Blunder Buster
Volume 1, Issue 2

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Last issue, we provided an overview of blunders and discussed the Simple Type-1 Blunder, when you or your opponent puts a piece on a square where it can be taken with no compensation. To refresh your memory, or for those that are new to this series, let's again quickly mention the various types simple blunders.

What is a Simple Blunder?
A simple blunder is a move that results in an immediate loss from your opponent's single attack.

A simple blunder can be where you:

Type-1: Place a piece on a square where it can be taken for nothing.
Type-2: Place your piece on a square where it could be taken with a piece of lower value.
Type-3: Capture a piece of lower value without realizing it is protected.
Type-4: Leave a piece on a square that is now being attacked
Type-5: Leave a piece on a square where it can be taken by a piece of lower value

The Simple Type-2 Blunder:
Let's now take a closer look at the Type-2 Simple Blunder. This blunder occurs when you place your piece on a square where it could be taken with a piece of lower value.

The Simple Type-2 blunder is slightly more sophisticated than its Type-1 counterpart, but still occurs most often in beginner games.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 show an example of placing a piece on a square where it can be taken by a piece of lower value. This is generally referred to as losing or giving up the exchange.
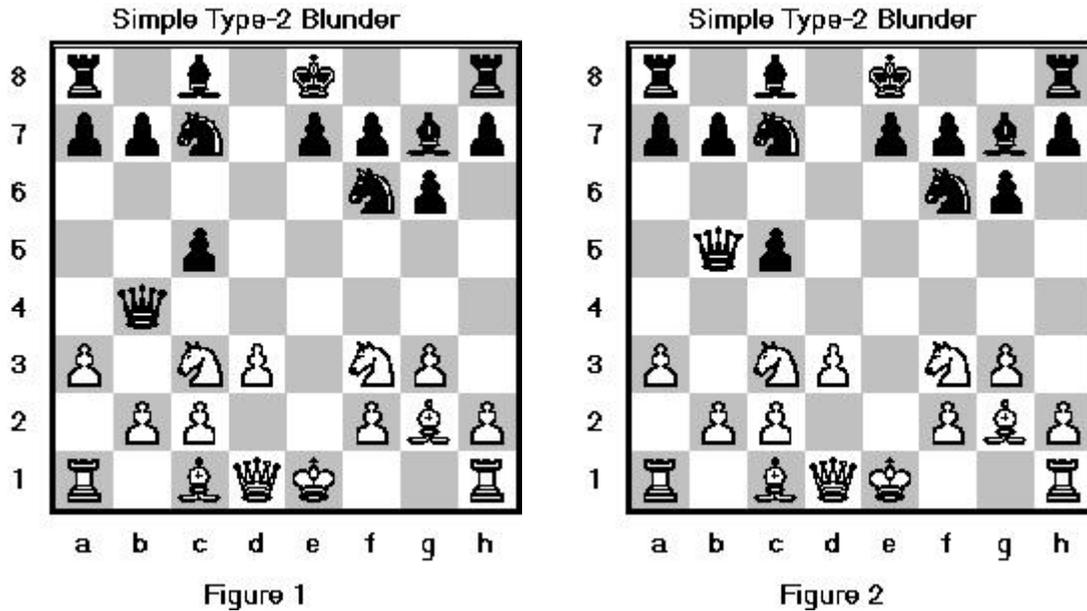
Figure 1

Figure 2

In Figure 1, the Black queen on b4 is attacked. If the Black queen moves the Queen to b5 in order to avoid being taken by the White pawn on a3, as shown in Figure 2, then Black has committed a simple Type-2 blunder. Black has failed to realize that, even though the Black knight on c7 is protecting it, the Black queen can still be captured by a piece of lower value, the White knight on c3.

What do you need to do to discover a Type-2 blunder?
It is very important to watch where your opponent puts his pieces. If you are attacking a piece of higher value, regardless of whether it is defended or not, and there are no other tricks or traps, then you can take it.

Step 1) See if you are attacking any of your opponent's pieces
Step 2) Determine if your piece is worth more than the one attacking it
Step 3) Check for tricks so as to avoid other types of blunders
Step 4) Take the more important piece
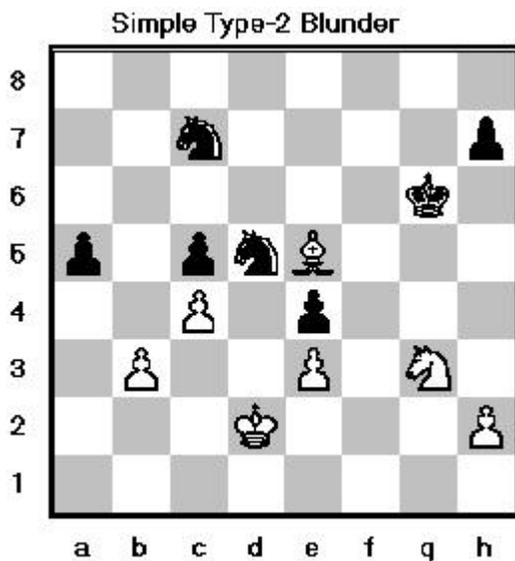
Practice Example Diagrams:
The following diagrams give you practice in looking for your opponent's Simple Type-2 blunders. In each diagram, look for a more important piece that can be taken.
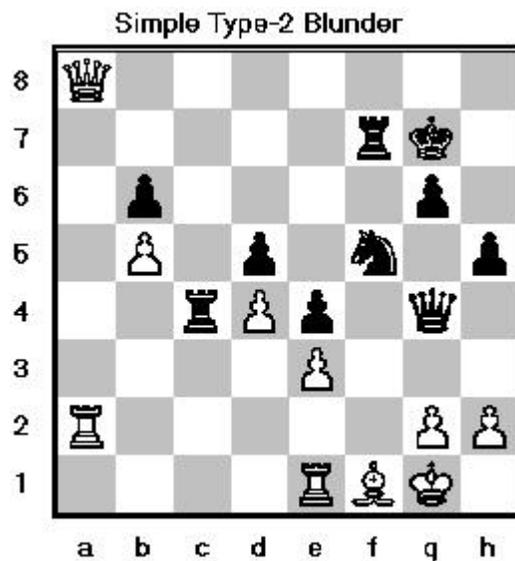
Simple Type-2 Blunder

E1. White to Move

Simple Type-2 Blunder

E2: Black to Move
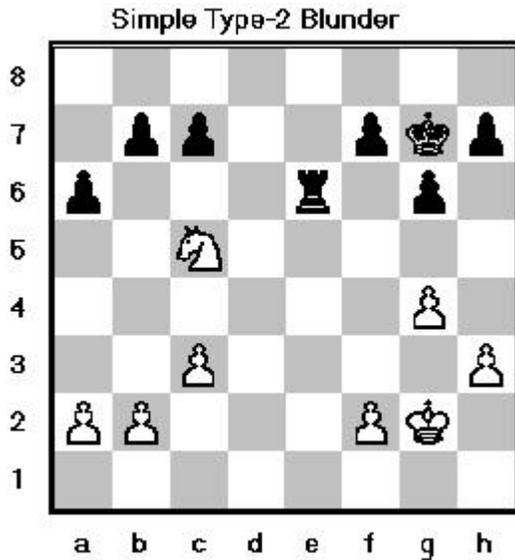
Simple Type-2 Blunder
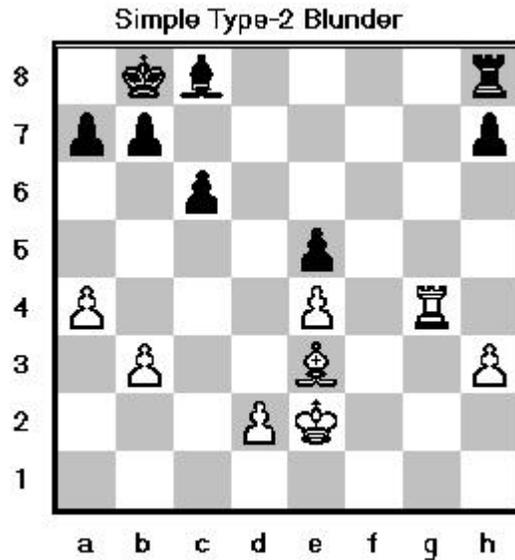
E3: White to Move

Simple Type-2 Blunder

E4: White to Move

NOTE: Answers to exercises are at the end of this article

Example Game illustrating a Simple Type-2 Blunder:

In beginner games, we find that Simple Type-2 blunders generally occur because the player is not paying attention. However, stronger players sometimes try to get fancy and this is when they can end up in trouble. The following game is a case in point.

 **RUY LOPEZ. CLASSICAL defense**
Fick W. - Zander O.
1922.

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Bc5 4. O−O Qf6 5. Nc3 Nge7 6. d3 Nd4 7. Nxd4 Bxd4 8. Be3 O−O 9. Bc4 c6 10. Qd2 Re8 11. Rae1 d6 12. Ne2 Be6 13. Bb3 Bxb3 14. axb3 Bb6 15. Ng3 d5 16. Bxb6 axb6 17. f4 exf4 18. e5 Qe6 19. Rxf4 Ng6 20. Rf6 gxf6 21. Nh5 Nxe5 22. Kh1 Nf3 **[0:1]**

Let's take a look at the position (see Diagram G1) after Black has made move 19. … Ng6.


Game position after 19. … Ng8

G1: White to Move
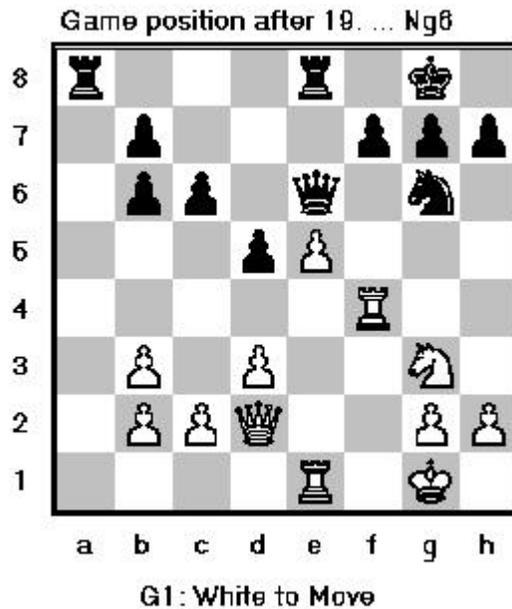
Fritz 8 indicates that the plan to win for White in to simply pull the White rook on f4 back to f1 and the game is still fairly even.

However, Fick decided to play 20. Rf6 instead, thinking that rather than defend, he would counter-attack Black, and potentially give himself mating chances should the Black pawn on g7 take the White rook on f6 (see Diagram G2).

Game position after 20. Rf6

G2: Black to Move
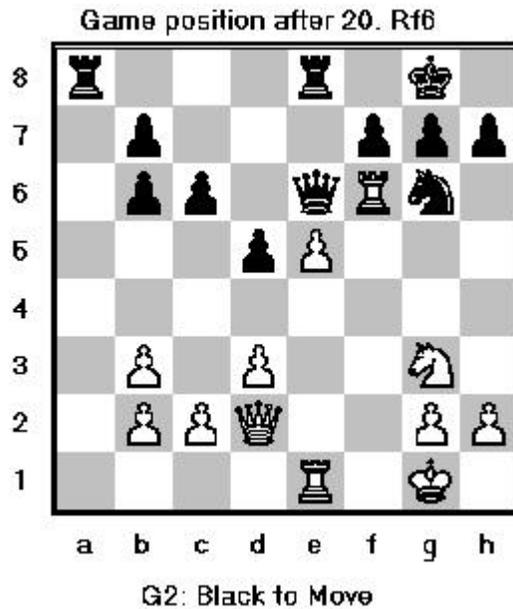
However, Black was up to the challenge and played 20. …gxf6 anyways. After the moves, 21. Nh5 Nxe5 22. Kh1 Nf3 White found that he did not have enough compensation for the material he gave up on move 20, and resigned (see diagram G3).

Game position after 22 …Nf3

Diagram G3: White Resigns
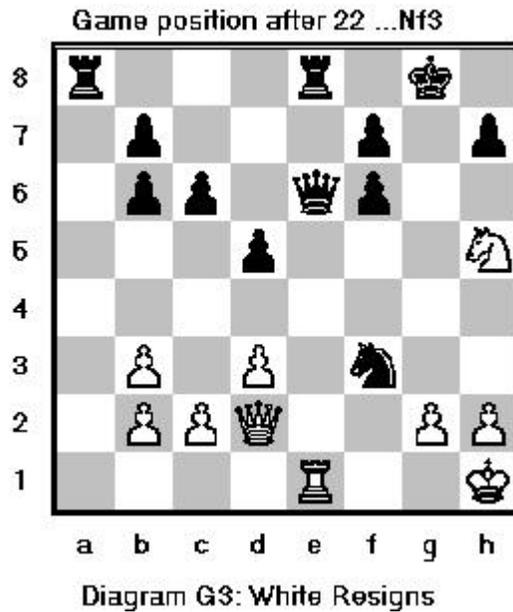
So the point illustrated from the Fick vs Zander game is that although White had his reasons to counter-attacking instead of defending, his move 20. Rf6 turned out to be a Simple Type-2 Blunder.

How do I avoid Simple Type-2 Blunders?
The example game just goes to show you that even strong players are susceptible to making these types of blunders.

As a beginner, try to avoid making these types of mistakes by simply checking to see if the square that you plan to move your piece is not already being attacked by a piece of lower value than the piece you intend to move.

Ask yourself,
> Question 1) "Is my opponent attacking the square I want to put my piece on?"

For more advanced players, you should ask:
> Question 2) "Can I move my piece to the attacked square anyways?"

Question 1 is intended to make beginners aware of the pieces that their opponent is attacking.

Question 2 is to give advanced players a chance to thing about potential opportunities.

Next time we will continue our look into the fascinating world of blunders. So, until then, play well and watch out for Simple Type-2 Blunders where your opponent can take your piece with one of lesser value.

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Answers to Example Exercises:
> E1) Nxe6
> E2) Bxg4
> E3) cxd5
> E4) Bxc4