

**CHESS PSYCHOLOGY:
THE WILL
TO WIN!**

EVERYMAN CHESS

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About the Author

William Stewart is a United States Chess Federation National Master. In 2009 he tied for first place in the under-2200 section of the World Open. He holds degrees in both Psychology and Spanish from the University of Georgia. He has over six years of chess teaching experience, and in 2011 he co-founded the websites OnlineChessLessons.net and the Spanish equivalent ClasesdeAjedrez.net, which promote and teach chess on a global level. In 2012 he launched a job site and recruitment agency called Non-StopJobs.com. His current focus is on playing chess tournaments to achieve higher FIDE titles.



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Introduction

Welcome to *Chess Psychology: The Will to Win!* – a comprehensive chess book designed to give you the tools you need to succeed in chess. This book is intended for beginner and intermediate chess players and covers a diverse range of topics while emphasizing the role of effective psychology in chess. Many players overestimate the importance of factors like how old you are, how long you have been playing, your current rating, your choice of openings, how many positions you can memorize, and the sheer number of games you can browse in 20 minutes. The real truth to improvement in chess is very simple – *identify your long-term objectives and put together a short-term set of goals that will help you consistently get better.*

The purpose of this book is not to destroy your current style of play and start building your game again from scratch. *This book is designed to help you – the beginner or intermediate chess player – organize and evaluate a customized plan for rapid short-term and sustainable long-term improvement.*

Chess Psychology: The Will to Win! will teach you to re-evaluate your approach to improvement in chess. With a resounding emphasis on deep understanding over shallow memorization, you will begin to see the big picture on getting better at chess through the eyes of an experienced master. *Chess Psychology: The Will to Win!* will teach you how to play aggressive chess from the very first move, never to stop making threats and actively searching for counterplay. After reading this book, your opponents will never have an ‘easy game’ against you for the rest of your life!

You will learn about the importance of aggressive psychology combined with resilient and stubborn defence. You will learn how to prepare for competitive chess tournaments and how to maximize your focus to achieve your best possible results.

This book will elevate your chess game by applying crucial elements of chess psy-

Chess Psychology: The Will to Win!

chology to all phases of the game: opening, middlegame, endgame, tactical, and positional – and is guaranteed to take you to a higher level.

William Stewart,
Atlanta, Georgia,
May 2013

Narrow Your Focus

Taking the time to contemplate your approach to chess improvement can save you a lot of time and energy by focusing on what will really help you get better. This maxim applies even more to the topic of designing an opening repertoire, as *you want to put together a narrow game plan that is focused on results*. The beginner chess player really only needs to have three basic opening systems on hand: what to play as White, what to play as Black against e4, and what to play as Black against d4. If you can decide on three systems and maintain the discipline to focus exclusively on them, your results are going to skyrocket. And remember, *you don't want to work on memorizing the moves – you want to understand the reasons behind the moves*.

Organize a Game-plan

For most beginner chess players, it's going to be very difficult to identify three basic opening schemes that are interconnected with respect to basic concepts and fundamental strategies. Luckily for you, I've decided to make your path to chess excellence that much easier by designing a comprehensive opening repertoire that is very solid and easy to learn.

We will now examine three opening systems that overlap in ideology:

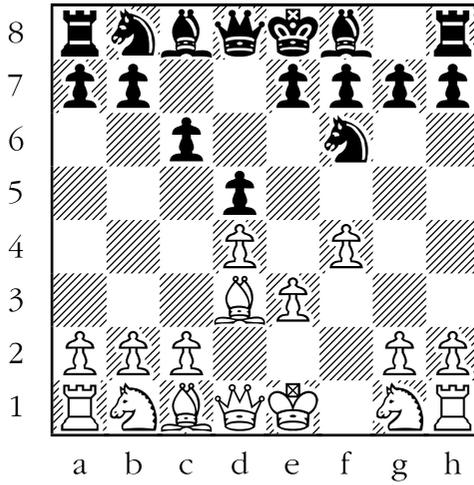
- 1) The Stonewall Attack;
- 2) The French Defence; and
- 3) The Slav Defence (Schallopp Variation).

The underlying principles of these openings are very similar: *the minor pieces will control the central squares that your solid pawn formation does not cover*. Whether you choose to follow my suggested opening repertoire or design your own – keep in mind that a focused approach will yield the best results.

Stonewall Attack – Sac to Attack

The Stonewall Attack is a powerful opening system by White that puts immediate and consistent pressure on Black by controlling the centre. In Part One, we will examine a classic Stonewall structure and plan.

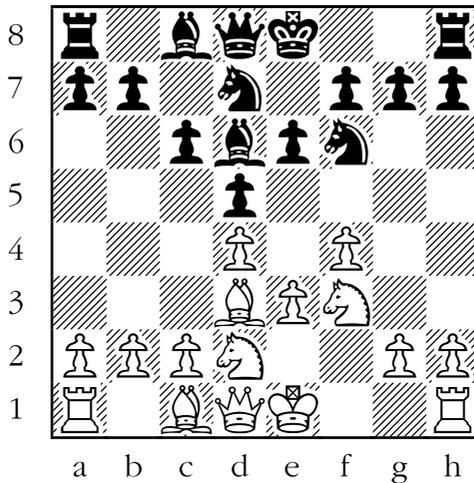
1 d4 d5 2 e3 f6 3 d3 c6 4 f4



Position after 4 f4

White plays an early f4 to clamp down in the centre and prevent Black from liberating his position with ...e5.

4... ♗bd7 5 ♘d2 e6 6 ♘gf3 ♙d6

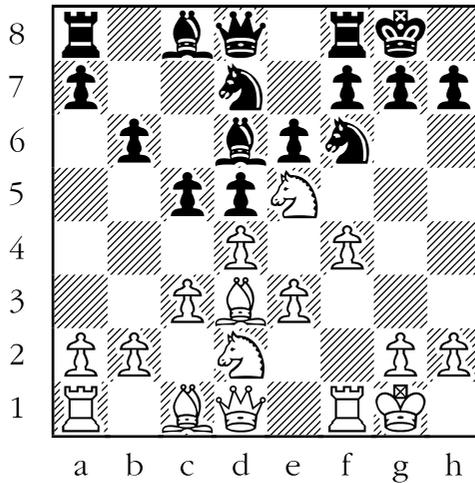


Position after 6... ♙d6

With his pawns, White has established strong control of the dark squares in the

centre. With his pieces, White aims to control the light squares and prevent Black from establishing a stronghold with ...♘e4.

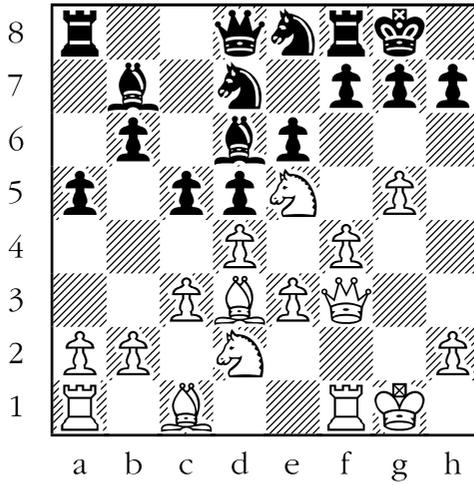
7 0-0 0-0 8 ♘e5 c5 9 c3 b6



Position after 9...b6

White maintains a very strong grip on the centre and would likely respond to ...cxd4 by Black with exd4 – opening up the e-file for White and keeping a fluid, coordinated pawn structure. White should continue trying to keep Black from playing ...♘e4 which would greatly congest White’s position. Also, White should aim for a direct kingside attack by lifting his queen in the future to f3, g4, or h5. White can also employ a common rook manoeuvre in this type of position, lifting the rook to f3, where it can participate in the attack via g3 or h3 as well.

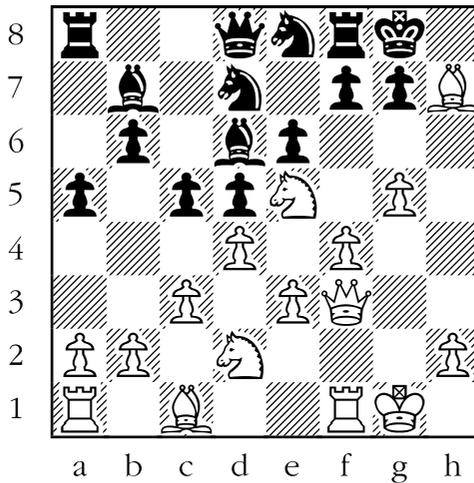
10 ♖f3 ♗b7 11 g4 a5 12 g5 ♘e8



Position after 12...♖e8

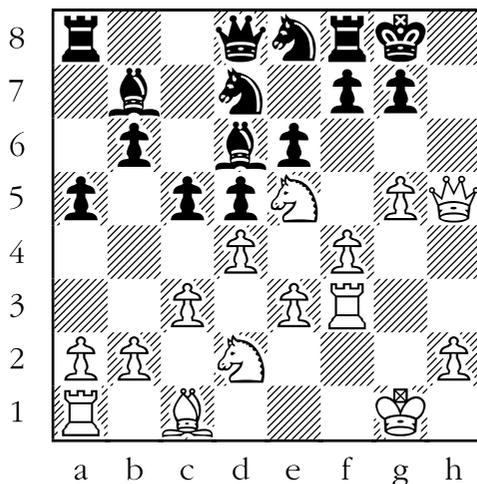
This is a very promising position for White. He has kept Black's knight out of e4 and the centre is closed. Black's counterplay on the queenside is too slow. White is now lining up a kill-shot against Black's weakest point.

13 ♗xh7+!



Position after 13 ♗xh7+

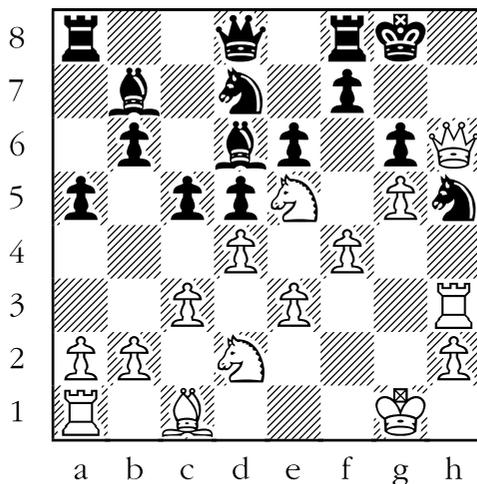
13...♔xh7 14 ♖h5+ ♔g8 15 ♜f3!



Position after 15 ♜f3!

White prepares a decisive breakthrough on the h-file by lifting the rook from f1-f3-h3.

15...g6 16 ♜h6 ♞g7 17 ♜h3 ♞h5

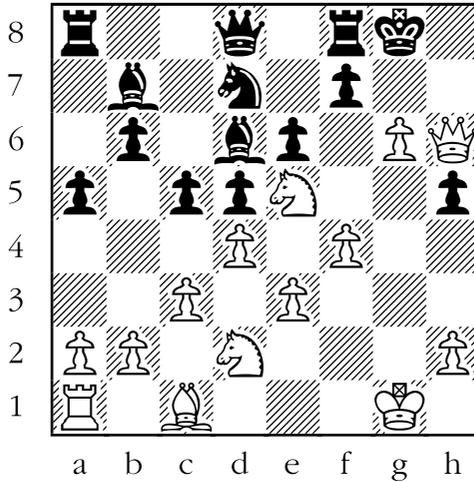


Position after 17...♞h5

It appears that Black has succeeded in stopping White's attack. However, be-

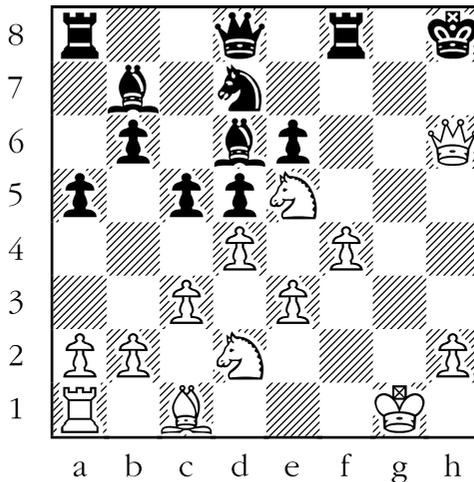
cause White controls more space in the centre, and the centre is completely closed – Black’s extra material is unable to help out his lonely king. White crashes through before Black can consolidate.

18 ♖xh5! gxh5 19 g6



Position after 19 g6

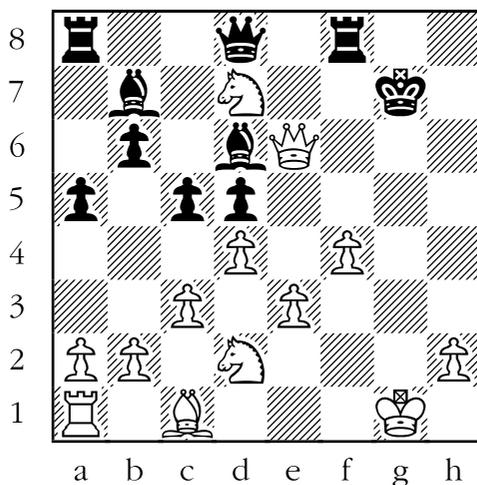
19...fxg6 20 ♖xg6+ ♔h8 21 ♖xh5+ ♔g7 22 ♖g6+ ♔h8 23 ♖h6+



Position after 23 ♖h6+

White picks off as many pawns around Black's king as possible before cashing out his attack for Black's d7-knight.

23...♔g8 24 ♖xe6+ ♕g7 25 ♘xd7



Position after 25 ♘xd7

White has emerged from the complications with a winning material advantage – a knight and three pawns for a rook. White's king is also very safe while Black's king will experience problems for some time to come.

If Black plays 25...♗c8, White can simply respond 26 ♘xf8 ♗xe6 27 ♘xe6+ – winning back the queen.

Basic Principles in the Stonewall Attack

1) Control the Centre

Quickly establish a bind on the dark squares with d4, e3 and f4 – creating an excellent outpost on e5.

2) Develop Your Pieces Actively

Compensate for the natural light-square weakness by deploying your pieces accurately – ♗d3, ♘d2, ♘f3, ♘e5, etc.

3) Get Your King Safe!

Castling is not a defensive move; it is a necessary step to guard your king before starting the attack.