

The [Internet Chess Club](#) and GM Marian Petrov present

Attack the King!



GM Marian Petrov

This is a course-guide that comes with the video series: Attack the King!

Please watch the videos as you progress into this document!

<https://store.chessclub.com/videos/petrov-attacktheking>

GM Marian Petrov, from Bulgaria, is a new ICC contributor. He's not new at making video courses for people who want to learn and improve the game. His first video course for the Internet Chess club is "Attacking Chess" or "Attack the King!".

In the video lessons, you'll see a lot of different ways to attack the enemy's King: combinations, checkmates, sacrifices, and in general, you'll learn how to attack your opponent's forces in different circumstances. Studying the different patterns that lead to a winning combination means to deeply understand how to think when the opponent's King is castled or not, or when your opponent has a weakness in their pawn structure.

In general, GM Marian divides the attacking paths among three prominent families:

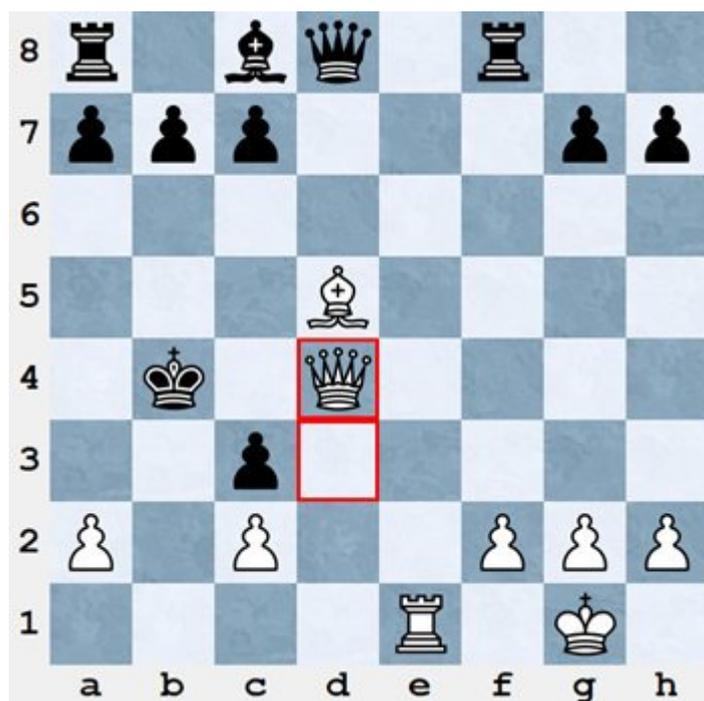
1. Attacking from the opening: choosing an aggressive opening to allow an attack to happen early in the game;
2. Attacking when the game is balanced and quite complicated. This usually requires in-depth analysis, and it may involve sacrifices to unleash a deadly attack;
3. Attacking when there is a positional battle, but one of the players has a slight advantage.

GM Petrov is not going to show you games where one of the players succeeded in attacking his opponent. Or, better, not only that. He will teach you to recognize - via patterns and board/pieces configurations - when it's the right moment to attack, or when you should wait and develop your pieces differently, regroup, or devise a different plan.

Attacking chess is not charging head-down, trying to destroy everything in your path! It needs planning, thinking, calculation, and ability to analyze the position in all its aspects.

This fantastic course will give you a deeper understanding of tactics and attacking chess, contributing to bringing up the level of your game!

Chapter 1 - Attack the King in the Center



In this first video of the course, GM Marian shows us how to attack the enemy's King when it's not castled or, in other words, it's stuck in the center.

While sometimes a GM can deliberately choose not to castle, because the position indicates that even losing a tempo to castle may result fatal, normally it's a good idea to castle as soon as possible and bring His Majesty to safety, behind the pawns' curtain.

In the video, Marian uses a notorious game played by Paul Morphy against an amateur to show us what leaving the King exposed in the center of the board can lead to.

And it's not a nice end for the poor Monarch!

Chapter 2 – When to attack



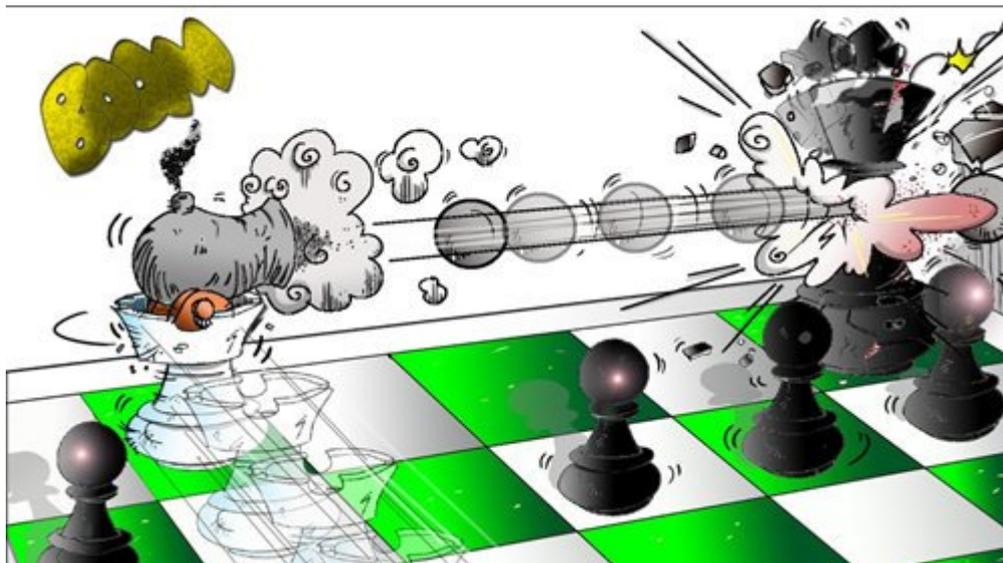
In this second video of the course, GM Marian Petrov tackles a crucial topic: when is the right moment to attack?

We often tend to attack our opponent's forces as soon as we see a possibility. Still, it's essential to consider the situation: what if our opponent can easily defend, maybe even developing his pieces? The art of attack is not driven by brute force, but, on the contrary, it's often a matter of fine-tuning, of assessing the position and weighting all the possible developments.

The right conditions to launch an effective attack may come from different situations: the opponent has made a positional mistake, or his opening sequence wasn't perfect, or you've been playing well, and your development is much better than your opponent's.

In this video, GM Marian shows us two enlightening examples: when it's right to attack and when it's not.

Chapter 3 - Attack on the h-file and back-rank mate



Attacking the castled King is not always easy. Three soldiers are defending their monarch, and the mighty rook sits there as well, just on the left of His Royal Majesty.

One thing the attacker must do is spotting which of the three pawns is least defended, or more vulnerable. Often, to weaken one of the three crucial pawns, the attacker needs to eliminate the defending pieces, even sacrificing part of his troops. Once you have created the weakness, regroup your forces and launch a deadly attack on the opponent's King! Easy, isn't it? No, it's not. GM Marian Petrov, in this third video of his series on tactics, explains with his bright and easy-to-understand style what you need to know. Watch the video, and get back to solve the quizzes, so that you'll fix what you've just learned!

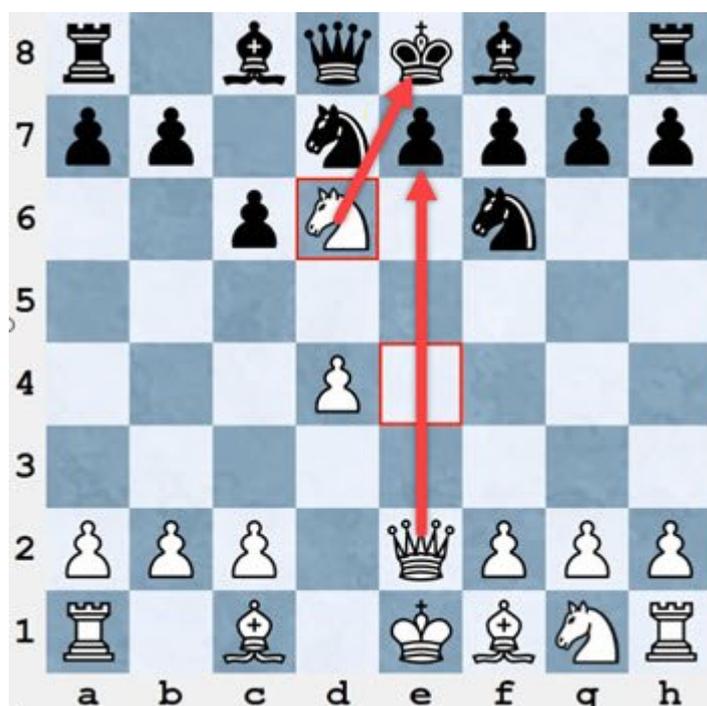
Chapter 4 – Smothered Mate

In chess, a **smothered mate** is a checkmate delivered by a knight in which the mated king is unable to move because he is surrounded (or *smothered*) by its pieces.

The mate is usually seen in a corner of the board since fewer pieces are needed to surround the king there.

It's a classical checkmate, which every good player should be able to see and perform when it happens over the board.

To clarify what a smothered mate is, here is the most typical example of a smothered mate. In a Caro-Kann opening, after the moves 1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 dxe4 4. Nxd4 Nd7 5. Qe2 Ngf6 6. Nd6#



The knight checkmates the king, which is "smothered" by its pieces!

Of course, everyone (or almost everyone!) knows this opening trick.

GM Marian, in this fantastic video, shows you several examples using games played over the board.

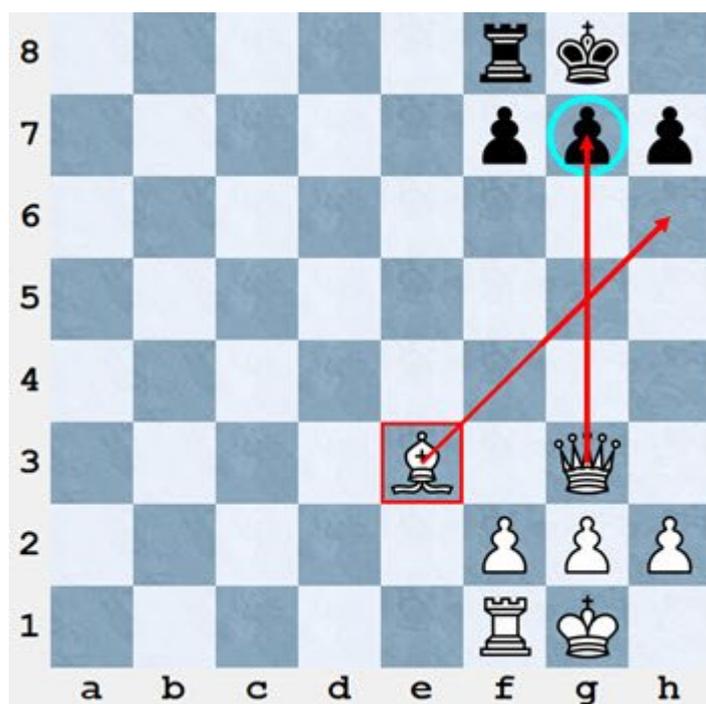
Chapter 5 – Attack on the g-file

The g-file is one of the most used highways to attack the King. The only barrier which separates the King from the direct attack of the enemy's pieces is a small - but powerful - soldier, right in front of the monarch.

The defender can often use his pieces to reinforce the fortress, making the attacker's life hard.

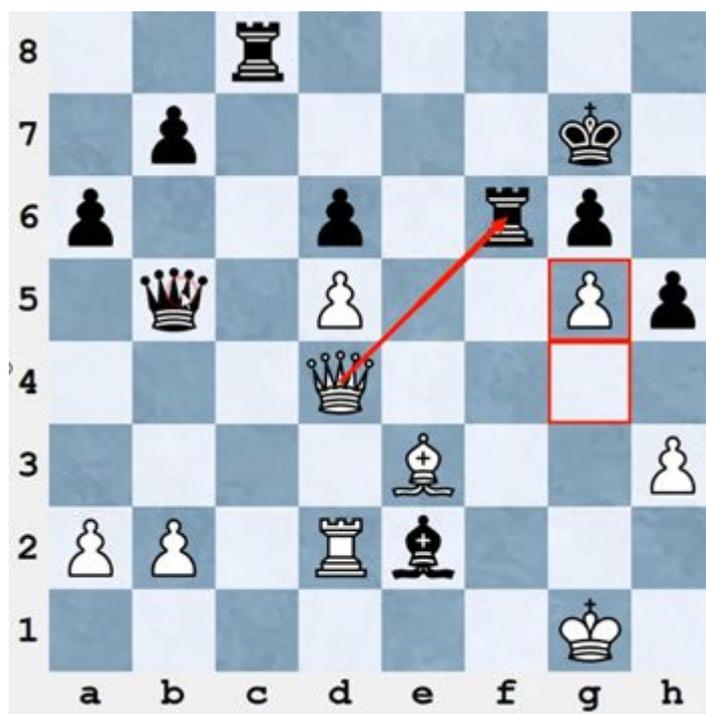
It is essential to know all the subtleties of attacking on this particular file.

The most classic configuration of an attack on the g pawn is Queen + Bishop.



In this video, GM Marian shows us different situations from real games, explaining how to attack the King on the g file.

Chapter 6 - Attack on the f-file



And here we are, with the third pawn which protects the King being attacked. The "f" file is a place that has generated in the years some of the most spectacular and appealing pieces of tactic. The f6 pawn - when White is attacking - can be subject to attack by multiple pieces, and if the defender is not careful and precise, it may become the target of violent and often successful attacks. In this video, which concludes the tris about the three files f, g, and h, GM Petrov shows how to conduct an attack on the "f" file, and also how to defend that delicate file.

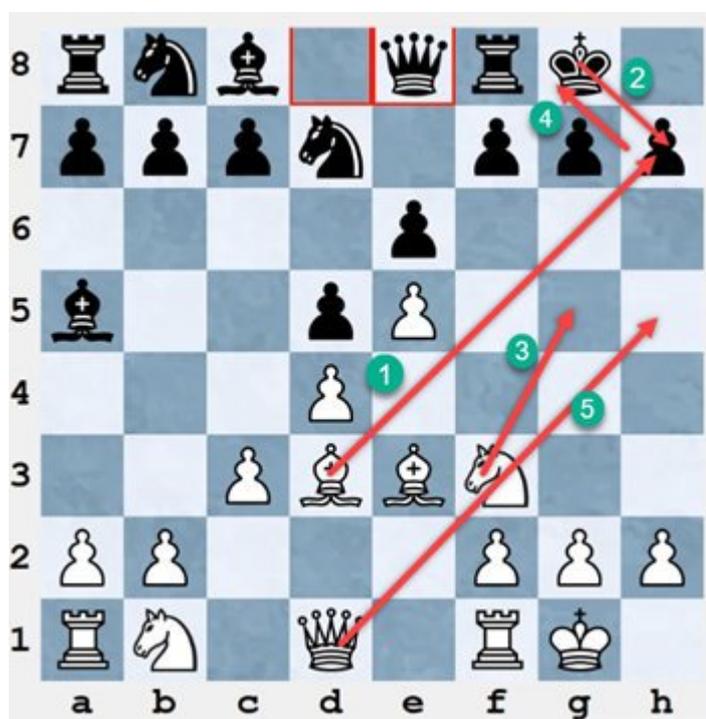
Chapter 7 - The Greek Gift

We all know the story narrated by Homer: the Trojan War was waged against the city of Troy by the Achaeans (Greeks) after Paris of Troy took Helen from her husband Menelaus, king of Sparta. The Greeks went for a decade-long siege of the city of Troy, but there was no way to conquer it.

So, according to Homer, the Greeks built a wondrous Horse by using wood, and hid troops into it, pretending then to leave, lifting the siege. The "Greek gift" revealed to be a disgrace for the people of Troy, which decided to accept it, take it inside the city walls, and celebrate all night long the alleged victory of the long war. At dawn, the Greek soldiers came out of the gigantic horse and destroyed the city.

In chess, a Greek gift is a sacrifice that hides a deadly combination.

Here is a classic example.



In this position, white sacs the bishop in h7 and, after the black's king takes it, uses his knight - or horse, we should call it! - to check the king and force it back to g8. At this point, the queen lands on h5 and the checkmate is unavoidable. So, our Trojan horse this time was a... bishop!

The Greek gift is one of the most important pieces of tactic that every chess player should be familiar with.

In this video, GM Marian gives you several examples of the Greek gift and explains how to use it and how to avoid it. Enjoy!

Chapter 8 – Windmill



When we think about a windmill, the first image that comes to mind is Don Quixote, the protagonist of the Spanish novel written by Miguel de Cervantes in 1605-1615.

The "caballero andante" (knight-errant) Don Quixote fought windmills, in a romantic adventure which - in the intention of the author - wanted to remark how society is unjust, and only craziness and isolation can help a man to make it through life.

In chess, the tactic named windmill is not so imbued of deep meanings, but it is - nonetheless - dramatic.

The windmill happens when two pieces, usually rook and bishop, enter a combination of discovered checks and regular checks, often forcing the opposing king to move back and forth between two squares, winning massive amounts of material.

It is not easy to create the conditions to perform an effective windmill in a chess game, but when it happens, usually the game is over.

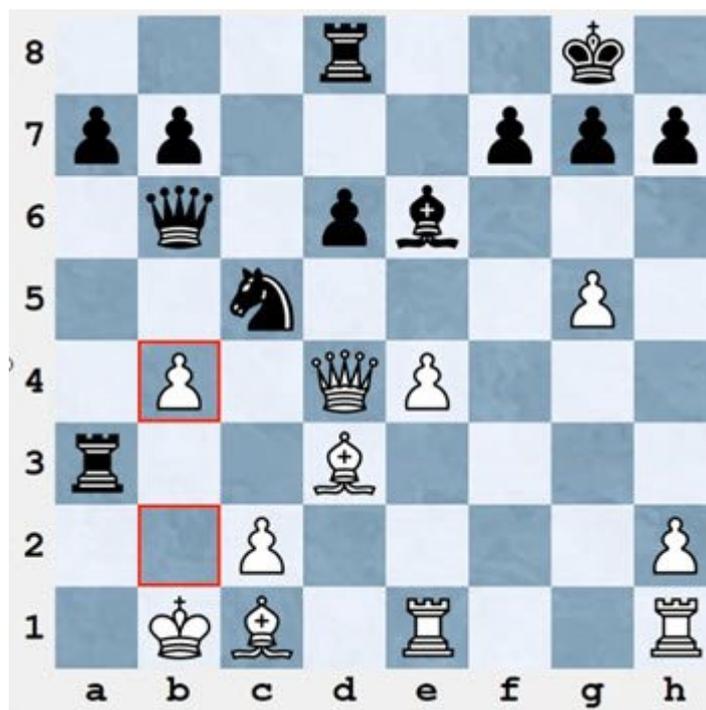
In this great video, GM Marian Petrov provides you with examples and comments on this crucial piece of tactic.

Chapter 9 – Attack with Both Rooks



The Rook, or Torre as the Latins call it (tower), is the most powerful chess piece after Her Majesty the Queen. We all know how active and influential can a Rook be, especially in endgames, where it is free to roam the board from left to right. It cannot run across diagonals, like the Bishop, which is the only thing that differentiates the Rook from the Queen. Often a Rook on the board decides the fate of a game. So, imagine what two coordinated Rook can do. If used the right way, two rooks can wreak havoc on the enemy's troops. In this video, GM Marian Petrov explains how to take advantage of having two rooks and, with some great examples, shows us what a couple of these menacing towers can do when well-coordinated.

Chapter 10 – Attack on the c-file



When is that we have a chance to make the c-file our primary attacking target?

Well, mostly when our opponent castles queen-side. The Sicilian is one of the openings in which White tends to castle long, and the first game Marian shows us illustrates such opening indeed. It's imperative when launching the attack, to keep a vigilant eye on the chances our opponents have got of a powerful counter-attack on our kingside! GM Petrov shows us how black was able to attack the c-file, but also how he had to carefully consider all the possibilities of his opponent. A very instructive game for attacking players!

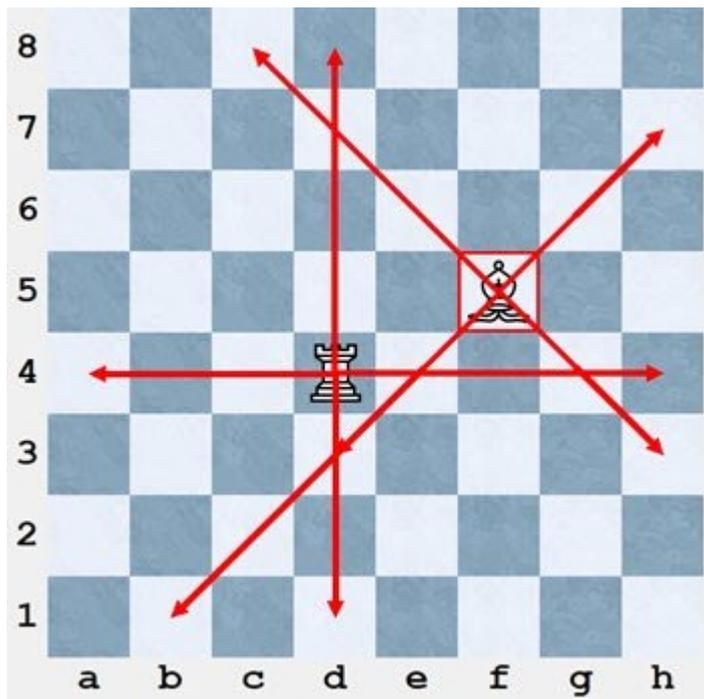
In the second game, GM Marian shows us how to use the c-file playing white. In this case, white castled kingside. Therefore, the action on the c-file was secondary for, of course, white attacks the black king on the other side of the board. But is that true? With this game, Marian shows us how important it is to play all over the board, using all our forces to destabilize our opponent's defense! And the game was won attacking the c-file, with the enemy queen unable to hold all the blows that the white pieces kept aiming at Her Majesty.

Chapter 11 – Attack with Bishop and Rook

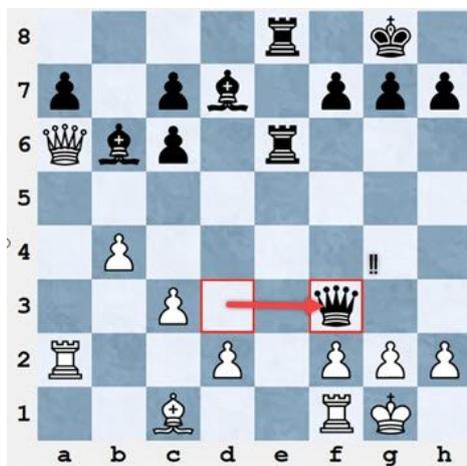
Rook and bishop working together can be a deadly pair. The rook can wreak havoc on the files and columns, and the bishop on diagonals. Together they are a "power-unit" that, if used the right way, can become an excellent attacking tool.

As attacking players, we need to master this weapon.

GM Marian shows us the first example from one of the most famous chess games ever played: Paulsen vs. Morphy. It is a fantastic example of how rooks and bishops work together.



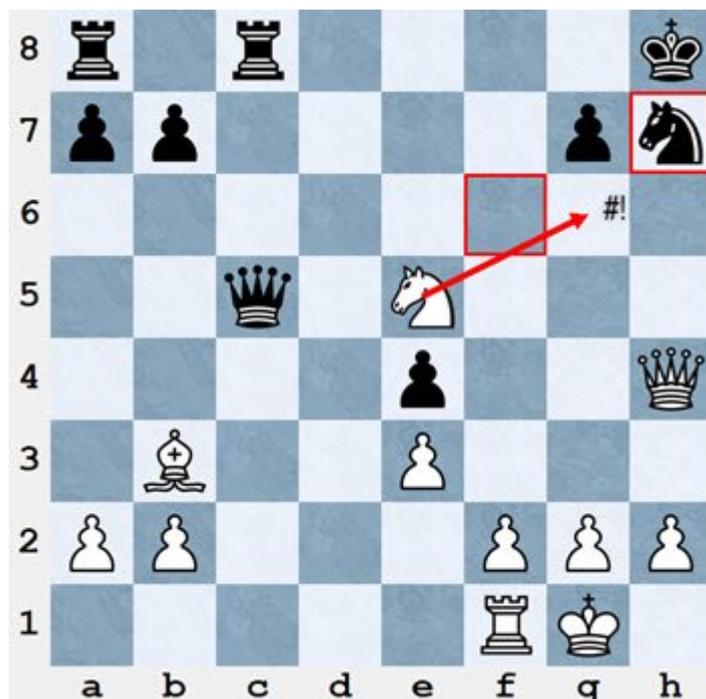
Marian played the second game, and it shows again the power of these two minor pieces working together. Of course, if we can manage to get a rook - or both! - on the seventh rank, and grant them the support of one or both bishops, our attacking potential becomes, in most cases, unstoppable!



Chapter 12 – Attack on the b-file

Like for the attack on the c-file, for this kind of tactic to take place, we need the enemy king to be on the Queenside. The b-file might seem a complicated file to drive a powerful attack upon, but GM Marian shows us some very instructive examples on how to take advantage of the c-file and conduct a striking attack. Queen and rooks need to collaborate, of course, without forgetting to protect their King! Studying tactics when the position is wide open, and both kings are in danger, is probably the most fun part of our path to becoming good tacticians. There are literally tons of factors we need to take into consideration, and the "sense" of danger must stay awake all the time. At the same time, our attack has to carry on as precise as possible, calculating sacrifices and subtle moves that can take our opponent off guard.

Chapter 13 – Attack with Queen and Knight

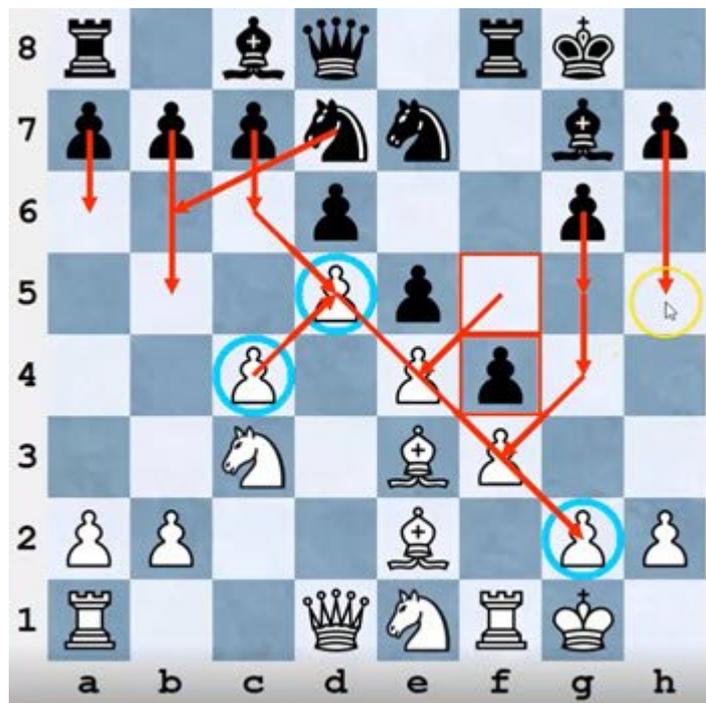


Her Majesty and her trusted Knight, together, are one of the most deadly duos you can face on the chessboard.

When the powerful Queen and the jumping horse work together, it can become dangerous for the enemy!

Of course, it takes a good tactician to maneuver these two pieces in unison, to become a mortal pair. GM Marian Petrov, in this 13th video of this fantastic series, teaches us how to look at the position and spot the right way to unleash the power of Queen + Knight in an overwhelming attack!

Chapter 14 - Attack with Pawns

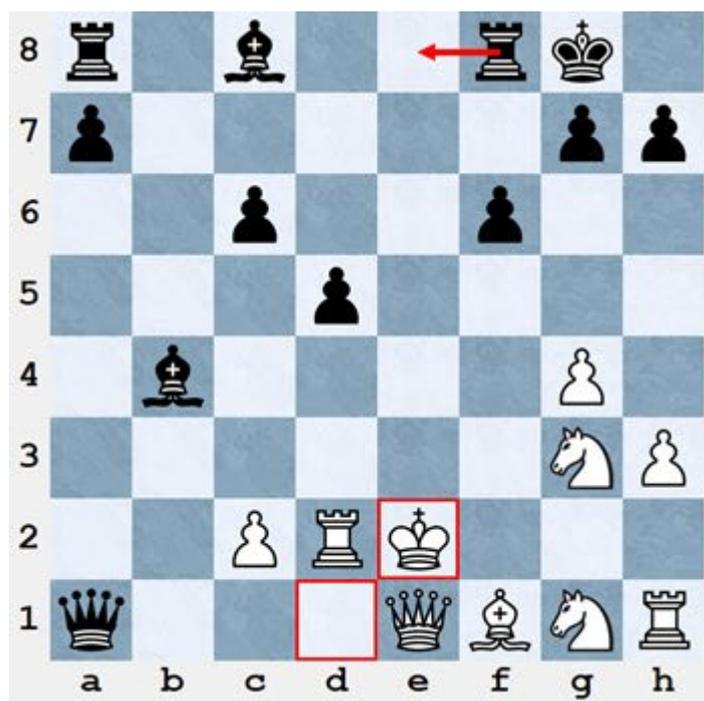


The humble soldiers are the protagonists of this 14th installment of Petrov's fantastic series on attacking the king.

Too often, we underestimate the attacking power of the pawns. When they get close to the opponent's king, these little roundheads became an important arrow in the attacker's quiver. There are so many famous games that show how the pawns, alone or with the collaboration of other pieces, were launched in a final, deadly attack.

In this video, GM Marian Petrov shows us some examples of how to use the pawns to threaten and - eventually - knock down the enemy King!

Chapter 15 – Attack with Pieces



Attack with pieces, without the help of pawns.

It might seem odd to give such a piece of advice, no? But there are situations in which it's not easy to push the pawns towards the enemy's lines, and all we can do is attacking in force with our pieces. In this last video of his fantastic series on attacking the King, GM Petrov explains how to use our pieces to deliver a strong attack when we can't count on the precious pawns to collaborate.

If you have watched all the videos of the series, at this point, you are a fearsome player, ready to use all your knowledge to unleash your creativity and calculation over the board to deliver powerful attacks!