

# Edward Whiteside: 2005 UCU Master Class

## Developing pawn structures.

### Pawn Levers

6<sup>th</sup> August 2005

(notes by Mark Newman)

I have based this talk on an excellent book - *Mastering the Sicilian* by Danny Kubek. The talk follows well with Rays talk. We are looking at pawn structures. Quote from the book - "believe the strength about a chess expert is their ability to recognize a pawn lever in a position" (para-phrased). It is important what Kubek doesn't say. He doesn't mention opening repertoires, end games or plan in the middle game but singles above these the recognition of pawn levers.

## What is a pawn lever?

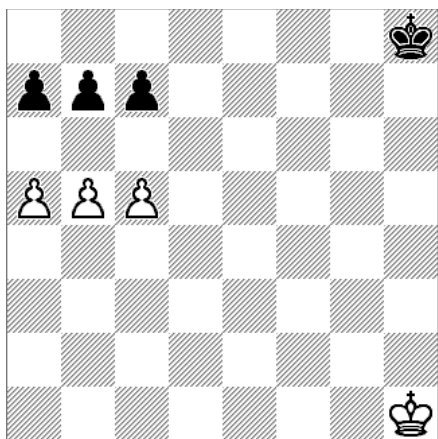
"A Pawn move" - Rays example with the isolated queens pawn was d5.

What does the pawn move do? - it "offers a trade"

Reasons for playing - "improves the lever playing sides pawn structure and or damages the opponents pawn structure"

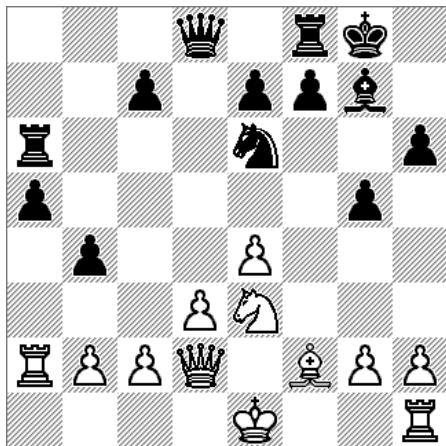
Can be played at any stage of game - opening, middle, end game.

## Basic example :



White to play the pawn lever b6 wins. If black plays cxb then another pawn lever (lever as in opening something up). White plays a6. If black to move how does he stop the pawn lever? He plays b6 and then white cant win. This position requires whites pawns to be close to the end rank. It is a good basic example of a powerful pawn lever.

Most people would give examples where they have won. Here is one I lost against Danny Mallaghan. The Sicilian Dragon against e4. White played atrociously. But you learn more from your losses than wins.



In the dragon - the black king castles, king bishop is fianchettoed and black aims to push the queen side pawns. In this position white hasn't castled and has no counter play. White could still survive but I missed a pawn lever and played the routine move O-O.

What do you think black did to win the game?

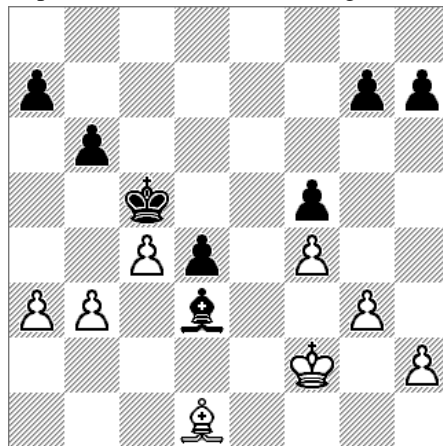
A pawn lever b3. The trade improves blacks position. The white pawn on d3 is weak and should fall.

Instead of white playing O-O what should he have done? The move d4 stops the pawn lever.

O-O wasn't focusing on the needs of the position.

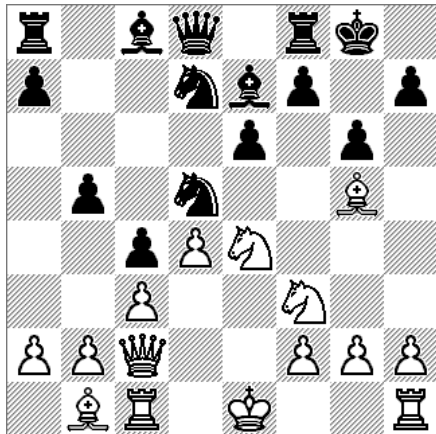
Another local game - David Robb of Bombardier.

Black would like to get his pawn to a4. White managed to hang on.



- ..... a5 signalling the desire for a4.
- Ke1 a4
- Ke2 Be4 king gets tempo attacking bishop
- B4+ Kxc4
- Bxa4 b5
- Bd1 Bg2
- Be2+ Kb3
- Bxb5 Kxa3
- Bd3

This game I won against Michael Waters - I will put it up and you can say what you think about the position.



Good example where both sides have advantages. The d5 knight has a good square.

White has taken time to line up queen and bishop onto h7 diagonal. Will look for h5 lever to open up king. However black won this.

.h4 f5

Ng3 h5

Qe2 Nf6 Blacks king is safe white will need to regroup and possibly sacrifice to break through.

Nf1 Ng4

Nf1d2 Qd6

Bxe7 Nxe7 Black needs to be careful his black squares are weak.

Ng5 Nd5

.g3 Re8 relieve queen from defending pawn

O-O e5 the pawn lever, removes weakness of backward pawn, frees white squared bishop. Rook is pinned.

.f4 Rook is pinned.

.e4 the backward pawn is now a passed pawn. The kingside is blocked. A clever combination

.b3 Nxc3

Rxc3 Qxd4+

Re3 Qxe3+

QxQ NxQ

Re1 c3

Ndxe4 fxe4

Bxe4 Rxe4

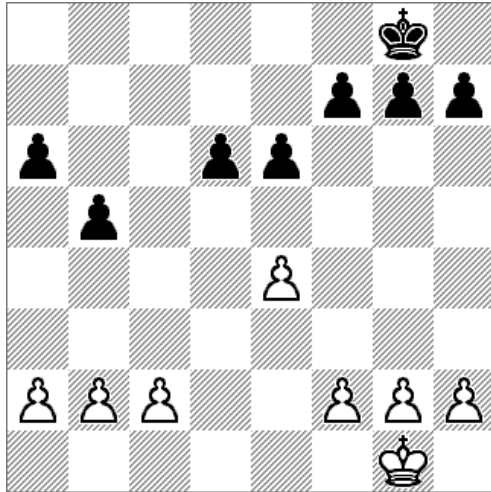
Nxe4 c2

Rc1 Bf5

Nd6 Rd8

Black blocked whites king side levers and setup one of this own.

Best way to learn openings is to learn pawn structures. We will look at three structures in the Sicilian. The pawn structures dictate where the pieces should be placed and provide a plan for the middle game. Learn pawn structure and typical middle game plans then play 100 games of that opening to watch for recurring patterns, pawn structures and places for pieces. The subtle positions for pieces in the pawn structure will be learnt through the 100 games. GM's look for patterns. Kopeks book on the Sicilian concentrates on pawn structures not on moves and gives a summary of general principles after each game.



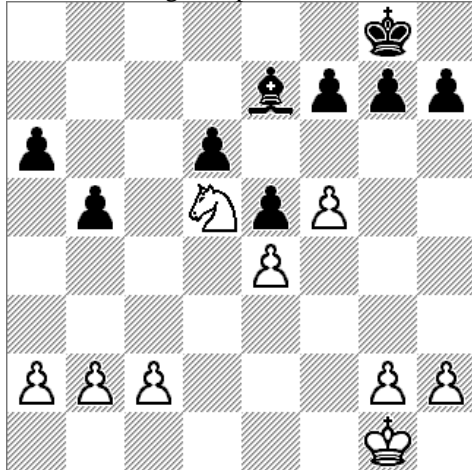
The pawn position for the Scheveningen. Pawns on d6 and e6. Knights possibly on c6 and f6. The structure provides solidity and flexibility with compactness. In general black has the superior pawn position. Black has two central pawns against whites only one. Black will be looking for the d5 pawn lever. If he can get this he should have the better game. He may play e5 first aiming to play d5 very soon afterwards.

White goes for king side attack in middle game if black survives to end game is normally better off.

The black pawns on a6 and b5 are multi-purpose. Stopping the knights from b5 and allowing the bishop to develop. Also the b5

pawn can be pushed to hit the knight on c3 defending the e4 pawn. Sometimes black moves e5 to block e4 pawn. Need to get the pawn duo ( leading pawns side by side ), so need to get d5. Sometimes black will play g6 hitting knight or stopping it from going to f5.

If white can get a pawn on f5 then bad for black.



Whites good knight - black not so good bishop.

Not good for black.

White plays c3 in some variations - the lever a4 can also be useful for white. One game showing this pawn structure.

Topolov v Kasparov ( Kasparov demolishes the English attack ).

- |         |       |
|---------|-------|
| 1. e4   | c5    |
| 2. Nf3  | Nc6   |
| 3. d4   | cx d4 |
| 4. Nxd4 | e6    |
| 5. Nc3  | d6    |
| 6. Be3  | Nf6   |
| 7. f3   | Be7   |

f3 - English attack push g and h pawns. Aim is to castle queens side and slow down kings pawn. It can be intimidating - Kasparov doesn't appear to be intimidated.

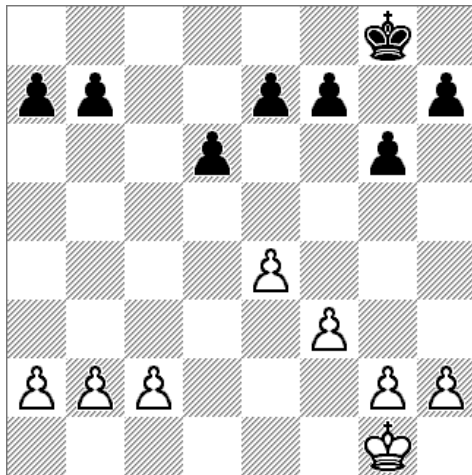
8. g4	O-O	
9. Qd2	a6	
10. O-O-O	Nxd4	
11. Bxd4	b5	Recognise the pawn structure from above the
Scheveningen.		
{12. g5	Nd7	d7 must be left for square for knight to be able to
retreat.		
13. f4	b4	both sides continue their attacks
14. Ne2	Bb7}	
12. Kb1	Nc5	supports d5
13. h4	Rc8	
17. g5	Nd7	good knight options c4 via b6 plenty of options
18. Rg1	b4	
19. Ne2	Ne5	BxN when black recaptures he has all central squares
and the two bishops		also gained tempo by attacking pawn.
20. Rg3	Nc4	good square for knight
21. Qc1	e5	must ensure followed closely by d5
22. Bf2	a5	roll-up the board on the queenside. Gives bishop extra
square		
23. Bg2		to protect e-pawn when playing f4
	Ba6	white has a loose piece - the knight on e2 - black could
put his knight		anywhere
24. Re1	a4	White protects the knight. Black continues the pawn
push.		
25. Bh3	Rc6	

In a position where you are not sure what to do look for a piece not on a great square and move it to a better one thereby improving your position. Here whites queen is dire.

26. Qd1	d5	The pawn lever
27. exd5	Rd6	
28. f4		allows rook across
	Rxd5	
29. Rd3	Na3+	
30. bxa3	Bxd3	
31. cxd3	Rxd3	

The author summarises that we should take from this. "black swaps Knights on d4 to slow down attack. The d7 square is left for the knight to retreat. Once knight is pulled back it has a "feast of squares" to choose from. Finally the lever e5 and d5.

Next Sicilian setup : The Dragon ( Danny Mallaghan watch out!)



The dragon is solid. The 5 pawns and bishop on g7 are powerful. Black aims to push on queenside.

Black plans rook (s) on c file perhaps doubling them. Pushing b5, a5, a4, b4 storm. The white knight on c3 can be vulnerable sometimes even the rook can afford to swap breaking up the pawns.

White may castle kingside or queenside.

The black knight goes to c4 - very solid.

Whites queen on c1 - h6 diagonal with a view to exchanging dark bishops. Black can simply move the rook and put bishop on h8. White may throw up the h pawn.

If black can get the d5 pawn lever he is doing well.

Botnivick v Rausa

- |          |       |
|----------|-------|
| 1. e4    | c5    |
| 2. Nf3   | Nc6   |
| 3. d4    | cx d4 |
| 4. Nxd4  | Nf6   |
| 5. Nc3   | d6    |
| 6. Be2   | g6    |
| 7. Be3   | Bg7   |
| 8. Nb3   | Be6   |
| 9. f4    | O-O   |
| 10. O-O  | Na5   |
| 11. NxN  | QxN   |
| 12. Bf3  | Bc4   |
| 13. Re1  | Rfd8  |
| 14. Qd2  | Qc7   |
| 15. Rac1 | e5    |
| 16. b3   | d5    |
| 17. exd5 | e4    |
| 18. bxc4 | exf3  |
| 19. c5   | Qa5   |
| 20. Rcd1 | Ng4   |
| 21. Bd4  | f2+   |
| 22. Kf1  | Qa6+  |
| 23. Qe2  | Bd4   |
| 24. Rxd4 | Qf6   |
| 25. Rcd1 | Qh4   |
| 26. Qd3  | Re8   |
| 27. Re4  | f5    |
| 28. Re6  | Nh2+  |
| 29. Ke2  | Qxf4  |

Black looking for exchanges  
if 11. f5 Bc4  
12. Bd3

Whites queen side exposed

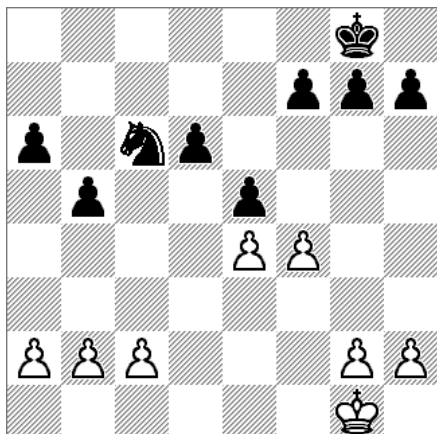
Q on a5 loose white could move Knight from c3 with attack. Aiming b3 Nd5 and c4

d5 must follow shortly  
The pawn lever that wins

best gxf3 Nd5

if Kh1 Rd3

## The Boleslavski pawn structure



The backward d pawn in the middle game is surprisingly difficult to attack and easy to defend

Motifs :

Knight on c6. Possible outpost is e5 if fxe. Black would have isolated d pawn and white isolated e pawn. White outpost for his knight on d5. Back captures on d5 if exd5 better for black. Black is looking for timely d5.

The next game has gone down in history as the "perfect Sicilian". Bobby Fisher loses to TAL 1959.

- |          |       |
|----------|-------|
| 1. e4    | c5    |
| 2. Nf3   | d6    |
| 3. d4    | cx d4 |
| 4. Nxd4  | Nf6   |
| 5. Nc3   | a6    |
| 6. Bc4   | e6    |
| 7. Bb3   | Be7   |
| 8. f4    | O-O   |
| 9. Qf3   | Qc7   |
| 10. O-O  | b5    |
| 11. f5   | b4    |
| 12. Na4  | e5    |
| 13. Ne2  | Bb7   |
| 14. Ng3  | Ndb7  |
| 15. Be3  | Bc6   |
| 16. Bf2  | Qb7   |
| 17. Rfe1 | d5    |
| 18. exd5 | Nxd5  |
| 19. Ne4  | Nf4   |
| 20. c4   | g6    |
| 21. fxg6 | f5    |
| 22. g7   | Kxg7  |
| 23. Qg3+ | Kh8   |
| 24. Nec5 | NxN   |
| 25. Bxc5 | Bxc5+ |
| 26. Nxc5 | Qc7   |
| 27. Qe3  | Rae8  |
| 28. Re2  | Nxe2+ |
| 29. Qxe2 | Bxg2  |
| 30. Nxa6 | Qc7+  |
| 31. Kxg2 | Rg8+  |
| 32. Kh3  | Qg7   |

the Scheveningen position

with a3 queen is safe from knight attacks

hit the e pawn

where should the knight go? Nc5 looks good.

aiming to put Queen on b7 more pressure on pawn

move bishop to allow rook to protect the pawn

the defining move the pawn lever

white blocks diagonal with knight self-pinned.

Lessons - aim of the game is the levers e5 / d5.

don't learn openings by rote - look for pawn structures and the needs of these. The structure of the pawns controls the game.

