these are the kind of things that make most of us fall in love with chess in the first place.

The Grandmaster Training Camp series solved my small dilemma of how to both make money and do good training at the same time. This volume specifically solved the dilemma of how to train intensively while still having a ton of fun at the same time. It is my sincere hope that this book helps all readers improve their play in the most joyful and romantic element of the royal game, and that they have as good a time doing it as I did.

Sam Shankland,
Walnut Creek, January 2026

Chapter 1

Theme Introductions

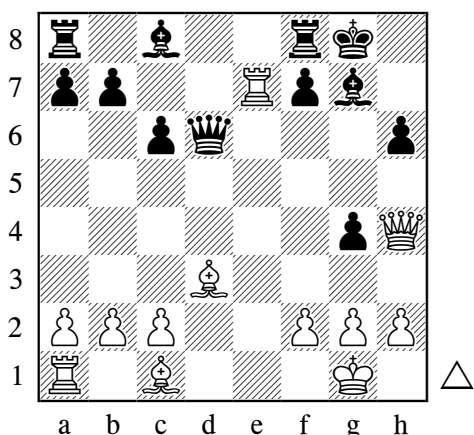


Let's quickly get you acquainted with the twelve attacking themes that will be repeated throughout the book. We'll not delve into any detail here – just illustrate what each of them might look like. The goal is only to get you ready for the chapters that follow, where exercises are arranged by theme. In the solutions to these exercises we'll get plenty of chances to dive deeper into each of these themes.

Momentum

Shamsiddin Vokhidov – Ulugbek Tillyaev

Tashkent 2024



White played 22.♖e1!?, which was decent and he was a little better, but it let a big chance slip. Eventually, Black held a draw.

White has two pieces on the queenside that need to come in to play. There is a strong and forcing way to include them.

22.♘g5!

White maximizes his lead in development. The bishop cannot be taken on pain of mate on h7, and he is ready to bring in the last piece with ♖ae1 next. Additionally, Black is now no longer able to try to trade queens with ...♙f6.

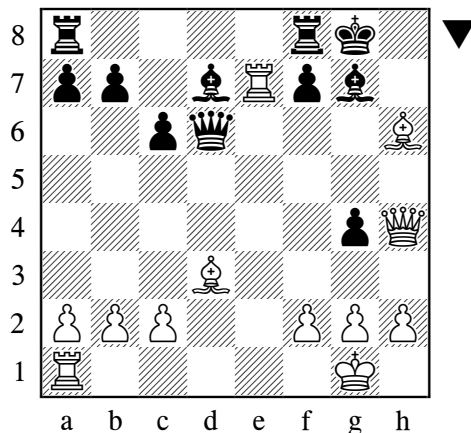
22...♙d7

Once you realize that the g5-bishop cannot be taken, it is hard to imagine Black playing a move other than ...♙d7. He is ready to play ...♜fe8 next to contest White's activity on the e-file, and this should equalize. But, now we see the point of provoking the bishop to d7, specifically with the rook still on e7, and not on e1 like it was in the game.

23.♙xh6!!

Bang. There was no time to waste. Since the d7-bishop is loose, the tactics work out in White's favor.

23.♞ae1 is strong and sensible, much like ♞e1 was on the previous move, and White is clearly better. But one measure I use with my students when they play a move which is second best, is to ask them: *would you beat Magnus Carlsen from here?* We came across this idea many times in the first volume of this series too. Here, I don't think I would. You don't want to let major chances pass you by when they come. 23...♜fe8± Black remains under pressure, but is definitely fighting back.



23...♙xh6

Trading queens with 23...♙xh6 avoids an immediate mate, but the endgame will not offer any hope of salvation: 24.♙xh6 ♘xh6

25. ♖xd7 White is a clean pawn up, his rook is terrorizing the seventh rank, and ♕f5 could easily pick up a second pawn at a moment's notice. It's all over.

24. ♖xd7 ♜xd7 25. ♝xh6

The mate threat on h7 forces Black to touch his f-pawn, but this will not save him.

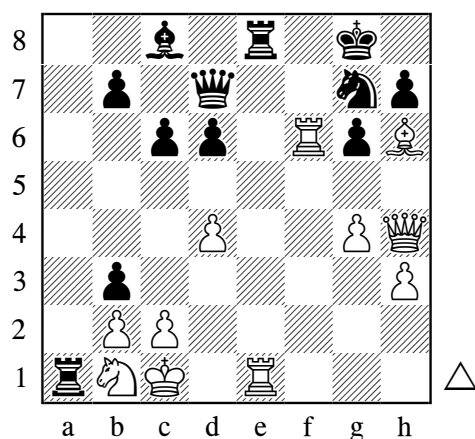
25...f5 26. ♕c4†

White is totally winning.

Include all the pieces in the attack

Levon Aronian – Jan-Krzysztof Duda

Warsaw 2023



The game continuation was 24.cxb3?. White won anyway, but Black is fine here. 24... ♗d8! 25. ♖xe8† ♝xe8 26. ♖xd6? Fast time controls lead to lots of errors, even from elite players. White eventually won, but had Duda found 26... ♗e4!, the game would have ended immediately in Black's favor.

24. ♖ff1!!

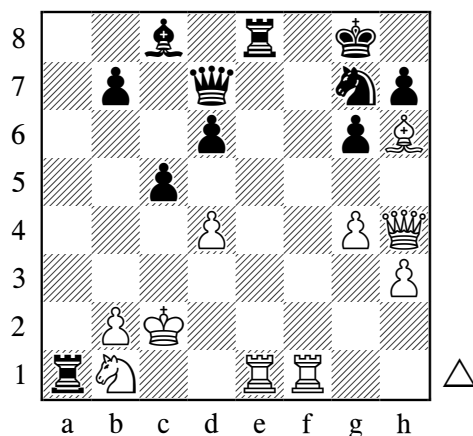
This is a perfect example of what Jacob always calls “simple but difficult”. The concept is easy – White clears the f6-square for his queen, and in the meantime, he is overprotecting the rook on e1 to make sure that it will not hang once the queen leaves h4. ♗f6 is coming, and there is not a thing Black can do about it.

24...bxc2

After 24... ♗d8 25. ♖xe8† ♝xe8 26. ♗f6 Black is clearly checkmated, as he cannot stop ♗xg7 without allowing a mate on f8 instead.

25. ♕xc2 c5!

This is Black's most testing option, but it will not save him.



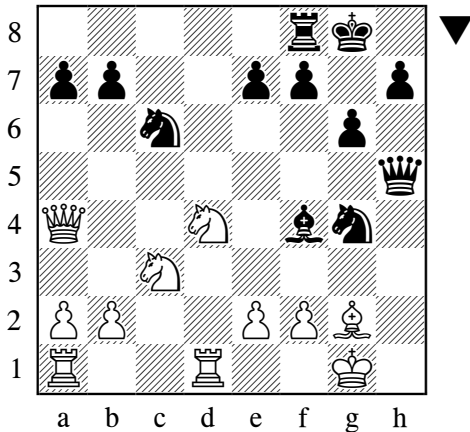
26. ♕d2!!

White's king pre-emptively gets out of any possible checks from the queen on a4. Next up is ♗f6, Black cannot prevent it, and he should lose.

Color

Artyom Timofeev – Gawain Marroa Jones

Internet 2021



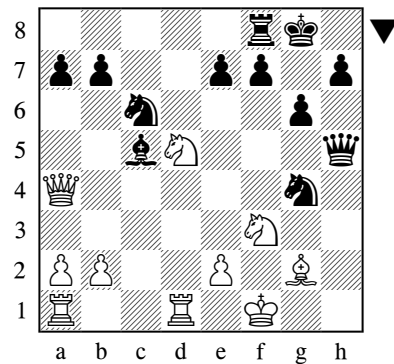
White lacks a dark-squared bishop, and Black can launch a decisive attack on the dark squares.

With 20...♘e3?, Marroa Jones sacrificed another piece to try to mate on the dark squares, but attacking chess is unforgiving. This is the right idea but with improper execution, which often means the difference of a full point, and this was no exception. 21.fxe3 ♙xe3† 22.♕f1 ♘xd4 23.♖d3! (In the game, White gave up his queen with 23.♙xd4? and eventually won. The machine claims Black is still clearly better but, in human practice, any result is possible.) 23...♙f5† 24.♙f3! ♘xf3 25.♕g2! After a couple of cold-blooded defensive moves, White is reasonably safe. The position is messy and anything could happen from here.

Let's look at a couple of alternative tries for Black before moving on to solution: 20...♙h2† does not work in this position. 21.♕f1 ♘e3† (After 21...♘xd4 22.♙xd4!, the queen does a good job of keeping things under control. ...♘e3 is not a thing here. Or 21...♙h4 22.♘e4!, and White can protect the f2-pawn.) 22.fxe3 ♙xe3

23.♘f3! It's a bit annoying that this move exists! Black is out of steam, and dead lost.

20...♙e3!? is not bad and Black is better, but once more, you really don't want to let a big chance slip when it comes. 21.♘f3 (Taking the bishop leads to mate: 21.fxe3 ♙h2† 22.♕f1 ♙g3! 23.♕g1 ♘xe3 Mate on g2 cannot be prevented.) 21...♙xf2† 22.♕f1 ♙c5 23.♘d5 The computer claims Black is better here with a couple of accurate moves:



23...♘b4! 24.♕e1 ♙h6! But the position just looks unclear to me. If I were to look at it without a machine running and had to guess the evaluation, I could easily imagine +1 or -1. In human terms, it's a real fight ahead.

These variations point us towards the correct solution:

20...b5!!

By making a blunt threat to the queen, Black forces White's position to become uncoordinated.

21.♙xb5

It turns out that either knight is unable to capture on b5, as this would drag them away from important defensive tasks on the kingside: 21.♘cxb5 ♙h2†! 22.♕f1 ♙h4! With the c3-knight dragged offside by taking on b5, White is missing ♘c3-e4 as a defensive resource, and is immediately mated.

Chapter 2

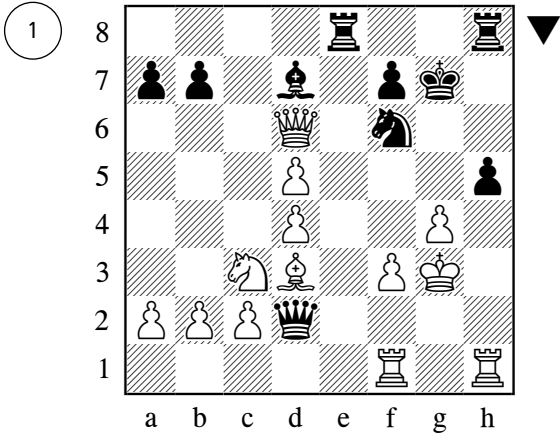
Momentum



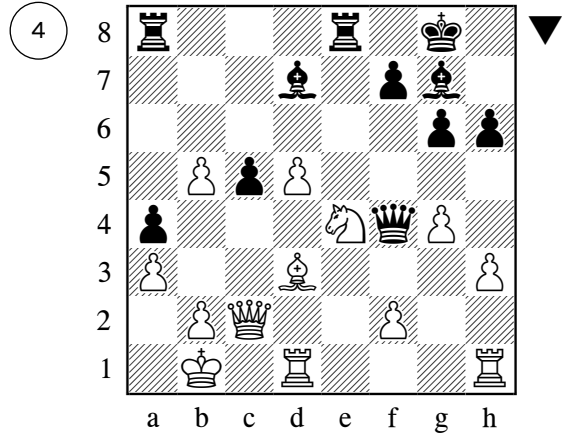
In this first section, we will solve some exercises where the main theme is *momentum*. Momentum is often important when the attacking side already has the pieces in their optimal positions and needs to look for direct strikes. In this section, slow moves tend to be poor, because there is not much you can do to bring your pieces to better attacking positions. The defender, on the other hand, will have a lot of potential to improve their defensive posture if you are not direct enough.

As Jacob explains in *A Killer Guide to Attacking Chess*, it often makes sense to view an attack as a race. Getting a feeling for the momentum will help you to do just that.

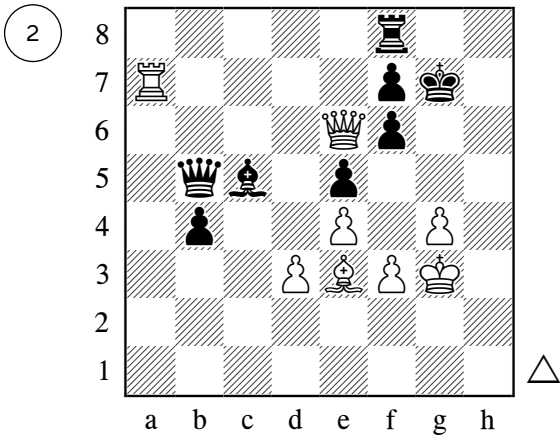
Zakarian – Pein, England 2024



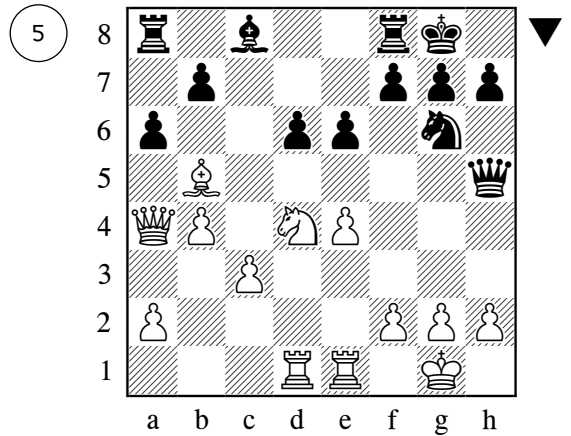
Abrisqueta – Hrebenshchykova, Rhodes 2024



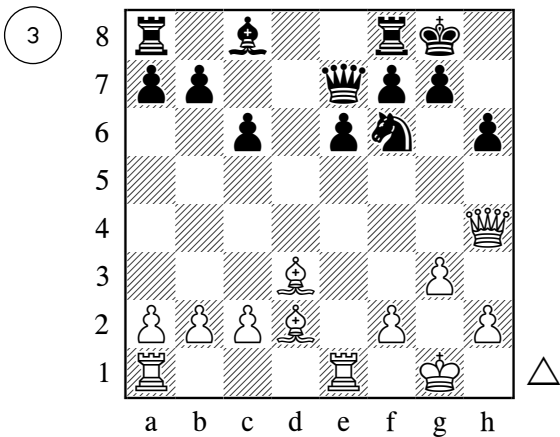
Gorshtein – Dardha, Ramat Gan 2024



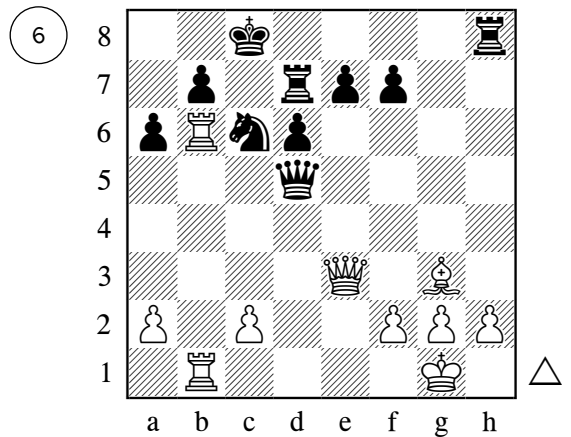
Kobalia – Sjugirov, Moscow 2021



Schnellbacher – Kliashtornyi, Dusseldorf 2023



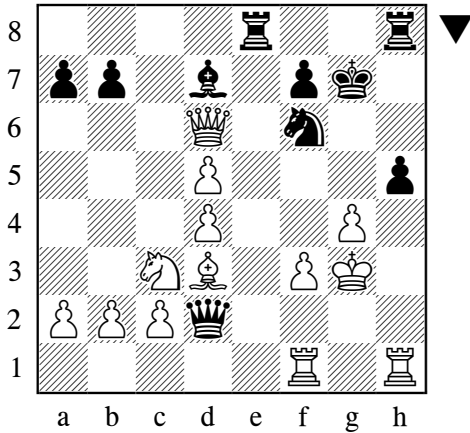
Socko – Salem Saleh, Berlin 2015



Solutions

1. David Zakarian – Malcolm Pein

England 2024



This one is easy, as it is checks and captures from start to finish.

23...h4†! 24.♞xh4

Not taking the pawn doesn't help: 24.♔h3 ♞xg4†! 25.fxg4 ♞e3† Mate is coming.

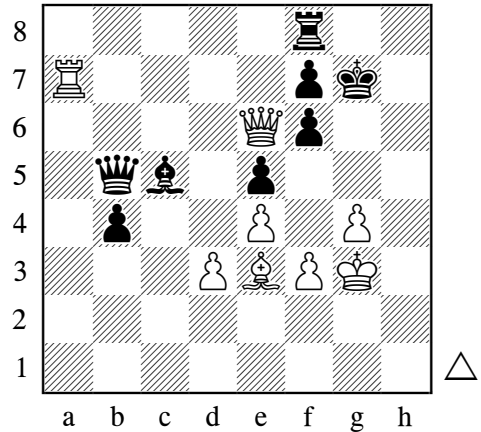
24...♞xh4 25.♔xh4 ♞h8†

White is mated:

26.♔g3 ♞h2# 0-1

2. Ido Gorshtein – Daniel Dardha

Ramat Gan 2024



White delivered mate with direct play:

49.♞h6†!

Always examine all checks and captures.

49...♔xh6 50.♞xf6†

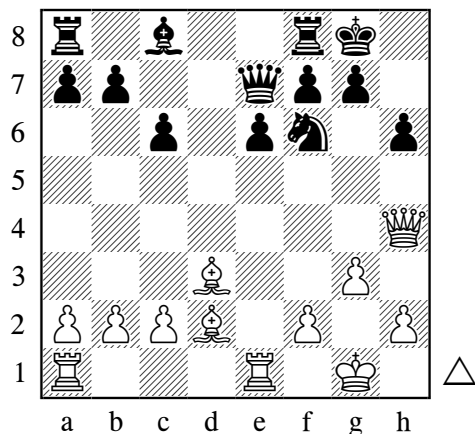
50.g5† will also be mate.

50...♔h7 51.♞a1!

The rook comes to h1, and that will be that.
1-0

3. Jan Eric Schnellbacher – Arkadii Kliashtornyi

Dusseldorf (rapid) 2023



17. ♖xh6!

This move is just begging to be played, destroying the pawn cover around Black's king. The only subtlety comes on move 20.

White's 17. ♖ad1? in the game let a real chance slip. After 17... ♘d5, White kept some compensation for the missing pawn, but not enough for an edge. Eventually, he lost.

17...gxf6 18. ♖xh6

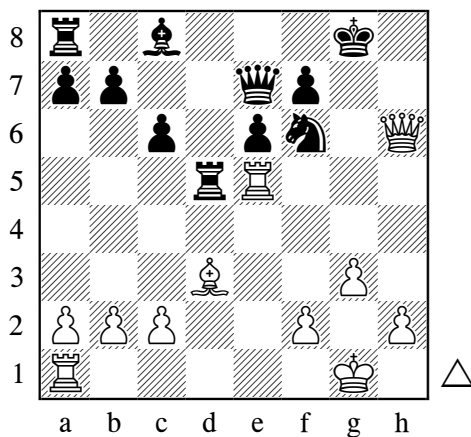
Black's king is frozen in place, and White is ready to lift his rook with ♖e5-g5 to give mate.

18...♖d8

18...e5 does not save Black: 19. ♖g5+! ♔h8 20. ♖xe5. Coming next are returning with ♖h6 and then ♖g5. My computer claims that it is a forced mate in 12 moves.

19. ♖e5! ♖d5

Black can stop the mate, but only for the moment.



20. ♖ae1!

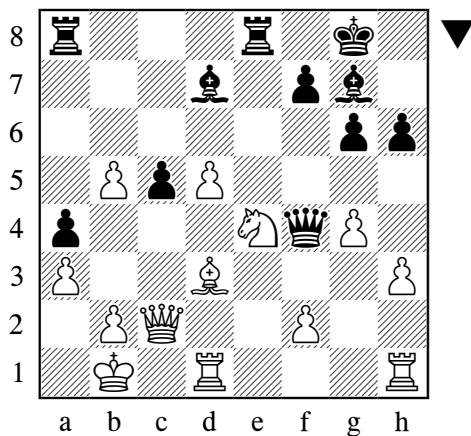
The other rook comes in, and this one will successfully reach g5. Without this move, White would be out of breath, but with it, he wins immediately.

20...♗d7 21. ♖xd5 cxd5 22. ♖e5

It is time for Black to resign.

4. Leyre Abrisqueta – Yelyzaveta Hrebenshchykova

Rhodes 2024



22...c4!!

A typical momentum move. White has to take with the queen, in order not to lose a piece: