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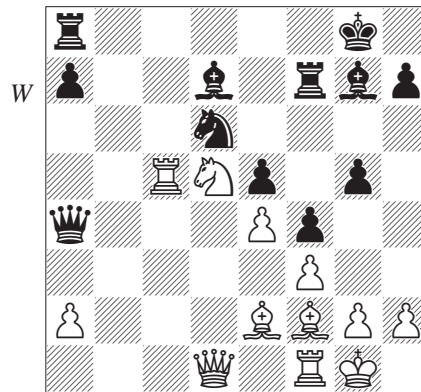
QUESTION 26**How do you know if there is a tactical possibility available in the position?**

Finding tactical ideas in ‘spot the winning move’ puzzles is all very well, but these exercises have one big disadvantage – you know in advance that there is a spectacular winning move. Knowing this usually makes it much easier to spot the idea. In a normal game, however, you do not have somebody standing next to you, tipping you off when there is a tactical trick available. So how do you learn to detect such opportunities?

In the main, it is a function of experience. Once you are familiar with typical tactical operations, you develop an intuition for such possibilities. In addition, the tactical themes themselves often provide a hint. If the enemy king is blocked in behind a row of unmoved pawns, this suggests that a back-rank tactic might be available. Similarly, if an enemy piece is fulfilling two important functions – for example, stopping a mate threat and also defending a piece elsewhere on the board – the possibility of exploiting this overload naturally comes to mind.

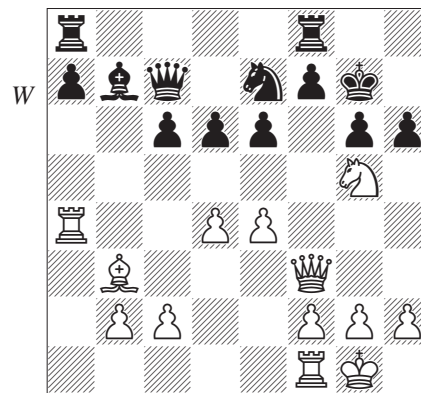
One of the best rules of thumb for such tactics is John Nunn’s rule ‘Loose Pieces Drop Off’ (LPDO). Undefended enemy pieces often give rise to tactical possibilities. In the top diagram of the next column we see a simple example.

Here, Black has two undefended pieces – the d6-knight and the a8-rook. Moving the d5-knight away would attack d6, but Black could answer by taking on d1. However, the move **26** ♖e7+, as played, prevents this defence, and wins immediately after 26...♙xe7 (or 26...♗f8 27 ♚xd6 ♙xe7 28 ♙c7, etc.) 27 ♚d5+, picking up the loose rook on a8 (LPDO).



Giddins – Botley
Thanet 1990

And here we see the rule’s creator demonstrating the idea:



Nunn – Swanson
European Junior Ch, Groningen 1974/5

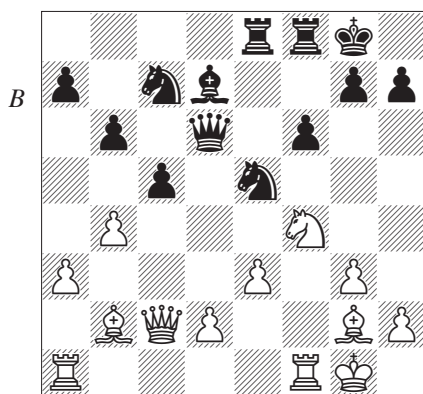
Note that Black’s queen is undefended. White exploited this by **18** ♚xf7+! and Black resigned, since after 18...♙xf7 19 ♖xe6+ and 20 ♖xc7 (LPDO), White wins two pawns and an exchange.

QUESTION 27

How can I make my position less vulnerable to tactical strikes?

The answer to this question is derived largely from the previous one. Since it is the presence of loose pieces that often creates tactical opportunities for the opponent, so the key to safeguarding yourself against unpleasant tactical surprises is to avoid having undefended units in your position.

The next diagram is a typical example of a player losing through failing to do so.

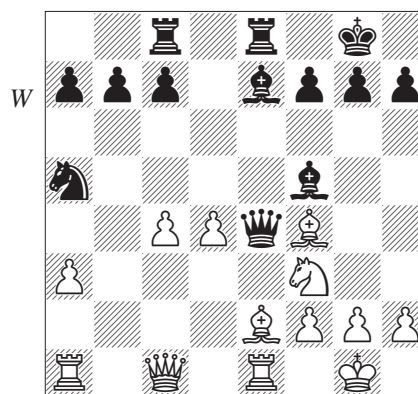


Giddins – Wooley
English Counties Ch 2006

In this position, White has some pressure and more active pieces, but after a move such as 19...♞e6, his advantage would not be so great. Instead, Black played **19...♗c6?** which places the bishop on a vulnerable square. Surprisingly, Black is now lost, thanks to the principle of LPDO. Play continued **20 bxc5** (the immediate 20 d4 may be stronger still) **20...bxc5** (20...♞d7 was a better chance) **21 d4!** and Black faced decisive material loss. Now 21...cxd4 22 exd4 ♗xg2 is met with 23 dxe5! followed by 24 ♞xg2, winning a piece. Black instead tried **21...♞d7**, but after **22 dxc5 ♞xc5 23 ♞fd1**, he resigned, since he

loses the loose bishop on c6 (LPDO). It is hard to believe that Black could lose the diagram position quite so quickly, but that he did so is directly attributable to his failure to keep his pieces securely guarded.

The next example sees a world champion lose a game through ignoring the same principle.



Anand – Kramnik
Sofia 2005

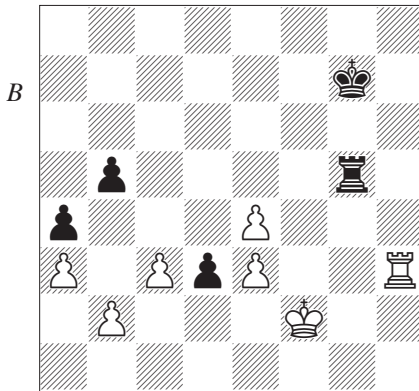
Black has just blundered by playing his queen to e4. Looking at the diagram, we can see that he has an undefended knight on a5, and his queen is vulnerable to a discovered attack from the rook on e1. Kramnik had of course realized this, but thought White had no way to exploit these factors. However, he had missed something. Anand played **18 ♗d1 ♞d3 19 ♞e3!** This was what Kramnik had overlooked. The reply **19...♞xc4** is forced, but now the black queen no longer defends the bishop on f5. After **20 ♞e5**, the knight on a5 and the bishop on f5 are forked, so a piece is lost (LPDO). Black resigned at once.

QUESTION 28

Are tactics important in the endgame?

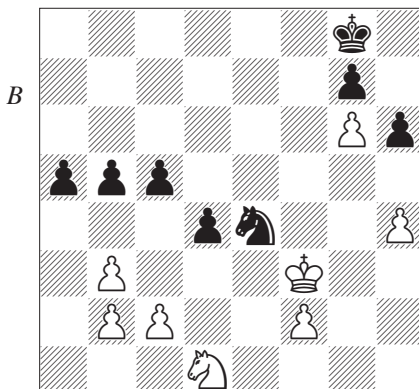
In principle, one would expect tactics to be less important in the endgame, because the simplified positions should reduce the scope for sharp tactics. Nonetheless, there are many tactical ideas in endgames.

One major theme in endgames is the passed pawn, and many endgame tactics revolve around this.



Ferguson – Adams
British Ch, Hove 1997

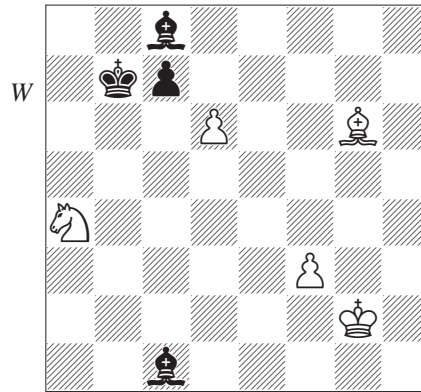
Here, Michael Adams struck with a neat tactical idea based on his passed d-pawn: **73...♖g1!** **74 ♕xg1 d2** and the pawn queens.



Bonner – Medina
Haifa Olympiad 1976

Black decided the game with the very nice sacrifice **41...♗c3!!** **42 bxc3 a4** and the a-pawn cannot be stopped. After the further moves **43 cxd4 cxd4** **44 c3 a3**, White resigned.

Endgame studies are an excellent way to learn about tactics in the endgame. The example below illustrates the use of forks in the ending.



S. Kaminer
3rd Prize, Shakhmaty, 1925
White to play and win

White wins with a combination based on a succession of knight forks.

1 ♖c5+

White must play his moves in the correct order. **1 d7?** ♗xd7 **2 ♖c5+** fails because now Black can play **2...♗c8**.

1...♗c6 **2 d7!** ♗xd7 **3 ♖d3 ♗g5**

3...♗a3 **4 ♖e5+ ♗d6** **5 ♖c4+** wins for White. **3...♗d2** and **3...♗e3** are met by the same response, while after **3...♗h6** White continues as in the main line.

4 ♖e5+ ♗d6 **5 ♖f7+ ♗e6** **6 ♖xg5+ ♗f6**

White has won a piece, but he seems to be losing it back. However...

7 ♖h7+! ♗xg6 **8 ♖f8+**

White wins a piece with another fork.