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Dynamic Chess Strategy

An Extended and Updated Edition

New In Chess 2010

Contents

Symbols 6

Foreword 7

Chapter 1 – Dynamic Chess Strategy, Revisited 9

Chapter 2 – The Beginning 35

Chapter 3 – Why Rethink Chess Strategy? 59

Chapter 4 – What is Strategy? 93

Chapter 5 – Dynamic Strategy in Attack and Defence 107

Chapter 6 – Lest We Forget the Classics 177

Chapter 7 – Black Wins After All! 185

Chapter 8 – Quiz Solutions 197

Bibliography 203

Index of Selected Games 204

Index of Players 205

Foreword

I must start by confessing that I have never written a foreword and therefore have no idea what it should contain. It was simpler before they got Stalin out of the Mausoleum, when one had to just mention the *Big Father of the Big Neighbouring Country*, or when in Romania the password was *Genius of the Carpathians* (president Ceausescu).

Neither am I going to use it to smugly congratulate you on your wise choice in reading this book, although I do believe that you will enjoy playing through the games in it, whatever your standard of play.

Within the notes and commentaries I have highlighted the **dynamic** aspects of strategy and differentiated them by means of some **immeasurable potential**, in an attempt (necessarily an optimistic one) to explain the whole jungle of a chess battle in a relatively few lines.

In the opening you need to develop in order to increase the attacking and defensive potential of your pieces. I have extended this obvious principle to cover all phases of the game.

In modern chess, setting aside home preparation, we have fewer and fewer attacking or defensive moves while more and more *neutral* ones. How do we use these moves?

Adherents of classical chess strategy will answer: 'for improving the position'. Thank you very much! This concept has all the qualities of a legal eagle's speech: archaic, superfluous, static, and irrelevant. It often comes into conflict with **principles** as well as with the need for move-to-move play.

Is it possible to get the initiative out of nothing? Moreover, is it possible to lose it without explanation?

Each move of the opponent changes the position even if it does not threaten anything. Leaving aside the computer programs, chess players' opinions differ about what 'improving the position' involves. Even more so when it comes to 'who has the initiative?' or else 'when and why did it evaporate?'

This is the twilight zone of chess strategy.

The option to choose between a good position that cannot be improved and a bad position that can be substantially improved is also quite modern. I have tried to give another view on the meaning of bad positions and quiet moves by way of the concept of **dynamic potential**. Although the terms 'dynamic' and 'potential' are used in their natural sense, the theoretical sections of this book will give the reader a better understanding of

my ideas about them. These discussions may be a little heavy-going at times, but I hope the reader will bear with me.

Combining chess philosophy with actual chess is a difficult task, both in play and in writing. I hope the reader will not only forgive any occasional mistakes but will also, in correcting them, create or improve his own, specific, strategy. I know how difficult it is to break free from dogma. Besides the personal character of some memorable games and of the ideas in various openings, all my efforts have been directed towards encouraging this.

I apologize to those to whom some explanations or repetitions seem trivial, the more so as this is not supposed to be the reader's first chess book. To put it more explicitly, this book is *not* a chess manual and is *not* recommended to children, unless they are prodigies. Of course, potential parents of chess prodigies are encouraged to read it before (or instead of) conceiving. The book was designed for players above, say, 1900 FIDE or equivalent. Exceptionally, the strength ranking could be lowered, if

compensated by patience and a general chess culture well above the average of that ranking. If you belong to this category, my book can help you reorder your knowledge to make it more efficient and tune the *aggressiveness* of your play more adequately. This book could be a crack for players between 2000 and 2350, in the process of digesting rules and crystallizing their own strategic concepts. It can certainly be useful and fun for higher-rated players.

The author cannot be charged with the sole responsibility for organizing the plot against classical strategy. Others who appear on the indictment are Ray Keene and Paul Lamford, who encouraged me to begin and gave me technical advice, Bob Wade, who was a great help in gathering material, and my old friends Father Iosif (Joseph Siroker) and Sanducu (Alex Elian), who helped me realize my aim of writing for the chess enthusiast with an inquiring mind. Aggravating circumstances for making the message even clearer can be applied to Bob (Robert Patrick Thackway) who, for this edition, took upon himself the task of rephrasing my English.

Chapter 1 – Dynamic Chess Strategy, Revisited

Hindsight

The book *Dynamic Chess Strategy* was published by Pergamon Chess with some delay, possibly owing to my awkward English. An attentive observer will have noted in this new book a variation of tone – sometimes less mordant and some other times more so. This is due not only to the inexorable change of my age, but also to the change of regime in Romania, because the manuscript was handed over when my ‘self-censorship’ was more alert.

The following friends from my everyday chess environment were not mentioned too often in the old book, to spare them possible problems: Father Serge (IM Sergiu Grünberg), Father Mihaila (IM Mihai Ghinda), Father Valisor (IM Valentin Stoica), Mirciulica (IM Mircea Pavlov) and Costica (GM Constantin Ionescu). They may be considered contributors, as I used many of their ideas and expressions. Much of my chess experience was also forged in their company.

I finished that book in August 1989 during a two-month stay in Brussels. By that time Belgium champion Luc Winants, who had a copy of the manuscript, seemed very enthusiastic

about the outcome. He was the first to say that such a thing had not been published since *My System*.

The former candidate, GM and GP (i.e. a representative of an endangered species called *Gentlemanibus Professionalis*) Kevin Spraggett – was another proof-reader. He was, in my view, over-impressed and for a few years took over my entire opening repertoire against his own experience, preparation and style.

Printed in 1991, the book won the BCF *Best Chess Book of the Year* award for 1992 and it stirred up everything from simple curiosity and controversy to the deepest interest and (I shouldn’t say this!) adulation. Following the Internet explosion, good slices of the book have been translated (notoriously into Spanish) and clandestinely posted to websites. Established and less established chess authors took their helping of quotes now and again. Thank you all, now I’ve got somebody to argue with!

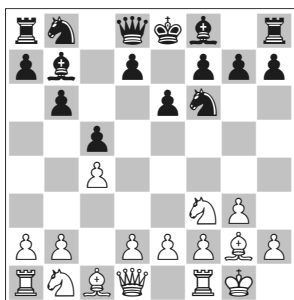
Twenty years have gone by since I gathered in a book some opinions on strategy, interspersed with 36 selected games, and I am happy to see how, in most cases, the ideas ventured then are still fresh.

Game 5
Milan Vukic–Suba

Vinkovci 1977

English, Symmetrical: Hedgehog

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.g3 b6 3.♙g2
♙b7 4.0-0 e6 5.c4 c5



A proof of the poor reputation which the Hedgehog enjoyed in those days is that Vukic did not try to play his beloved Queen's Indian after the move order chosen by Black. After all, ...c5 is the distinctive feature of the Hedgehog and it must be included in the Sicilian family.

6.d4 cxd4

From a strictly structural point of view, this exchange must be regarded as being in Black's favour. But White gains control in the centre, as well as greater space and mobility, and clears the way to the weak point d6.

There are two differences with respect to a 'normal' Sicilian, both caused by the c-pawn being on c4: White has better control of the centre and the queenside, but a less violent attack on the kingside.

7.♙xd4 d6 8.♘c3 a6

The move order chosen by my opponent allowed me to establish the most precise set-up.

9.♖d1



9...♗c7

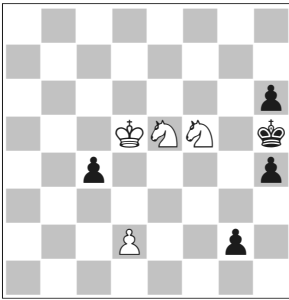
This may not be the most elastic move, but in many cases it will catch up with the more frequent lines by transposition. Let's review some theory, for a comparison:

A) 9...♙e7 and now:

A1) 10.♘g5 ♙xg2 11.♙xg2 ♘c6 12.♗f4 0-0 13.b3 ♖a7 14.♙b2 h6 15.♘f3 ♗d7 16.♖ac1 ♗b8 17.♗e4 ♘xe4 18.♗xe4 ♖c8 19.♗d2 with a dynamic equilibrium, and a draw was agreed in Adorjan-Gheorghiu, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1984;

A2) 10.b3 ♘bd7 11.e4 ♗b8 (later, most Hedgehog experts became adepts of my move 11...♗c8 – see the line 9...♘bd7 below – which deters White's attempts to play endgames. Uncompromising players like Vaissier attach an exclamation mark to it) 12.♙b2 0-0 13.♗e3 ♖e8 14.♘d4 ♙f8 15.♗d2 ♗a7 16.♖e1 ♖ac8 17.♖e2 ♗a8 18.♖ae1 ♖ed8 19.h3 ♘c5 20.♗e3 ♖e8 21.♗d2 with a dynamic equilib-

Quiz Position 17



The beauty of this study lies in having the first move produce the greatest possible degree of surprise and in the idea of constructing a cage around Black's king. By all rules, the solution move looks awkward, even ridiculous – the last move you would think about.

After you learn the solution, the idea is clear: White avoids intermediate checks and creates a zugzwang position! In Botvinnik's terms this is not a combination, as White does not sac anything. Neither etymology nor common sense can accept such a limitation. It is a nice combination. We can even argue that allowing Black to queen is quite a big sacrifice. I challenge all authors of chess engines to improve the methods for evaluating the final position. By now, we can be proud of our 'human understanding' of this 'positional draw', as all programs give an approximate -4 evaluation.

Once having seen this, the reader will surely accept Tartakower's adage:

A combination is a victory of spirit over matter.

It becomes obvious that classical strategy, although a good basis on which to learn chess, can prevent us from finding brilliant moves if it is applied dogmatically. Chess allows us to fully express our personalities. We are all geniuses when we find nice combinations. Of course we are, since we have had to make such efforts to break with dogma in order to find them.

The degree to which a move surprises a player corresponds, to a certain extent, with his chess culture, on how much dogma he has ingested and how much he has digested. In a given position, a quiet pawn move may look less obvious to a GM than putting the queen en prise.

How then do surprise moves appear? Does it mean they are not inferable from the position? On the contrary, it means that our rules for inference are either incomplete or wrong. Try to clothe the standard, classical approach with a new, dynamic strategy and **you will be better equipped both to find brilliant combinations yourself and to thwart your opponent's in good time.**

The first thing to do is to regard the moves as a continuum: **giving up something to get a superior something else in exchange.** Fair trade is no robbery! This way, it is easier to explain not only the occurrence of a combination but also the process of its accumulation. Strategy must bring to light the requirements of the position and tactics must then achieve them in one way or another.

My model for the game below was Smejkal-Timman. Unfortunately, at the time I was unaware of the really impressive performance by Uhlmann against Kortchnoi. See both games in the notes to move 12. Having analysed the former game in a hurry with my old friend IM Sergiu Grünberg, who was my second at the time, I asked him why White does not play 12.♘e4 instead of 12.♘a4. I must admit that it was a 'prepared error'. Shame! As an excuse I can say that the Interzonals were exhausting tournaments. We were too tired. I can only agree with Seirawan's saying: 'One must not only be good to win – one must also be lucky.'

Game 15 Suba-Jan Timman

Las Palmas Interzonal 1982

English: Reverse Dragon

1.c4 e5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♖g2 d5
4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.♘c3 ♘b6
6.♘f3 ♘c6



7.d3

If White wishes to play the variation with a3, it is better to play it after 7.0-0 ♖e7. Now 8.a3 0-0 9.b4 ♖e6 10.♙b1 f6 was seen in the 1989 Candidates' matches.



analysis diagram

Karpov continued 11.d3 against Hjartarson, while Portisch tried to improve against Timman with 11.♘e4. Although both games were won by White, a definite conclusion has yet to be drawn. In the New York Open 1989 I employed Portisch's 11.♘e4?! against Thorsteins and after 11...♖a2 12.♙b2 ♖d5 13.♘c5 e4! 14.♘e1 ♘c4 15.♙b1 ♖xc5 16.bxc5 b6, Black was at least equal. Some variations are just lucky – I won that game too!

Against Patrick Wolff (Park Hall-Preston 1989) I preferred 11.d3 and after 11...♘d4!? 12.♖b2 ♘xf3+ 13.♖xf3 c6 14.♘e4 ♖d5 15.♖c3! ♙c8 16.♖a1 White was able to prepare a minority attack on the queenside. The position after 11.d3 deserves to be assessed as preferable for White.

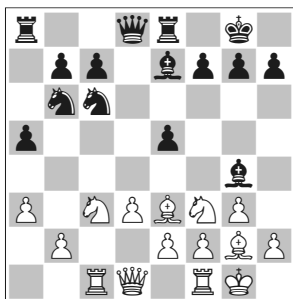
Another good example for my recommended order is 7.0-0 ♖e7

8.a3 0-0 9.b4 ♖e8 10.♞b1 ♕f8
 11.d3 a5 12.b5 ♘d4 13.♙b2 ♙g4
 14.♘d2 ♖c8 15.♞e1 a4 16.♖c1
 ♙d7 17.♘f3 c5 18.bxc6 ♙xc6
 19.♘xd4 exd4 20.♙xc6 bxc6
 21.♘e4 c5 22.♖c2 ♖d8 23.♙c1
 c4 24.dxc4 f5 25.♙g5 ♖c7 26.c5
 ♘c8 27.♙f4 ♖c6 28.♘g5 ♖d5
 29.♞ed1 h6 30.♘f3 ♖xc5
 31.♖a2+ ♔h7 32.♘xd4 ♖xa3
 33.♖xa3 ♙xa3 34.♘b5 ♙f8
 35.♘c7 ♘a7 36.♘xa8 ♞xa8
 37.♙d6 ♘c6 38.♙xf8 ♞xf8
 39.♞d6 and 1-0 in Portisch-
 Kortchnoi, Wijk aan Zee 1990.

7...♙e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.a3 a5

After my game with Mestel (see move 12) this plan completely disappeared from practice at high level. Better is 9...♙e6 10.b4 a5 11.b5 ♘d4 12.♘d2 a4 13.♙xb7 ♞a5 14.♞b1 ♖e8 15.♘f3? ♘xb5 16.♘xb5 ♞xb5 17.♖c2 ♞c5 18.♖b2 ♖b8 19.♙e4 f5 and 0-1 after 47 moves in Dorfman-Guseinov, Soviet Union 1984.

10.♙e3 ♞e8 11.♞c1 ♙g4



12.♘e4?

This move helps Black to realize his plan.

A) Theory was 12.♘a4 with the possible continuation 12...♘d5 13.♙c5 (interesting is 13.♞xc6 ♙xf3 14.♙xf3 bxc6 15.♖c2 ♘xe3 16.fxe3 ♙g5 17.♙xc6 ♙xe3+ 18.♔g2 ♞e7 19.♞f3 ♙d4 20.e3 ♙a7 21.♙xa8 ♖xa8 22.e4 h5 23.♖c4 ♖c8 and drawn after 38 moves in I.Ivanov-Torre, New York 1989) 13...♙f6 14.h3 (in those days the theory of this variation was rudimentary and even top players mistook bad for good and vice versa: 14.♖b3 ♞b8 15.♘d2 ♙e6 16.♖b5 ♘d4 17.♙xd4 exd4 18.♘c5 c6 19.♖a4 ♙g4 20.♘de4 ♙e5 21.f4 ♙f6 (21...b5 22.♖b3 a4 23.♖a2 ♙d6) 22.♞f2 ♘e3 23.♘b3 ♙e6 24.♘bc5 ♙g4 (24...b5!) 25.♙f3, but Smejkal was a big fighter – he kept playing for a win in a clearly worse position and succeeded: 1-0 after 85 moves in Smejkal-Timman, Moscow 1981) 14...♙e6 15.♔h2 (another alternative is 15.♞e1! g6 16.e4 ♘b6 17.d4 exd4 18.e5 ♙e7 19.♙xd4 ♘c4 20.♞e2 ♙d5 21.♙c5 ♙xc5 22.♘xc5 ♙xf3 23.♙xf3 ♘d4 24.♙xb7 ♘xe5 and drawn in Glek-Kaidanov, Kuibyshev 1981) 15...♖d7?! 16.♖c2 g6?! (16...♞ad8) 17.♞fd1 b6? 18.e4! ♘de7 19.d4!± and 1-0 after 58 moves in Uhlmann-Kortchnoi, Moscow 1971.

B) Petrosian's move 12.♘d2 is even less convincing, although Petrosian attached an '!' here. Why this move is strong is still a mystery to me. As Fischer remarked in one commentary, 'Petrosian likes to play