

*International Trainers' Course
for
FIDE Trainer Titles*

Turkey – Antalya

13th to 20th November 2009

Lecturers

GM/FST Adrian Mikhalchishin

GM/FST Efstratios Grivas

(Day 1: 16:00-16:45 - Grivas)

Welcome Speech – Analyses of the Course

Dear Participants, Welcome.

We are delighted to have you here to participate and share in the Antalya International Trainers' Course for FIDE Trainer Titles. Thank you for coming. That many of you travel long distances serves to remind us all just how important our work is.

Antalya International Trainers' Course for FIDE Trainer Titles is committed to actively raising the quality of chess trainers. We want all trainees, regardless of race, creed or circumstance to achieve their full potential. Our task is to make it possible. Our mission is to provide practical, step by step assistance. Our aim is not only to teach you what a trainer must know in order to well perform his profession but also to show you the correct way to teach his/her knowledge.

The chess intellectual trainers' conversations very often comes to the conclusion that chess has changed to a clear science and demands from the top chess-player to watch out for every day attention and information. But, very often you just have to perform the basics and then the rest are coming. This saying is nowadays has become a motto by the top trainers that have worked or working on a high level.

So, we have gathered here in Antalya in order to present these 'basics' topics. We will work on various subjects which are described in the prospectus of this seminar/course and we will try to make the best out of the 34 hours we will spend together. As I did mention beforehand, our aim will be to 'dig deeply' on the general chess basic topics, which are affiliated to general chess subjects, middlegame and endgame handling and using chess computer programs.

I have to mention that most of the material that it will be presented in this course is based on my books' series called *Chess College 1,2,3* and *Practical Endgame Play - Mastering the Basics*.

The Middlegame

Chess is not an absolute game. In several junctures throughout a chess game, there does not exist a single, concrete, perfect solution to the problems of the position. Many successful decisions made by the players cannot be justified scientifically. They are instead based on numerous subjective factors, some are even not directly related to the situation on the board. Yet they do prove successful in the specific context in which they were applied. A great part of the beauty of chess lies, in my opinion, in exactly this possibility of one, should the circumstances permit, seeking the truth (or, more conventionally, victory!) in his own distinctive way.

The middlegame is the part of the game that allows self-expression in its purest form. While opening paths have been charted and the best set-ups more or less clarified by many decades of tournament practice, while endgame theory has advanced to great depths (not without the help of powerful computers), middlegame play remains a mystery to many. It is sufficient to consider how differently two distinctive players, such as Kramnik and Shirov for example, handle the one and same opening position, to understand that the middlegame in chess is unfathomable and will take ages before it is codified and made fully susceptible to computer analysis. The decision-making process during the middlegame remains the most fertile field for the human brain to display its power, ingenuity and creativity.

While this is so, one cannot ignore the systematization process carried out by tournament practice. A set of clear strategic elements and general guidelines has emerged as the product of hundreds of years of chess research. These elements and guidelines do not aim to force our brains into pre-determined channels of thought, but rather to serve as tools for the better understanding of

chess positions and as aids to our creativity. Knowledge and understanding of these products of experience will greatly assist our thinking process, much as the existence of the wheel was helpful to the inventor of the car...

Apart from the exposition and discussion of several middlegame themes, one can also become acquainted with other practical aspects of chess, not necessarily connected to moves but rather to more abstract concepts, such as emotions. The middlegame is once again that part of the chess game where these concepts are most applicable, as they are directly relevant to decision-making. For someone aspiring to improve his play, these concepts should not be ignored.

The Endgame

The third world champion, the Cuban Jose Raul Capablanca, once expressed his opinion that the study of chess should commence with the third and final phase of a chess game, the endgame. The Cuban himself was a renowned master of this stage and his advice was undoubtedly provoked by his personal experience. Many words have been spoken about the significance of endgame knowledge and experience in practical play - there is no point in repeating them here.

Many people think that the qualities of a grandmaster, compared to an ordinary player, mostly consist of superior opening preparation, greater calculating abilities and deeper understanding of typical middlegame positions. If you, however, take a closer look at games from, say, a strong open tournament, you will notice several cases where the grandmaster outplays a weaker player (or even a fellow grandmaster) in the endgame, from more or less equal positions. You are often left wondering how on earth one could lose such a simple position with so few pieces on the board.

And yet, in my personal experience, the last part of the game is where a well educated player can set the opponent the most problems. The weight of each move increases, each mistake can prove very costly, great accuracy is required. In our times, with the abolition of adjournments and the increasingly faster time-controls, endgame knowledge has acquired greater significance than never before.

Avoiding Trainers with a Flawed Technique (based on GM Nigel Davies)

It's amazing how often you see players with talent essentially ruined through their assimilation of their teacher's flawed tendencies. Only the exceptionally talented manage to overcome this obstacle, at which point the teacher will usually claim the credit anyway!

The result of flawed technique in teachers is that there are lots of students who acquire really bad habits. I've had quite a few of them come to me, wondering why they seem to have hit a ceiling with their results, despite only being fifteen or so. Usually, they've been pumped full of opening systems, their untested teacher believing that this is somehow the most important thing. Sometimes it's superficial trick lines, sometimes it's Garry Kasparov's opening repertoire and sometimes the lines suggested in some repertoire book that have been honed to the nth degree (though not in Moscow). Can the students hope to recover?

Well yes, maybe. But for the unfortunate student it's probably more traumatic than giving up smoking as without the "systems" they will often have little to fall back on. I believe that the cure is for people to immerse themselves in reading the autobiographical games collections of great past players as it is like taking lessons with some of the greatest players in history.

With regard to the opening, the main problem is the belief that the opening is the basis of victory. When you've got round this one then it isn't hard to find alternatives amongst the zillion solid openings that reach a playable middlegame. This is what Lajos Portisch wrote on the matter in *How to Open a Chess Game*:

It is illogical for one who has not earned his master title to ape the complicated opening variations played by, say, a world champion. After all, while the opening is indeed important in chess, it is still only one part of the game; victory can be found as well in the middle game and endgame. Your only task in the opening is to reach a playable middle game (taking advantage of a

good middle game position requires instruction that is beyond the intentions of this book). What is our task, then? How should we lay the foundations of our opening repertoire? It is hard to come up with a single answer to satisfy every player. Individuals will have different objectives in the opening, as well as different playing strengths. Nevertheless, to all players I can recommend the following: simplicity and economy. These are the characteristics of the opening systems of many great masters. They do not strain unduly for advantages in the opening; they would just as soon move on to the next stage of the game, hoping their skill will overcome the opponent in the middle game or endgame.

I think this is really wonderful advice, but as usual very few people will take it and might even resent the fact that it has been offered! But one can see from Portisch's games that he practiced what he preached. And in his day he was known as one of the most outstanding opening specialists, often playing quite simple variations.

So, we come to the conclusion that a good chess trainer is the one that trains his students in every aspect of the game, pays attention to the opening phase but most important for him is to focus on the middlegame and endgame various techniques and arm his students with the knowledge of them. But above all he is a trainer without a Flawed Technique.

(Day 1: 17:00-17:45 - Grivas)

Middlegame & Endgame Theory

Every chess-player who wishes to improve his level in the difficult subject of chess is obliged, first of all, to study methodically and understand the existing principles that govern the theory of the opening, middlegame and endgame.

Most chess-players focus more on the study of opening theory than other aspects of the game. The reasons are probably clear: opening theory is easier to learn and can provide immediate results, although this is based more on the opponent's ignorance than our own abilities. Even for a chess trainer, it is easier to teach some variations from this or that opening or a set of simple tactical motifs than to engross himself in the exposition of middlegame and endgame theory.

Yes, middlegame and endgame theory does exist. The great difficulty in approaching it lies in the fact that it does not follow absolute and clear-cut paths, but rather involves deep research in the ideas and logic by which specific types of positions are treated. Moreover, unlike opening theory, the theory of the middlegame and the endgame does not change rapidly based on modern developments and remains almost intact through the years.

In view of the above, any chess-player who wishes to follow a chess career or simply become a better player must refrain from the commonplace and assume a different approach. He must develop a good understanding of middlegame and endgame theory, so as to be able in his games to proceed in a proper way after his chosen opening has reached its conclusion. The chess-player can differentiate himself only in the opening; there, each one of us brings forth his own beliefs and convictions, and in general his own experiences and references. Objectively, no opening loses - but also no opening wins. The opening is just the beginning of the journey and serves to offer us a comfortable start. But to reach the end of this journey successfully we have to count on our knowledge and experience, as regards middlegame and endgame theory.

Endgame theory teaches us two fundamental issues. First, how to extract the maximum from a basic theoretical position with little material, where the experts (and practice comprising thousands of games) have reached definite conclusions. Second, the way in which we can handle an endgame, depending on the material remaining on the board, and the ideas and plans we should employ. This second issue is significantly more difficult to master because, apart from making full use of the first one (we must be aware of the possible outcomes of the endgame in question) it is greatly influenced by our experience and understanding, which are basically derived from the images and impressions we have from related positions. And, of course, a primary role is played by the effort we have invested in studying.

In middlegame theory, things are even tougher. We are obliged to study various types of positions with specific strategic and tactical attributes, so as to understand the underlying ideas and be able to employ them ourselves in similar situations. Besides, while many chess-players have studied these topics and acquired knowledge, it is the application of this knowledge in practice that helps differentiate between them. True, chess is not a simple activity, but it becomes so much more attractive when we acquire this knowledge...

The purpose of this seminar/course is to introduce the attendee to advanced training concepts, using the same methods of presentation and instruction that were taught to me personally by famous trainers that I have worked with. I owe to these people gratitude for their valuable contribution to my progress as a chess-player. Besides, the fact that I succeeded in attaining the grandmaster title is owed first and foremost to the education I received and then to my personal work and effort.

Sex Differences

1. The Difference Between Boys and Girls in Chess (WWCC GM Suzan Polgar)

Can female players be as good in chess as male players? The answer to the above question is, “yes.” But then how come very few female players can compete on the same level as their male counterpart? That is the \$64,000 question, yet it seems that very few people are concerned about finding the answer. I will discuss the reasons for this and then I will offer my solutions for change:

Social Acceptance: In general, society does not encourage or really accept the concept of girls playing chess. That makes it difficult to get girls involved in chess and even more difficult to maintain their interest.

Family Acceptance: There is also little family acceptance for girls playing chess. Many parents do not really understand or play chess well themselves. Some do not understand the benefits of their daughters playing chess. Therefore, if the girls are not encouraged to play chess, it is more natural for them not to play at all or to abandon it quickly. This is similar to the stereotype of boys playing with cars and trucks, while girls play with Barbie dolls. Boys don't play with Barbie dolls because it is generally considered a girl thing. Many parents consider chess as a boy thing.

Opportunities: This point directly links to the social and family acceptance issues. Because of the lack of family and social acceptance, fewer parents actually invest the time and money to encourage their daughters to play chess. And the lack of encouragement or assistance directly leads to fewer girls taking chess seriously.

Intimidation: Because the ratio between girls and boys at tournaments are so skewed (9 to 1 boys vs. girls), girls often get very intimidated. And because girls have fewer opportunities to learn and play it leads to poor results, which leads to discouragement and eventually they quit. In addition, boys are usually much more rough and competitive; many girls are teased and rather than fighting back, they just don't come back.

Different approach to the game: Boys and girls approach the game of chess very differently. Most boys are results-oriented and focus on winning and losing. Girls are very different; they have a greater appreciation for the artistic and social aspect of chess. The problem we face is that most people expect girls to learn the game and enjoy it the same way as boys do. They don't, and we as educators, parents or coaches need to understand this. If we do not recognize this differences in how boys and girls approach the game, how can we find a solution to fix it?

Different interest: If we want to keep girls in chess, we must keep the girls interested in the game. We must find out what makes chess fun for the girls and what motivates them to maintain their interest.

Physiological and Physical differences: As they get older, girls tend to develop faster in many ways. They develop different interests and are often treated differently; they also have different social problems. It is not easy being the “only” female player at a tournament. Many older girls have to fend off unwanted advances and are often subjected to inappropriate remarks. Being chess pioneers, my sisters and I faced many of these issues while competing in a male dominated chess environment. No female player is immune to this. But I was able to focus on my chess because I was encouraged and supported by my parents, and I was given the opportunities to learn and compete in chess.

Chess Development and Improvement: We do not have specialized chess development and improvement courses geared towards girls, something that addresses the differences between boys

and girls approach to the game. The same goes with chess camps or chess classes. The activities and methods of teaching chess are more orientated for boys than girls.

Different standard and expectation: A chess rating is just number that measures the competitive success of a player. Yet, as I mentioned above, girls are much less competitive than boys. So if everything revolves around ratings, can we expect the same success in girls?

Career Longevity: Female players often must interrupt their careers in order to raise a family.

Solutions: Now I will offer some of my solutions to the above problems. Through my numerous experiences with thousands of young female players and their parents across the country, I discovered that girls do need and want a separate chess environment in which they are comfortable. Only in such an environment can you encourage more girls to stay, play and learn chess at a much higher ratio and level. This would give them a chance to advance and catch up with the boys.

According to the statistics from the USCF, our federation is losing girls at an alarming rate after 3rd and 4th grade. For years the USCF has been unable to correct this problem on its own. I was asked to try and reverse this trend and my solutions have been to:

- Create more fun and exciting events for girls to motivate them to stay in chess longer.
- Create a better atmosphere so young girls will be less intimidated.
- Create activities that girls would enjoy and appreciate more.
- Create more college scholarships as an incentive for girls to achieve better results.
- Create a free training program to help the more serious and more talented girls excel to be top-level players.

And much more...

All of the above initiatives have been funded by the Susan Polgar Foundation. My idea has always been that the more girls who successfully play chess, the more motivated they will be to remain in chess, which will increase the amount of good players. It's all about the numbers.

In conclusion, girls *can* compete equally against boys and they *can* excel in chess if they are given the same opportunities. Only then we can expect a growth in both numbers and strength. My goal is to eventually close the gap between boys and girls in chess.

2. Sex Differences in Intellectual Performance (Based on a research by Christopher Chabris and Mark Glickman)

Is the disparity between women and men in the sciences the result of an innate difference in cognitive ability or the result of some social phenomena such as selective participation or discrimination? Chess is a good way to objectively study this question, since the rating system tracks players throughout their careers.

Only 1% of the world's chess grandmasters are women. This underrepresentation is unlikely to be caused by discrimination, because chess ratings objectively reflect competitive results. Using data on the ratings of more than 250,000 tournament players over 13 years, we investigated several potential explanations for the male domination of elite chess. We found that

- The ratings of men are higher on average than those of women, but no more variable.
- Matched boys and girls improve and drop out at equal rates, but boys begin chess competition in greater numbers and at higher performance levels than girls.
- In locales where at least 50% of the new young players are girls, their initial ratings are not lower than those of boys. We conclude that the greater number of men at the highest

levels in chess can be explained by the greater number of boys who enter chess at the lowest levels.

There could be some innate difference in ability between men and women overall with respect to the skill required to play chess well. This difference in average or in variability need not be large; at the upper tail of the distribution where chess players operate for say spatial ability, a small difference would result in a large difference in representation. They call this the ability distribution hypothesis.

Discrimination could result in a difference in participation through different standards. However, they note that this is not a problem for this particular study because Chess rankings are objective measures. You can't discriminate against someone when their gender cannot be calculated into their performance.

There could be a differential drop-out rate between boys and girls. Equal numbers of boys and girls with equal abilities could begin chess training, but fewer girls could see it through to becoming chess grandmasters. They call this the differential dropout hypothesis.

Fewer women could self-select to participate in chess. If fewer talented women choose to participate in chess in the first place, by attrition alone there will be fewer in the resulting grandmaster pool. They call this participation rate hypothesis.

After examining the data Chabris and Glickman come to the following conclusions:

- Men and women differed in chess ability in all age groups even after differences like frequency of play (read: level of training) or age were taken into account. The disparity between men and women in ability exists at the beginning and persists across all age groups.
- No greater variance is to be found in men than women – if anything in most age groups women had a higher variance than men.
- Women and men do not drop out more or less frequently when ability and age are factored out. For example, if you are not very good at chess you are more likely to stop playing tournaments, but girls and boys that are equally good are equally likely to stop playing. This strikes a blow at the differential dropout hypothesis.
- If you look at the participation rate of women and relate that to performance, you find that in cases where the participation rate of women and men is equal the disparity in ability vanishes.

There is a more extensive description in the Science blog *Pure Pedantry*, where the subject can also be discussed.

(Day 1: 18:00-18:45 - Mikhalchishin)

Getting to Know Ourselves

It is essential to become acquainted with ourselves chesswise so as to be able to identify and codify the assets and weaknesses of our chess personality. But how can this be done? Our basic source shall be the games we have played so far. We must re-examine this material and produce an 'X-ray' image of our chess self. This examination must include all three parts of the game, opening, middlegame and endgame, for each of our games.

Starting with the opening, we shall fill up two charts, one for the white and one for the black pieces. These charts will provide very clear-cut information about ourselves (provided of course that we do this work with strong self-criticism) and will show how well we understand the openings we have chosen or, in the bottom line, whether these openings really suit our style (difference between opening outcome and game result). The bigger the sample, the more accurate the conclusions.

Opening Examination									
Games with White				Opening outcome			Result of the game		
	Opponent	Rating	Opening	+	=	-	1	½	0
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
	Totals								

Here is an example of how to fill up these charts:

Opening Examination									
Games with White				Opening outcome			Result of the game		
	Opponent	Rating	Opening	+	=	-	1	½	0
1	Shirov,Alexei	2732	Sicilian Defence		X			X	
2	Gelfand,Boris	2690	King's Indian	X				X	

Next, we shall move on to a similar chart in order to examine our performance in the middlegame. This chart will contain our games with both White and Black, and requires a sample of at least 40 games to produce reliable results.

Middlegame Examination								
Games with White & Black			Handling of the middlegame			Result of the game		
General Type		Middlegame type	+	=	-	1	½	0
1	Strategy	Open position						
2		Semi-Open position						
3		Closed position						
4	Tactics	Attack against the king						
5		Defence of the king						
6		Combinative play						
Totals								

An example of how to fill up the middlegame chart:

Middlegame Examination								
Games with White & Black			Handling of the middlegame			Result of the game		
General Type		Middlegame type	+	=	-	1	½	0
1	Strategy	Open position	4	2	0	5	0	1
2		Semi-Open position	2	3	3	3	2	3
3		Closed position	0	3	3	0	0	6
4	Tactics	Attack against the king	5	0	0	5	0	0
5		Defence of the king	1	0	4	1	1	3
6		Combinative play	6	2	2	5	4	1
Totals			18	10	12	19	7	14

We will then work similarly to create our endgame chart:

Endgame Examination								
Games with White & Black			Handling of the endgame			Result of the game		
Endgame Type		+	=	-	1	½	0	
1	Pawn endgame							
2	Queen endgame							
3	Rook endgame							
4	Bishop endgame							
5	Knight endgame							
6	Combinations of the above							
Totals								

After completing this work we will have a much clearer picture of both our weaknesses and our strengths. It is recommended to repeat this process at frequent intervals, provided of course that we have gathered enough material from recent games. In this way we can evaluate our improvement or discover other hidden aspects of ourselves.

The Trainer

Chess books and databases can be of valuable help to the progress of an ambitious chess-player. However, besides these indispensable tools, the role of the trainer is both significant and essential. This consideration immediately spawns questions: who is the indicated trainer?

An answer to this question does not come easily...

Trainers' Ranking

Every trainer is useful in specific stages in the progress of a chess-player. We could try to categorize chess trainers as follows:

First-Level Trainer: The trainer who will teach the student the basics and bring him into contact with the world of chess. One of his main aims is to infuse the student with love and respect for chess.

Second-Level Trainer: The trainer who will teach the student his first openings, simple tactical motifs and, generally, will introduce the student to the aspects of working and learning.

Third-Level Trainer: The trainer who will teach the student, first and foremost, the theory of the middlegame and the endgame. Moreover, he will work closely with the student towards the creation of the student's personalized openings repertoire, which he will also help enrich with new ideas.

Fourth-Level Trainer: The trainer who will continue in the footsteps of the previous one, but will also introduce the student to other important aspects of chess, such as the concept of and preparation for competitive success. Trainers of such calibre and skill are very scarce, and are only necessary to those chess-players who wish to reach a high level of play or seek competitive success in any form.

FIDE Trainers' System

DEVELOPMENTAL INSTRUCTOR – DI

Qualification:

- knows the Rules of Chess
- rating of minimum 1400

Scope:

- simple instructions

DI Title may be awarded by regional Academies.

NATIONAL INSTRUCTOR – NI

Qualification:

- minimum two years experience as Development Instructor
- rating of minimum 1600

FIDE Trainers' Course – Antalya 2009

- trainees have minimum top 10 placings in recognized national level competitions

Scope:

- instruct/train players with rating up to 1600

NI Title may be awarded by regional Academies.

FIDE INSTRUCTOR – FI

Qualification:

- proposal/endorsement from National federation
- minimum two years experience as an instructor or National Instructor
- rating of minimum 1800

Scope:

- National examiner and conduct courses for Instructors from levels 1 and 2
- instruct/train players with rating below and up to 1800

FIDE TRAINER – FT

Qualification:

- proposal/endorsement from National federation
- minimum 5 years experience as a trainer
- tertiary education or FIDE Instructor
- rating of minimum 2300 or for a time
- speaks one of the FIDE languages

Scope:

- National examiner and conduct Course for FIDE Instructors from level 1 to 3
- train players with rating 2301 – 2450

FIDE SENIOR TRAINER – FST

Qualification:

- proposal/endorsement from National federation
- minimum 10 years experience as a trainer or FIDE Trainer
- tertiary education
- rating of minimum 2450 or for a time
- speaks English
- have World/International successes

Scope:

- National examiner
- conduct Courses for FIDE Instructors/Trainers from level 3 upwards
- train players with rating above 2450

Title Awarded	Title award (one-time fee)	License fee (valid for two years)
FIDE Instructor	100 Euro	60 Euro
FIDE Trainer	200 Euro	120 Euro
FIDE Senior Trainer	300 Euro	180 Euro

(Day 1: 19:00-19:45 - Mikhalchishin)

The Golden Rules of the Endgame

The endgame is the moment of truth. It is the phase of the game where we will try to reap the seeds of our effort, regardless of whether that is the full point of victory or the half point of the draw. In the endgame the significance of errors increases, as the opportunities for correcting them are few. The following rules are considered to be the Golden Rules of the Endgame. They were recorded by GMs **Reuben Fine** and **Pal Benko**, two of the world's greatest experts in this field:

1. Start thinking about the endgame in the middlegame.
2. Somebody usually gets the better deal in every exchange.
3. The king is a strong piece: Use it!
4. If you are one or two pawns ahead, exchange pieces but not pawns.
5. If you are one or two pawns behind, exchange pawns but not pieces.
6. If you have an advantage, do not leave all the pawns on one side.
7. A distant passed pawn is half the victory.
8. Passed pawns should be advanced as rapidly as possible.
9. Doubled, isolated and blockaded pawns are weak: Avoid them!
10. The easiest endings to win are pure pawn endings.
11. Passed pawns should be blockaded by the king, the only piece that is not harmed by watching a pawn is the knight.
12. Two bishops vs bishop and knight constitute a tangible advantage.
13. Bishops are better than knights in all except blocked pawn positions.
14. Do not place your pawns on the colour of your bishop.
15. The easiest endings to draw are those with bishops of opposite colours.
16. Rooks belong behind passed pawns.
17. A rook on the seventh rank is sufficient compensation for a pawn.
18. Not all rook endings are drawn!
19. Perpetual check looms in all queen endings.
20. Every move in the endgame is of the utmost importance because you are closer to the moment of truth.

Pawn Endings – Part 1

Pawn endings are fundamental to the education of an aspiring chessplayer. The reason is obvious: no matter which other type of ending we encounter, there will always be moments when the possibility of a transition (through exchanges) to a pawn ending will force us to properly evaluate its positive or negative properties and accordingly make our decision.

Many games never reach the endgame. However, every good chessplayer, even in the heat of the battle, must consider the endings that can possibly arise in the course of the game. Our opening moves must take into account the consequences they may impose on a future ending. Doubled, isolated, immobilized or passed pawns, strong and weak squares - in general, all the positional elements, positive or negative, must be considered and evaluated. Anticipation of a favourable ending or fear of an inferior one will often influence our decisions in the middlegame, in the sense of selecting or rejecting certain continuations. When dissatisfied with a prospective ending we will often opt for unclear complications or serious material or positional concessions. In the end, our evaluation of the endings that may arise will affect the entire course of the battle.

In comparison with other types of endings, very few games actually reach a pawn ending. Based on this fact, many chessplayers tend to underestimate its rich content and significance. It would be wrong to assume that perfect knowledge of its technical side is easy to master and that, consequently, its study is 'unimportant'. The pawn ending lurks behind every position and its proper knowledge and evaluation can prove very useful to our decision-making process.

Pawn endings have their own specifics, that set them apart from other types of endings. Their main characteristic is the significant role of the king, which transforms himself from a subject of protection by the other pieces to the most useful piece in combat. As a rule, the active participation of the king in the proceedings decides the outcome of a pawn ending. Also, the worth of pawns is greatly increased, thanks to their unique ability to promote to any other piece. Consequently, the basic aim in a pawn ending is to create a passed pawn and promote it. The 'transformation' of the pawn can be considered as an original way of gaining material! Such a drastic change in the material balance between the opponents is usually sufficient to cease further resistance. The threat of promotion, or even that of creating a passed pawn, is a powerful weapon in itself.

In pawn endings the king is the main motivating power, guiding and coordinating the advance of the pawns. As a rule, the king heads for the centre, from where, according to needs, he can be directed to either flank, usually to attack enemy pawns. The king also executes complex manoeuvres, aiming to occupy or defend critical squares, or to force the opponent to move himself, i.e. to create a zugzwang position.

Behind the 'simplicity veil' that covers pawn endings, quite often one can discover true gems and fantastic opportunities!

The main elements of pawn ending education can be classified as follows:

A. Opposition	B. Rules	C. Technique
A1. Close opposition	B1. Promotion square	C1. Triangulation
A2. Distant opposition	B2. Promotion count	C2. Breakthrough
A3. Knight opposition	B3. Advance of separated passed pawns	C3. Passed pawn
	B4. Critical squares	C3.1. Outside passed pawn
	B5. Corresponding squares	C3.2. Protected passed pawn

The concept of the opposition is defined as follows: when the two kings are placed opposite of each other, separated by an odd number of squares (one, three or five), then FIDE Trainers' Course – Antalya 2009

the side not on the move has the opposition. The significance of the opposition lies in the obligation of the opponent to move, thus forcing him to make concessions that will

allow us to achieve our goal.

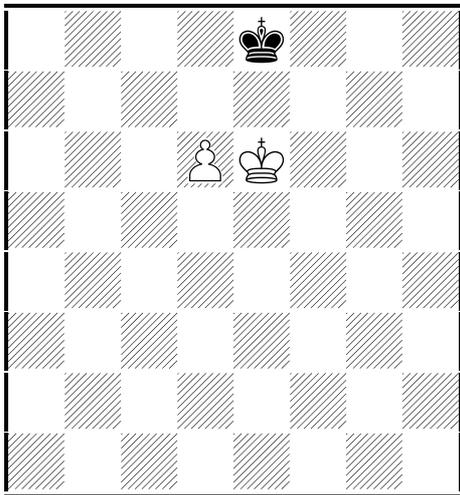
The great chess-player and theoretician P. A. Romanovsky offered a simpler definition: 'The opposition is the placement of the kings opposite each other in such a way, so that a zugzwang is brought about'.

The definition of the universally accepted German chess term 'zugzwang' itself implies the obligation (or the right) of the weaker side to make a move, a fact that doesn't support its interests.

Close Opposition

The close opposition can occur on a rank, file or diagonal.

Example 1 ○



The simplest form of close opposition. The side to move is unable to achieve its goal. If White is to move, then by

1.d7+

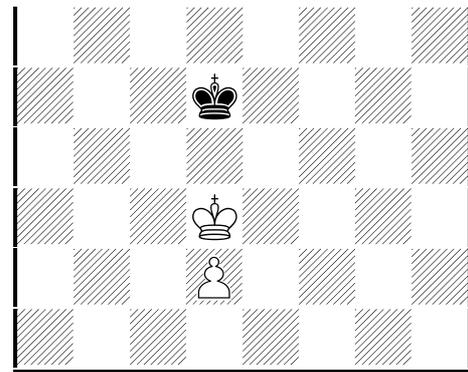
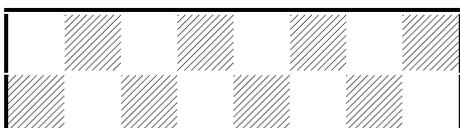
After 1.Kd5 Kd7 2.Kc5 Kd8! 3.Kc6 Kc8 Black regains the opposition (1/2-1/2). If Black is to move, then he loses after 1...Kd8 2.d7 Kc7 3.Ke7 (1-0).

1...Kd8 2.Kd6

a stalemate is brought about.

1/2-1/2

Example 2 ●



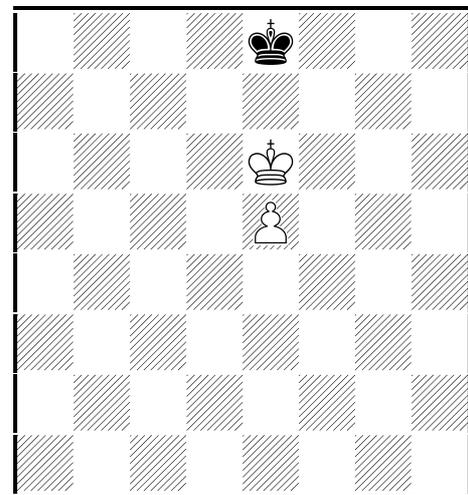
The opposition has the leading role. With White to move, the game is drawn after 1.Ke3 Ke5 2.d4+ Kd5 3.Kd3 Kd6!. If however Black is on the move then he loses:

1...Ke5 2.Kc4 Kd6 3.Kd4! Kc6 4.Ke5 Kd7 5.d3 Ke7 6.Kd5 Kd7 7.d4!

We can thus formulate the following rule: If the attacking king has reached the square right in front of his pawn, then the result of the game depends entirely on which side is to move.

1-0

Example 3 ○



An exception occurs when the pawn has crossed its 4th rank. Then, the attacking side wins regardless of who is to move!

1.Kf6 Kf8 2.e6 Ke8 3.e7 Kd7 4.Kf7 1-0

Another exception is caused by the rook pawns (a and h), where: if the defending king controls the promotion square or can prevent the escape of the attacking king from it, then the game is drawn.