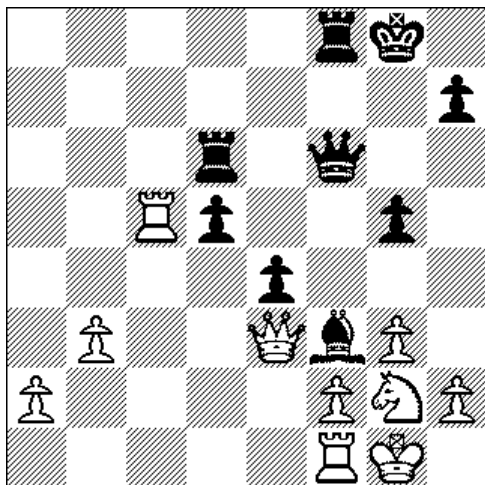


Mate is Enough

By Bob Basalla

Checkmate is the name of the game, isn't it? Well, actually the name of the game is chess, but checkmate is the **goal** of the game. One must always be alert for a chance to deliver that final blow, as after all, when you checkmate the other player you always win! That can't be said for any other move, even winning their queen for nothing! Let's look at a few examples, shall we?

The following position is from the 1984 Ohio Chess Congress. I had Black. He had the move.



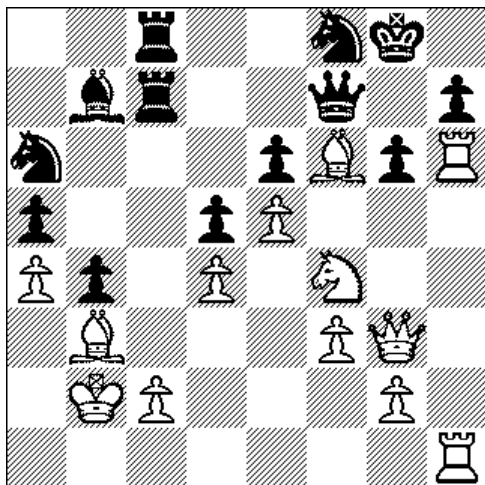
Black has built up some attack for a pawn, but it is not over yet. White tries to save himself by simplifying, which sounds like a good idea. Maybe activating his other rook would have been an even better idea. **33.Ng2-e1 Qf6-f5, 34.Ne1xf3 Pe4xf3** (A pawn or bishop on f3/f6 with a queen heading for h3/h6 is a common method of playing for a mate. Here Black's own exposed king makes it harder to play straight away.) **35.Kg1-h1** (A defensive move to guard g2 with a rook on g1. But once again, counter attack on the d-pawn is the correct defense.) **35...Rd6-h6, 36.g3-g4*** (White goes wild, thinking he sees a trick, but it backfires badly. However, there may not be a defense any more.)

* (Mr. Skripchenko, a chess coach and the father of well-known WGM Almira Skripchenko, sent us his analysis of the position arises after the 35 moves. He agreed that the move 36.g4? was a mistake and suggested the following line instead:

"36.Qd4 Rd6 37.Rc7 Rf7 38.Rf7 Qf7 39.a4 Qf5 40.a5 Qh3 41.Rg1 Qh2 42.Kh2 Rh6 43.Qh4+-, noticing that it will be white who wins."

Fritz 9 agreed that white's position is better and offered the following line: 36.Qd4 Rd8 37.g4 Qf6 38.Qf6 Rf6 39.Rd1 d4 40.Rg5 Kf7 41.Rd3 Re8 42.h3 Re1 43.Kh2 Rf1 44.Kg3)

36...Qf5xg4, 37.Rf1-g1 (Queen moves and White gets in 38...Rg1xg5+, right? But as was said before, mate is enough.) **37...Rh6xh2+** and mate next move by 38...Qg4-h4++ so White resigns. In fairness White was shorter of time than Black and the time control was at move 40. Even so, when a forced mate is there you have to be alert to see it and take it. Otherwise the worm can turn.

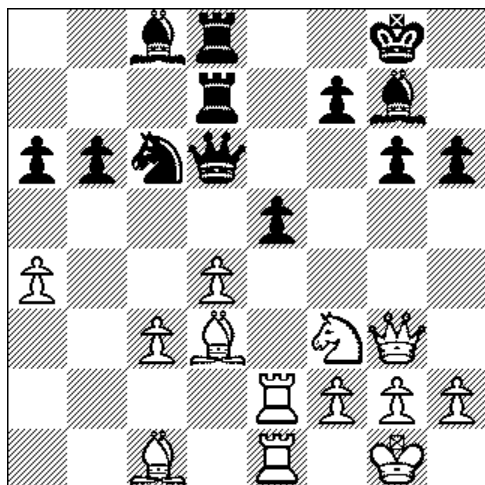


Here is a more complicated one from a Cleveland Chess Association Club League game from 2/17/87. I had White and my opponent was on move.

White (me!) has the better of the attacks as all my pieces except my bishop are playing a part in hunting his king, while Black has several pieces either totally on defense (Nf8) or out of play (Na6 and Bb7). Because of this Black plays a desperate sacrifice. But just because something is desperate doesn't mean you can treat it lightly. **30...Rc7xc2+, 31.Bb3xc2 Qf7-c7** (Black might have even tried the double-desperate 31...Rc8xc2+,

32.Kb2xc2 Qf7-c7+ but I don't think that would work either.) And here White played **32.Qg3-f2** and beat back Black's attack after **32...Qc7-c3+**, **33.Kb2-b1 Pb4-b3**, **34.Bc2-d3 Na6-b4**, **35.Qf2-b2 Nb4xd3**, **36.Qb2xc3 Rc8xc3**, **37.Nf4xd3 Rc3xd3**, **38.Rh1-c1 Nf8-d7**, **39.Rc1-c7 Nd7xf6**, **40.Pe5xf6 Bb7-a6**, **41.Rh6xh7** and White soon won. However, had I been more alert (and more blessed with time!) I might have found the nifty checkmating sequence: 32.Rh6xg6+ Nf8xg6 (if 32...Ph7xg6, 33.Rh6-h8+ Kg8-f7, 34.Qg3xg6+ Nf8xg6, 35.Bc2xg6++) 33.Qg3xg6+ Ph7xg6 (Here again, if 33...Kg8-f8, 34.Nf4xe6 is mate.) 34.Rh1-h8+ Kg8-f7, 35.Bc2xg6++. So it is mate in four however Black defends. Notice that all this was possible because of the White bishop being put on an attacking diagonal after 31.Bb3xc2! Black set up the mate himself! Under time pressure I couldn't figure out all the patterns so I played it "safe." But allowing the game and counterattack to go on is never as safe as a finishing checkmate!

Here's one more sneaky one for the road:



I had White and the move in this game from the Cleveland Chess Association Club League way back on 3/16/82. Black had outplayed me and was about to reap the fruits of his play by crashing through in the center, snagging a key pawn and most likely, the game. And I couldn't trade off one of my weak pawns on d4 because my bishop on d3 would hang. However, I had craftily prepared an amazing turnaround. **25.Bd3-c2** (Now I am the one threatening 26.Pd4xe5, but Black is not concerned as he continues with his consistent plan.) **25...Pe5xd4**, **26.Re2-e8+** (This almost looks like desperation, and my opponent said he thought it as much, avoiding the mistake of 26...Bg7-f8, 27.Bc1xh6. In reality, he is already without a saving move!) **26...Kg8-**

h7, **27.Nf3-g5+!** **Ph6xg5**, **28.Qg3-h3+ Bg7-h6**, **29.Bc1xg5**, and amazingly, checkmate cannot be stopped! Notice that instead of 27.Nf3-g5+ White could have played 27.Qg3-h3 and threatened 28.Nf3-g5++, but since that is not a check, it may allow some kind of a defense with 27...Bg7-f8. Move orders in these mating sequences can be very important! But as long as you are careful, mate is enough!