

# ATTACKING PLANS FOR BLACK

Black has many different attacking plans, depending primarily on which side of the board White chooses to castle. As Black, you don't want to commit yourself to a plan too early. Waiting for White to castle is a good idea, so that you can configure your pieces appropriately. Until White declares, just develop the pieces and keep an eye on the center. If White delays castling for too long, you may be able to rip open the position with the Sicilian break ...d5.

## White Castles Queenside

When White castles queenside, we have two basic plans of attack. One strategy is to advance the a-pawn to undermine the safety barrier of the White king. The other is a piece attack, using the c-file, a knight at f4, and bishop at e6. In either case, often we will sacrifice the exchange at c3 when we can force Black to recapture with the b-pawn, and even sometimes when the rook can be captured by another piece.

The attack with the a-pawn is especially effective when we have pressure on the a1-h8 diagonal. That is why a sacrifice at g4, opening the line for the Dragon bishop, is seen frequently. Sometimes the bishop enters the game when we move the knight from f6 to d5. If our pawn gets to a3, it can often be used by the queen to create a mating net.

The piece attack can take a variety of forms. Sometimes the b-pawn will come to b5 to support the infiltration of the knight at c4, or to advance to b4, and cause more trouble. If the pawn is captured, the b-file is open for a rook. We also see bishop sacrifices at a2, or a demolition of the position via a sacrifice at c2.

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### The Standard Attack

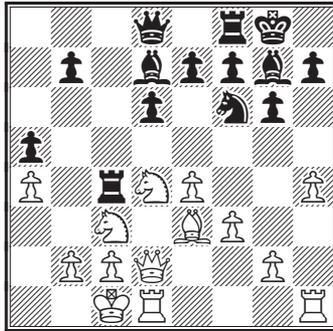
In our first game, Black launches the queenside attack prematurely, but White fails to set up the proper defense and it works anyway.

#### Danelian vs. Neverova

Soviet Union, 1986

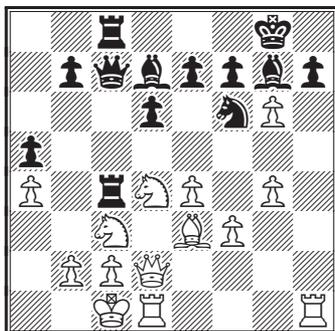
**1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 Nc6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 g6; 5.Nc3 Bg7; 6.Be3 Nf6; 7.Bc4 0-0; 8.Bb3 d6.** Black can avoid the Yugoslav Attack by playing 8...a5, since 9.f3 is met by 9...d5!

**9.f3 Bd7; 10.Qd2 Rc8; 11.0-0-0 a5?! This is a very rare, and weak continuation.** Black has lost the option of moving the queen to a5, and b5 is available to White's knights. **12.a4.** The further advance of the a-pawn is prevented, but the queenside is weakened. **12...Ne5; 13.h4 Nc4; 14.Bxc4 Rxc4.**



White could obtain an advantage here by kicking out the rook with b3, followed by Ncb5. Again, we see the need to keep our lust to attack under control by keeping an eye on strong defensive possibilities. The attack is not a mere horserace!

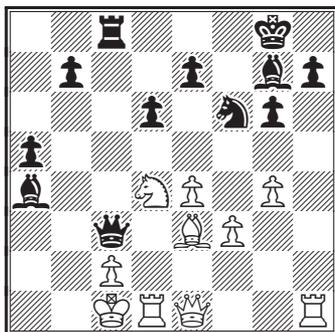
**15.g4?! Qc7; 16.h5.** 16.Bh6 allows the tactical trick 16...Nxe4! (16...Rxd4? is recommended by the commentators, but it is not good. 17.Qxd4 Bxh6+; 18.g5 Bg7; 19.gxf6 Bxf6. Since White cannot afford to allow ...Bxc3 and the subsequent loss of the a-pawn, the play is forced. 20.Nd5 Bxd4; 21.Nxc7 Be3+; 22.Kb1. White has a small advantage.) 17.fxe4 Rxd4. White may have nothing better than 18.Qxd4 Bxd4; 19.Nd5 but the situation after 19...Qc5; 20.Nxe7+ Kh8; 21.Bxf8 Bxa4; 22.Rd2 (22.Rh2 Bxb2+; 23.Kxb2 Qe5+) 22...Be3 is beyond mortal salvation. **16...Rc8; 17.hxg6.**



Black usually captures toward the center, but in this case it is better to use the f-pawn, keeping the h-file closed and a potential passed pawn in the endgame. **17...fxg6!** 17...hxg6; 18.g5! Nh5; 19.Nd5, and here 19...Rxa4; 20.Kb1 Qd8; 21.b3 traps the rook.

**18.Qh2.** 18.Ndb5 is a defensive try. There is still plenty of attacking force left on the kingside. Play might continue 18...Bxb5; 19.axb5 Rxc3; 20.Qxc3 Qxc3; 21.bxc3 Rxc3; 22.Rd3 Rxd3; 23.cxd3 Nd7. White has better chances in this endgame, and Black will remain on the defensive for a long time. **18...Rxc3!; 19.bxc3 Qxc3.** Material is not the primary consideration here. The White king is the immediate target, and a favorable endgame is the goal.

**20.Qf2 Bxa4; 21.Qe1.**



Black uses the clearance combination **21...Nxe4** to force a winning position. 21...Qa3+; 22.Kd2 Nxe4+ would have been more precise. **22.Qxc3 Nxc3; 23.Rd2 Bd7; 24.Re1 Rc4; 25.Rd3 Nd5; 26.Bf2 Ba4; 27.Rd2 Bh6.** White resigned.

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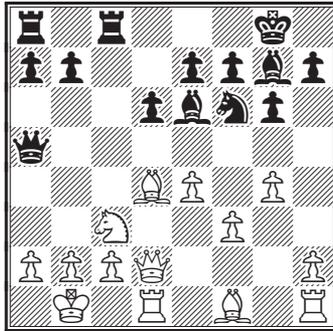
### White Refrains from Bc4

When White adopts a system that keeps the bishop at f1, there is less pressure on Black's f7-square, and the a2-g8 diagonal can be used in conjunction with an attack on the c-file. Black can establish a bishop at e6 after exchanging knights at d4. This is a popular approach, and was seen in the 1995, PCA World Championship match and in many other important encounters.

#### Dolgov vs. Lebedev

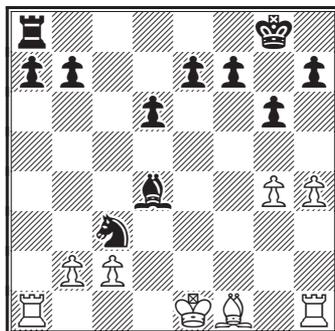
Russia, 1967

This game was awarded the best game prize for the tournament. Black demonstrates a variety of tactics in a successful queenside attack, which leads to a winning endgame. **1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 0-0; 8.Qd2 Nc6; 9.g4 Nxd4; 10.Bxd4 Be6; 11.0-0-0 Qa5; 12.Kb1 Rfc8.**



Black's defense is solid, and there is an escape route for the king along the 8th rank. Therefore White should defend the a-pawn by moving it to a3, then aim for Nd5. The kingside attack is premature here, and allows Black to show the proper queenside plan without much interference.

**13.h4?** White fails to sense the danger. Black starts with the sacrifice at c3, even though that square, and e4, seem to be well defended. **13...Rxc3!; 14.Qxc3 Qxa2+; 15.Kc1.** Now it is time to undermine the center. **15...Bxg4!** White should probably ignore the bishop, but is then facing a serious queenside attack without any material to show for the inconvenience. **16.fxg4 Qa1+; 17.Kd2 Nxe4+; 18.Ke1 Nxc3!** This is more efficient than capturing at d1, though that is also good for Black. **19.Rxa1 Bxd4.**

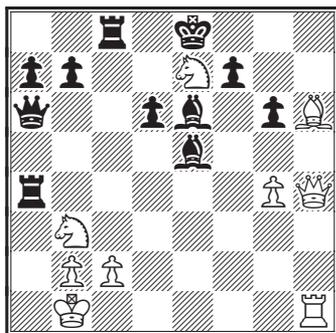


Black enters the endgame with three pawns for the exchange. White tries to create some counterplay. **20.Bg2 Nb5!**; **21.c3?** White is in trouble, but this is suicide. Black gives up the minor pieces for a rook and two pawns.

**21...Nxc3; 22.bxc3 Bxc3+; 23.Ke2 Bxa1; 24.Rxa1 a5; 25.Bxb7 Ra7.** The endgame is not difficult for Black to win, with four pawns for the piece. **26.Be4 h6; 27.Ke3 Kg7; 28.Ra2 e6; 29.Kd4 f5; 30.gxf5 gxf5; 31.Bf3 Kf6; 32.h5 a4; 33.Ra3 Ra5; 34.Bc6 e5+; 35.Kd3 Kg5; 36.Bxa4 Rd5+.** White resigned.

## Attack on the a-file

Even with the pawn at a7, Black can use the a-file to attack the enemy king. In the next example, Black has sacrificed a piece, but has all pieces aimed at the enemy king. The vulnerability of White's king could have been exploited had Black found the combinational key.



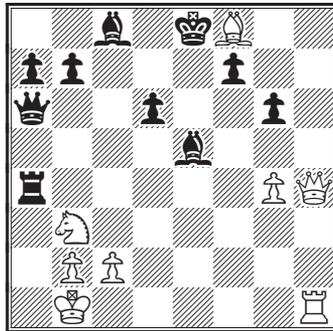
**Zezulkin vs. Kulagin**  
Czestochowa, 1991

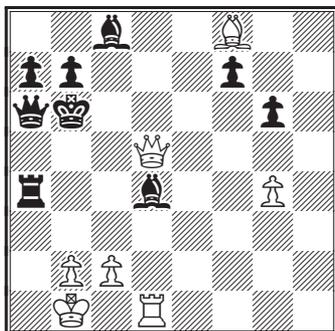
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This is a critical position. Both attacks are raging. White is obviously going to capture the rook at c8, since the rook is a powerful attacking force. Then it gets complicated.

**32.Nxc8 Bxc8?** 32...Ra1+!! is the correct move. The rook sacrifice leads to a long king hunt, but it is not hard to work out the details. 33.Nxa1 Qa2+; 34.Kc1 Qxb2+; 35.Kd2 Qd4+; 36.Ke1! Qxa1+; 37.Kf2 Bd4+; 38.Be3 (38.Kg3 Qc3+; 39.Kg2 Qxc2+ is a simple win for Black) 38...Bxe3+; 39.Ke2! (39.Kxe3 Qc3+; 40.Kf2 Qxc2+; 41.Kg3 Qxc8; 42.Qh8+ Kd7; 43.Qxc8+ Kxc8 is hopeless for White) 39...Bxc8; 40.Qh8+ Qxh8; 41.Rxh8+ Kd7; 42.Kxe3 Kc7 and the presence of the pawn at c2 does not significantly prolong the game.

White managed to take advantage of Black's oversight with the amazing move **33.Bf8!!**





**43.Qd8+.** 43.c4 is only slightly worse for White, according to Zezulkin, who missed mate in six: 43...Ra1+; 44.Kc2 Qa4+; 45.Kd3 Qxd1+; 46.Ke4 Qe1+!; 47.Kf3 (47.Kxd4 Rd1#) 47...Qf2+; 48.Ke4 Qe3#. 43...Kb5; 44.Qd5+.

## White Castles Kingside

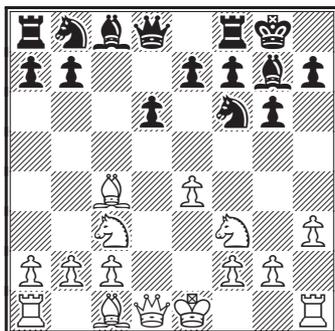
Attacks against the kingside are rarer, but they do occur if the circumstances permit. To carry out this strategy, Black needs the power of a second fianchettoed bishop at b7. Setting this up takes time and concedes space to White, and the relevant positions can rarely be arrived at in the main lines.

### Benjamin vs. Gufeld

New York, 1989

Here's how I defeated the 1997 United States Champion, who had already won the title once when we met in this game.

**1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Bc4 Bg7; 7.h3 0-0; 8.Nf3?!**

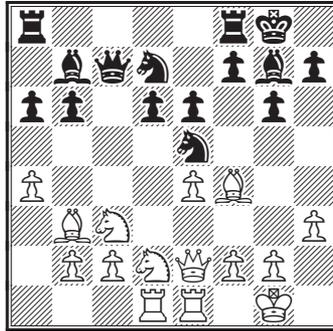


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Benjamin is known for his interest in unusual openings, and here he takes up a very rare move. I decided to do something a bit different myself, placing my knight at d7 instead of the usual c6. It doesn't make much of a difference, because it winds up at e5 anyway.

**8...Nbd7!?**; **9.0-0 a6**; **10.a4 b6**. If the White knight still stood on d4, White might be able to make good use of the c6-square. **11.Qe2 Bb7**; **12.Bf4 Qc7**; **13.Rfe1 e6!** This is known as the hedgehog formation. It is usually seen in the Accelerated Dragon where White has a pawn on c4. The bishop at b7 can help in a kingside attack.

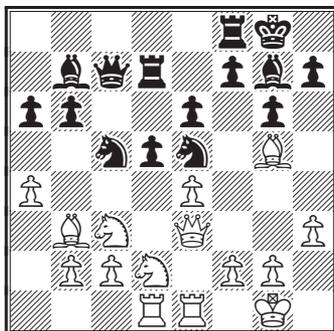
**14.Rad1 Ne5**; **15.Bb3**. **15.Nxe5?!** dxe5 and the doubled pawns turn out to be quite strong. **15...Nfd7**; **16.Nd2**.



There is a secret hidden in this position. White must keep the bishop at f4, as otherwise White will exchange knights at f3 and bring the other knight to e5. White's move anticipates this plan. The attempt to double rooks illustrates the plan. **16.Rd2?! Nxf3+**; **17.gxf3 Ne5**. Black is better, because to get rid of the knight White will either have to give up the essential dark squared bishop, or organize the advance of the f-pawn, which will weaken e4.

**16...Nc5**; **17.Be3 Rad8**; **18.Bg5?!** This is a waste of time. **18.f4!?** was better, in my opinion, but Eric prefers **18.Bd4!?** For example, **18...Nxb3**; **19.cxb3!?** intending **19...Rc8**; **20.Qe3** winning the b-pawn. **18...Rd7**; **19.Qe3?!** White wants to attack with Bh6, but the attack has no support.

19...d5!

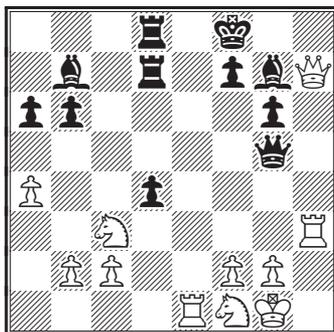


The Sicilian break has added power because of the threat of ...d4. 20.exd5 exd5; 21.Qg3 Ne6!; 22.h4 Nxc5; 23.hxc5 Rfd8; 24.Nf1. If White had anticipated my next move, then 24.Nf3 might have been a wiser choice.

24...Kf8! A surprising move in a tense situation. I invite my opponent to go after the h-pawn, which is now undefended.

25.Qh4 Nc4!; 26.Bxc4 Qxc4; 27.Qxh7? White should have settled for exchanging queens, though my bishop pair will be effective in the endgame. 27.Qxc4 dxc4; 28.Rxd7 Rxd7; 29.Ne3 Rd4; 30.Kf1 Bc6 is very uncomfortable for White.

27...Qg4; 28.Rd3 Qxg5; 29.Rh3 d4!



The bishops dominate the endgame. Two dragons breathe fire at the enemy horses!

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**30.Ne4 Qe5; 31.Nfd2 d3!; 32.Nf3 Qxb2; 33.cxd3 Rxd3;  
34.Neg5 Rd1; 35.Rxd1 Rxd1+; 36.Kh2 Qxf2-+; 37.Nxf7. 37.Ne6+  
fxe6; 38.Qxg6 loses to 38...Be5+!; 39.Nxe5 Qg1+; 40.Kg3 Qxg2+;  
41.Kh4 Qxh3+!; 42.Kxh3 Rh1+; 43.Kg4 Rg1+.**

**37...Bxf3!; 38.Rxf3 Qg1+; 39.Kg3 Qe1+; 40.Kg4 Rd4+; 41.Kg5  
Qe7+; 42.Kxg6 Qe6+; 43.Kg5 Qg4#.**