The background of the cover is a warm, reddish-brown color. In the center, there is a perspective view of a chessboard with a green and white checkered pattern. Several chess pieces are visible: a red king, a red knight, a red rook, and a yellow knight. A large, dark brown puzzle piece is superimposed over the board, with its shape cut out to reveal the chessboard underneath. The puzzle piece has a complex, irregular shape with several interlocking points.

The Chess
PUZZLE
Book

4

**Mastering the
Positional Principles**

Karsten Müller & Alex Markgraf
Foreword by Mark Dvoretsky

**The
Chess Puzzle Book 4**

Mastering the Positional Principles

by

**Karsten Müller
&
Alexander Markgraf**

Foreword by Mark Dvoretsky



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Mastering the Positional Principles
by
Karsten Müller
Alexander Markgraf

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Signs and Symbols

1-0	White wins
0-1	Black wins
$\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$	Draw agreed
+	check
#	mate
!	a strong move
!!	a brilliant or unobvious move
?	a weak move, an error
??	a grave error
!?	a move worth consideration
=	an equal position
\cong	White is slightly better
\pm	White has a clear advantage
+−	White has a winning position
\mp	Black is slightly better
\mp	Black has a clear advantage
−+	Black has a winning position
∞	an unclear position
∞	with compensation
ol	Olympiad
m	match
ch	championship
wch	world championship
corr	correspondence game
[W]	White to move
[B]	Black to move
(D)	see the next diagram

Foreword

Regular training plays, or rather, should play, an important role in self-improvement. The participants of any sport know this, as do musicians, dancers, etc. Unfortunately, most coaches and their students ignore this technique for some reason.

For those players who are ready to improve their skills and learn new techniques, rather than just strain their memories with limitless opening analysis, it is important to find a high-quality collection of exercises involving various chess topics. Grandmaster Karsten Müller's Puzzle Book series can be a great help.

This is the fourth book in the series, and, in my opinion, the most interesting and useful. The thing is, there are many tactics books. Not all are created equal; only some are of very high quality. Books with positional exercises are much less common, although you can still find some in the huge market of chess literature. However, I cannot think of any books with high-quality exercises regarding such topics as domination, the "do not hurry" principle, the principle of two weaknesses, etc., all of which are discussed by Müller and his co-author Alexander Markgraf.

A significant number of the exercises in this new book pertain to the realization of an accumulated advantage. In making decisions, one has to consider not only purely chess implications but also psychological factors. Indeed, it often makes sense to choose a continuation that is not objectively strongest, instead making things easier for the player or creating difficulties for the opponent, helping him make mistakes.

A strong chess player and an experienced coach (and Müller has considerable coaching experience) is able to explain the inner logic of these positions, a logic that is sometimes not quite obvious at first sight. The authors' comments to the positions, which explain the topic which is being discussed, are interesting and instructive. It is not as simple with the exercises, which the readers have to solve on their own.

Indeed, for the positional exercises (as opposed to purely tactical ones), which involve no small part of psychology, there can be different interpretations. It can be difficult to decide which approach is correct. Moreover, even a computer often does not give clear preference to one or another. However, when you compare your decision to the authors' comments, you can trust their opinion. Indeed, Müller's previous books and articles have established his reputation as an extremely diligent author who always carefully checks his material. On the other hand, bearing in mind that the exercises of this kind often do not have a unique solution, you might stay with your own solution. Careful examination and com-

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parison to the author's solution is very useful in any case, regardless of your final conclusion.

I hope that you enjoy this new book by Müller and Markgraf and I encourage you to seriously study the positions discussed in the book. As a result, you will significantly progress in your understanding of chess and improve your results.

Mark Dvoretzky
Moscow
June 2012

Introduction

Many coaches agree that solving exercises without moving the pieces is a good way to train and improve your abilities. And, of course, books with tactical puzzles abound. But what about other areas of the royal game? Here much less material is available. The present book mostly deals with the important technical question of how to convert a static advantage. A few chapters like prophylaxis and the right exchange also tackle wider issues. The chapters on prophylaxis and the principle of two weaknesses are based on works by Alexander Markgraf to get his A and B German trainer licenses. They have been translated, checked and rewritten by Karsten Müller to fit into this series.

Finally we want to thank our publisher Hanon W. Russell for his help and cooperation, Mark Dvoretzky for his foreword and our students Fiona Sieber, Spartak Grigorian, Philipp and Marcel Kyas, Rasmus Svane, Jonas Lampert, Julian Kramer, and Daniel and Julian Grötzbach for testing the exercises. We wish you a lot of fun while improving your positional feeling!

Karsten Müller and Alexander Markgraf
Hamburg
March 2012

Chapter 1 Prophylaxis

(1.1) The Theoretical Concept

Nimzowitsch introduced the concept of prophylaxis. He valued it very highly and even made it the most important principle of positional play. In his work *My System* he defined prophylaxis as “taking precautionary measures to render positional harmful options harmless.” In principle, he distinguished between two forms of prophylaxis: the inner and the outer. Outer prophylaxis means stopping the ideas and plans of the opponent, especially so-called freeing moves. Inner prophylaxis means overprotecting important points, for example, the base of a pawn chain.

Among the modern authors who have dealt with prophylaxis, Dvoretsky stands out. He not only found good examples for prophylactic play, but also formed a model of thought for employing the principle of prophylaxis in a practical game – the so-called “prophylactic thinking.” He recommends that you should ask yourself, after every move, what the opponent is threatening or planning, especially what he would play if it were his move. Furthermore, your ability should be trained to use those answers in your own processes in reaching a decision. Dvoretsky stresses explicitly that this method is not a pure chess phenomenon. The psychological aspects must be taken into consideration as well: “It is in the nature of mankind that he thinks mostly about his own plans, ideas and feeling. The opponent (and in chess the

opponent has exactly the same rights!) is often forgotten and from time to time we even shed tears.” It is indeed helpful to ask yourself during the games: “What is my opponent planning?” Only in this way is it possible to make sure, that we give the opponents plans the same priority as ours.”

(1.2) How to Train Prophylactic Thinking?

Why should a chessplayer try to master the concept of prophylaxis? Chess is a game between two players. Both have the same options and rights. So an optimal plan always has to take the options of the opponent into account and put one’s own aims forward. Prophylactic thinking is relevant in almost all positions. If you have already achieved a large advantage, it is important for its realization to give the opponent no more counterplay than absolutely necessary. Otherwise the opponent must be beaten twice or three times in every game. In tactical positions, it is also very important to deal with your opponent’s options. If this concept is applied carefully, then the number of tactical oversights can be reduced considerably.

The defense of difficult positions is often based on preventing an opponent’s plans and ideas. This is of course much easier if you see them before they appear on the board. As the attacker, you should search for defensive setups early and not when they repel your attack for good. So

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prophylactic thinking can be found and applied in all phases of the royal game, regardless if you are dealing with the opening, middlegame or endgame, or if you are dealing with a strategic, tactical or technical position.

So progress in understanding prophylaxis is progress in all areas of chess. But the very broad field of prophylaxis also introduces problems for both trainer and student. Successful prophylaxis can only be applied if the type of the position at hand and the plans of both sides are fully understood. For example, the side with the pair of bishops should be aware that one main plan of the opponent is to halve the pair. With certain pawn structures, it is important to know which pieces should be exchanged and which should remain on the board to use, e.g., an outpost.

In the endgame you should know which theoretical positions are won and which are drawn. This could be continued of course. So the training of prophylaxis should always be in accordance with the general development of the student. Nevertheless, one issue that arises is whether the method of prophylactic thinking – the constant searching for the opponent's plans – should be introduced early in training, so that the student can get used to it. Classical games of great master of prophylaxis are very helpful for this purpose. Petrosian and Karpov come particularly to mind. Both players had a very prophylactic style. Petrosian thought in larger dimensions and tried to prevent any counterplay during the whole game. The following game is quite typical of this. At first, Petrosian seems to start an attack with his pawns on the kingside in a typical King's

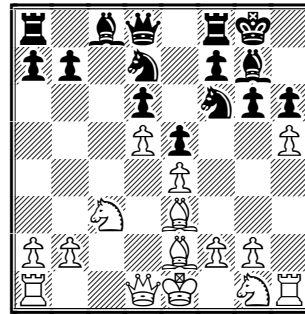
Indian position. But in reality, his aim is to close that wing, stopping the usual source of counterplay ...f7-f5, and then to attack undisturbed on his home turf, the queenside.

01.01 Petrosian – Schweber

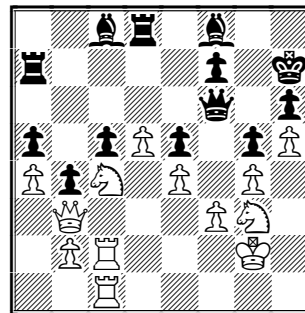
Stockholm Interzonal 1962

King's Indian Defense [E73]

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♙g7 4.e4 d6 5.♙e2 0-0 6.♙g5 h6 7.♙e3 e5 8.d5 c6 9.h4 c×d5 10.c×d5 ♗bd7 11.h5 (D)



At first this looks like an attack, but in reality, Petrosian wants to prevent Black's play before it begins. **11...g5 12.f3 a6 13.g4 b5 14.a4 b4 15.♗b1 a5 16.♗d2 ♗c5 17.♙×c5 d×c5 18.♙b5 ♙b7 19.♗e2 ♗e8 20.♙×e8 ♗×e8 21.♗c4 ♙a6 22.♙b3 ♗f6 23.♗c1 ♙f8 24.♗g3 ♙c8 25.0-0 ♗d8 26.♙g2 ♗a7 27.♗f2 ♙h7 28.♗fc2 (D)**

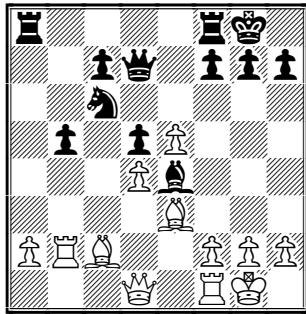


Prophylaxis

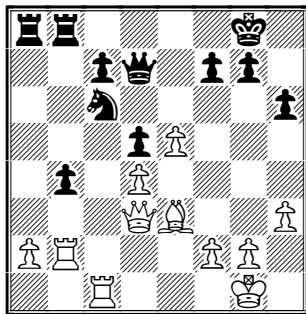
A complete triumph of Petrosian's strategy. Black is positionally lost, as he has many structural weaknesses and no counterplay. **28...♖a6?! 29.♗×e5 ♜c7 30.♗c4 ♕g7 31.♞d3 ♝g8 32.♞d2 ♞e7 33.e5 ♕×e5 34.♗×e5 ♞×e5 35.♞×a6 ♕×a6 36.♞×c5 ♕c8 37.♞×a5 f5 38.g×f5 ♕×f5 39.♗×f5 ♞×f5 40.♞b5 ♞df8 41.d6 ♞×b5 42.a×b5 ♝f7 43.d7 1-0**

Karpov's style is more concrete. He stops threats of his opponent that might arise in a few moves. This is well-illustrated by the following example:

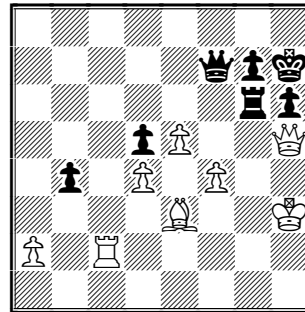
01.02 Karpov – Yusupov USSR (ch) Moscow 1983 [W] (D)



Karpov fights against the regrouping of the knight to c4 in the following moves as the knight on c4 would block the c-file and so would stop White's attack against the weak c7-pawn: **20.♕d3! ♕×d3 21.♞×d3 ♞fb8 22.♞fb1 b4 23.h3 h6 24.♞c1 (D)**



24...♞b6 Trying to regroup the knight with 24...♗a5 is met by 25.♞b1! (Karpov in *Informant* 35/427) 25...♗c4 26.♞×b4 ♞×b4 27.♞×b4 as 27...♞×a2?? runs into 28.♞b8+ ♝h7 29.♞b1+--. **25.♞b1 ♞ab8 26.♞c5!** Karpov now stops ...♗a5 directly. **26...♗d8 27.♞cc2 ♗c6 28.♞c1 ♞8b7 29.♞c5** The motif repeats itself **29...♗e7 30.♝h2** Now Karpov plans and attack on the kingside to open a second front, which induces a mistake immediately. **30...♗f5?** Yusupov had to sit tight and wait with, e.g., 30...♞a6. **31.♞bc2 ♞g6?! 32.♞×c7 ♞×c7 33.♞×c7 ♞b5 34.g4 ♗h4 35.♞c8+ ♝h7 36.♞d1 ♞a6 37.♞c2 f5?! 38.♝g3 f×g4 39.♝×h4 g×h3 40.f4 ♞e6 41.♞h5 ♞e7+ 42.♝×h3 ♞f7 (D)**



Now comes Karpov's tactical point, the prophylactic **43.♞h2!! ♞d7+ 44.f5 1-0**

In addition to these two great players, studying the games of Dvoretzky's students Yusupov and Dolmatov is productive.

(1.3) Prophylaxis in the Middlegame

Because of the universal nature of prophylaxis, we cannot deal with all aspects extensively and will mostly deal with middlegames. In the opening