

# LEARN CHESS THE RIGHT WAY

Book 3: Mastering Defensive Technique



Internationally Acclaimed Chess Trainer!

## GRANDMASTER SUSAN POLGAR

Women's World Chess Champion

# **Learn Chess the Right Way**

**Book 3**

**Mastering Defensive Technique**

**by  
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with Paul Truong**



2016  
Russell Enterprises, Inc.  
Milford, CT USA

Learn Chess the Right Way  
Book 3: Mastering Defensive Technique

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ISBN: 978-1-941270-49-3  
ISBN (eBook): 978-1-941270-50-9

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Published by:  
Russell Enterprises, Inc.  
PO Box 3131  
Milford, CT 06460 USA

<http://www.russell-enterprises.com>  
[info@russell-enterprises.com](mailto:info@russell-enterprises.com)

Cover design by Janel Lowrance  
Front cover Image by Christine Flores  
Back cover photo by Timea Jaksa

Printed in the United States of America



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# Introduction

Ever since I was four years old, I remember the joy of solving chess puzzles. I wrote my first puzzle book when I was just 15, and have published a number of other best-sellers since, such as *A World Champion's Guide to Chess*, *Chess Tactics for Champions*, and *Breaking Through*, etc.

With over 40 years of experience as a world-class player and trainer, I have developed the most effective way to help young players and beginners – *Learn Chess the Right Way*. By understanding the most common and critical patterns, it will help you improve much quicker.

In this series of ***Learn Chess the Right Way***, I will show you the most effective way to learn and improve through pattern recognition.

In **Volume 3**, you will be introduced to 500 must-know defensive techniques. Each chapter will start with a few introductory examples and explanation about what to look for in the puzzles that follow.

In chapter 1, the task is to move an attacked piece. In each puzzle, there is only one good solution by moving the attacked piece to a safe square. In chapter 2, one of the kings is in check. The goal is to find the correct response. In chapter 3, a piece is attacked, but has no good square to which to move. So, rather than moving the attacked piece(s), you will need to look for a way to protect it with another piece.

In chapter 4, we focus on defensive ideas against a direct checkmate threat. In chapter 5, one side “defends” by counter-attacking. In chapters 6 and 7, you will be introduced to the game-saving techniques of drawing by stalemate or perpetual check. In chapter 8, the task is to catch a pawn that is about to promote. In chapter 9, a certain piece is about to get “trapped.” The task is to prepare for the attack and avoid material loss. Finally, in chapter 10, you can practice solving a variety of defensive ideas, with the goal to avoid or minimize material losses or being checkmated.

In some examples it will be White to move, while in others you will have to try to find the saving move for Black. Also please note that under each diagram you will be able to record the amount of time it took you to solve each puzzle. As you go through and solve the puzzles again, your speed recognizing the winning material patterns should improve.

In chess, pattern recognition is a very important part of playing better chess. Therefore, my suggestion is to try to solve the puzzles multiple times, or until you feel that you can recognize the correct solutions within a minute per page (4 puzzles). Initially you may want to set up the pieces on the chess board as shown in the diagrams (make sure every piece is exactly as shown!), but by the second time around I would surely recommend to try to solve the puzzles just from the diagram.

Wishing you enjoyment on embarking on the road “Learning Chess the Right Way!”

Susan Polgar  
July 2016

# Chapter 1

## Run!

Once one of your pieces is attacked by an enemy piece, you may have a number of options. Usually, the most natural and simplest response is to “run.” In other words, move away from the attacking piece.

Of course, depending on the exact situation, you may have other – and perhaps better – options, such as capturing the enemy piece which is attacking your piece, or ignoring the attack on your piece and counterattack.

In this chapter, we shall see only examples where your best option is to “run.”

Once you recognize that one of your pieces is under attack and that you want to move it, you need to identify the safe square(s) to which to move. Moving to a wrong square where your attacked piece would still get captured, possibly by a different enemy piece, would be no help.

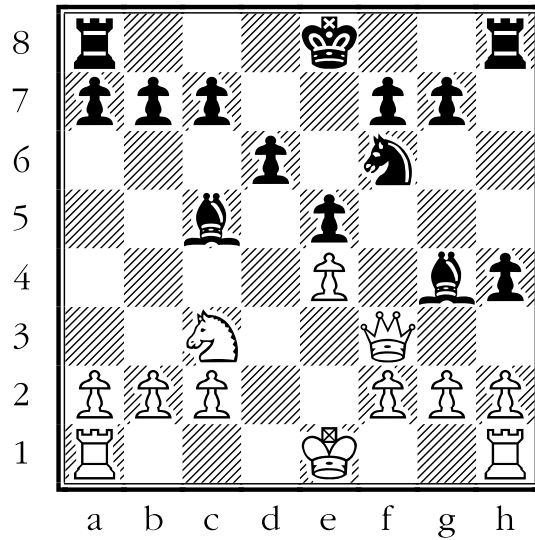
In order to understand which squares are safe for your pieces, it is essential to understand the relative value of the different pieces:

Queen = 9
Rook = 5
Bishop or Knight = 3
Pawn = 1

The king can never be captured (removed from the board) and has no relative value.

It is very important to be clear about the values of the various pieces as shown in the above table so that you will avoid moves which lose material for no reason.

Now let us take a look at a few basic examples of what you will practice in this chapter.

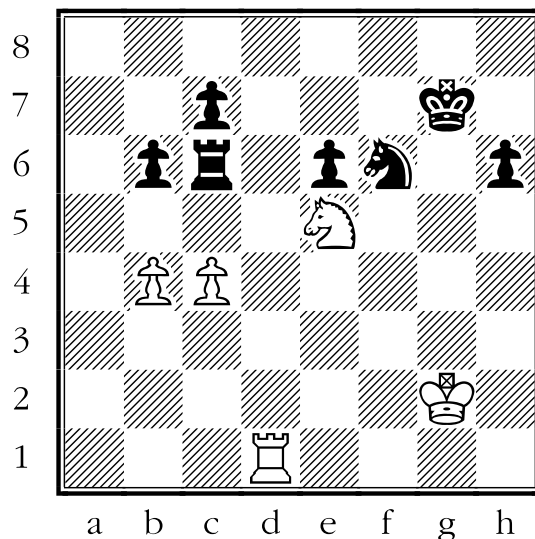


*White to move*

Black's last move was Bc8-g4, attacking the white queen on f3. If White captures the bishop on g4, Black would simply recapture with Nxg4, thereby winning a queen while only losing a bishop. In other words, White would lose 6 points based on the "relative value table" above. The same material loss would occur if White were to capture the black knight with Qxf6 after which Black responds with g7xf6.

Now that we have established that there is nothing that the white queen can capture safely, it is time to search for a safe square. It is not good to move the queen to e3 (on account of Bxe3) or g3 (on account of h4xg3) or other squares, save one. It is not difficult to come to the conclusion that in this position, d3 is the only safe square to which to "run."

In some cases, as in our next example, in order to find a safe square, it is necessary to find a supportive piece (one of your own); this can even be a pawn.

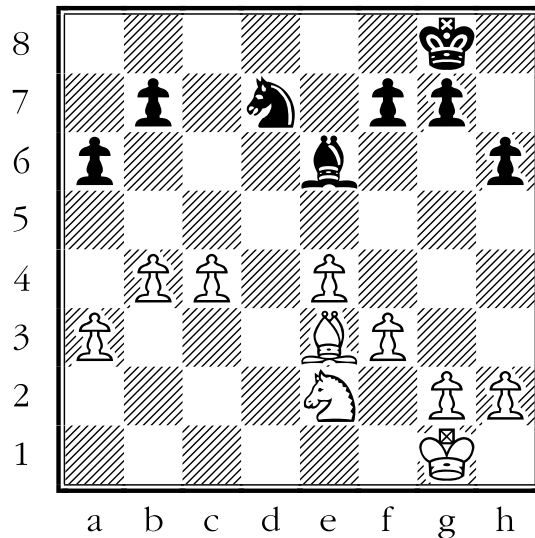


*Black to move*

## Run!

Here, White's last move was Nf3-e5, attacking Black's rook on c6. White's pawn on c4 is safe as after Rxc4, the white knight would capture Black's rook there.

The only move to avoid losing material is Rd6. It is key to recognize that after 1...Rd6, if White captures 2.Rxd6 Black can simply recapture with 2...cxd6, which would result in an exchange of rooks without any material loss on either side. In this case the "supportive role" of the c7-pawn was essential to find the safe square.



*White to move*

Every piece is important in chess. Generally, you would not want to lose even the lowest valued piece (a pawn) for no reason. In the position above, the white pawn on c4 is "hanging," which is a chess word for a piece under attack without protection.

The right answer here is to simply push the c4-pawn to c5 and White avoids losing any material.

Now you will find 100 examples to practice the above theme. They will be separated by the various pieces. In the first 20 puzzles, you will have to find the safe square for the queen. In the next 20, you will have to do the same for the rook, then bishop, knight and then finally in the last 20, the pawn.

Remember, in most examples, the task simple, just find a safe square, but in others, first you will need to establish which is the "supportive piece" in order to find the correct answer.

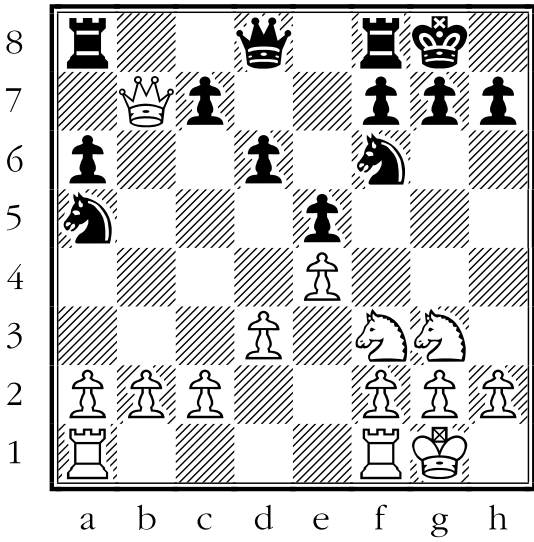
And now, have fun, and good luck solving the next 100 puzzles!



# Learn Chess the Right Way

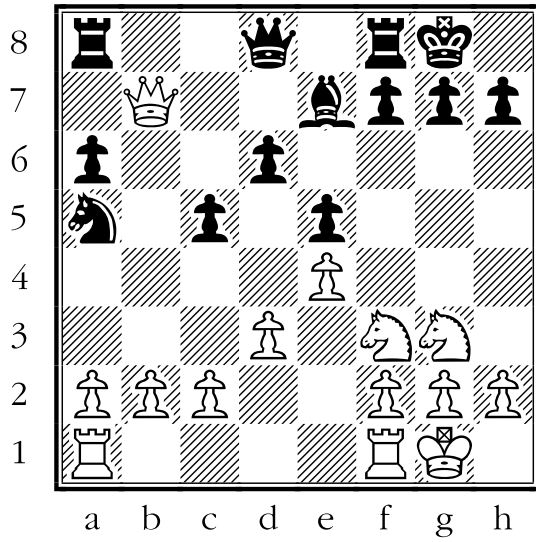
White to move

(1)



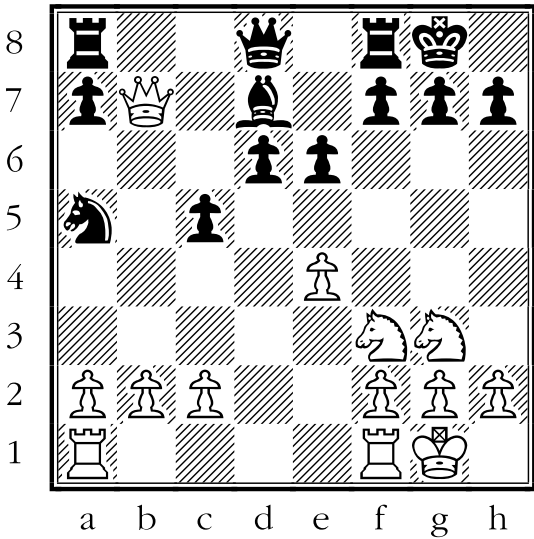
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(2)



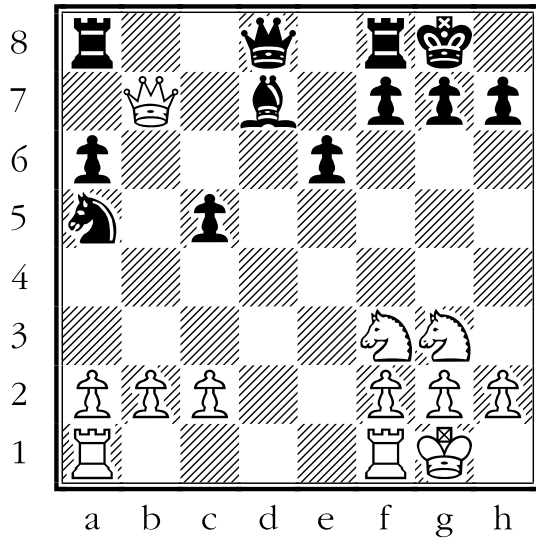
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(3)



1. \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

(4)

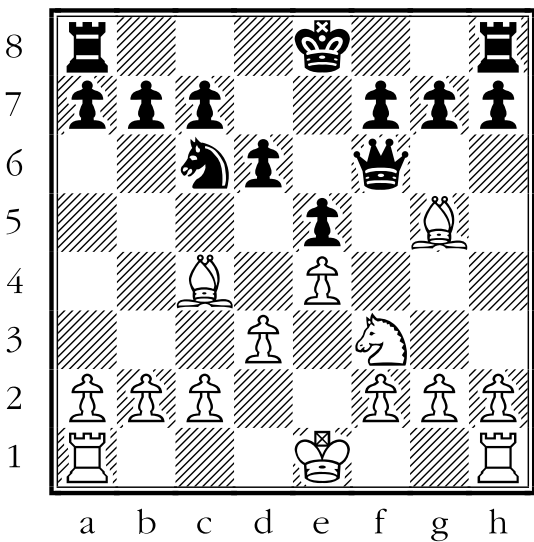


1. \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Run!

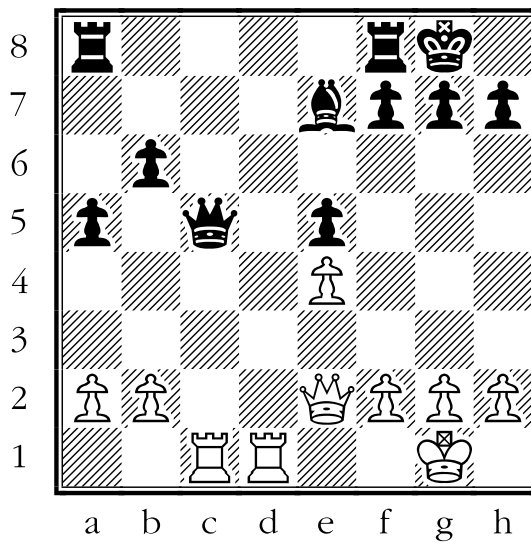
Black to move

(5)



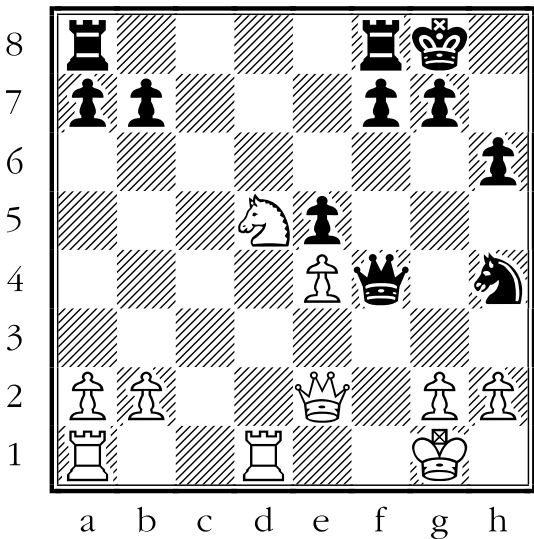
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(6)



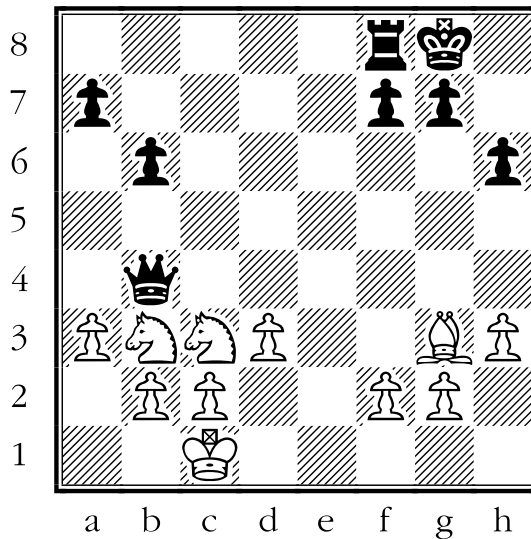
1. ... \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

(7)



1. ... \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

(8)



1. ... \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_