
Learning how to exploit (big) weaknesses

Contributed by Sciurus
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After working my way through Irving Chernev's "Logical Chess" (see my earlier {In:"logical chess: move by move" by Irving Chernev 'review}), I was up for another game collection. Most books focus on games played by chess masters. Not surprisingly, these games are very different from the games I play. The rules are of course the same, but in contrast to games played by masters, in my games sooner or later either my opponent or me make a (big) mistake. This can be a tactical mistake causing a material advantage for one side or some positional misbehavior that ultimately also leads to the loss of a piece or more. These things (almost) never happen when chess masters play against each other - the decisive factors are much more subtle than in amateur games. Therefore, these relatively big mistakes are not discussed in books like Chernev's "Logical Chess". Although I really enjoy playing through master games and think I gained chess knowledge from doing so, I feel that it may be more efficient for a chess beginner like me to learn exploiting not-that-subtle mistakes (avoiding them myself would be even better, but that is a different story).

If one can learn from re-playing and analyzing other people's chess games, then why not studying games played by a chess master facing an amateur? Therefore, I bought a copy of Chess Master vs. Chess Amateur, a collection of chess games with the world champion Max Euwe playing against the amateur Walter Meiden. However, I did not see many people recommending this approach (with the exception of one article in Dan Heisman's column at chesscafe.com, although the basic idea of studying games by players that make mistakes like me (and most of my opponents, because most of my games are against opponents that are around the same strength as myself) against (almost) perfect chess masters sounds reasonable to me. Is there something wrong with this idea? If not, why is it not more often recommended to chess beginners? For instance, I may pick up bad habits instead of avoiding them. Anyway, I will post more about this and a review of "Master vs. Amateur" once I finished playing through the games, but that will probably take a few months at the current rate of progress...