

Defending

Chess

How to defend a worse position, and the mistakes that lose it faster.

Defending is a distinct skill from attacking, and is less often practised.

Do

Trade attacking pieces

Keep the king's pawn shield intact

Create counterplay elsewhere

Find the opponent's slowest plan and prepare for it

Give back material to reach a safe endgame

Do not

Move pawns in front of your king without need

Trade your best defender

Play passively and wait

Panic-sacrifice to relieve pressure

Remember

Defence is harder than attack; expect to work

One accurate move often refutes a whole attack

The attacker also has to find the right moves

The most common defensive error is a needless pawn move near the king. It creates the very weakness the attack needed.