

Attacking the King

Chess

The conditions an attack needs, and what to do when they are absent.

Attacks succeed on preconditions, not on enthusiasm.

1

Check the centre is stable

A wing attack with an open centre usually fails. Secure it first.

2

Count attackers and defenders

You need more pieces near their king than they have defending it.

3

Open a line

A pawn sacrifice or a break. Attacks need open files and diagonals.

4

Bring in the reserves

Rooks via a lift; the queen last, not first.

5

Look for the sacrifice

Only once enough force is present. Calculate it fully.

CLASSIC SACRIFICES

Bxh7+ — the Greek gift

Rxh7 to open the h-file

Nf5 to remove a defender

Exchange sac on c3 in the Sicilian

If the centre is open and unstable, a wing attack is usually refuted by a central counter. Fix the centre first.