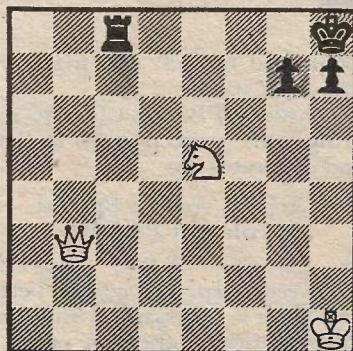


... and combine well

THE SHEER SPEED with which strong chess players can pluck combinations out of a position, sometimes barely pausing to think, can baffle the average enthusiast. The secret of this ability, however, is not just the extremely fast calculation of which top players are capable. A major factor is the knowledge of past positions with similar characteristics that a player has seen or experienced in previous games.

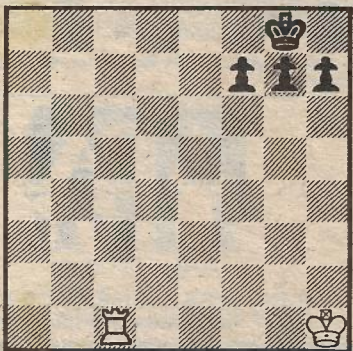
For example, here is a simple smothered mate position which experienced players should recognise straight away.



White plays 1.Nf7 ch Kg8 2.Nh6 double ch Kh8 3.Qg8 ch! Rxc8 4.Nf7 mate. Naturally there will be more pieces dotted around the board, but the essential idea is illustrated here.

What is needed, of course, is a book cataloguing the various elements of chess tactics, and I am pleased to report that such a book has just been published in New Zealand. *The Power of Chess Tactics*, written by Lev Aptekar, enables a player to recognise standard combinational themes so he may then utilise them in his own games.

Having spent 15 years as a trainer in the Soviet Union before emigrating to New Zealand, Aptekar is well qualified to write such a work, and all of the players on the European circuit to whom I showed it were impressed by the fine selection of game positions it contains. It is available from the New Zealand Chess Association, PO Box 8802, Auckland, at \$3.50 plus 25 cents postage.



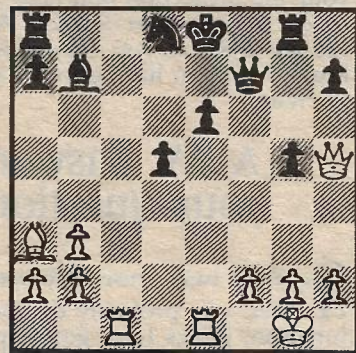
This is a back-rank mate position in basic form. White plays 1.Rc8 checkmate, as there is no escape for the Black king, hemmed in by his own pawns. Building on this idea, it should not be too difficult to spot what White played in this next position, drawn from Aptekar's book.



Minic v Honfi, Yugoslavia 1965.

1.Qa7! and Black resigned. Check for yourself why Black cannot capture the queen with either his own queen or rook, also why 1...Rxd5 is not a defence!

This next example illustrates the theme of the "see-saw".

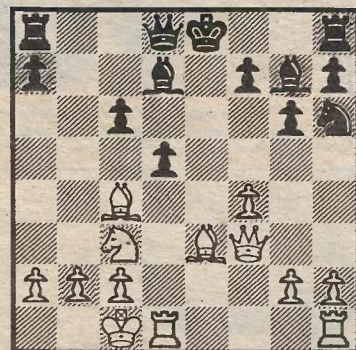


Antunac v Hubner, Dresden 1969.

1.Rc7! Qxh5 2.Re7 ch Kf8 3.Rxb7 ch Ke8 4.Re7 ch Kf8 5.Rxh7 ch (the see-saw is in full swing) Ke8 6.Rxh5 Resigns. Black could only watch helplessly while White picked off a bishop, a pawn and a queen in succession.

* * *

Among those players who should benefit from Aptekar's book are the contestants in this year's New Zealand school pupils championship, which resulted in a triple tie for first between Auckland Roy Mathias, and Jonathan Sarfati and Leonard McLaren of Wellington. In this position from the championship, Hammond Williamson was White, to play, against Michael Steadman.



Williamson played 1.Bc5 (trapping the Black king in the centre — 1...dxc4 fails to 2.Rhe1 ch) Be6 2.Nxd5! and Black got slaughtered; 2...cxd5 3.Bb5 ch Bd7 4.Rhe1 ch wins, as does 2...Bxd5 3. Bxd5 cxd5 4. Rhe1 ch Kd7 5. Qxd5 Kc7 6. Qxf7 ch etc.

MURRAY CHANDLER