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Resulting Moves

The expression 'candidate move' is well known in chess and was formulated by the famous Soviet grandmaster and author Alexander Kotov. Amongst other advice, he expounded the strict principle of finding all candidate moves before a detailed analysis and he also recommended analysing every candidate move only once without coming back to it. No doubt his theory was an enormous help to chessplayers in disciplining their thinking. Nevertheless, in practice things are often more complicated.
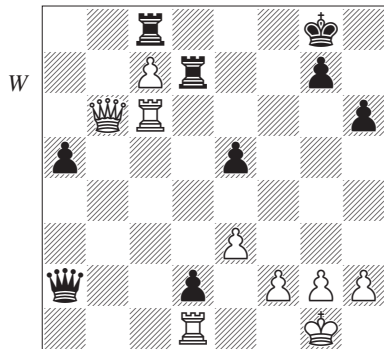
Korchnoi – Spassky
Belgrade Ct (7) 1977

The nature of the position is obvious: far-advanced passed pawns on both sides. Which could be the candidate moves? Probably 1 ♕b7 or 1 ♕b8. Do you see any other moves, such as 1 ♕a6 or perhaps 1 ♖d6? However, these look dubious in view of 1...♖cxc7 (the

latter even loses outright to 1...♕c2!). So let's look at the analysis:

a) 1 ♕b8 ♖dxc7 2 ♕xc8+ ♖xc8 3 ♖xc8+ ♔h7 4 ♖d8 and White stands much better.

b) 1 ♕b7 ♖cxc7 (what else?) 2 ♖xc7 ♕a4 3 ♖c8+ ♔h7 4 ♕b1+.

Impressed by line 'b', we move our hand towards the queen in order to play 1 ♕b7 but suddenly we notice the answer 1...♕a4. After a short analysis this proves to be very uncomfortable! Indeed: 1...♕a4!! 2 ♕xc8+ ♔h7 3 ♕h8+? ♔xh8 4 c8♕+ ♔h7 5 ♖c2 ♕a1!!. The same thing happens after 1 ♕b8.

In the game White played **1 h3!!**, which leaves Black without his main motif for counterplay.

After **1...♕a4 2 ♖xd2! ♖xd2 3 ♕b7 ♖dd8 4 cxd8♕+ ♖xd8 5 ♖c7 ♕a1+ 6 ♔h2 e4 7 ♕xe4 ♕f6 8 f4!** White soon won.

Could 1 h3!! have been found as a candidate move according to Kotov's prescription? I really doubt it. I think the move 1 h3!! can only be found as a necessary solution to the problem 1 ♕b7? ♕a4!!. Does this mean that the theory of candidate moves is wrong? Not at all! In my view this theory only has to be improved and completed.

How can White play for a win in the following diagram? Of course one has to try 1 b7 or 1 ♘f6+.

a) 1 b7 a3 2 ♘f6+ ♔c6! (2...♔d8? 3 ♔a7; 2...♔e6? 3 ♘e4 a2 4 ♘c5+ and 5 ♘b3) 3 ♔c8 a2 4 b8♕ a1♕ 5 ♕b7+