

TACTICAL IDEA 3: TACTICS ON THE e-FILE

Imagine a position where the two e-pawns have disappeared. The enemy king is now a target. If you can get a queen, or, even better, a rook onto the e-file, then if there's an enemy piece in the way it's PINNED. If one of your own pieces is in the way you can play a DISCOVERED CHECK.

Let's look at a few examples and see how this works.

1. e4 e5

2. Nf3 Nf6

Instead of defending the e-pawn, Black creates an EQUAL THREAT against the white e-pawn. This is a good move, but you have to avoid a few traps.

3. Nxe5 Nxe4

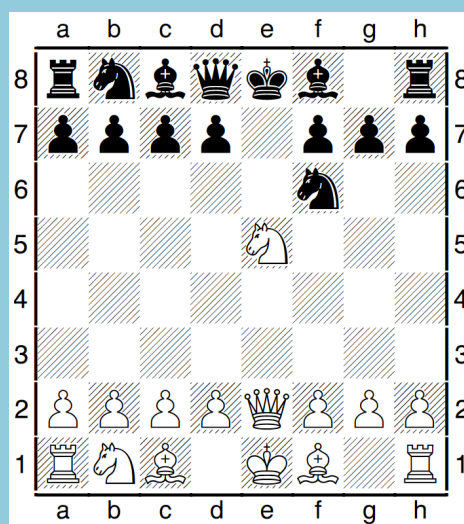
Not the best move, although not quite as bad as some people think.

Now White's best move is...

4. Qe2

Threatening the black knight. Let's suppose it moves to a safe square.

4... Nf6



It's White's move. What would you play here?

If you move your knight on e5 anywhere it will be DISCOVERED CHECK. So you look for the square where it will do the most damage without being captured by the black king.

5. Ng6+ THREATENS the rook on h8, but better still is 5. Nc6+, THREATENING the black queen. Of course Black can't capture the knight because the black king is in check.

Black could instead have copied White for one more move, playing 4... Qe7. After 5. Qxe4 d6 Black THREATENS the white knight which is now PINNED.

Black does better to play 3... d6, capturing the pawn on e4 next move. But you still have to be careful.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nf6
3. Nxe5 d6
4. Nf3 Nxe4
5. Nc3

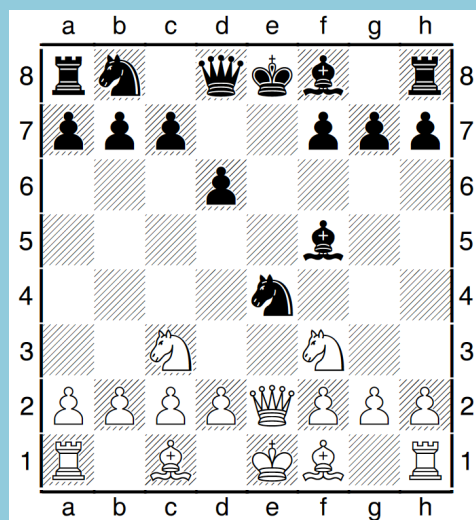
The most popular move here is 5. d4. If White plays Qe2 to PIN the black knight, Black has to UNPIN by playing Qe7.

Black should now play Nxc3, but it looks natural to develop a piece and DEFEND the knight.

5... Bf5

It's a mistake, though. White can win a piece by playing...

6. Qe2



Black's knight is THREATENED and PINNED. 6... d5 is met by 7. d3, attacking the pinned piece. Instead, 6... Qe7 is met by 7. Nd5, DEFLECTING the queen. Then 7... Qe6 runs into the FORK 8. Nxc7+.

Let's look at a different opening. You've seen the first few moves before.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bb5 a6
4. Bxc6 dxc6
5. O-O

This is much better than Nxe5, which we looked at a few pages ago.

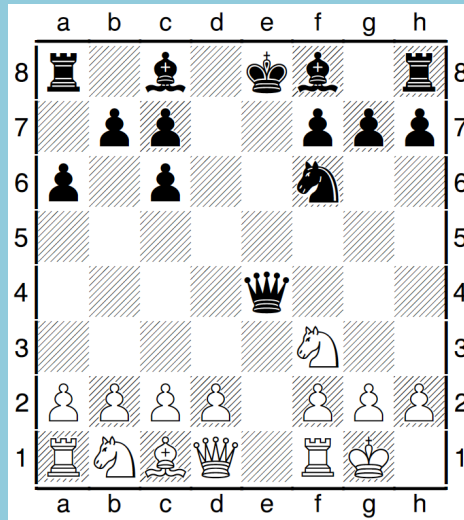
Now Black should do something about defending the e-pawn. It's easy to run into trouble by playing natural developing moves without thinking about what's going to happen next. 5... f6 is fine, as is 5... Bg4 (PIN!).

Now we're going to look at a move which is not so good.

- 5... Nf6
- 6. Nxe5

Now, unlike last move, taking the pawn is excellent. Black might try the QUEEN FORK:

- 6... Qd4
- 7. Nf3 Qxe4



This time it's very different because White has already castled.

White can play...

- 8. Re1

PINNING and winning the queen.

Let's go back a couple of moves. This time, after the moves

- 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6
- 4. Bxc6 dxc6 5. O-O Nf6 6. Nxe5

Black decides to take the pawn on e4 straight away.

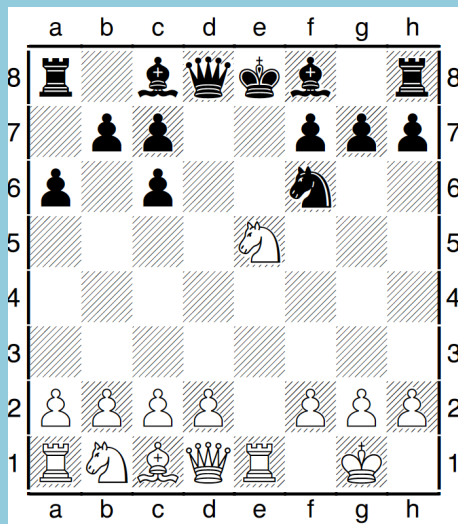
- 6... Nxe4

Again we move the rook into the action:

- 7. Re1

If Black decides to move the knight to safety:

- 7... Nf6



You know what happens next: White can use a DISCOVERED CHECK to win the black queen:

- 8. Nxc6+

And if Black decides to defend the knight by playing 7... Bf5 we can play 8. d3 and we're going to win a piece of some sort.