



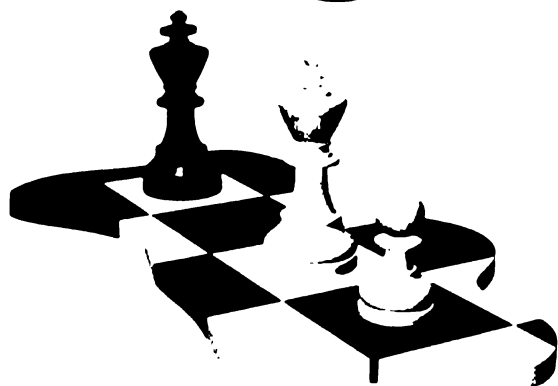
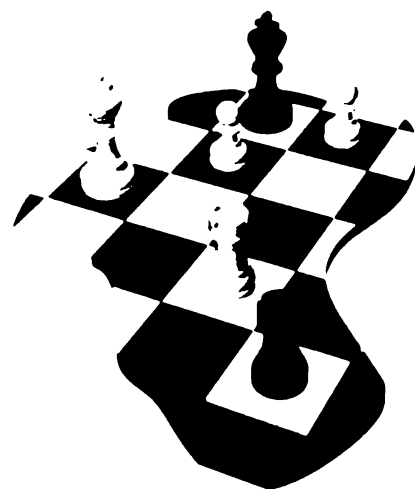
GAMBIT

Understanding



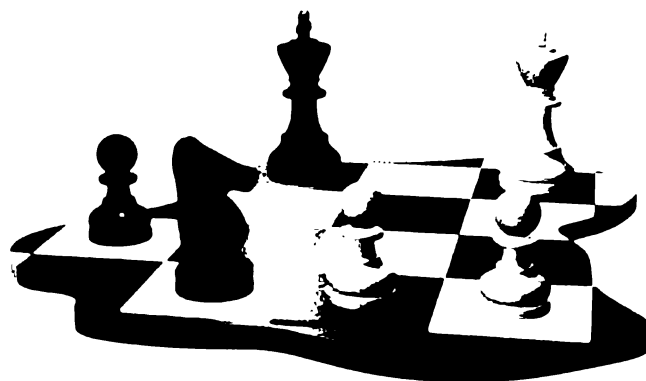
Chess

Endgames



John Nunn

*Featuring the 100
most important
endgame ideas*





Understanding Chess Endgames

John Nunn

GAMBIT

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Contents

Symbols	6
Introduction	7
King and Pawn Endings	9
1 King and Pawn vs King (1)	10
2 King and Pawn vs King (2)	12
3 The Rook's Pawn	14
4 King and Two Pawns vs King	16
5 Shouldering Away	18
6 King Geometry	20
7 Extra Pawn	22
8 Outside Passed Pawn	24
9 Protected Passed Pawn	26
10 Active King	28
11 Breakthrough	30
12 Opposition	32
13 Distant Opposition	34
14 Triangulation	36
15 Reserve Tempi	38
16 Transformation to a Queen Ending (1)	40
17 Transformation to a Queen Ending (2)	42
18 Surprise Moves	44
Knight Endings	46
19 Knight vs Pawn	48
20 Knight vs More Pawns	50
21 Extra Piece	52
22 Extra Pawn	54
23 Positional Factors	56
24 Tactical Ideas	58
Same-Coloured Bishop Endings	60
25 Bishop vs Pawns	62
26 Rook's Pawn and Wrong Bishop	64
27 Bishop and Pawn vs Bishop (1)	66
28 Bishop and Pawn vs Bishop (2)	68
29 Extra Pawn	70
30 Bad Bishop	72

Opposite-Coloured Bishop Endings	74
31 Bishop and Two Pawns vs Bishop	76
32 Blockade	78
33 Passed Pawns	80
Bishop vs Knight Endings	82
34 Bishop and Pawn vs Knight	84
35 Knight and Pawn vs Bishop	86
36 The Dominant Bishop	88
37 Bishop or Knight?	90
38 Two Bishops vs Bishop and Knight	92
39 Two Bishops vs Two Knights	94
Rook Endings	96
40 Rook vs Pawn (1)	98
41 Rook vs Pawn (2)	100
42 Rook vs Two Connected Passed Pawns	102
43 Rook vs Two Isolated Passed Pawns	104
44 ♖+♗ vs ♘ – The Standard Draw	106
45 Lucena Position	108
46 ♖+♗ vs ♘ – Enemy King Cut Off (1)	110
47 ♖+♗ vs ♘ – Enemy King Cut Off (2)	112
48 ♖+♗ vs ♘ – Checking from the Side	114
49 ♖+♗ vs ♘ – Moving to the Short Side	116
50 Rook and Rook's Pawn vs Rook	118
51 Vančura Draw	120
52 Rook and Two Pawns vs Rook (1)	122
53 Rook and Two Pawns vs Rook (2)	124
54 ♖+f♗+h♗ vs ♘	126
55 Extra Pawn on One Side	128
56 Extra Passed Pawn – Rook in Front of the Pawn	130
57 Extra Passed Pawn – Rook Behind the Pawn	132
58 Connected Passed Pawns	134
59 Pawn Weaknesses	136
60 Active King	138
61 Rook on the Seventh	140
62 Tactical Tricks (1)	142
63 Tactical Tricks (2)	144
64 Manoeuvring in Rook Endings	146
65 Defence in Rook Endings	148
66 Double Rook Endings	150
Rook vs Minor Piece Endings	152
67 Rook vs Bishop	154
68 Rook vs Knight	156
69 Rook + Pawn vs Bishop	158

70	Rook + Pawn vs Knight	160
71	Rook + Pawn vs Bishop + Pawn	162
72	Rook + Pawn vs Knight + Pawn	164
73	Rook vs Bishop: Pawns on One Wing	166
74	Rook vs Bishop: Pawns on Both Wings	168
75	Rook vs Knight: More Pawns	170
Queen Endings		172
76	Queen vs Pawn (1)	174
77	Queen vs Pawn (2)	176
78	Queen and Pawn vs Queen (1)	178
79	Queen and Pawn vs Queen (2)	180
80	King Safety	182
81	Passed Pawns	184
82	Active King	186
83	Escaping the Checks	188
84	Extra Pawn on One Side	190
Other Material Combinations		192
85	Mating with Bishop and Knight	194
86	Queen vs Rook (1)	196
87	Queen vs Rook (2)	198
88	Rook and Minor Piece vs Rook	200
89	Rook vs Two Minor Pieces	202
90	Queen vs Rook and Minor Piece	204
91	Queen vs Two Rooks	206
92	Rook and Minor Piece Endings (1)	208
93	Rook and Minor Piece Endings (2)	210
94	Queen and Minor Piece Endings	212
95	Heavy-Piece Endings	214
Tactical Ideas		216
96	Mate	218
97	Stalemate	220
98	Pawn Promotion	222
99	Underpromotion	224
100	Imagination	226
Index of Players		228
Index of Composers and Analysts		231

Symbols

x	capture
+	check
++	double check
#	checkmate
!!	brilliant move
!	good move
!?	interesting move
?!	dubious move
?	bad move
??	blunder
Ch	championship
Ct	Candidates
ECC	European Clubs Cup
(<i>n</i>)	<i>n</i> th match game
(<i>D</i>)	see next diagram

Introduction

This book had an unusual genesis in that originally I didn't intend to write it at all. I was starting work on a more advanced book on endgames, and while I was collecting material for this, I began to compile a list of all the things the reader would be assumed to know. The idea was that an introductory chapter would give a brief survey of this 'presumed knowledge' so that I would not have to explain it in the main body of the book. However, it quickly became clear that this 'introductory chapter' would be more like a book in itself, so I put the main project to one side and started to think about how this introductory chapter could be turned into a useful book. There are already many chess endgame books, and to distinguish this from previous titles I decided to focus on three areas: the list of topics covered, the selection of positions presented and the layout.

I decided to create the list of topics before choosing any of the positions to be included. Chess books are often written in the reverse order: first the author selects some interesting positions relating to the subject at hand, and only afterwards creates the structure into which the positions fit. In this case I adopted the reverse approach, first choosing a list of 100 key endgame topics which together form a solid body of essential endgame knowledge. At the level at which this book is aimed, these topics should provide a comprehensive course in chess endgames, but I hope that the material provided here will inspire readers to delve further into the fascinating world of chess endgames.

After choosing the 100 themes, I started to look for examples of each theme. This stage, in which the actual positions were selected, was the lengthiest step in the creation of the book, occupying roughly half the total time taken. If you have a database of over three million games, finding examples of a particular theme is not at all easy. ChessBase has many sophisticated search functions, but these are related to the position on the board, the game data and the moves played. Chess software is not yet intelligent enough to allow you to search for positions featuring, for example, a breakthrough in a rook ending leading to the creation of a decisive passed pawn. However, the search functions available certainly helped and I learned a lot about them in the course of writing this book. The advantage of this writing strategy was that I discovered examples I didn't know existed before I started work. Chess literature tends to stick to certain 'classic' examples of particular themes, which are then repeated again and again with each new author adding little or nothing to what has been said before. I have made a considerable effort to avoid this and instead offer new positions, many taken from recent tournaments. There are still a few 'classic' examples in the book, as I preferred a clear-cut historical example to a confusing contemporary position, but in the vast majority of cases I was able to find suitable examples from recent tournaments. Even in the cases in which I chose a historical example, I have made an effort to revise previous analyses, sometimes with surprising results (see position 32e, for example).

This brings us to the layout, which is an important factor for readers. A well laid-out and approachable book will be read, while one which is less friendly may stay on the bookshelf. Given the inclusion of 100 topics, it seemed natural to devote exactly two pages to each topic. I have called each group of two pages a 'section'. Each section contains four columns and there is a diagram at the top of each column. Most sections contain precisely four examples, although this is not an absolute rule and some contain more or fewer. This layout means that the book is divided into 100 equal parts, which can be studied at whatever pace the reader sees fit and according to the time available.

Readers are assumed to know a few things which are not explained in this book. The elementary mates with king and queen vs king, king and rook vs king and king and two bishops vs king are not covered, although the more complex win with king, bishop and knight vs king is explained. Other than that, practically nothing is assumed. Thus the book is suitable for a wide range of players, from

those who are just starting to study the endgame, to club players who would like to consolidate their existing endgame knowledge. This book is not an encyclopaedia; it is an instructional book. I have focused strictly on topics which are relevant to over-the-board play and which, when mastered, will result in the greatest improvement in playing strength (although there are a handful of positions included for their entertainment value, as no book should be without a little light relief). The book is best read in the following sequence: Sections 1-15, then a glance at Sections 76 and 77, back to Section 16 and then straight on for the rest of the book. The reason for this apparently curious sequence is explained on page 9. The first few sections are quite elementary, although there are one or two subtleties to which even more advanced players should pay attention. Thereafter there is a gradual progression throughout the book, although all the topics presented are within the grasp of the diligent reader.

I have acquired a reputation as an author fond of detailed analysis. Readers may therefore be a little shocked by this book, which contains very little detailed analysis. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, the book is tightly focused on one objective: to provide a compact course in essential endgame knowledge. Thus any analysis which does not further the book's objective has been omitted, no matter how interesting it might be. It is of course possible to wring every last scrap of instructional value out of each position, but I have not done this. The positions have been selected to make specific points, and the comments and analysis are directed towards explaining and emphasizing these points. Many of the positions practically explain themselves and then my comments are designed mostly to focus the reader's attention on specific moments in the examples.

Most of the sections have been grouped according to material, with the result that the book consists of ten parts. Each part is prefaced by a page or two which summarizes the contents of that part, and gives the reader an overview of the general principles governing that particular type of endgame.

I have kept the use of technical terms to a minimum and any that are used will be explained in the text. I have adopted one convention which is worth explaining. In discussing, for example, the ending of bishop and pawn vs bishop, one often wants to write something like 'if White's pawn is on the fifth rank, then...'. Indeed, in many endgame books this is not a problem, since it is always assumed that White is the superior side. However, this book depends heavily on practical examples, and in these it quite often happens that it is Black who has the bishop and pawn and so references to 'White's pawn' may be confusing. Some books solve this problem by reversing the colours in those examples where Black is trying to win, but in practice you have to play Black as often as White and I believe that it is helpful to see the situation from both sides of the board. Therefore I have adopted a different solution to this problem. If I want to make a general statement about an ending, I shall write (to use the above example), 'if the attacker's pawn is on the fifth rank, then...' where it is understood that the *attacker* is the superior side, who is trying to win, while the *defender* is the inferior side, who is trying to draw. This avoids reference to White or Black and applies equally whether White or Black is the superior side. It should be clear in any given position who the attacker and defender are.

Each diagram is labelled by a number and a letter, so that '32b', for example, is the second diagram in Section 32. Cross-references refer to diagrams using these labels. The letter 'W' or 'B' beside a diagram indicates whether it is White or Black to play. If 'W/B' appears, this means that the diagram position is considered both with White to move and with Black to move. Where I refer to 'first rank', 'fifth rank', etc., this is always from the point of view of the player being discussed.

I hope that this book proves helpful in improving the reader's endgame play and in showing that the endgame is one of the most interesting and important parts of chess.

John Nunn
Chertsey
July 2009

King and Pawn Endings

King and pawn endings are the most fundamental type of ending, since all other endings can reduce to them via piece exchanges. Therefore, the study of endgames in general must start here. I have devoted a considerable amount of space to king and pawn endings, not only because of their intrinsic importance, but because several important endgame concepts make their first appearance in such endings. Examples of such concepts are *zugzwang*, the outside passed pawn and the active king, all ideas which recur throughout the book in different types of endgames.

You can't get much more basic than king and pawn vs king, and Sections 1-3 deal with this ending. Even though many readers will be familiar with the principles governing this ending, positions such as 2d and 3d show that applying these principles may require a degree of subtlety. Section 4 covers king and two pawns vs king, which is almost always winning, although it is worth being aware of the few exceptional positions.

This book is intended as an instruction manual, and so focuses on the general concepts which, once grasped, will actually improve your play over the board. Section 5 explains how you can use your own king to frustrate the enemy monarch, while Section 6 deals with the geometry of the chessboard and how this can be used to pursue two targets at the same time.

The task of exploiting an extra pawn arises frequently in practice, and this is the subject of Section 7. Passed pawns are usually an asset, and this is especially so if they are outside (far away from the other pawns) or protected, and such pawns are discussed in Sections 8 and 9. An active king is a benefit in almost all types of ending; king and pawn endings are no exception, as you can see in Section 10.

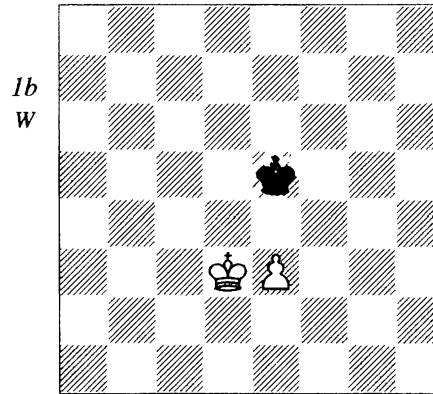
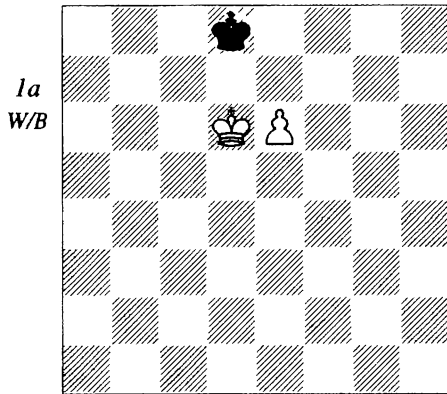
The creation of a passed pawn can easily decide a king and pawn ending, because if the enemy king is too far away to stop it, then promotion is inevitable. This can sometimes be achieved by a breakthrough, in which one or more pawns are sacrificed to ensure the promotion of another. Section 11 gives some examples.

It is sometimes possible to manoeuvre with the king in order to penetrate into the enemy position. The most basic example of this is the *opposition*, which is explained in Section 12. A slightly more sophisticated case is the *distant opposition* (see Section 13), while *triangulation* is a subtler variant of the same principle (see Section 14). In order to gain the opposition, it is sometimes necessary to make a waiting move with a pawn, so it is helpful to have one or more pawn moves which can be executed at any moment. These are called *reserve tempi*, and are covered in Section 15.

Pawn endings can be transformed into queen endings if one or both of the players promote, but equally queen endings can reduce to pawn endings if the queens are exchanged. Thus there is an unavoidable circularity in covering such endings. Sections 16 and 17 deal with pawn endings which transform into queen endings. This is an important topic, as it is quite common for both sides to promote in pawn endings. However, these two sections do depend to a limited extent on knowledge of some basic queen endings, and you may find it helpful at least to glance at Sections 76 and 77 before starting on Section 16.

Finally, Section 18 is a reminder that unexpected points lurk in even the most innocent-looking positions. With only kings and pawns on the board, many players feel that tactical surprises are out of the question and lower their guard, only to realize their mistake too late. Even grandmasters have been known to overlook the subtle finesses which occur surprisingly often in king and pawn endings. The examples in this section should serve as a warning that it is always necessary to maintain your tactical alertness.

1 King and Pawn vs King (1)



You can't get much more basic than this, but even such a simple position allows us to make some important points. If White manages to promote his pawn without Black immediately being able to capture the new queen, then he will win. Note that we do not cover the basic mate of king and queen vs king in this book.

If Black is to play, he cannot prevent White from promoting his pawn, since after 1...♔c8 2 e7 or 1...♔e8 2 e7 ♔f7 3 ♔d7 the pawn will promote next move.

However, if White is to play he cannot win. If he continues 1 e7+ ♔e8, then the only move not to lose the pawn, 2 ♔e6, delivers stalemate. If White does not push the pawn, he cannot make progress; for example, 1 ♔d5 ♔e7 2 ♔e5 ♔e8! (2...♔d8? loses to 3 ♔d6, and the diagram position arises with Black to move) 3 ♔f6 ♔f8 and the same situation has arisen on the other side of the pawn.

In most chess positions, it is an advantage to have the move, but in the diagram the reverse is the case: it is an advantage **not** to have the move. If a player is in a situation in which every move he can make damages his position, then he is said to be in *zugzwang*. *Zugzwang* is extremely rare when there are many pieces on the board, but it occurs quite often in endgames.

This is a typical position of king and pawn vs king in which the defender's king is in front of the pawn and close to it. Unlike the previous diagram, it is a draw whoever moves first. Play might continue:

1 e4 ♔e6

Black must keep his king in front of the pawn. After 1...♔f4? 2 ♔d4 White is able to usher the pawn to the eighth rank.

2 ♔d4 ♔d6 3 e5+ ♔e6 4 ♔e4

Now Black must again retreat his king. At first sight it looks as if White is making progress, as he gradually advances his pawn towards the queening square. However, this progress comes to a grinding halt when the pawn reaches the sixth rank.

4...♔e7

At this stage it doesn't matter whether Black plays 4...♔e7 or 4...♔d7, but when the pawn reaches the sixth rank the choice of retreat square is all-important.

5 ♔d5 ♔d7 6 e6+ ♔e7 7 ♔e5

The key moment. Black has to retreat his king to the back rank, but of the three possible choices only one draws.

7...♔e8!

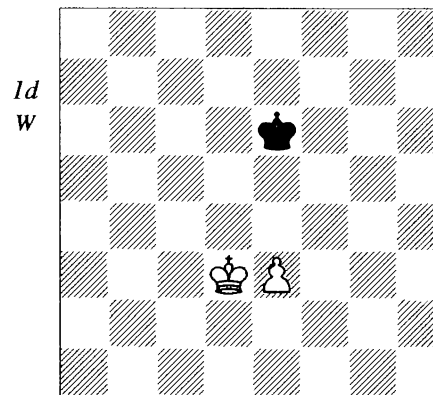
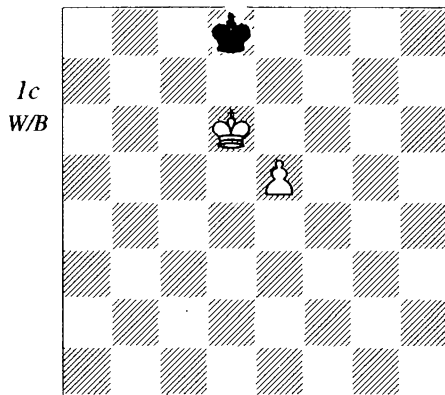
Not 7...♔d8? 8 ♔d6 reaching 1a with Black to play, nor 7...♔f8? 8 ♔f6 ♔e8 9 e7 and again White wins.

8 ♔d6

8 ♔f6 ♔f8 is the same.

8...♔d8

This is 1a with White to play, so is a draw.



We've made just a small change to diagram 1a, pushing the white pawn back one square. This small change makes a big difference, because now **White wins whoever moves first**.

If White moves first, then the win is familiar, because 1 e6 leads to diagram 1a with Black to play. When Black moves first, however, White can win because the square e6 is available for his king. After 1...♙e8 (1...♙c8 2 ♙e7, followed by e6, ♙f7 and e7, wins) 2 ♙e6! Black is in zugzwang. He would prefer to pass, leaving his king in front of the pawn, but the laws of chess compel him to move and after 2...♙d8 3 ♙f7 or 2...♙f8 3 ♙d7 White's king controls all the squares on the e-file from e6 to e8, so he can just push his pawn to the eighth rank.

The situation after 2 ♙e6, in which the two kings face each other with just one square in between, is an example of the *opposition*. If the defender is to move, then (provided he has no other spare moves) he will have to move his king, allowing the attacker to advance his own king. The opposition is very important in king and pawn endings and we shall have more to say about this topic in Sections 12 and 13.

Positions which are winning whoever moves first are important target positions for the attacker, as he need not worry about tempi when heading for them.

A key point in this example is that it is good for the attacker to **have his king in front of his pawn**, so as to give his king the greatest freedom of movement.

This differs from 1b only in that Black's king is one square further back. White to play can now win, but he has to choose the correct first move.

1 ♙e4!

The only path to victory. White must keep his king in front of the pawn and must also gain the opposition. Thus 1 e4? ♙e5 2 ♙e3 ♙e6 3 ♙d4 ♙d6 and 1 ♙d4? ♙d6 2 ♙e4 ♙e6 3 ♙f4 ♙f6 are draws.

1...♙d6

Black must move to the side, and the white king can step forwards.

2 ♙f5 ♙e7

After 2...♙d7 3 ♙f6 Black loses one move more quickly.

3 ♙e5!

White avoids the mistake 3 e4? ♙f7!, after which Black gains the opposition and draws. White must push his king one square further up before it is safe to advance the pawn.

3...♙d7 4 ♙f6

Now that White's king has reached the sixth rank, he can push the pawn, secure in the knowledge that 1c is a win whoever is to play.

4...♙e8 5 e4 ♙f8 6 e5 ♙e8 7 ♙e6

White continues to bear in mind that his king is best placed ahead of the pawn. He could undo all his good work by playing 7 e6?, after which 7...♙f8 secures the draw for Black.

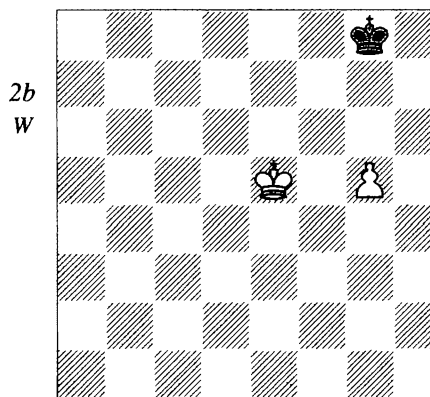
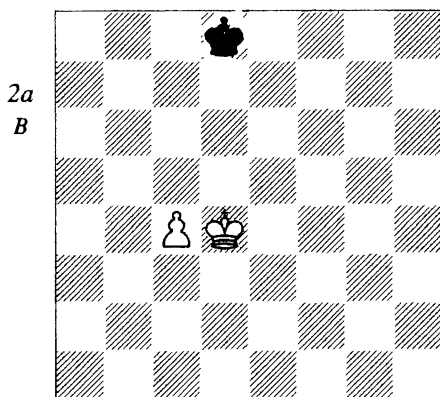
7...♙d8

7...♙f8 8 ♙d7 is similar.

8 ♙f7

and the pawn's promotion is assured.

2 King and Pawn vs King (2)



Based on what we have seen in Section 1, we can work out what Black should play to draw this position.

At first sight, things look grim for Black, since the most obvious moves, 1...♔c7 and 1...♔d7, both lose. After 1...♔c7 White replies 2 ♕c5, gaining the opposition. We now have the same situation as in 1d: Black must move his king to one side or the other, allowing White's king to advance. The same thing happens after 1...♔d7 2 ♕d5 ♔c7 3 ♕c5. So what can Black do?

The solution is to play 1...♔c8!, which is the only move to draw. Black waits to see which square White's king will occupy on the fifth rank before making his own choice. If White plays 2 ♕c5, then 2...♔c7! gains the opposition and draws, while 2 ♕d5 ♔d7! is very much the same. If White plays a move such as 2 ♕e4, then 2...♔c7 3 ♕d5 ♔d7 again leads to a draw.

The reason why 1...♔c8! works is that White would like to play 2 ♕c4, waiting for Black to move one way before going the other way with his king. This fails, of course, because c4 is occupied by the pawn and so ♕c4 is impossible.

So long as the white pawn is on the c-, d-, e- or f-files, everything that we have said up to now holds true, but there are a few slight differences with a knight's pawn. The basic principles are still the same, but there is one additional tricky point which sometimes catches people out. White can win in the above diagram, but he must take a little care.

1 ♕f6

White is heading for the standard win with his king on the sixth rank ahead of the pawn. Now it seems that Black has nothing better than 1...♔f8 2 ♕g6 ♔g8 3 ♕g7 ♔h7 4 ♕f7 and White wins.

1...♔h7!

This puts up the most resistance and sets a small trap.

2 ♕f7

The only move to win, as 2 ♕g6+? ♔h8! is a draw and other moves allow the black king to occupy g7.

2...♔h8 3 ♕g6!

Avoiding the trap 3 ♕g6?, when Black is stalemated. In fact, White cannot win with his king to the left of the pawn due to this stalemate and must transfer his king to h6.

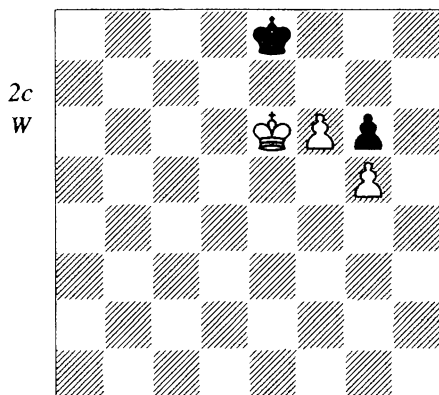
3...♔g8 4 ♔h6 ♔h8

If Black plays 4...♔f7 or 4...♔f8, then 5 ♔h7 wins because this way round there is no stalemate.

5 ♕g6 ♔g8 6 ♕g7 ♔f7 7 ♔h7

The pawn queens next move.

The situation with a rook's pawn is quite different and we shall cover this in Section 3.



Knowing the basic positions enables us to solve a lot of other positions which reduce to an ending of king and pawn vs king.

How can White win here? If he could play his king round to attack Black's pawn from the right, then the win would be easy, but h5 is under Black's control so this is impossible. The most obvious continuation is 1 f7+ ♖f8 2 ♖f6, but this stalemates Black.

The crucial point is to remember that any position of king and pawn vs king with the white king on g6 and pawn on g5 is winning for White.

1 f7+ ♖f8 2 ♖d6!

This surprising move is the key to success. White sacrifices his f-pawn to reach a position in which he can win the g6-pawn by force.

2...♗xf7 3 ♖d7

Black's king is very restricted in its movements and he cannot prevent White's king from edging its way towards the g6-pawn.

3...♗f8 4 ♖e6 ♖g7 5 ♖e7

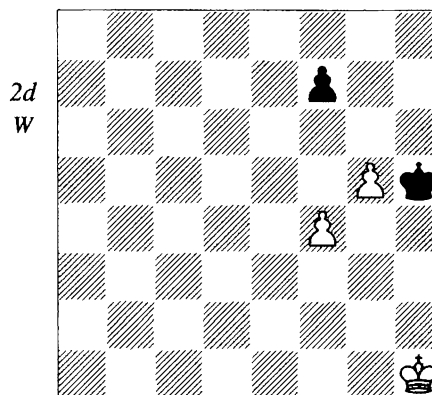
Now Black has to give White's king access to the f6-square. All the time White works with zugzwang, driving Black further and further back.

5...♖g8 6 ♖f6 ♖h7 7 ♖f7

One final zugzwang forces Black to concede his pawn, and White reaches his target position.

7...♖h8 8 ♖xg6 ♖g8 9 ♖h6 ♖h8 10 g6 ♖g8 11 g7 ♖f7 12 ♖h7

Finally White promotes his pawn.



H. Mattison

Deutsches Wochenschach, 1918

White is temporarily a pawn up, but his king is too far away to prevent Black from capturing both white pawns with his king. At first sight the position is dead lost for White; for example, after 1 ♖g2? ♖g4 2 ♖f2 ♗xf4 3 ♖g2 ♖xg5 4 ♖g3 ♖f5 5 ♖f3 Black uses his spare pawn move 5...f6! to gain the opposition and win as in 1d.

The saving idea is that since White's pawns will be lost within a few moves in any case, he should sacrifice them in such a way as to draw Black's pawn forward and prevent Black from establishing a winning position with his king in front of the pawn.

1 g6!

The first sacrifice.

1...fxg6 2 f5!

The second sacrifice is necessary since 2 ♖g2? loses to 2...♖g4 3 ♖f1 (after 3 f5 gx5 Black has the opposition and wins) 3...♗xf4 4 ♖f2 g5 5 ♖g2 ♖g4 and again Black seizes the opposition.

2...gxf5

Black's pawn is pulled forward again, depriving him of the spare pawn tempi which proved decisive in the above lines. Now we have a situation familiar from 2a. White must keep his king on the first rank until Black commits his king to f4 or g4.

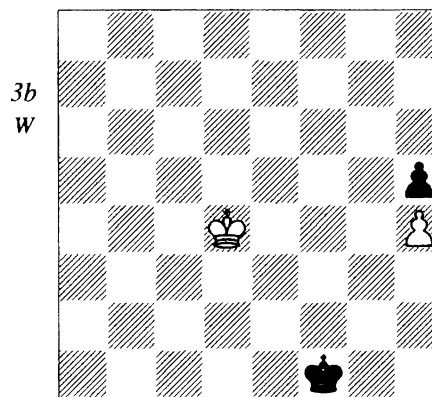
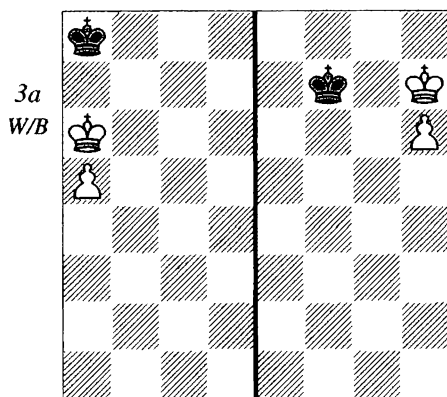
3 ♖g1!

Not 3 ♖g2? ♖g4, nor 3 ♖h2? ♖h4.

3...♖g5 4 ♖f1! ♖f4 5 ♖f2

White has the opposition and draws.

3 The Rook's Pawn



The situation in king and pawn vs king is very different if the attacker has a rook's pawn.

The left position above is winning if the pieces are on any file apart from the a- and h-files, but the diagram position is a **draw whoever is to move**.

For example, if White is to play then **1 ♖b6 ♜b8 2 a6 ♜a8 3 a7** leads to stalemate rather than a win, because there is no square available for the black king on the file to the left of the pawn. If Black moves first, then **1... ♜b8** is safe, this time because there is no space for the **white** king to the left of the pawn.

The consequence of this is that **for a rook's pawn, all positions with the black king in front of the pawn are drawn**. It doesn't matter if White has doubled or even tripled a-pawns; provided Black can get his king in front of all the pawns, it's a draw.

The right-hand position above shows another drawing possibility, when the attacker's king is stuck in front of the pawn. Again it doesn't matter who moves first. White to play can stalemate himself by **1 ♜h8 ♜f8 2 h7**, but he cannot win. With Black to play, **1... ♜f8 2 ♜g6 ♜g8** brings the king in front of the pawn and again draws.

These two drawing positions mean that if White has an a-pawn, Black can draw provided his king can reach c7, except if White's pawn is on a7 and he can promote immediately.

The special drawing possibilities with a rook's pawn give rise to some unusual situations. In this position, White can win the h-pawn without any difficulty, but will the resulting position be a win?

At first sight, it seems not because after **1 ♜e4? ♜e2 2 ♜f4 ♜d3!** (the only move to draw, making for f5) **3 ♜g5 ♜e4 4 ♜xh5 ♜f5** the white king is trapped in front of the pawn and the black king reaches f7, which we know ensures a draw. However, White has one move which frustrates Black's defence:

1 ♜e3!

White approaches the g5-square, while at the same time blocking the black king's progress towards f5. This use of the king to shoulder away the enemy king occurs in several types of ending and is an important general concept, which is covered in more detail in Section 5.

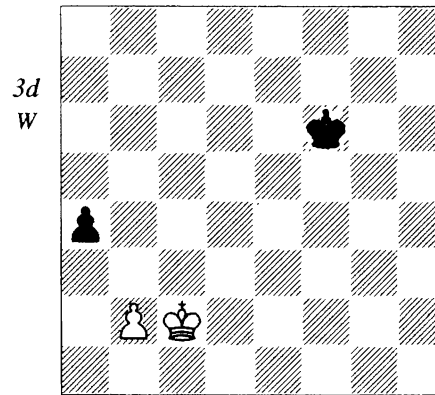
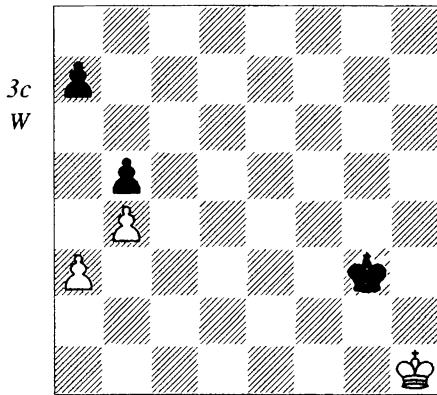
1... ♜e1

Or **1... ♜g2 2 ♜f4 ♜h3 3 ♜g5 ♜g3 4 ♜xh5 ♜f4** transposing to the main line.

2 ♜f4 ♜e2 3 ♜g5 ♜f3 4 ♜xh5 ♜f4 5 ♜g6

Now White's pawn has a free run to h8.

One special property of the king is that diagonal routes (which are longer if measured with a ruler on the chessboard) take no more time than lateral routes. Thus, moving from d4 to g5 via e3 takes three moves, the same as going by the straighter path via e4 and f4. In the above position, this meant that the king could achieve two objectives with one move.



If ever a king and pawn ending looked hopeless, this is it. Black's king occupies a dominant position on the sixth rank, and is even one square closer to the vulnerable queenside pawns than White's king. There seems nothing White can do to prevent Black from marching his king to the queenside and capturing both white pawns, when the resulting king and two pawns against king position is an easy win.

However, using the ideas we have seen in earlier positions, White can save the game.

1 g1 f3 2 f1 e3 3 e1 d3

There is nothing so far to indicate White's drawing idea, but now comes a surprise.

4 a4!

White unexpectedly sacrifices a pawn, knowing that even two a-pawns will not help Black if White's king can reach a1 (4 d1 c3 5 a4! is equally good).

4...bxa4

Or 4...a6 5 axb5 axb5 6 d1 c3 7 c1 xb4 8 b2 and White draws because he has the opposition.

5 d1

White's king is just in time to catch the a-pawn if Black now plays 5...a3, which explains why White couldn't play a4 any earlier.

5...c3 6 c1

White must prevent ...b2, which would ensure the promotion of the a4-pawn.

6...xb4 7 b2

White's king reaches a1.

The idea of offering a pawn to convert a useful b-pawn into a useless a-pawn occurs quite often in king and pawn endings.

F. Cassidy

The Chess Monthly, 1884

This position contains a trap within a trap. One's first impression is that White can just head for the a-pawn: 1 c3 e5 2 b4 d5 3 xa4 c6 (or 3...c5 4 a5 followed by b4) 4 a5 b7 5 b5 and wins. However, Black can use the idea of offering a pawn to convert the b-pawn into an a-pawn: 1 c3? a3! 2 b4 (2 bxa3 e6 and Black draws by heading for a8) 2...e5 3 b3 d5 4 xa3 c6 5 a4 b6 and Black draws as in 1b.

The winning move is very surprising:

1 b1!

White again heads for the a4-pawn. This route is one move longer than that via c3 and b4, but it puts White in a better position if Black plays ...a3.

1...a3

Still the best chance, as 1...e5 2 a2 d5 3 a3 c5 4 xa4 b6 5 b4 c6 6 a5, etc., is an easy win.

2 b3!

We already know that White should try to have his king in front of his pawn; this is easier to achieve if the pawn is further back. Indeed, 2 b4? e5 3 a2 d5 4 xa3 c6 5 a4 b6 only leads to a draw.

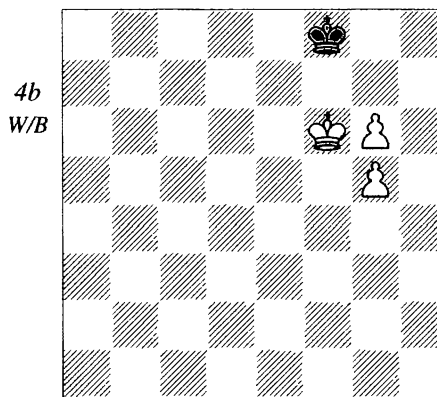
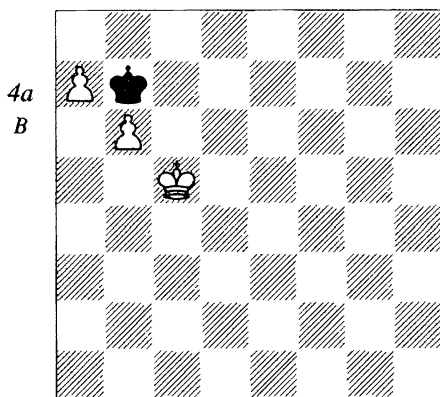
2...e5 3 a2 d5 4 xa3 c6 5 a4!

The last finesse. After 5 b4? b6 Black gains the opposition and draws.

5...b6 6 b4

Making use of the square left free by 2 b3, White gains the opposition and wins.

4 King and Two Pawns vs King



Most positions with king and two pawns vs king are straightforward wins. There is nothing the defender can do to prevent the gradual advance of the pawns, supported by the attacker's king. Eventually, one of the pawns will promote. However, there are a few positions which require a little finesse and even a few exceptional positions which are drawn.

The above position is a win, but White has to employ a small degree of subtlety.

1...♔a8

Now obvious attempts, such as 2 ♔c6?, only lead to stalemate. The key idea is to sacrifice the a-pawn to remove the possibility of stalemate, but the a-pawn is currently blocked, so first White has to play a waiting move.

2 ♔d6

Any other waiting move is equally good.

2...♔b7 3 a8♚+! ♔xa8 4 ♔c6

This is no longer stalemate.

4...♔b8 5 b7 ♔a7 6 ♔c7

The pawn promotes next move.

With connected a- and b-pawns further back, the win is even easier, as White can just play with the b-pawn, using the a-pawn to supply a reserve tempo when the pawn reaches b6. If White has connected passed pawns on other files, the win is simpler still, as there isn't even a stalemate possibility to worry about.

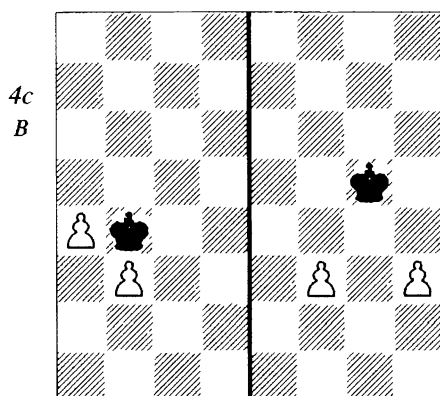
Even if the pawns are doubled, then the win is usually simple, provided the pawns are supported by the king. The normal technique is to play with just the front pawn, using the rear pawn to supply a reserve tempo if necessary when the front pawn reaches the sixth rank.

However, problems may arise if both pawns are far-advanced. The above position, for example, is a draw if White is to play. The only move that makes sense is 1 g7+, since after other moves Black just plays ...♔g7. But Black replies 1...♔g8, and now the only two moves to preserve the g7-pawn are 2 ♔g6 and 2 g6, but both these stalemate Black.

If Black is to play, then White wins, but this requires a small trick. After 1...♔g8 2 g7 ♔h7, White cannot play the obvious 3 ♔f7? because Black is stalemated, but the finesse 3 g8♚+! ♔xg8 4 ♔g6 wins, as White's king reaches f7 or h7 next move.

If the rear g-pawn is further back, then the position is a win whoever moves first. For example, with the pawn on g2, then White to play wins at once by 1 g7+ ♔g8 2 g3 (reserve tempo) 2...♔h7 3 ♔f7. With the rear pawn on g4 and White to play, one route to victory is 1 g7+ ♔g8 2 g5 ♔h7 3 g8♚+! as above.

There is one case in which the position is generally drawn: if the doubled pawns are on a rook's file, then the position is drawn provided the defender's king is in front of the pawns.

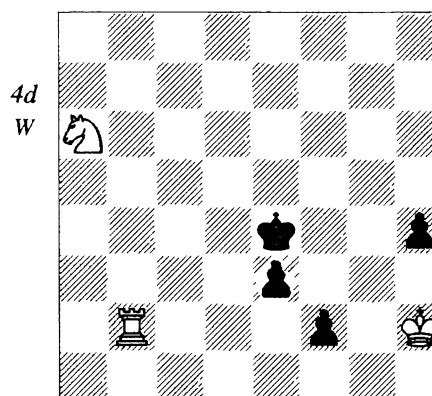


If the attacker's king is not yet supporting the pawns, then the question is whether the defender can capture the pawns before the king arrives. In many cases this is impossible because two pawns can often defend themselves without any help from the king.

In the left-hand position above, the a-pawn is defended by the b-pawn, but Black cannot play ... xb3 because after a5 the a-pawn cannot be stopped. It doesn't matter how far away the white king is, since Black cannot do anything while the king is marching across to lend a hand.

A similar situation exists in the right-hand position. If Black plays $1... \text{f4}$, White replies 2h4 ($1... \text{h4}$ 2f4 is the same) and Black is unable to take on f3 because then the h-pawn queens. Black can then change tack and head for the h-pawn, but after $2... \text{f5}$ and $3... \text{g6}$ White plays 4f4 , and the same situation is repeated one rank further up the board. This gives White unlimited time to bring his king to support the pawns.

If there are two empty files between the pawns instead of one, then the defender's king can sometimes win both pawns, if they are quite far back and cannot be supported by the attacker's king. If the pawns are still further apart, then they can normally defend each other much as above.



A. Troitsky (version of study)
Novoe Vremia, 1896

There are one or two exceptional positions in which a lone king can draw against two disconnected passed pawns. In the above position, White can draw by making use of one of these.

1 c5+ !

$1 \text{c}2? \text{h}3+ 2 \text{f}1 \text{h}2$ and $1 \text{b}1? \text{e}2$ are easy wins for Black, but it is interesting to see why $1 \text{xf}2? \text{exf}2 2 \text{g}2$ loses. Black continues $2... \text{e}3 3 \text{f}1 \text{h}3 4 \text{b}4 \text{h}2 5 \text{c}2+$ (or $5 \text{d}5+ \text{f}3$) $5... \text{d}2$ and Black promotes one of his pawns.

1... f3

After $1... \text{f5}$ White draws by $2 \text{xf}2+ \text{exf}2 3 \text{g}2$, while $1... \text{d}4?$ even loses after $2 \text{g}2 \text{h}3+ 3 \text{f}1 \text{h}2 4 \text{b}4+$ followed by $5 \text{h}4$.

2 $\text{xf}2+$!

After $2 \text{b}1?$ or $2 \text{b}8?$ Black wins by $2... \text{e}2$ and the passed pawns are overwhelming.

2... $\text{exf}2 3 \text{d}4$!

Now White sacrifices his other piece.

3... $\text{xe}4$

$3... \text{f}1 \text{d}2+$ and $3... \text{f}1 \text{d}+$ $4 \text{h}3$ are easy draws.

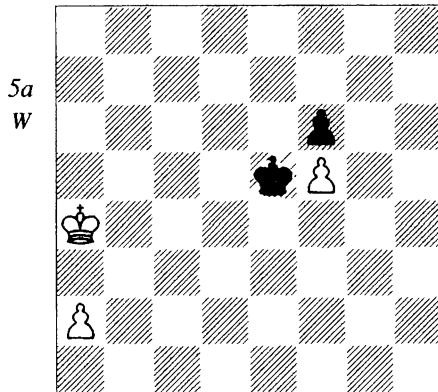
4 $\text{g}2$

The position is the same as after $1 \text{xf}2? \text{exf}2 2 \text{g}2$, except that White has no knight. As we shall see, this actually helps White.

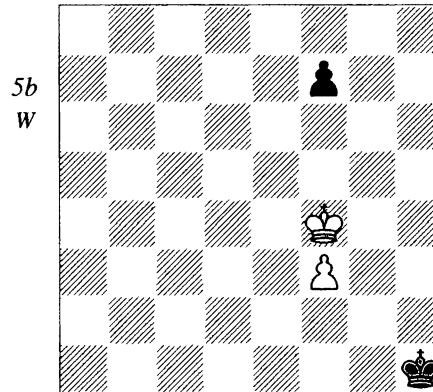
4... $\text{e}3 5 \text{f}1$

Suddenly the position is a draw, as the only two moves that retain the f-pawn, $5... \text{h}3$ and $5... \text{f}3$, both stalemate White.

5 Shouldering Away



A. Sokolov – Vorotnikov
Russian Ch, Elista 1996



Rogers – Shirov
Groningen 1990

A common feature of king and pawn endings (and, indeed, many other types of ending) is *shouldering away*, the use of your own king to keep the enemy king at arm's length.

In this position, Black is about to capture the f5-pawn and create his own passed pawn. White's first move must be a king move to clear the way for the passed a-pawn, but where should he move the king?

1 ♔b5!

After Black takes on f5, he is still in time to run back and stop the a-pawn. White must position his own king to prevent this.

1...♟xf5 2 a4

White cannot waste another tempo on a king move at this point, because he must be ready to promote before Black.

2...♟e6

Still trying to stop the a-pawn. After 2...♟g4 3 a5 f5 4 a6 f4 5 a7 f3 6 a8 ♖f2 7 ♖g2+ White picks up the enemy pawn and wins easily.

If 2...♟e5, then 3 a5 ♔d6 4 ♟b6 and White heads off the black king and again promotes first.

3 ♟c6! 1-0

White's king move cuts off the black king's approach to a8, but surely this gives Black a tempo to promote his own pawn? This is true, but if we work through the line we find that after 3...f5 4 a5 f4 5 a6 f3 6 a7 f2 7 a8 ♖f1 ♖, White wins Black's queen by 8 ♖e8+ and 9 ♖f8+.

Here is a dramatic example of shouldering away. White must win the black pawn without losing his own pawn, but the direct approach fails: 1 ♟f5? ♟g2 2 f4 ♟f3 with a clear draw.

1 ♟g3! 1-0

This unexpected move is the key to success, even though the white king actually moves away from Black's pawn. The idea is to keep Black's king at arm's length while the white pawn advances to f6. Then the white king can run for Black's pawn, since when White takes on f7 he will also be defending his own pawn.

Let's see how this plan works out in terms of concrete variations:

1...♟g1 2 f4 ♟f1

Black's king has to take the long way round. After 2...f5 3 ♟h4 White wins easily.

3 f5

It is important not to waste time; after 3 ♟f3? f5 4 ♟e3 ♟g2 the position is a draw since White would even lose if he tried 5 ♟d4? ♟f3 6 ♟e5 ♟g4.

3...♟e2 4 ♟f4!

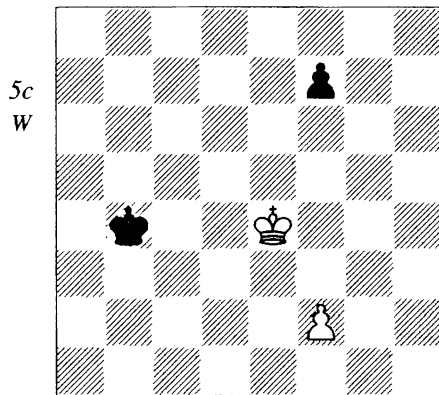
A second shouldering-away move; once again, Black's king has to make a detour.

4...♟d3

White also wins after 4...f6 5 ♟e4 ♟f2 6 ♟d5 ♟f3 7 ♟e6 and 4...♟f2 5 f6! (but not 5 ♟e5? ♟f3).

5 ♟e5 ♟e3 6 f6

White will play ♟d6-e7, winning.



Malakhov – Nayer
Moscow 2007

The unexpected moves which arise in shouldering-away situations can easily be overlooked. In this position an experienced grandmaster missed the winning move. The game continued:

1 ♖e5?

The direct approach is wrong, as it allows Black's king to approach the pawns.

1...♗c5 2 f3

Or 2 f4 ♗c6 3 ♖f6 (3 f5 ♗d7 4 ♖f6 ♗e8 5 ♖g7 ♗e7 is also a draw) 3...♗d5 and White cannot do better than exchange pawns.

2...♗c6

Heading to defend the f7-pawn.

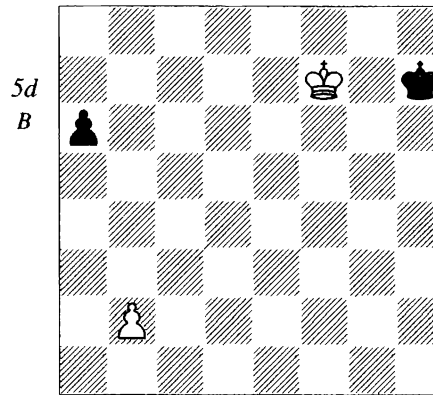
3 f4 ♗d7 4 ♖f6 ♗e8 5 ♖g7

Now Black must take care; for example, 5...♗e7? 6 f5 f6 7 ♖g6 ♗e8 8 ♗xf6 ♗f8 9 ♗e6 and 5...f6? 6 ♖xf6 are winning for White.

5...f5! 6 ♖f6 1/2-1/2

After 6...♗f8 7 ♗xf5 ♖f7 Black seizes the opposition and draws (see 2a).

However, White could have won by **1 ♗d4!**, keeping the black king at bay while gaining time to push the f-pawn. After **1...♗b5** (or **1...♗b3 2 ♗e5 ♗c4 3 f4 ♗c5 4 f5** and White wins) **2 ♗d5 ♗b6** (2...♗b4 3 f4 ♗c3 4 f5 ♗d3 5 f6 doesn't help Black) **3 ♗d6 ♗b7** Black's king is cut off and can no longer support his f-pawn, so White has time to advance his own pawn. The main line is **4 f4 ♗c8 5 ♗e7 f5 6 ♗e6 ♗d8 7 ♗xf5 ♗e7 8 ♖g6** with a standard win as the white king is well in front of the pawn.



T. Gorgiev (end of study)
2nd Honourable Mention, Leningrad Central
Chess Club Tourney, '64', 1936

This example is an extreme case in which White has to shoulder Black's king away right across the board. The basic idea is similar to the previous examples: White must gain time to push his b-pawn to a more favourable square.

1...♗h6

1...♗h8 2 b4 ♗h7 3 ♗e6 and White wins easily.

2 ♖f6

2 b4? ♗g5 3 ♗e6 ♗f4 4 ♗d5 ♗e3 and **2 ♗e6? ♗g5!** are only draws.

2...♗h5

If the black king reverses direction with **2...♗h7**, then **3 b4** wins. This logic repeats right down the board.

3 ♖f5 ♗h4 4 ♖f4 ♗h3 5 ♖f3 ♗h2 6 ♖f2 ♗h3

6...♗h1 7 b4 is a win as the black king cannot move to the ninth rank. **6...a5** also loses after **7 ♗e3 ♖g2 8 ♗d4**, etc.

7 b3!

An important finesse. **7 b4? ♖g4 8 ♗e3 ♖f5 9 ♗d4 ♗e6 10 ♗c5** looks promising, but Black draws using the same trick as in 3c: **10...a5! 11 bxa5 ♗d7 12 ♗b6 ♗c8**.

7...♖g4 8 ♗e3 ♖f5 9 ♗d4 ♗e6 10 ♗c5 ♗e5

10...a5 doesn't work with the pawn on b3 since White wins by **11 ♗b5 a4 12 ♗xa4!**.

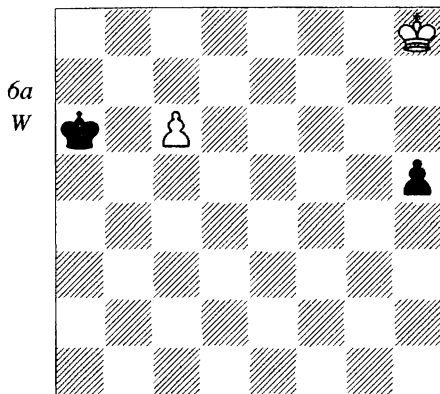
11 b4!

Not **11 ♗b6? ♗d4** with a draw.

11...♗e4 12 ♗b6

and White wins.

6 King Geometry



R. Réti

Kagans Neueste Schachnachrichten, 1921

Under 3b, I have already remarked on the curious feature of the king's move, that when it moves diagonally it is effectively moving faster than if it moves orthogonally. This allows a king to perform feats which appear impossible.

In the above diagram the white king appears far too slow to catch the runaway h-pawn. Despite this, White can save the game by using the c-pawn to gain the two tempi he needs to overhaul Black's pawn.

1 ♖g7!

White's king must chase the h-pawn while at the same time moving closer to the c-pawn.

1...h4

Or 1...♖b6 2 ♖f6 h4 3 ♖e5 transposing to the main line.

2 ♖f6! ♖b6

Black must spend a tempo stopping the c-pawn. After 2...h3 3 ♖e6 h2 4 c7 White also draws.

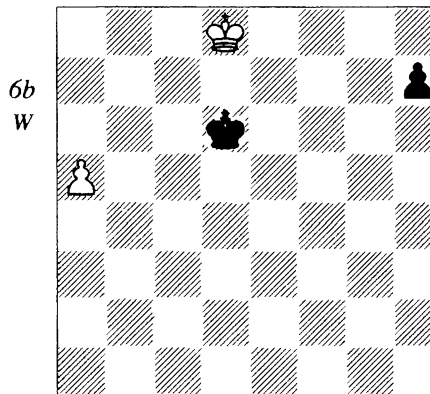
3 ♖e5! ♖xc6

3...h3 4 ♖d6 is a draw, so Black must spend a second tempo dealing with the c-pawn.

4 ♖f4

White catches the pawn and draws.

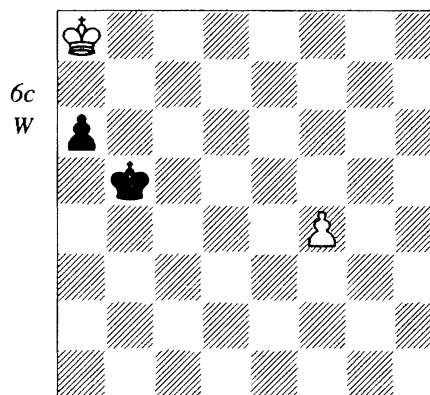
Geometrical motifs occur quite often in king and pawn endings, and the idea of using the king to create a double threat is not unusual. Here are two more examples.



L. Prokeš

Šachové Umění, 1947

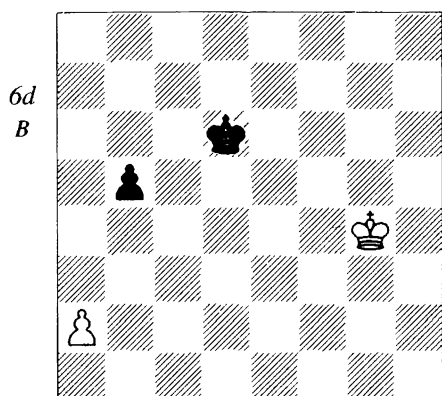
White uses his a-pawn to accelerate his king in a boomerang manoeuvre and catch the h-pawn, a feat which appears impossible in the diagram: 1 ♖c8 (not 1 a6? ♖c6 2 ♖e7 h5 and the h-pawn queens) 1...♖c6 2 ♖b8! (threatening to queen the a-pawn) 2...♖b5 3 ♖b7 (repeating the threat) 3...♖xa5 4 ♖c6 h5 5 ♖d5 and the king can stop the h-pawn.



C. de Feijter

Deventer Dagblad, 1939

Here the solution is 1 ♖b7! (not 1 f5? ♖c5 2 ♖b7 a5 3 ♖c7 ♖d5 4 ♖d7 ♖e5 and the a-pawn will prove decisive) 1...a5 2 ♖c7 ♖c5 (after 2...a4 3 f5 or 2...♖c4 3 ♖c6 a4 4 f5 both sides promote, with a draw) 3 ♖d7 ♖d5 4 ♖e7 ♖e4 (Black must step back a rank to stop the f-pawn) 5 ♖e6! ♖xf4 6 ♖d5 and draws.



Moiseenko – Pavasović
European Ch, Dresden 2007

Black's aim is to capture the a-pawn without losing his own b-pawn. However, the direct 1...♙c5 2 ♚f5 ♜b4 3 ♙e5 ♜a3 4 ♚d5 ♜xa2 5 ♜c5 doesn't work, so something more subtle is required. The next idea is to head for a2 via the alternative route d5-d4-c3-b2, but that doesn't work either: 1...♚d5 2 ♚f4 ♚d4 3 ♚f5 b4 4 ♙e6 ♙c3 5 ♚d5 ♜b2 6 ♙c4 and once again White is in time.

Black's winning continuation combines the shouldering-away idea with a zigzag king manoeuvre (d6-e5-d4). This combination occurs frequently in over-the-board situations.

1...♙e5!

Black again uses the route via d4, but going via e5 is just as quick, and has the benefit of keeping the white king further away.

2 ♚g5

Or 2 ♚f3 ♚d4 3 ♚f4 (3 ♙e2 ♙c3 4 ♙e3 b4 is similar) 3...b4 and then Black can head for a2.

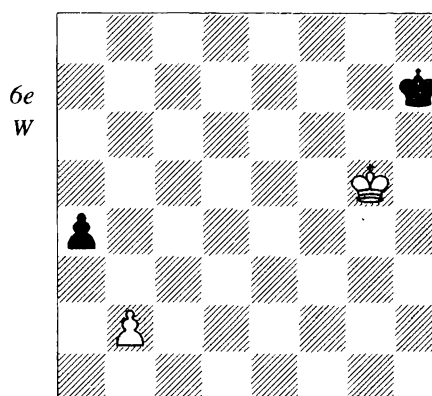
2...b4

The common factor in all these lines is that at some stage the two kings are on the same rank. At this moment White is not threatening to approach with his king, so Black has time to gain a useful tempo by playing ...b4.

3 ♚g6

White has to go the long way round to reach Black's pawn and ends up losing by one tempo.

3...♚d4 4 ♚f5 ♙c3 5 ♙e4 ♜b2 6 ♚d3 ♜xa2 0-1



S. Movsesian – Sadvakasov
Calvia Olympiad 2004

Here's another example featuring a diagonal path plus shouldering away. White must capture the a-pawn in such a way as not to allow Black to draw by means of the trick ...a3. In particular, the direct 1 ♚f5 ♚g7 2 ♙e5 ♚f7 3 ♚d5 ♙e7 4 ♙c5 a3! 5 bxa3 ♚d7 allows Black to draw. However, the zigzag route via e7 reaches b4 just as quickly as the direct path, but also restricts Black's king.

1 ♚f6! ♚g8 2 ♙e7!

White's king manoeuvre forces Black to waste time, since for the moment he cannot move to the f-file. 2 ♙e6? ♚f8 3 ♚d6 ♙e8 4 ♙c6 (4 ♙c5 a3 is also a draw) 4...♚d8 5 ♙b5 a3 only draws.

2...♚g7 3 ♚d6 ♚f6 4 ♙c6?

A mistake which throws away the win. The square White must head for is not a4, to capture the pawn, but b4, to prevent the ...a3 trick. Therefore White should have played 4 ♙c5! a3 (4...♙e7 5 ♙b4 a3 6 ♜xa3 is also a win as White's king is well in front of his pawn) 5 bxa3 ♙e7 6 ♙c6 ♚d8 7 ♙b7 and White is just in time to prevent Black's king from reaching c8.

4...♙e6 5 ♙b5 a3!

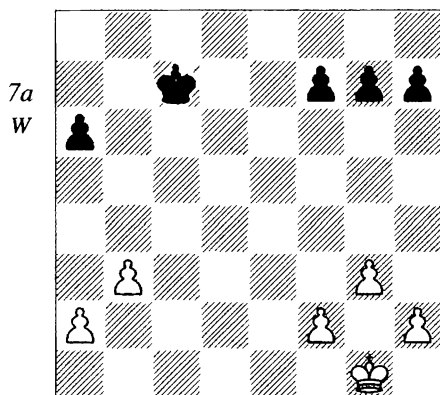
The standard idea, converting White's useful b-pawn into a less useful a-pawn.

6 bxa3 ♚d7 7 ♙b6 ♙c8

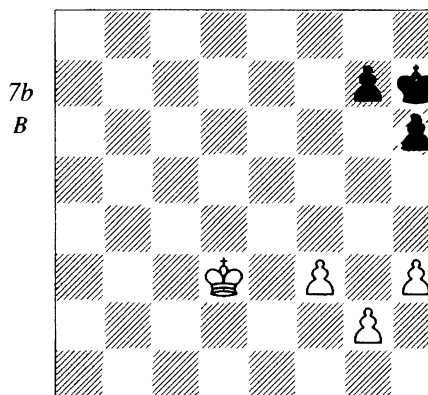
Black's king reaches his goal, and next move occupies either b8 or c7, ensuring the draw (see 3a).

7

Extra Pawn



T. Serafimov – Hedjazian
Elancourt 2003



Andersson – Tal
Malmö Ct playoff (6) 1983

An extra pawn in a king and pawn ending with no compensating advantages is generally enough to win. The more pawns there are on the board, the better the winning chances.

When there are pawns on both sides of the board, the winning plan is to create a passed pawn on the side where you have an extra pawn. This is used to deflect the enemy king, leaving your own king free to wreak havoc on the other side of the board. Here's an example:

1 ♖f1 ♜c6 2 ♖e2

White first centralizes his king.

2... ♜c5 3 a3 ♜d4

Black's king temporarily occupies an active position, but it cannot stay here for ever.

4 ♜d2 a5 5 ♜c2 h5 6 h4 f6 7 ♜d2

Once Black's tempo moves on the kingside run out, he will have to make a concession.

7... g6

Or **7... g5 8 f3 gxh4 9 gxh4 f5 10 ♜e2 ♜c3 11 b4 axb4 12 axb4 ♜xb4 13 ♜e3 ♜c5 14 ♜f4** and White wins both black pawns.

8 f4 f5 9 ♜c2 ♜e4 10 b4 axb4

After **10... a4 11 ♜c3 ♜d5 (11... ♜f3 12 b5 ♜xg3 13 b6 ♜xf4 14 b7 ♜g4 15 b8♖ is an easy win as none of Black's pawns is far advanced) 12 ♜d3** Black's king is in full retreat.

11 axb4 1-0

The end might be **11... ♜d4 12 b5 ♜c5 13 ♜c3 ♜xb5 14 ♜d4 ♜b4 15 ♜e5 ♜c4 16 ♜f6 ♜d4 17 ♜xg6**, with an easy win.

Exploiting an extra pawn is more difficult when all the pawns are on the same side of the board, but provided the superior side has at least three pawns it is usually possible to win.

In this position, White must aim to keep his king active and gradually advance his pawns. With careful play by White, Black has no chance of survival.

1... ♜g6 2 ♜e4 ♜f6

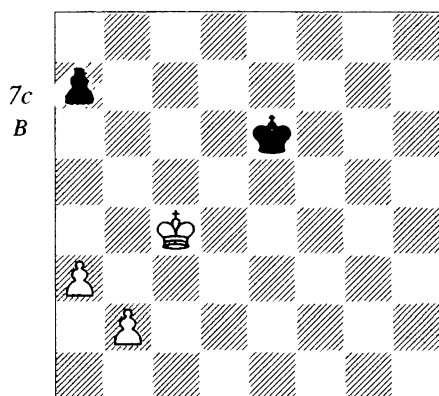
The position after **2... ♜g5** emphasizes a key point: White should not allow Black's king to become too active. Thus **3 ♜e3?** is wrong and allows Black to draw by **3... ♜h4 4 ♜f2 g5!**. White can win with the cautious **3 g3**, or by the more direct **3 f4+ ♜f6 (3... ♜h4 4 ♜f5 ♜g3 5 ♜g6 ♜xf4 6 ♜xg7 and White wins) 4 g4 ♜e6 5 h4**, and now:

1) **5... ♜f6 6 f5 g6 7 fxg6 ♜xg6 8 ♜e5 ♜f7 9 ♜f5 ♜g7 10 ♜e6 h5 (or 10... ♜g6 11 h5+ ♜g5 12 ♜f7 ♜xg4 13 ♜g6 and White wins) 11 g5 ♜g6 12 ♜e5 ♜g7 13 ♜f5 ♜f7 14 g6+ ♜g7 15 ♜g5** and the h-pawn falls.

2) **5... g6 6 g5 hxg5 7 hxg5 ♜d6 8 f5 ♜e7 9 f6+ and White wins as in 2c; for example, 9... ♜f7 10 ♜d5 ♜f8 11 f7!, etc.**

3 f4 h5 4 f5 1-0

The end might be **4... ♜g5 5 ♜e5 ♜h6 6 ♜f4 g6 7 f6 ♜h7 8 ♜g5** or **4... ♜e7 5 ♜f4 ♜d6 (5... ♜f6 6 h4 g6 7 fxg6 ♜xg6 8 ♜e5 will win the h-pawn) 6 ♜g5 ♜e5 7 g4 hxg4 8 hxg4** and White's king heads for the g7-pawn.



Lautier – Piket
Dortmund 1995

When all the pawns are on the same side, and it is a case of two pawns against one, the position is often finely balanced and only precise calculation will reveal the truth. However, general principles are still useful; for example, the superior side's chances are improved if he has an active king position. In the diagram, White's king can reach a6, which provides a good foundation, but an accurate follow-up is still required.

1...♠d6 2 ♠b5 ♠c7 3 ♠a6 ♠b8

Now White must take care. White first advances the a-pawn, because the b-pawn still has the choice of moving to b3 or b4. This provides an added flexibility which White should preserve until it becomes clear which is the correct choice.

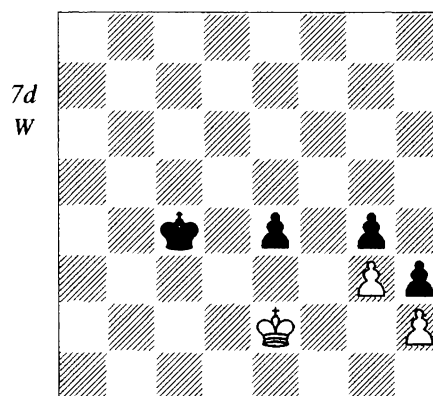
4 a4 ♠a8 5 a5 ♠b8

Now White must make up his mind about the b-pawn. It turns out that 6 b4? only leads to a draw: 6...♠a8 7 b5 ♠b8 8 b6 axb6 9 axb6 ♠a8 10 b7+ ♠b8 11 ♠b6 with stalemate. In this line White is on the wrong foot when the pawn arrives at b6, and so he should lose a tempo by advancing the b-pawn one square.

6 b3! ♠a8 7 b4 ♠b8 8 b5 ♠a8 9 b6 1-0

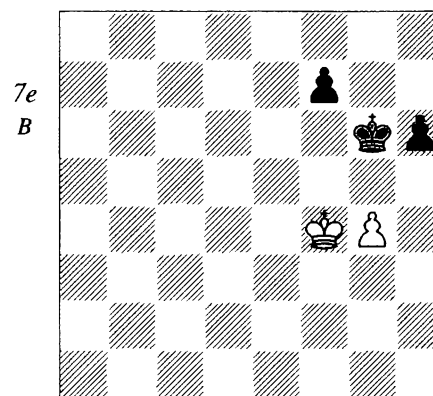
Now 9...axb6 (9...♠b8 10 b7) 10 axb6 ♠b8 11 b7 ♠c7 12 ♠a7 wins for White as the b-pawn promotes.

Not all endings with an extra pawn are wins, however; here are a couple of examples in which the defender saves the game.



Akopian – Z. Almasi
Ljubljana ECC 1995

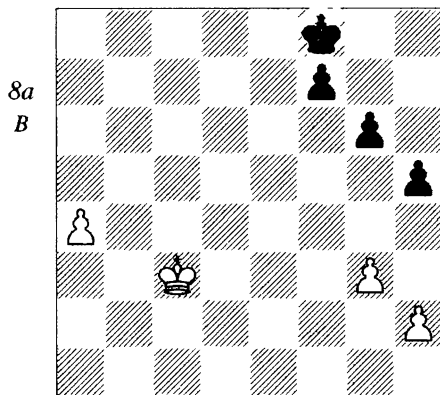
In this position Black cannot win because his king gets trapped in the h1-corner: **1 ♠e3 ♠d5 2 ♠e2 ♠d4 3 ♠d2 e3+ 4 ♠e2 ♠e4 5 ♠e1 ♠f3 6 ♠f1 e2+ 1/2-1/2**. After 7 ♠e1 ♠g2 8 ♠xe2 ♠xh2 9 ♠f2 ♠h1 10 ♠f1 Black's king cannot escape from its prison.



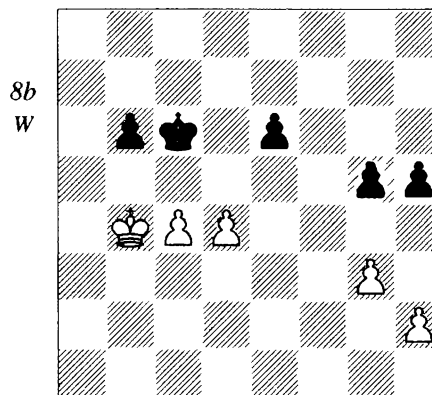
Lalić – Velimirović
Vršac 1989

Here precise defence enables White to prevent Black from creating a passed pawn under favourable circumstances: **1...♠f6 2 ♠f3!** (but not 2 ♠g3? ♠g5 3 ♠f3 ♠h4 4 ♠f4 f6! 5 ♠f3 ♠h3 and Black's king penetrates to the rear of White's pawn, leading to a win after 6 ♠f4 ♠g2 followed by ...♠g3) **2...♠e5** (now 2...♠g5 3 ♠g3 f6 4 ♠f3 ♠h4 5 ♠f4 ♠h3 6 ♠f3 is only a draw because White has the opposition) **3 ♠e3 ♠d5** (3...f6 4 ♠f3 ♠d4 5 ♠f4 draws) **4 ♠d3 1/2-1/2**.

8 Outside Passed Pawn



Fischer – Larsen
Denver Ct (5) 1971



Timman – Nikolić
Belgrade 1987

The diagram shows a common situation in endings with equal pawns: White has a passed pawn on the other side of the board from the remaining pawns. We call this an *outside passed pawn*. Possession of an outside passed pawn is normally a considerable advantage because it can be used to deflect the enemy king away from the main mass of pawns, which can then be attacked by the king. The situation in the diagram is similar to that in 7a, except that White has a pawn less on the kingside. That doesn't matter much here, because Black has no time to make use of his extra kingside pawn.

1...♚e7

Black's king must move to the queenside or the a-pawn queens straight away.

2 ♚d4

White's king runs directly to the kingside to attack the enemy pawns.

2...♚d6

The white king's path is temporarily blocked, but he can use the a-pawn to draw Black's king away.

3 a5 f6 4 a6 ♚c6 5 a7 ♚b7 6 ♚d5 h4

Trying to exchange some pawns, but it makes no difference.

7 ♚e6 1-0

After 7...hxg3 8 hxg3 ♚xa7 9 ♚xf6 ♚b6 10 ♚xg6 the g-pawn will prove decisive.

Even if there is no outside passed pawn initially, it may be possible to create one. In this position, White only needs to penetrate with his king to b5 and then play c5; Black will be forced to play ...bxc5 and after dxc5 White has an outside passed pawn.

1 h3!

A good move. Simply waiting by 1 ♚a4! g4 2 ♚b4 also wins, but White must avoid 1 h4?, after which he will be left with only an h-pawn on the kingside. We know that rook's pawns offer fewer winning chances than other pawns and indeed Black can draw by 1...gxh4 2 gxh4 ♚d6 3 ♚b5 ♚c7 4 c5 bxc5 5 dxc5 e5 6 ♚b4 e4 7 ♚c4 ♚c6 8 ♚d4 e3 9 ♚xe3 ♚xc5.

1...♚b7 2 ♚b5 ♚c7 3 g4 h4

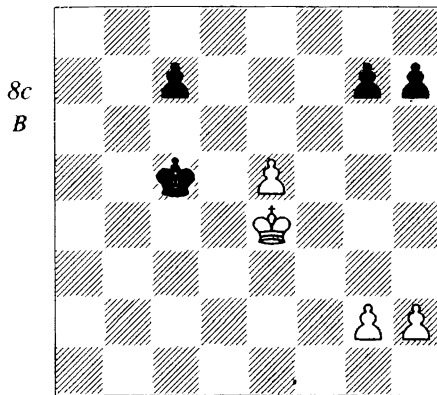
White wins even more easily after 3...hxg4 4 hxg4 ♚b7 5 c5 bxc5 6 dxc5 e5 7 c6+ ♚c7 8 ♚c5 followed by taking both the e- and g-pawns.

4 c5 bxc5 5 dxc5 e5 6 ♚b4!

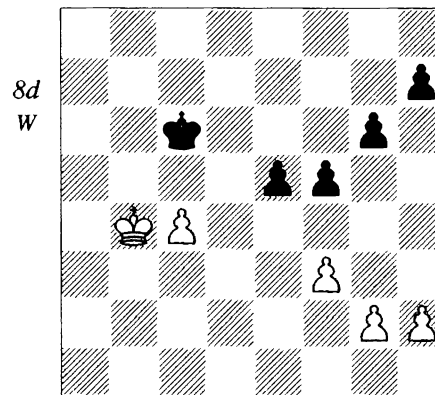
An important finesse. 6 ♚c4? ♚c6 leaves White in zugzwang and allows Black to draw by 7 ♚b4 e4 8 ♚c4 e3 9 ♚d3 ♚xc5 10 ♚xe3 ♚d5.

1-0

After 6...♚b7 7 ♚c3 (the white king heads for e4 while circling the mined c4-square; if Black plays 7...♚c6, then 8 ♚c4 followed by ♚d3 and ♚e4 wins) 7...♚c7 8 ♚d3 ♚c6 9 ♚e4 ♚xc5 10 ♚xe5 White wins both Black's kingside pawns.



A. Sokolov – Korchnoi
Tilburg 1987



Karasev – Geller
USSR Ch, Leningrad 1971

White's passed pawn is further advanced, but Black's pawn is more 'outside', and this is the deciding factor. However, accurate play is required by Black. The key idea is that Black must improve the situation on the kingside before the exchange of c-pawn for e-pawn.

1...♟c6 2 h4

Or 2 ♟d4 ♟d7 3 ♟d5 c6+ 4 ♟c5 and now the precise move 4...g5! is the only way to win. After 5 ♟b6 (Black also wins after 5 e6+ ♟xe6 6 ♟xc6 g4 7 ♟c7 h5 8 ♟d8 h4 9 ♟e8 ♟f5) 5...♟e6 6 ♟xc6 g4! 7 ♟c7 (it's a long way round!) 7...h5 8 ♟d8 h4 9 ♟e8 g3 10 hxg3 hxg3 11 ♟f8 ♟xe5 Black wins by heading for g2.

2...♟d7 3 ♟d5 h5!

An important move avoiding pawn exchanges on the kingside. 3...g6 is wrong because White draws by 4 h5! gxh5 5 e6+ ♟e7 6 ♟e5 h4 7 ♟f5 c5 8 ♟e5 c4 9 ♟d4 ♟xe6 10 ♟xc4 ♟e5 11 ♟d3 and the king reaches f1.

After the text-move, if it were Black to play the position would be a draw, but with White to play he must weaken his pawns.

4 e6+

Or 4 g3 (now Black can take the g-pawn one move more quickly) 4...c6+ 5 ♟c5 ♟e6 6 ♟xc6 ♟xe5 7 ♟d7 ♟f5 8 ♟e7 ♟g4 9 ♟f7 ♟xg3 and Black wins.

4...♟e7 5 ♟c6 ♟xe6 6 ♟xc7 ♟f5 7 ♟d6 ♟g4 8 ♟e5 ♟xh4 9 ♟f4 g6 10 ♟f3 g5 0-1

The finish might be 11 ♟f2 g4 12 ♟g1 ♟g3 13 ♟h1 h4 14 ♟g1 h3 15 gxh3 ♟xh3 and Black wins.

Outside passed pawns don't always win. In this diagram a crucial element is missing; White's king has no route by which to attack Black's kingside pawns. Therefore White has no threat to run to the kingside with his king and Black has plenty of time to push his g- and h-pawns and so create counterplay.

1 c5?!

White fails to realize the danger and plays casually. He should have aimed for pawn exchanges on the kingside to remove any possibility of defeat. One way to do this is by 1 h4 (1 g4 is also a safe draw) 1...h6 (or 1...e4 2 fxe4 fxe4 3 c5 e3 4 ♟c3 ♟xc5 5 ♟d3 ♟d5 6 ♟xe3, drawing) 2 c5 g5 3 hxg5 hxg5 4 ♟c4 f4 5 ♟d3 ♟xc5 6 ♟e4 ♟d6 7 ♟f5 ♟d5 8 ♟xg5 with an inevitable draw.

1...g5 2 ♟c4?

The second mistake proves fatal. The only chance was 2 g3 h5 3 h4 (3 h3? loses to 3...h4 4 gxh4 gxh4 5 ♟c4 f4) 3...f4 4 gxf4 gxh4 5 f5 h3 6 f6 h2 7 f7 h1 ♟8 f8 ♟e1+ and Black is just slightly better in this queen ending.

2...h5

Black's pawns are ominously advanced. Now 3 g3 g4 and 3 h3 h4 4 ♟b4 e4! 5 fxe4 f4 6 ♟c4 g4! are hopeless for White, so he just waits.

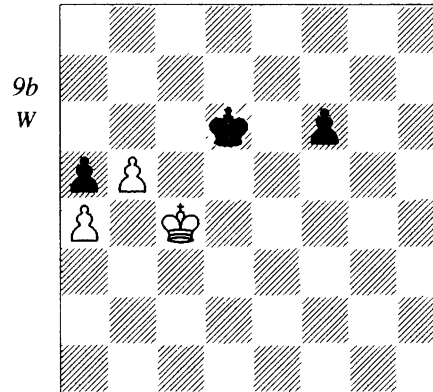
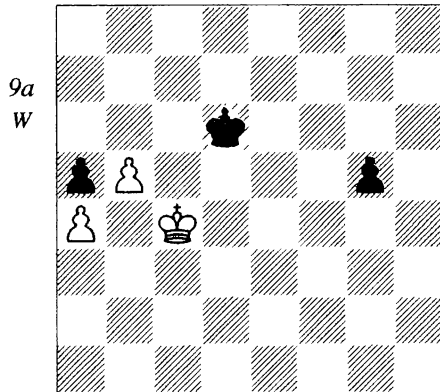
3 ♟b4 f4 4 h4

Desperation, but 4 ♟c4 g4 5 h3 g3 6 ♟d3 ♟xc5 7 ♟e4 ♟d6 8 ♟d3 ♟d5 9 ♟d2 e4 also wins for Black.

4...gxh4 5 ♟c4 e4 0-1

Black will promote a pawn after 6 fxe4 f3.

9 Protected Passed Pawn



In this position, the pawn on b5 is a *protected passed pawn*; in other words it is a passed pawn soundly defended by another pawn. Possession of a protected passed pawn is usually a considerable advantage. The pawn is immune to attack from the enemy king, and severely restricts the king's movements. In this position, the black king cannot venture to the f-file, because then White would play b6 and promote the pawn. Thus Black's king is unable to defend the g-pawn, so White can just walk over and pick it up.

1 ♖d4 ♜e6 2 ♜e4

White would still win even if it were his turn to move here, because after ♜f3-g4 Black would lose the pawn in any case.

2... ♜d6 3 ♜f5 ♜d5 4 ♜xg5 ♜e5 5 ♜g4

The correct direction, as after 5 ♜g6 ♜e6 6 ♜g7 ♜e7 White is not making progress.

5... ♜e6

Black cannot move to e4 as then the b-pawn promotes, so White's king can return.

6 ♜f4 ♜d5 7 ♜f5 ♜d6 8 ♜f6 ♜d7 9 ♜e5 ♜c7 10 ♜d5

A trap arises after 10 ♜d4 ♜b6 11 ♜d5 ♜c7, and now 12 ♜c5 (12 ♜e6 is correct) 12... ♜b7 13 b6? ♜a6 is a draw since 14 ♜c6 is stalemate. Thus it is safer for the white king to approach along the fifth and sixth ranks.

10... ♜b6 11 ♜d6 ♜b7 12 ♜c5 ♜a7 13 ♜c6

Here too 13 b6+? ♜a6 is a draw.

13... ♜b8 14 ♜b6

White wins the a-pawn and the game.

Black has better chances when the pawn is closer, because then at least his king is able to defend the pawn. However, White still wins in the above diagram by a neat manoeuvre:

1 ♜d4 f5

Or 1... ♜e6 2 ♜c5 f5 (after 2... ♜d7 3 ♜d5 ♜e7 4 ♜c6 ♜d8 5 ♜b7 White wins more easily) 3 ♜c6 f4 4 b6 f3 5 b7 f2 6 b8 ♜f1 ♜7 ♜e8+ and 8 ♜f8+, winning Black's queen.

2 ♜c4!

Surprisingly, returning to c4 is the only way to win. After 2 ♜e3? ♜e5 3 ♜f3 ♜d5 4 ♜f4 ♜e6 we reach a position which would be a win if Black were to move, but with White to play it is a draw.

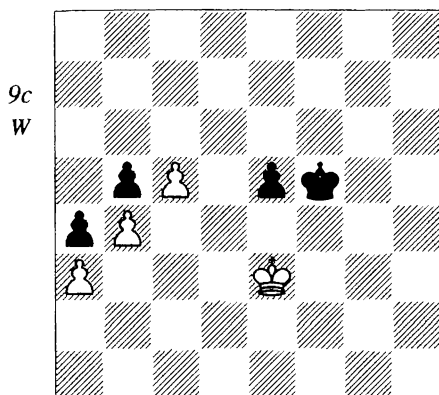
2... ♜e6

If the white king is allowed to d5, Black's pawn is doomed. Likewise 2... f4 3 ♜d4 will capture the pawn.

3 ♜c5 f4 4 ♜d4

White takes the pawn and then wins as in 9a.

However, if the black pawn starts on f7 rather than f6, then the position is a draw. The pawn is less accessible to attack when it is on f7 and the best White can do is to play **1 ♜d4 ♜c7 2 ♜e5 ♜d7 3 ♜f6 ♜e8**. This position would be a win were Black to move, but with White to play it is a draw. Trying to pass the move to Black doesn't work; for example, **4 ♜f5 ♜e7 5 ♜e5 ♜d7 6 ♜f6 ♜e8** and White is just going round in circles.



Sometimes it is necessary to give up the protected passed pawn to win. In this position, the black pawn is close to the protected passed pawn, so Black is able to protect the pawn with his king. However, White still wins:

1 c6!

The simplest method. White swaps the c- and e-pawns to reach a position in which his active king position enables him to win Black's remaining pawns.

1...e6 2 e4 d6 3 c7 xc7 4 e5

Black's king suffers from lack of space and White can force it back step by step until the b5-pawn can no longer be defended.

4...c6 5 e6 c7 6 d5 b6 7 d6 b7 8 c5 a6 9 c6 a7 10 xb5

White now picks up the a4-pawn as well, leading to an easy win with $\text{K}+2\Delta$ vs K .

The reason White won in the above position was the favourable arrangement of pawns on the queenside, which made the b5-pawn weak and offered White a second pawn to win on a4. If the a3- and a4-pawn are removed in the diagram, then the position is a draw:

1 f3 f6

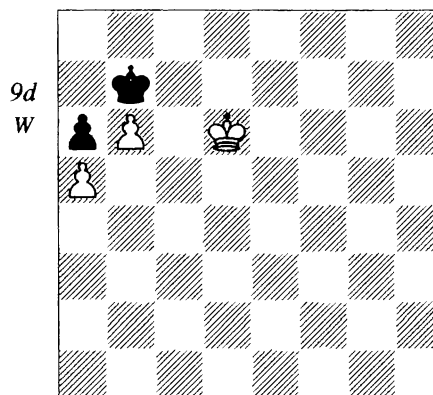
1...e4+ also draws, but not 1...e6? 2 e4 f6 3 d5 and White wins.

2 e4 e6 3 c6

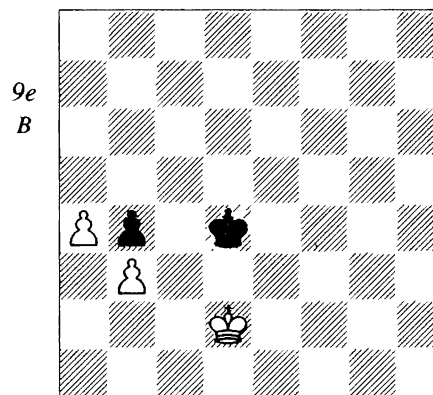
The same idea, but less effective here.

3...d6 4 c7 xc7 5 xe5 c6 6 e6 c7 7 d5 b6 8 d6 b7 9 c5 c7 10 xb7

Black has the opposition and so the result is a draw (see 2a).



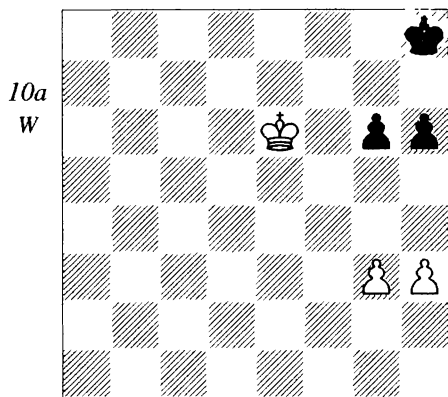
Not all positions with a protected passed pawn are winning. In the above diagram White cannot win because any attempt to make progress leads to stalemate. After **1 d7 b8 2 c6 c8** (2...a8 also draws), the only way forward is **3 b7+ b8 4 b6**, but then Black is stalemated.



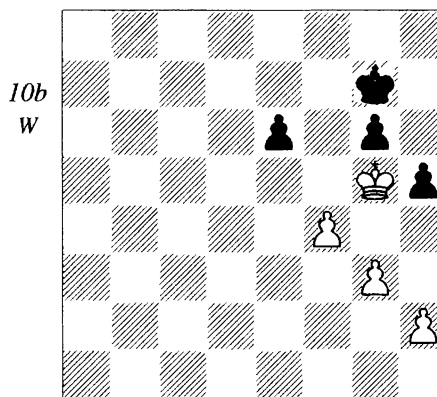
This position is a draw for a different reason. If Black plays accurately, he can keep White's king at bay and prevent it from approaching the b4-pawn. One line is **1...e4 2 e2 d4 3 f3 d5 4 f4 d4!** (not 4...d6? 5 e4 and the b-pawn will eventually fall) **5 f5 d5 6 f6 d6 7 g5** (7 f7 d7 doesn't help) **7...e5! 8 g4 e4 9 g3 e5! 10 f3 d5! 11 g4 e4** and now the cunning **12 h3** is White's last shot. The only move to draw is **12...d5!** (12...d4? loses to 13 h4! as the white king can eventually reach c4) – try it for yourself or refer to Section 13, which deals with the distant opposition.

10

Active King



L. Prokeš
Šach, 1944



Stein – Hartston
British Ch, Brighton 1972

An active king is an advantage in almost all types of endgame, but is particularly so in king and pawn endings. There are several reasons for this; if nothing else, an active king may more easily attack the enemy pawns, but it can also act to confine the enemy king. In the above position, the pawn-structure is symmetrical, and White's only advantage lies in his king position.

1 ♔f6!

The only winning move. After 1 ♔f7? (1 g4? g5 2 ♔f6 h5! is similar) 1...♔h7 2 g4 g5 3 ♔f6 h5! Black draws, because two h-pawns are no better than one, while after 4 ♔xg5 hxg4 5 hxg4 ♔g7 we have the draw of 2a.

1...♔h7

1...g5 2 ♔g6 wins both pawns.

2 g4 g5

Or 2...h5 3 g5 h4 4 ♔f7 and the pawns fall.

3 ♔f7 h5

Black tries the same trick of liquidating his h-pawn, but with the king on f7 it meets with a surprising refutation.

4 h4!

Whatever Black replies, White gains a passed g-pawn which proves decisive in view of the black king's vulnerable position.

4...gxh4

4...♔h6 loses to 5 ♔f6!

5 g5 h3 6 g6+ ♔h6 7 g7 h2 8 g8♘ h1♙ 9 ♙g6#

In this typical practical position, White has three advantages: better king position, unbroken pawns, and the flexibility to advance the h-pawn by one square or two.

1 h3!

White needs to be able to support a later g4. After 1 h4? ♔f7 2 ♔h6 ♔f6 3 ♔h7 ♔f7 White cannot make progress.

1...♔f7

1...♔h7 2 ♔f6 and the e-pawn drops straight away.

2 ♔h6 ♔f6 3 g4

White must prevent ...♔f5, as then Black's king also becomes active.

3...h4

The best try, as after 3...hxg4 4 hxg4 ♔f7 5 g5 White wins comfortably.

4 g5+ ♔f5 5 ♔g7

An advanced king position often results in the attacker's king penetrating behind the enemy pawns.

5...♔xf4 6 ♔xg6 e5

Black now has his own passed pawn, so the result is not entirely clear, but White has it all worked out.

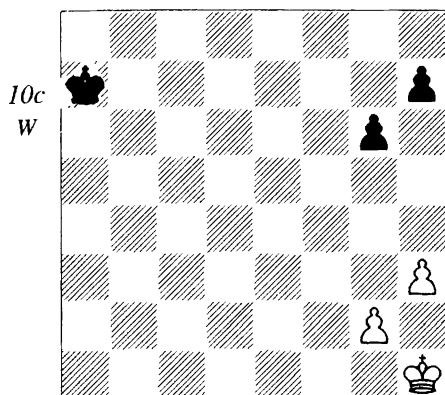
7 ♔f6

The simplest, although 7 ♔h5 also wins.

7...e4 8 g6 e3 9 g7 e2 10 g8♘ e1♙ 11 ♙g4+

White can force the exchange of queens, leading to an easy win after the h-pawn falls.

11...♔e3 12 ♙e6+ 1-0



Amirkiaee – Klein
US Open, Concord 1995

As always, there is plenty of scope for things to go wrong over the board. This position is winning for White because his king can reach a very active position, but the win still requires accuracy.

1 ♖h2 ♜b6 2 ♖g3 ♜c5 3 ♖f4!

From this square the king threatens to go to both g5 and e5. 3 ♖g4? is wrong as 3...h6 4 ♖f4 ♜d5 gives Black an easy draw.

3...♜d4

3...h6 4 ♖e5 followed by ♖f6 is an easy win.

4 ♖g5 ♜e3 5 h4?

White pushes the wrong pawn. 5 g4! (5 ♖h6! also wins) 5...♜f3 6 ♖h6 ♜g3 7 ♜xh7 ♜xh3 8 g5 followed by ♖xg6 was correct.

5...♜f2

Now Black's king also occupies an active position behind the white pawns, which should have been enough to draw.

6 g4 ♜g3 7 h5 ♜f3?

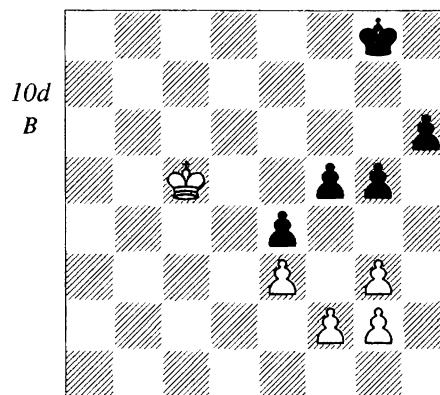
Throwing the draw away. 7...gxh5! 8 gxh5 ♜f3 is correct; after 9 h6 ♜e4 10 ♜f6 ♜d5 11 ♜g7 ♜e6 12 ♜xh7 ♜f7 Black's king arrives back just in time to draw.

8 h6!

Fixing the weak pawn on h7.

8...♜g3 9 ♜f6 1-0

After 9...♜xg4 10 ♜g7 g5 11 ♜xh7 ♜f3 12 ♜g6 g4 13 h7 g3 14 h8 ♜g2 White has a technical win (see 76a). One possible line runs 15 ♜h2 ♜f2 16 ♜f5 ♜f1 17 ♜f4+ ♜e2 18 ♜g3 ♜f1 19 ♜f3+ ♜g1 20 ♜f4 ♜h2 21 ♜h5+ ♜g1 22 ♜g3 ♜f1 23 ♜d1#.



Pomar – Cuadras
Olot 1974

A word of caution is in order here. If your king has advanced up the board to occupy an active position, you must be sure that your opponent cannot create a passed pawn, because your king may be too far away to stop it.

This position is a draw despite White's active king position, the reason being that the doubled pawns weaken White's pawn-structure and allow Black a chance for a breakthrough. Had the pawn been on h3 rather than g3 then White would indeed have a winning position.

1...h5

Black rightly seeks counterplay by pushing his pawns.

2 ♜d5 ♜f7 3 ♜e5 ♜g6 4 ♜e6 g4 5 ♜d5

5 ♜e5 ♜g5 6 ♜d6 ♜f6 also leads to a draw.

5...♜f6 6 ♜d6?

Instead of choosing the safe 6 ♜d4, White advances his king in the hope of playing it behind the pawns after something like 6...♜g6 7 ♜e6 ♜g5 8 ♜f7 (although in fact even this would not be enough to win). But he has forgotten an important point.

6...f4!

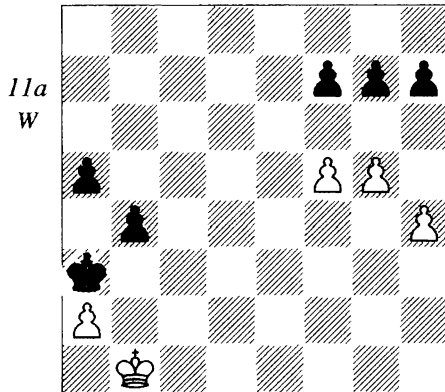
Now 7 gxf4 h4 and 7 exf4 h4 8 gxh4 g3 both force an unstoppable passed pawn, so White retreats his king, but too late.

7 ♜d5 h4! 8 ♜xe4 f3 9 gxf3 h3 10 fxe4 h2 11 f3 h1 ♜

The queen makes mincemeat of the white pawns.

12 ♜f4 ♜h6+ 13 ♜e4 ♜g5 14 ♜d4 ♜e5+ 0-1

11 Breakthrough



Schaefer – Tunc
Kranenburg girls 2007

In a king and pawn ending, there are no pieces around to stop a passed pawn, and if the king is too far away, a passed pawn will automatically become a queen. Thus it is often worthwhile to sacrifice some pawns in order to create a passed pawn. We have already seen an example of this in 10d, and it is worth looking at some further cases because they frequently arise in practice.

The above example features a classic breakthrough idea. Black is a pawn up and has a winning position, but White has one trick left.

1 h5 b3?

Black could have prevented the breakthrough by 1...g6, with an easy win after 2 hxg6 hxg6 3 fxg6 fxg6 4 ♖a1 b3 5 axb3 ♜xb3.

2 axb3?

Black has no serious threat, so 2 g6! would have won here (2...fxg6 3 h6 or 2...hxg6 3 f6).

2...♜xb3?

It's a little more complicated now, but 2...g6 would still have won: 3 hxg6 hxg6 4 fxg6 fxg6 5 ♖c2 ♜a2 6 ♖c3 ♜b1 7 ♖d4 ♜b2 8 ♖c4 (8 ♜e5 ♜xb3 9 ♖f6 a4 10 ♜xg6 a3 11 ♖f7 a2 12 g6 a1 ♜ wins for Black – see 76a) 8...♖c2 9 b4 axb4 10 ♜xb4 ♖d3 11 ♜b3 ♜e4 and wins.

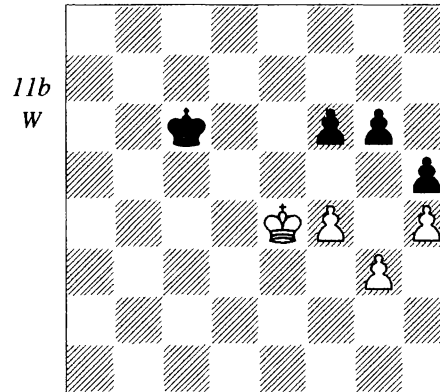
3 g6!

This time White has the right idea.

3...hxg6

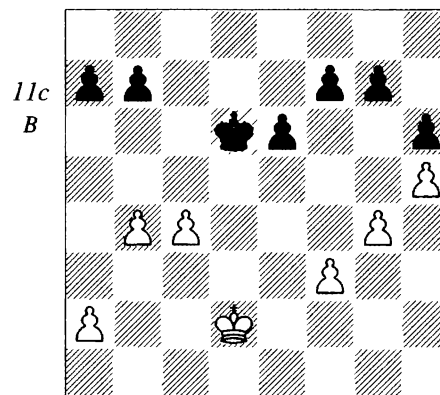
3...fxg6 4 h6 is the same.

4 f6 1-0



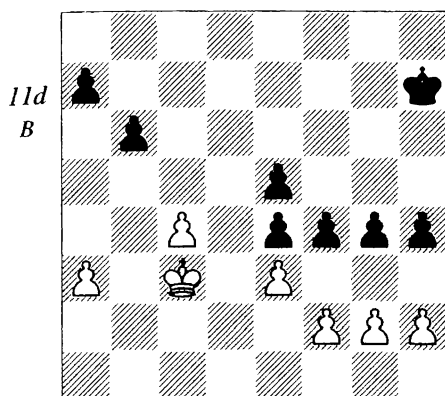
Ki. Georgiev – Milanović
Bar 2008

White won with a typical breakthrough in which four pawns form a square: **1 f5 g5 2 g4!** (here it is) **2...♜d6** (2...hxg4 3 h5 promotes) **3 gxh5 1-0**. After 3...♜e7 4 hxg5 fxg5 5 ♖f3 ♜f7 6 ♜g4 ♜f6 7 h6 White wins Black's last pawn.



Sarkar – Nur
USA U-18 Ch, Washington 1996

While this breakthrough can occur as a result of accurate play, as in 11b, it also often arises thanks to a blunder. In this position Black would have no trouble drawing after the safe 1...♜e5 2 ♜e3 g5 3 a4 b6 4 b5. Instead he played **1...g6?** but lost after **2 g5! ♜e7** (Black can just about stop the h-pawn, but then White wins by making a passed pawn on the queenside) **3 gxh6 ♜f6 4 h7 ♜g7 5 hxg6 fxg6 6 c5 ♜xh7 7 b5 ♜g7 8 c6 bxc6 9 bxc6 1-0**.



11d
B
Catta Preta – De Andrade
Brasilia 1999

A breakthrough may be effective even if the resulting passed pawn can be stopped by the enemy king. In this example, Black is a pawn up, but he should not be complacent. If he cannot break through with his advanced kingside pawns, then he will face problems on the queenside.

1...♔g6?

Missing his chance to win by 1...g3! 2 fxg3 hxg3 (2...h3? doesn't work here as the white king can stop the f-pawn after 3 gxh3) 3 hxg3 f3 4 gxf3 exf3 (Black's f-pawn cannot promote, but it ties White down and gives Black time to advance his king to an active position) 5 ♖d2 ♔g6 (creating a protected passed pawn by 5...e4 also wins) 6 e4 ♔g5 7 ♖e3 ♔g4 8 ♖f2 a6! (reserve tempo) 9 a4 a5 and White loses his g-pawn and the game.

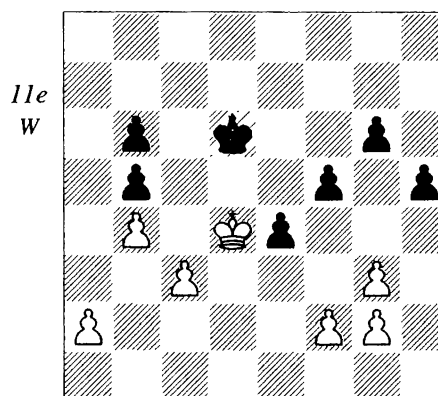
2 h3?

White could even have won here by 2 g3! (definitely ruling out any kingside breakthrough by Black) 2...♖f6 3 c5! (opening a path for the white king) 3...hxg3 4 hxg3 ♖e6 5 ♖c4 fxg3 6 fxg3 bxc5 (6...♖d7 7 cxb6 axb6 8 ♖d5 picks up the e-pawns) 7 ♖xc5 a5 8 a4 ♖e7 9 ♖d5 ♖f6 10 ♖d6! (a key point; 10 ♖xe4? ♖e6 only draws, but this way White wins **all** Black's kingside pawns) 10...♖f5 11 ♖e7 ♔g5 12 ♖e6 and the enemy pawns fall one by one.

The move played falls victim to another breakthrough.

2...f3! 0-1

Black will promote a pawn.



11e
W
N. Weinstein – Rohde
Lone Pine 1977

It's easy to overlook a breakthrough that doesn't fall into one of the standard patterns. At first sight, White is doing well here in view of Black's doubled queenside pawns, but in fact Black has a winning position. If White does not play c4 at once, Black's b-pawns effectively restrain White's queenside pawns, while the doubled g-pawns give Black the possibility of a kingside breakthrough (see 10d for a similar situation).

1 c4

The only chance, as after 1 ♖e3 g5 2 f3 exf3 3 gxf3 ♖e5 Black will make an outside passed h-pawn.

1...bxc4 2 a4

After 2 ♖xc4 g5 White has nothing better than to transpose with 3 a4.

2...g5 3 ♖xc4 h4?

Reversing the result of the game. Black could have executed a breakthrough by 3...f4 4 gxf4 (4 a5 bxa5 5 bxa5 h4 wins for Black) 4...gxf4 5 ♖d4 e3! (but not 5...f3?, when 6 g3 blocks the kingside and wins for White) 6 fxe3 f3! 7 gxf3 h4 and the passed h-pawn promotes.

4 gxh4 gxh4 5 ♖d4

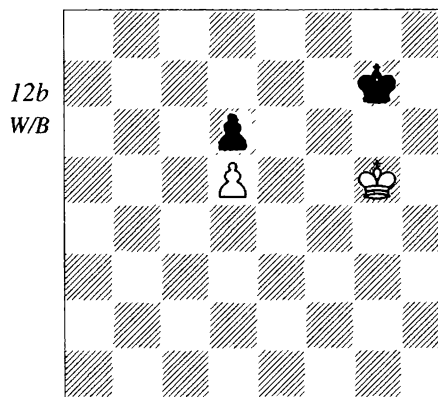
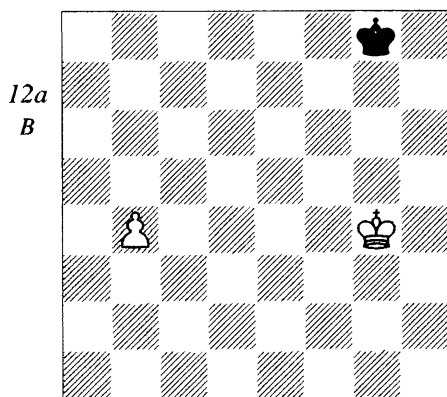
Now everything has turned against Black. He can no longer make a passed pawn on the kingside, while White can create an outside passed pawn on the other side of the board.

5...♖e6 6 a5 bxa5 7 bxa5 ♖d6 8 a6 ♖c6 9 ♖e5

Closing in for a hearty meal.

9...♖b6 10 ♖xf5 ♖xa6 11 ♖xe4 1-0

12 Opposition

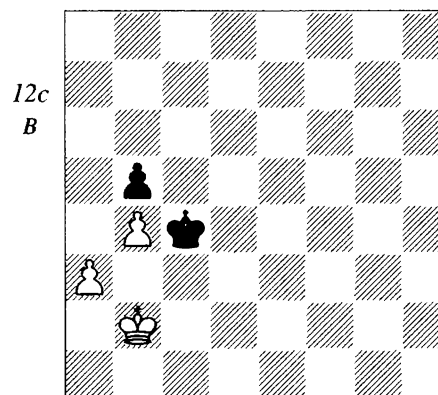


We have already briefly mentioned the opposition on page 11. This occurs when the two kings face each other with just one square in between. The most common situation arises when the two kings are vertically opposed to each other. In this case, if one of the players has to move his king then a path is opened for the enemy king to advance.

In the above diagram, if the white king were on b5 and the black king on b7, then we would have precisely this situation (see 1d). Then if Black were to move, White's king could advance, enabling him to promote his pawn; on the other hand, if White were to move then he could make no progress as if he moves his king sideways then Black does the same and again the way forward for the king is blocked. **In such a situation, it is better if it is the opponent's turn to move.** In this case, the player who is **not** to move is said to **have the opposition**.

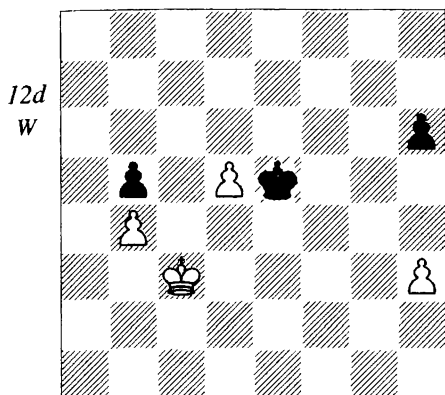
Looking at the diagram again, if Black plays $1... \text{♟f7?}$, then by $2 \text{ ♞f5! } \text{♜e7 } 3 \text{ ♞e5 } \text{♜d7 } 4 \text{ ♞d5 } \text{♜c7 } 5 \text{ ♞c5 } \text{♜b7 } 6 \text{ ♞b5}$ White maintains the opposition all the way across the board and wins. Likewise, $1... \text{♟g7? } 2 \text{ ♞g5! } \text{♜f7 } 3 \text{ ♞f5!}$ leads to the same win. However, Black can draw by $1... \text{♟f8!}$. Now Black can always gain the opposition if White advances his king; for example, $2 \text{ ♞f5 } \text{♜f7}$. The main line runs $2 \text{ ♞f4 } \text{♜e8!}$ (the same logic applies) $3 \text{ ♞e4 } \text{♜d8! } 4 \text{ ♞d4 } \text{♜c8! } 5 \text{ ♞c4 } \text{♜b8!}$ and now it is a draw after $6 \text{ ♞c5 } \text{♜c7 } 7 \text{ ♞b5 } \text{♜b7}$ or at once $6 \text{ ♞b5 } \text{♜b7}$, as Black can always oppose the white king.

The opposition is one of the most important concepts in king and pawn endings and arises in all sorts of situations. Here, if Black is to play White has the opposition and can round up the d6-pawn: $1... \text{♟f7 } 2 \text{ ♞f5 } \text{♜e7 } 3 \text{ ♞g6 } \text{♜d7 } 4 \text{ ♞f7 } \text{♜c8 } 5 \text{ ♞e6 } \text{♜c7 } 6 \text{ ♞e7 } \text{♜c8 } 7 \text{ ♞xd6}$ and wins as in 1c. If White is to play in the diagram, then the position is a draw.



Gelashvili – Vouldis
Korinthos 1999

Black found the way to draw: $1... \text{♜d5}$ (not $1... \text{♜d4? } 2 \text{ ♞b3 } \text{♜d5 } 3 \text{ a4 bxa4+ } 4 \text{ ♞xa4 } \text{♜c6 } 5 \text{ ♞a5 } \text{♜b7 } 6 \text{ ♞b5}$ and White has the opposition) $2 \text{ ♞c3 } \text{♜c6!}$ (not $2... \text{♜d6? } 3 \text{ ♞d4}$ with the opposition, nor $2... \text{♜e6? } 3 \text{ ♞b3 } \text{♜d5 } 4 \text{ a4}$ as in the previous note) 3 ♞c2 (the key line is $3 \text{ ♞d4 } \text{♜d6 } 4 \text{ ♞e4 } \text{♜e6}$ and Black has the opposition) $3... \text{♜d6 } 4 \text{ ♞d2 } \text{♜d5 } 5 \text{ ♞d3 } \text{♜e5 } 6 \text{ ♞c2 } \text{♜d6 } 7 \text{ ♞b3 } \text{♜c7 } 1/2-1/2$.



Ftačnik – Gausel
Manila Olympiad 1992

Here White must play accurately to gain the opposition.

1 d6!

After 1 ♔d3? ♔xd5 White even loses, since the situation in the game arises with colours reversed.

1...♔xd6 2 ♔d4

Each side has one spare pawn tempo; once these are used up, White will definitely have the opposition.

2...h5 3 h4

The pawn tempi are exhausted and now we have the standard situation; Black must move his king one way or the other, allowing White to penetrate towards one of the black pawns with his king. Whether this is decisive depends on the details of the position, in particular how far advanced the pawns are.

3...♔e6

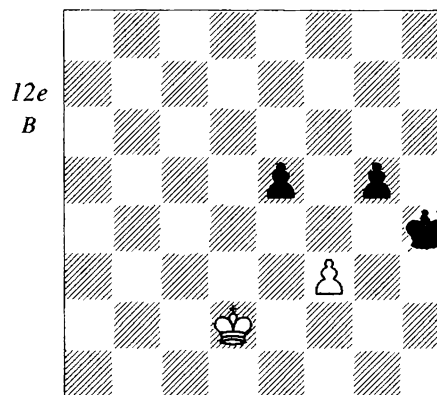
After 3...♔c6 4 ♔e5 ♔c7, White can win by either 5 ♔d5 ♔b6 6 ♔d6 ♔b7 7 ♔c5 ♔a6 8 ♔c6 picking up the b-pawn, or 5 ♔f5 ♔d6 6 ♔g5 ♔d5 7 ♔xh5 ♔c4 8 ♔g4 ♔xb4 9 h5 ♔a3 10 h6 b4 11 h7 b3 12 h8♚ with a standard win (see 76a).

4 ♔c5 ♔f5

Now it's a race, but White is always ahead.

5 ♔xb5 ♔g4 6 ♔c5 ♔xh4 7 b5 1-0

After 7...♔g3 White promotes, with check, while 7...♔g4 8 b6 h4 9 b7 h3 10 b8♚ stops the black pawn in its tracks.



Shavtvaladze – Remizov
Khalkidhiki 2000

Although it is most common for the kings to face each other vertically, the opposition can also arise with different geometries; this example features a horizontal opposition.

1...♔h3

Now if 2 ♔e2? ♔g2 Black has the opposition and White will soon have to surrender the f3-pawn, for example after 3 ♔e3 ♔f1 4 ♔d3 ♔f2 5 ♔e4 ♔e2 6 ♔xe5 ♔xf3, when Black wins. 2 ♔e3? ♔g3 3 ♔e2 ♔g2 leads to the same situation. So how does White continue?

2 ♔d3!

This is the key move. White must be ready to meet ...♔g2 by ♔e2 and ...♔g3 by ♔e3, and d3 is the only square to which White can play his king in order to achieve this.

2...♔h2

Black continues his king march, again hoping to lure White into making a mistake. Now there is a threat to play 3...♔g1 4 ♔e2 ♔g2, so White must be ready to meet ...♔g1 by ♔e1.

3 ♔d2

White again keeps all his options open and stands ready to oppose the black king whenever it moves to the g-file.

3...♔h1

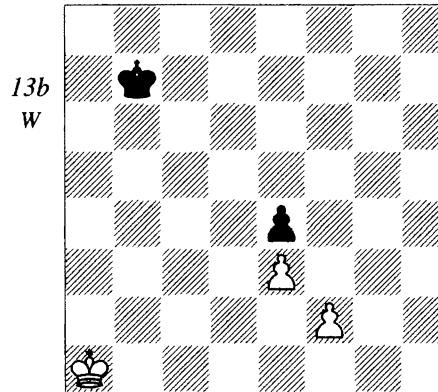
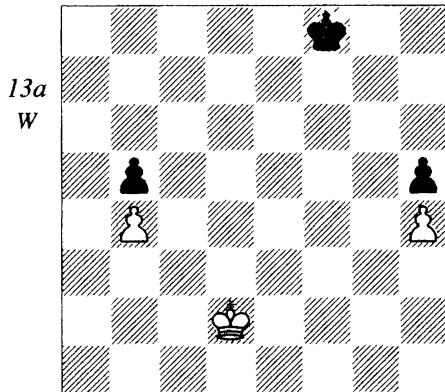
Now not 4 ♔e3? ♔g1 5 ♔e2 ♔g2 and Black wins. Instead, White continues with the same strategy.

4 ♔d1 1/2-1/2

Black has no way to make progress.

13

Distant Opposition



The principle of the opposition can also apply when the kings are further apart, a situation called the *distant opposition*.

1 ♔d3!

The unique winning move. 1 ♔e3? ♔e7 is only a draw because whenever White's king advances to the fourth rank, Black can oppose it, gaining the 'short' opposition.

1...♔e7 2 ♔e3!

A typical example of the distant opposition. The two kings stand on the same rank or file, with an odd number of empty squares between them.

2...♔e6

White wins after 2...♔d7 3 ♔f4 ♔d6 4 ♔g5 or 2...♔d6 3 ♔d4.

3 ♔e4

Now White has the short opposition.

3...♔d6

Or 3...♔f6 4 ♔f4! (but not 4 ♔d5? ♔f5 5 ♔c5 ♔g4 drawing) 4...♔e6 5 ♔g5 ♔d5 6 ♔xh5 ♔c4 7 ♔g4 ♔xb4 8 h5 and White wins (see 76a).

4 ♔d4!

White must not run for the pawn at once, as after 4 ♔f5? ♔d5 5 ♔g5 ♔c4 6 ♔xh5 ♔xb4 7 ♔g5 ♔a3 the pawns queen at the same time.

4...♔c6

4...♔e6 5 ♔c5 ♔f5 6 ♔xb5 ♔g4 7 ♔a6 ♔xh4 8 b5 also wins for White.

5 ♔e5 ♔c7 6 ♔d5 ♔b6 7 ♔d6

White plays to win the b-pawn.

7...♔b7 8 ♔c5 ♔a6 9 ♔c6

and White wins.

The distant opposition plays a prominent role in pawn endings and crops up in a wide range of positions. However, the details always depend on the precise pawn-structure.

1 ♔b1!

Gaining the distant opposition (five squares between the kings). Not 1 ♔b2? ♔b6 2 ♔c3 ♔c5 3 ♔d2 ♔d5 4 ♔e2 ♔e5 5 ♔f1 ♔f5 6 ♔g2 ♔g4 7 ♔h2 ♔h4 and Black can maintain the opposition across the whole board.

1...♔c7

Black can never allow his king to drift to the left of White's king, as then White can penetrate on the kingside; for example, 1...♔a6 2 ♔c2 ♔b6 3 ♔d2 ♔c6 4 ♔e2 ♔d5 5 ♔f1 ♔e5 6 ♔g2 ♔f5 7 ♔h3! ♔g5 8 ♔g3 and White wins.

After 1...♔b6 2 ♔b2 ♔c6 3 ♔c2, play transposes to the main line.

2 ♔c1! ♔d7

Or 2...♔b7 3 ♔d2, again heading for the kingside.

3 ♔b2!

Threatening ♔c3-d4, so Black must advance his king, but White regains the opposition.

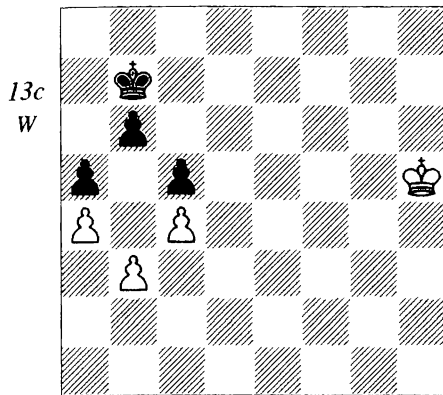
3...♔c6 4 ♔c2! ♔b6

Or 4...♔d6 5 ♔b3 ♔c5 6 ♔c3 and the king penetrates on the queenside.

5 ♔d2

Heading for the kingside.

5...♔c6 6 ♔e1 ♔d5 7 ♔f1 ♔e5 8 ♔g2 ♔f5 9 ♔h3 (avoiding the last trap 9 ♔g3? ♔g5, drawing) **9...♔g5 10 ♔g3 ♔f5 11 ♔h4** and White wins.



N. Grigoriev (end of study)
Shakhmaty, 1933

This example shows the distant opposition in a horizontal setting. If White can penetrate with his king to attack the black pawns, then he will win.

1 ♖h6!

Not 1 ♖g6? ♜c6 and Black has the distant opposition. The move played succeeds because Black would need to play ...♜b6 to maintain the distant opposition, but b6 is blocked by a pawn.

1...♜c6

1...♜c7 2 ♖g7 transposes.

2 ♖g6 ♜c7 3 ♖g7!

Now Black must move his king one way or the other.

3...♜c8

Or 3...♜c6 4 ♖f8! and the king advances.

4 ♖f6!

The key point is that White advances, but moves his king in the opposite direction to Black's king (i.e., ...♜c8 is met by ♖f6 and ...♜c6 by ♖f8). This allows White to make progress without conceding the opposition.

4...♜d7 5 ♖f7

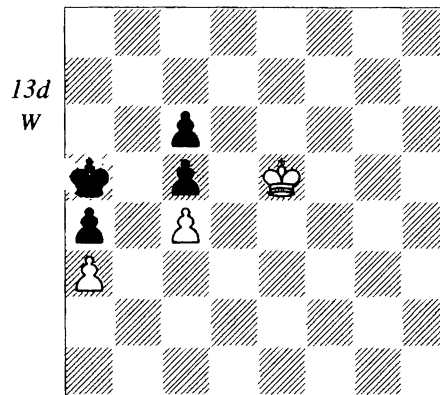
Regaining the opposition, but with his king closer to Black's pawns.

5...♜d6 6 ♖e8 ♜e5

Black makes a run for it. 6...♜c7 also loses after 7 ♖e7 ♜c6 8 ♜d8 ♜b7 (or 8...♜d6 9 ♜c8 ♜c6 10 ♜b8) 9 ♜d7 ♜b8 10 ♜c6 ♜a7 11 ♜c7 ♜a6 12 ♜b8 and Black is in a fatal zugzwang.

7 ♜d7 ♜d4 8 ♜c6 ♜c3 9 ♜xb6 ♜xb3 10 ♜b5!

and this final finesse wins.



F. Sackmann
Deutsche Arbeiter Schachzeitung, 1912

If the enemy king is confined, it is sometimes possible to steal the opposition from the opponent. In the above diagram, there are three squares between the kings, and it is White to play, so theoretically Black has the opposition, but with a cunning manoeuvre White seizes it for himself.

1 ♖f5!!

A very surprising move, avoiding the drawing lines 1 ♖d6? ♜b6 and 1 ♖e6? ♜a6.

1...♜b6

Black has no choice but to concede the opposition, as the square he would like to move his king to (the one to the left of a5) is off the board!

1...♜a6 2 ♖e6 ♜a7 3 ♖e7 transposes to the main line.

2 ♖f6

Now White has gained the distant opposition (three squares between the kings) and can approach the enemy pawns in a similar way to 13c.

2...♜b7 3 ♖f7

White must take care to approach the pawns at the correct moment. 3 ♖e5? only draws after 3...♜a7!.

3...♜b8

Or 3...♜b6 4 ♖e8!.

4 ♖e6! ♜a7 5 ♖e7 ♜a6 6 ♖d8!

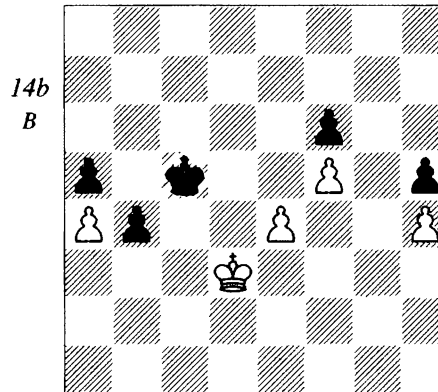
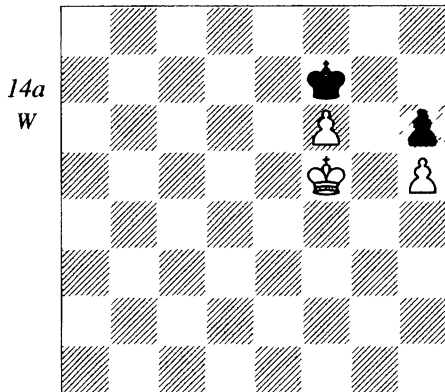
Step by step, the king approaches.

6...♜b7 7 ♖d7 ♜b6 8 ♖c8

and White wins as Black loses both his c-pawns.

14

Triangulation



Seirawan – Kasparov
Nikšić 1983

In king and pawn endings it often happens that you would prefer the other player to move. In order to achieve this it is necessary to lose a tempo, and *triangulation* is one of the most common ways to achieve this. The idea is that if you can move your king around in a triangle, while your opponent's king can only move back and forth, you will have taken three moves to return to the same king position, while your opponent has only taken two. The net effect is to lose a tempo. From this description, it is clear that triangulation only works if your king has more mobility than your opponent's so that he cannot simply mirror your manoeuvre.

In the above diagram, the first move is forced:

1 ♔e5 ♕f8

White wins more easily after 1...♕e8 2 ♕e6 ♕f8 3 f7, etc.

After the text-move, however, 2 ♕e6 ♕e8 3 f7+? ♕f8 only leads to a draw. In fact, after 1...♕f8 White would prefer Black to move, since then ...♕e8 would lose to ♕e6, and ...♕f7 to ♕f5.

2 ♕f4!

The key move, starting the triangulation.

2...♕e8 3 ♕e4 ♕f8

Black cannot move to f7, as then ♕f5 wins, so he can only move back and forth.

4 ♕e5

White's triangle is complete and Black is doomed.

4...♕f7 5 ♕f5 ♕f8 6 ♕g6

and White wins.

In this position Black would prefer White to move, because then 1 ♔e3 b3 2 ♕d3 ♕b4 (2...b2 3 ♕c2 ♕d4 4 ♕xb2 ♕xe4 also wins) 3 e5 ♕a3! is decisive since Black promotes with check. If one also notes that Black wins easily if his king gets to e5 (because then ...b3 is decisive), then one can see that the crucial zugzwang position is ♕c4 vs ♕c6, as with White to play ♕d3 may be met by ...♕c5, and ♕d4 by ...♕d6 followed by ...♕e5.

1...♕c6! 2 ♕c4

After 2 ♕e3 Black wins with the same triangulation: 2...♕c7 3 ♕d3 ♕d7 4 ♕e3 ♕c6 5 ♕d3 ♕c5.

2...♕c7!

The triangle c6-c7-d7 provides the solution. White can never play ♕d4 due to ...♕d6, so his king can only move back and forth along the path c4-d3-e3. This means that Black will have lost a tempo when he returns to c6.

3 ♕d3 ♕d7! 4 ♕e3

4 ♕c4 ♕c6 5 ♕d3 ♕c5 transposes.

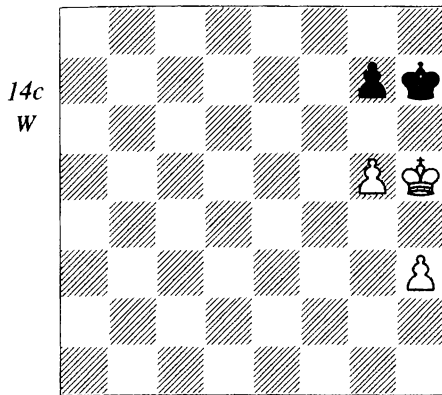
4...♕c6 5 ♕d3

Or 5 ♕d4 ♕d6, followed by ...♕e5.

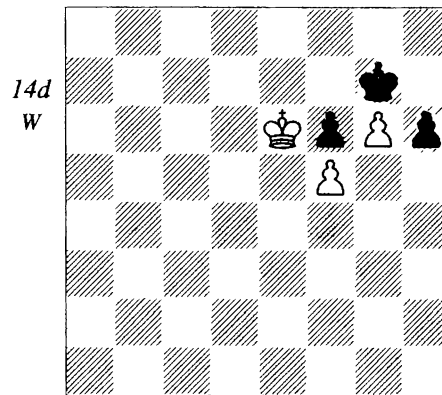
5...♕c5

Now the original position has been restored with White to play and the game is quickly decided.

6 ♕e3 b3 7 ♕d3 ♕b4 8 e5 ♕a3! 0-1



J. Nunn (end of study)
‘Brains of the Earth’ Challenge, 1999



B. Horwitz (version)
The Chess Monthly, 1879

In both 14a and 14b there was a key zugzwang position (♔f5 vs ♔f7 in 14a and ♔d4 vs ♔d6 in 14b) and the attacker’s king manoeuvred around the critical zugzwang square (e5-f4-e4-e5 in 14a and c6-c7-d7-c6 in 14b). Tempo-losing manoeuvres often involve tiptoeing with the king around the zugzwang square. The first step in finding the right plan is therefore to identify the key zugzwang.

In the above position, the zugzwang is ♔g4 vs ♔g8. If Black is to move, then ...♔f7 is met by ♔h5 and ...♔h7 by ♔f5, and in both cases White penetrates to g6 with his king; finally, 1...g6 is met by 2 ♔f4 ♔f7 3 ♔e5 ♔e7 4 h4, and Black loses his pawn.

1 ♔h4!

Not 1 ♔g4? ♔g8, nor 1 h4? g6+ 2 ♔g4 ♔g7 3 ♔f4 ♔f7 4 ♔e5 ♔e7 drawing because White no longer has the reserve tempo h4.

1...♔h8

1...♔g8 2 ♔g4! is the key zugzwang, while 1...♔g6 2 ♔g4 leads to the same lines.

2 ♔g3! ♔h7

2...♔g8 3 ♔g4! transposes.

3 ♔f4 ♔g8

Black has nothing better, as 3...♔h8 4 ♔f5 ♔h7 5 h4 and 3...♔g6 4 ♔g4 are also lost.

4 ♔g4!

The key zugzwang with Black to play.

4...g6

4...♔f7 5 ♔h5 and 4...♔h7 5 ♔f5 also win for White.

5 ♔f4! ♔f7 6 ♔e5 ♔e7 7 h4

and White wins.

This is a simplified version of Horwitz’s position. White would prefer it to be Black to move, as he would be forced to play ...h5, after which White could win the h-pawn by playing his king round to h4. White can lose a tempo by employing the triangle d6-d7-e7 (as usual, White has to move around the zugzwang square e6), but he must take care, as when his king is on the seventh rank he cannot stop the h-pawn directly.

1 ♔d6! ♔f8

1...♔g8 2 ♔e7 transposes.

2 ♔d7! ♔g8

After 2...♔g7 3 ♔e6 White has what he wants, while 2...h5 fails to 3 ♔e6 h4 (3...♔g7 4 ♔d5 picks up the h-pawn as in the main line) 4 ♔xf6 h3 5 g7+ ♔g8 6 ♔g6 h2 7 f6 h1 ♚ 8 f7#.

3 ♔e7! ♔g7

Once again 3...h5 is impossible due to 4 ♔xf6 h4 5 g7 h3 6 ♔g6 h2 7 f6 h1 ♚ 8 f7#.

4 ♔e6

Now Black is obliged to weaken his h-pawn.

4...h5 5 ♔d5 ♔g8 6 ♔e4 ♔g7 7 ♔f4 ♔g8 8 ♔g3 ♔g7

The immediate 9 ♔h4 ♔h6 doesn’t achieve anything, so White must employ a second triangulation.

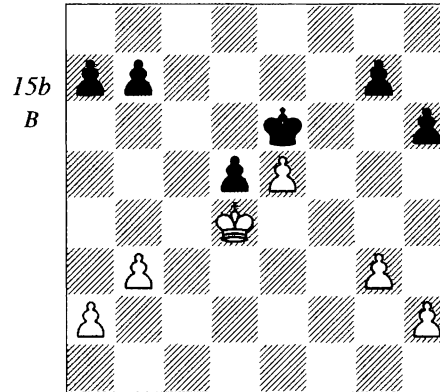
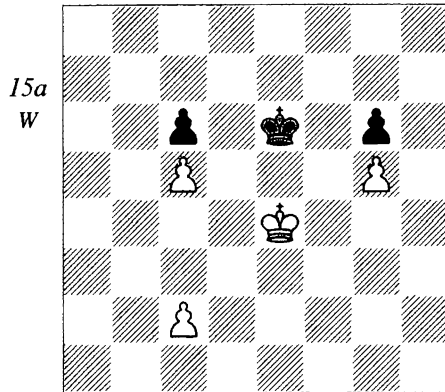
9 ♔h3! ♔h6 10 ♔h4

The h-pawn is lost and the rest is easy: White just returns to e6 to pick up the last black pawn.

10...♔g7 11 ♔xh5 ♔g8 12 ♔g4 ♔g7 13 ♔f4 ♔f8 14 ♔e4 ♔e8 15 ♔d5 ♔e7 16 ♔c6 ♔e8 17 ♔d6 ♔f8 18 ♔e6 ♔g7 19 ♔e7

and White wins.

15 Reserve Tempi



Purdy – Crane

Australian Ch, Sydney 1926

We have already seen how zugzwang and the opposition play a key role in king and pawn endings. *Reserve tempi* are often an important factor in the battle for zugzwang.

It is easiest to explain by means of the above example. The kings face each other with one square in between, so on the basis of king position alone it is Black who has the opposition. Indeed, if the c2-pawn were removed from the board, then White to play would lose. However, White has the possibility of moving his c-pawn, thus gaining the opposition for himself. So, why not play 1 c4? Black continues 1...♔f7 2 ♔e5 ♔e7 and now there is a problem: White has lost the opposition and must retreat. It becomes clear that White needs two spare moves in order to win: one to force Black's king back to the second rank, and one to gain the opposition when White's king is on the fifth rank.

Fortunately the two spare moves White needs are matched by the two reserve tempi he has with the c2-pawn, provided that he does not use them up in one go by mistakenly playing c2-c4. Thus the winning line is 1 c3! (first reserve tempo) 1...♔f7 2 ♔e5 ♔e7 3 c4 (second reserve tempo) and Black has to let the white king in.

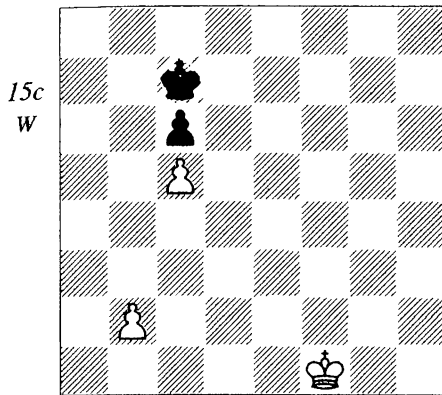
Handling reserve tempi is fraught with danger, but there is one rule of thumb which often, but not invariably, applies. If you have the choice, in a battle for tempi **it is generally better to make a move with a pawn that is not on the second rank**. The reason is that a pawn on the second rank has the possibility of advancing one square or two, and so provides useful flexibility. Thus such pawns should only be moved near the end of the battle, when the other pawns have committed themselves. In the above position, whoever has to move his king first will lose a pawn and the game. Black has a winning position, but he immediately went wrong.

1...g5?

Black should have used the above rule of thumb and played 1...h5!, which ensures that Black can never lose a tempo-battle on the kingside (since h4 can be met by ...g6, and h3 by ...g5). Then White always runs out of reserve tempi first; for example, 2 b4 b5 3 a3 a6 4 h3 g5, 2 a3 a6 3 b4 b5 or 2 a4 a5.

2 g4 1-0

Now White has secured the extra reserve tempo h3 on the kingside, and he only needs to wait to see what happens on the queenside before deciding whether to use it; for example, 2...a6 3 b4 b6 4 a4, 2...b6 3 b4 b5 4 a3 a6 5 h3 or 2...a5 3 a4 b6 4 h3 and White wins in every case.



N. Grigoriev
Shakhmatny Listok, 1931

It isn't always obvious that reserve tempi will be needed. Here White must play so as to conserve his reserve tempi with the b-pawn.

1 ♖e2

First White heads for the queenside.

1...♗d7

Keeping the king on the queenside is too passive: 1...♗b7 2 ♖d3 ♗a6 3 b4 ♗b5 4 ♖c3 ♗a6 5 ♖c4 ♗b7 6 ♖d4 ♗c7 7 ♖e5 ♖d7 8 ♖f6 and White wins.

2 ♖d3 ♖e7

2...♖e6 3 ♖c4 transposes.

3 ♖c3!

The key moment: 3 ♖c4? (3 ♖d4? ♖f6! 4 ♖c3 ♖e5 5 ♖c4 ♖e6 transposes) fails because White can only make progress by using one of his reserve tempi, and after 3...♖e6 4 b3 (4 ♖d4 ♖f6 doesn't help) 4...♖d7 5 ♖b4 (5 ♖d4 ♖e6 6 b4 ♖d7 7 ♖e5 ♖e7 also draws) 5...♖c7 6 ♖a5 ♖b7 7 b4 (White is forced to use his second reserve tempo) 7...♖a7 8 ♖a4 ♖a6 9 ♖b3 ♖b7 10 ♖c4 ♖c7 11 ♖d4 ♖d7 12 ♖e5 ♖e7 it is a draw, as there are no more reserve tempi left.

3...♖e6 4 ♖c4! ♖d7

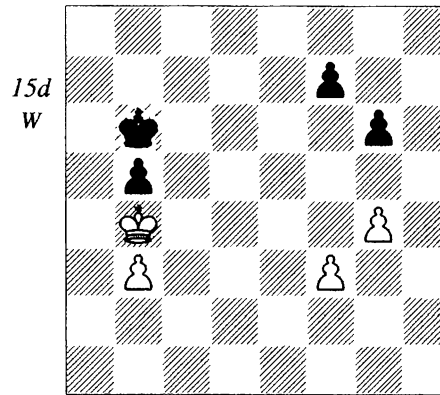
Black must retreat, as 4...♖e5 5 b4 ♖e6 6 b5 wins for White. Now White can head for a5.

5 ♖b4 ♖c7 6 ♖a5 ♖b7 7 b3! ♖a7 8 ♖b4 ♖b7

Or 8...♖a6 9 ♖c3 ♖a5 (9...♖b5 10 b4) 10 ♖c4 ♖a6 11 b4 ♖b7 12 ♖d4 and White wins.

9 ♖c4 ♖c7 10 ♖d4 ♖d7 11 ♖e5 ♖e7 12 b4

White wins, with the second reserve tempo proving decisive.



Arias – Tokman
Pan American U-12 Ch, Bogota 2003

Sometimes it is necessary to change the pawn-structure in such a way as to create reserve tempi for later use.

1 ♖c3?

The key move is 1 g5!, preserving the spare move f4 for when it is needed. After 1...♖c6 2 ♖a5 ♖c5 3 b4+ ♖c4 4 f4 the reserve tempo leaves Black in a fatal zugzwang.

1...♖c5?

Giving White a second bite at the cherry. The simplest drawing move was 1...f6! (1...g5! also draws), which prevents a possible g5. Then White's only try is 2 ♖d4 ♖c6 3 f4 ♖d6 4 g5 fxg5 5 fxg5, but after 5...♖e6 6 ♖c5 ♖f5 7 ♖xb5 ♖xg5 the pawns promote together.

2 b4+?

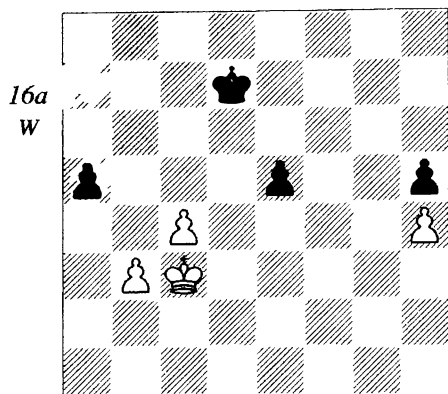
White could still have won by 2 g5!, although this time it is slightly more complicated: 2...b4+ (or 2...♖c6 3 ♖d4 ♖d6 4 b4 ♖c6 5 ♖e5 ♖d7 6 ♖d5 winning the b5-pawn) 3 ♖d3 ♖d5 4 f4 ♖e6 5 ♖c4 ♖f5 (forced, but White is ahead in the ensuing race) 6 ♖xb4 ♖xf4 7 ♖c5! (the only move to win; White must be ready to support his own pawn or head back to stop Black's, depending on how Black plays) 7...♖xg5 8 b4 f5 (or 8...♖f6 9 b5 ♖e7 10 ♖c6 ♖d8 11 ♖b7 g5 12 b6 and White will promote with check) 9 b5 f4 10 ♖d4 ♖g4 11 b6 f3 12 ♖e3! (ensuring that the b-pawn promotes with check) 12...♖g3 13 b7 f2 14 b8♖+ and wins.

2...♖d5 3 ♖d3 f5 4 gxf5 gxf5

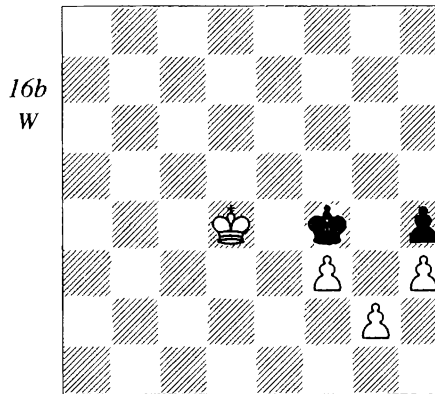
Now it's a dead draw.

5 f4 ♖e6 6 ♖e3 ♖d5 7 ♖d3 ♖e6 1/2-1/2

16 Transformation to a Queen Ending (1)



Damijanović – Ermenkov
Struga 2002



Ravinsky – Smyslov
Moscow Ch 1946

It quite often happens that a pawn ending is converted into a queen ending by one or both sides promoting. In some cases, the result of the ensuing ending will be clear, but in many cases it will not. However, there are a few situations in which the queen ending can be resolved quickly by tactical means. The first of these occurs if a favourable queen exchange can be forced.

1 ♔d3 ♕d6

After 1...♕e6 2 ♕e4 ♔d6 3 ♕f5 White wins more easily.

2 ♕e4 ♕c5

Or 2...♕e6 3 c5 ♕f6 4 c6 ♕e6 5 c7 ♔d7 6 ♕xe5 ♕xc7 7 ♕f6 ♕b6 8 ♕g5 ♕b5 9 ♕xh5 ♕b4 10 ♕g4 ♕xb3 11 h5 a4 12 h6 a3 13 h7 a2 14 h8♖ and White wins.

3 ♕xe5 ♕b4 4 ♔d5!

The only move to win. 4 ♔d4? ♕xb3 allows Black to promote with check, while after 4 ♔d6? ♕xb3 5 c5 a4 6 c6 a3 7 c7 a2 8 c8♗ a1♗ White cannot force the exchange of queens.

4...♕xb3 5 c5 a4 6 c6 a3 7 c7 a2 8 c8♗ a1♗

After a couple of checks, White forces the exchange of queens.

9 ♗c4+ ♕a3

Or 9...♕b2 10 ♗d4+.

10 ♗a6+ ♕b2 11 ♗xa1+ ♕xa1 12 ♕e5 ♕b2 13 ♕f5 ♕c3 14 ♕g5 ♔d4 15 ♕xh5 ♕e5

White wins by one tempo.

16 ♕g6 1-0

Another common situation arises when the poor position of the defender's pieces gives the attacker the chance to launch a mating attack using his new queen.

1 ♔d3!

The only winning move. After 1 ♔d5? ♕g3 2 ♕e4 ♕xg2 3 f4 ♕xh3 4 f5 ♕g4 5 f6 h3 Black will promote with check.

The text-move threatens to play ♕e2 and ♕f1, securing the two extra pawns, so Black has to make a run for the g2-pawn.

1...♕g3 2 ♕e2

White can also win by 2 ♕e3 ♕xg2 3 f4 ♕xh3 4 f5, with play similar to the main line.

2...♕xg2

Or 2...♕f4 3 ♕f2 and the extra material decides the game.

3 f4 ♕xh3 4 f5 ♕g2

4...♕g3 5 ♕f1! stops the h-pawn.

5 f6 h3 6 f7 h2 7 f8♗ h1♗

Black's pieces are poorly placed and the white king and queen, operating together, can force mate. This is a standard pattern and is well worth remembering.

8 ♗g7+ ♕h3

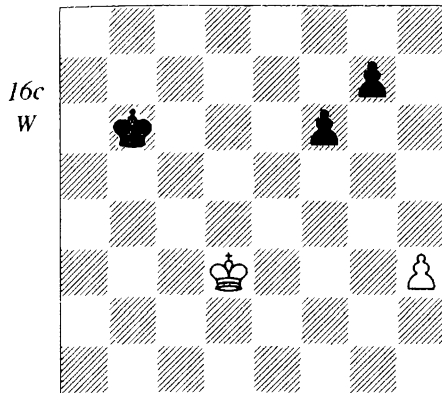
Or 8...♕h2 9 ♕f2.

9 ♗h6+ ♕g2 10 ♗g5+

The queen zigzags closer.

10...♕h3 11 ♗h5+ ♕g2 12 ♗g4+ 1-0

After 12...♕h2 13 ♕f2 Black has no defence.

**Hermann – Kestler***West German Ch, Königsfeld 1969*

It's worth looking at some further examples of mating ideas, because they occur relatively often in practice and are almost as often the cause of needless mistakes.

This position is a draw, but it requires accurate play by White.

1 ♖e4!

If Black's king can support his pawns then the extra pawn will be decisive, so White is right to play actively.

1...♗c6 2 ♖f5 ♗d6 3 ♖g6?

But here it all goes wrong for White, who fails to take Black's mating possibilities into account. He could have drawn by 3 h4! ♖e7 (otherwise White gains an important tempo) 4 ♖g6 ♖f8 5 h5 ♖g8 6 h6 gxf6 7 ♖xf6.

3...♗e6!

Not 3...♗e7?, giving White a chance to correct his error by 4 h4!

4 ♖xg7 f5 5 h4 f4 6 h5 f3 7 h6 f2 8 h7 f1 ♗9 h8 ♗g2+

This is slightly different from the previous example in that Black's king is on e6 (rather than the analogous square e7), but this doesn't save White.

10 ♖h6

10 ♖f8 ♗f3+ 11 ♖g7 ♗g4+ transposes.

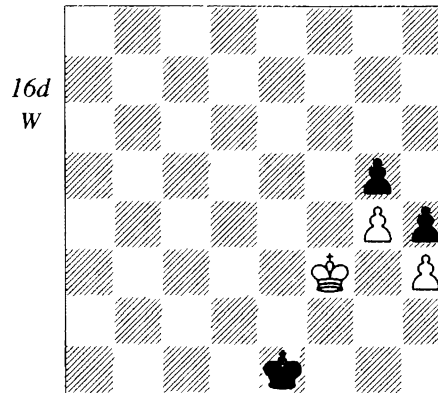
10...♗h3+ 11 ♖g7 ♗g4+ 12 ♖h6

Or 12 ♖f8 ♗f5+ 13 ♖e8 ♗f7+ 14 ♖d8 ♗d7#.

12...♗h4+ 13 ♖g7 ♗g5+ 14 ♖h7

White is also mated after 14 ♖f8 ♗e7+ 15 ♖g8 ♗f7#.

14...♖f7 15 ♗f6+ ♖xf6 0-1

**Kozarov – Orev***Bulgarian Ch, Sofia 1971*

However, not all such positions are winning. In this example, Black ends up in an awkward situation but one he should still have been able to save by accurate defence.

1 ♖e4 ♖f2 2 ♖f5 ♖g3 3 ♖xg5 ♖xh3 4 ♖f4!

The only move to give winning chances since White must confine the enemy king.

4...♖g2

Black cannot block the h-pawn, so he must allow White to promote with check.

5 g5 h3 6 g6 h2 7 g7 h1 ♗8 ♗8♗+

On checking through my database, I found several examples of this drawn position and discovered that it has been lost far more often than it has been drawn!

8...♖f1

The only move, as 8...♖f2? loses to 9 ♗a2+!, as in 16c.

9 ♗c4+ ♖f2?

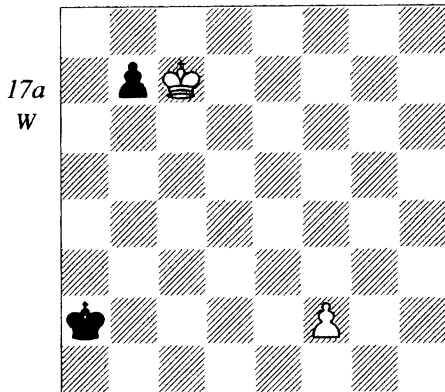
Black makes a fatal error which has been repeated many times. The strongest player to have committed it appears to be O.Korneev, who was rated 2649 at the time. The saving line is 9...♖g1! 10 ♗c5+ ♖h2! 11 ♗h5+ ♖g1! 12 ♗d1+ ♖h2!, the main point being that Black must never play his king to g2.

10 ♗a2+ ♖f1 11 ♗b1+ ♖g2

Now the familiar zigzag manoeuvre comes into play.

12 ♗c2+ ♖f1 13 ♗d1+ ♖g2 14 ♗e2+ ♖g1 15 ♖g3 ♗h4+ 16 ♖xh4 ♖h1 17 ♖g3 ♖g1 18 ♗g2# (1-0)

17 Transformation to a Queen Ending (2)



A. Mandler
Narodnoe Obrazovanie, 1938

Another common idea is to manoeuvre the enemy king into a position in which it is possible to win his queen with a skewer after both sides promote.

1 ♔d6!

A surprising first move. The idea is to help support White's own pawn while still being able to inconvenience Black's pawn. 1 ♔xb7? ♔b3 2 ♔c6 ♔c4 and 1 ♔b6? ♔b3 2 ♔c5 ♔c3 3 f4 b5 4 ♔xb5 ♔d4 are drawn.

1...♔a3

After 1...b5 2 ♔c5 ♔b3 3 ♔xb5 ♔c3 4 ♔c5 ♔d3 5 ♔d5, followed by f4, there is no stopping White's pawn.

2 ♔c5!

Approaching the enemy pawn with gain of tempo.

2...♔a4 3 f4 b5 4 f5 b4 5 ♔c4!

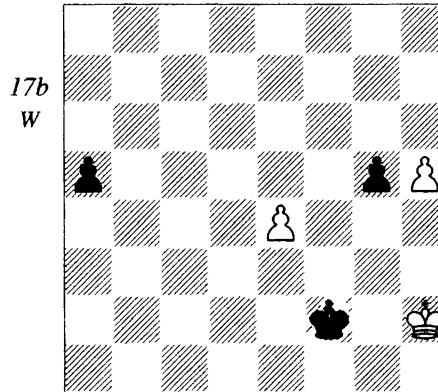
Not 5 f6? b3 6 f7 b2 7 f8 ♖b1 ♗8 ♗a8+ ♔b3 9 ♗b7+ ♔a2 and Black saves his queen. The text-move is tricky to spot because White spends two king moves in order to force Black's king to make just one. However, White regains the tempo because he is able to promote with check and, moreover, the confined position of Black's king works in White's favour.

5...b3 6 ♔c3! ♔a3

Everything is in position for the finish.

7 f6 b2 8 f7 b1 ♗9 f8 ♖+ ♔a4 10 ♗a8+ ♔b5 11 ♗b7+

and White wins Black's queen.



D. Pikhurov
Zadachy i Etiudy, 2002

This neat example combines several of the ideas we have seen earlier: queen exchange, skewer and mate.

1 h6!

The correct pawn to push; White would even lose after 1 e5? g4 2 e6 g3+ 3 ♔h3 g2 4 e7 g1 ♗5 e8 ♗ ♗g3#.

White can also win by 1 ♔h3 ♔f3 2 h6 g4+ 3 ♔h2! (not 3 ♔h4? g3 4 h7 g2 5 h8 ♗g1 ♗ with a draw, however) 3...♔f2 4 h7, which transposes to the main line, but takes two moves longer.

1...g4 2 h7 g3+ 3 ♔h3 g2 4 h8 ♗g1 ♗

Both sides promote together, but White is in a position to force an immediate exchange of queens.

5 ♗d4+ ♔f1 6 ♗xg1+ ♔xg1 7 e5 a4

The starting gun is fired for the second pawn race.

8 e6 a3 9 e7 a2 10 e8 ♗a1 ♗

Despite the limited material, Black is doomed by his bad king position.

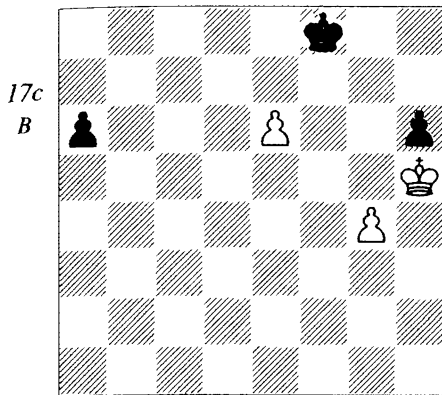
11 ♗e3+ ♔f1

Or 11...♔h1 12 ♗f3+ ♔g1 13 ♗g2#.

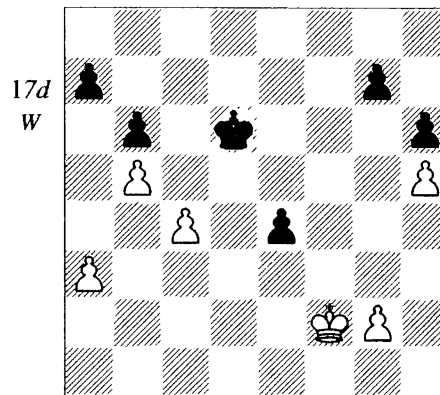
12 ♗f3+ ♔e1 13 ♗h1+

and White wins the queen.

If there is no immediate win after both sides promote, the position may be tricky to assess. Queen endings are notoriously hard to play, even if there are few pawns. We conclude with two examples illustrating the difficulties.



Jakubowski – Maslak
Pardubice 2006



Milos – Sunye Neto
São Paulo 1997

This position has arisen three times in my database. At first the play is forced.

1...a5 2 ♖xh6 a4 3 g5 a3 4 g6 a2 5 g7+ ♔e7 6 g8 ♜a1 ♞

♞+♠ vs ♞ endings are extremely tricky (see Sections 78 and 79), but this one looks promising as White's pawn is a far-advanced centre pawn.

7 ♞f7+ ♔d6 8 ♞d7+?!

This serious inaccuracy occurred in all three games. White had a simple win by 8 e7! ♞c1+ 9 ♔h7 ♞c2+ 10 ♔g8 ♞g2+ 11 ♔f8 ♞b2 12 ♞g6+ followed by 13 e8♞. Now the win is extremely difficult.

8...♔c5 9 ♔g6?

After this Black can draw. Returning with 9 ♞f7! would still have won.

9...♞e5!

The only drawing move, and found in just one of the three games. The other two went:

1) 9...♞g1+? 10 ♔f7 ♞h1?! (10...♞h2 offered much more resistance) 11 ♞c7+ ♔b5 12 ♞e5+ ♔a4 13 ♞d4+ ♔a3 14 ♞d3+ ♔b4 15 ♞f5 ♞c6 16 e7 ♞c7 17 ♞e4+ ♔a3 18 ♞d4 ♞h2 19 ♞c5+ ♔a2 20 e8♞ ♞f4+ 21 ♔g7 ♞g3+ 22 ♔f8 1-0 Alekhine-Stoltz, Salzburg 1942.

2) 9...♞b1+? 10 ♔g7 ♞f5 (10...♞b2+ was a better try) 11 ♞c7+ ♔d5 12 e7 ♞g5+ 13 ♔f8 ♞f6+ 14 ♔e8 ♞g6+ 15 ♔d8 ♞f6 16 ♔c8 1-0 Vorobiov-Bogner, Cappelle la Grande 2007.

10 e7 ♞g3+! 11 ♔h5 ♞f3+ 12 ♔h4 ♞f2+ 13 ♔g4 ♞g2+ 14 ♔f4 ♞f2+ 15 ♔g5 ♞e3+! 16 ♔g6 ♞g3+ 17 ♔f7 ♞f3+ 18 ♔g7 (18 ♔e8 ♞a8+!) 18...♞g3+ 19 ♔h6 ♞h4+ 20 ♔g6 1/2-1/2.

Sometimes all you can do is get the most favourable position you can, even if you are not sure whether it will be a win.

1 ♔e3 ♔c5

1...♔e5 2 g4 wins as Black must abandon the e-pawn.

2 ♔xe4 ♔xc4 3 ♔f5 ♔xb5 4 ♔g6 ♔a4?!

4...♔c4 5 ♔xg7 a5 6 ♔xh6 b5 7 ♔g5 b4 8 h6 b3 9 h7 b2 10 h8♞ b1♞ was probably a better chance, although White's extra pawn gives him fair winning chances.

5 ♔xg7 ♔xa3 6 g4!

An important point; 6 ♔xh6 b5 leaves White with the g2-pawn after both sides promote, but the text-move leaves White with a more advanced pawn on h5.

6...b5 7 g5 b4 8 gxh6 b3 9 h7 b2 10 h8♞ b1♞

This ending is a win, but it requires care.

11 ♞f8+ ♔a4

Not 11...♔a2? 12 ♞f7+, winning at once.

12 ♞f4+ ♔a5 13 ♞e5+?!

13 ♞c7+ ♔a6 14 ♞c6+ ♔a5 15 h6 would have won more easily.

13...♔a6 14 h6 ♞b7+ 15 ♔g6 ♞g2+ 16 ♔f7 ♞h1?

After this White wins comfortably. 16...♞c2 would have put up more of a fight, although 17 ♞g5 should win in the end.

17 ♞f6+ ♔b7

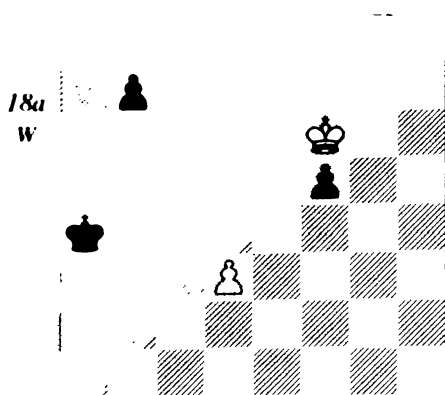
Or 17...♔b5 18 ♞f5+, followed by h7.

18 ♔g8 ♔c7 19 h7 ♞a8+ 20 ♞f8 1-0

The checks have run out.

18

Surprise Moves



O. Pervakov

1st Prize, 64-Shakhmatnoe Obozrenie, 2000

Surprising moves are quite common in king and pawn endings and it is easy to make a mistake through simply not considering the correct move at all. Here White saves the game with a bizarre-seeming move.

1 ♖g5!

White must stop the f-pawn, but not by 1 ♖xf5? since Black promotes with check, nor 1 ♖e5? due to 1...b5 2 d4 b4 3 d5 b3 4 d6 b2 5 d7 b1 ♜6 d8 ♜ ♖e4+! and Black wins since 7 ♖d6 ♜d4+ leads to an exchange of queens while 7 ♖f6 ♜h4+ is a deadly skewer.

1...b5

Or 1...♖b3 2 ♖xf5 ♖c3 3 ♖e5! (3 ♖e4? is again bad because Black checks when he promotes on b1) 3...♖xd3 4 ♖d5 ♖c3 5 ♖c5 and Black loses his pawn.

2 d4 b4 3 d5 ♖b5!

3...b3 4 d6 b2 5 d7 b1 ♜6 d8 ♜ is a draw as Black soon loses his pawn.

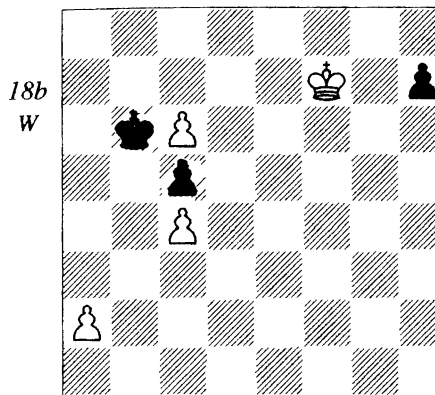
4 d6!

Avoiding another trap: 4 ♖f6? ♖c5! 5 ♖e6 b3 6 d6 b2 7 d7 b1 ♜8 d8 ♜ ♖e4+ 9 ♖f7 ♜d5+ and the exchange of queens is decisive.

4...♖c6 5 ♖xf5!

White uses his own pawn to accelerate his king, as in 6a.

5...♖xd6 (Black must take, as after 5...b3 6 ♖e6 the players promote at the same time) 6 ♖e4 ♖c5 7 ♖d3 ♖b5 8 ♖c2 ♖a4 9 ♖b2 and White draws as his king arrives just in time.



M. Zinar

1st Prize, 64-Shakhmatnoe Obozrenie, 1982

What's the result of this position? The calculation looks simple enough: 1 ♖f6 ♖xc6 2 ♖g5 ♖b6 3 ♖h6 ♖a5 4 ♖xh7 ♖b4 5 ♖g6 ♖xc4 6 ♖f5 ♖c3 7 ♖e5 c4 8 a4 ♖b4 and Black wins. However, it turns out that 1 ♖f6? is a mistake and White can draw with an astonishing move.

1 ♖g7!

This looks like total madness, forcing Black to push an unstoppable passed pawn.

1...h5

After 1...♖xc6 2 ♖xh7 White has gained a tempo over the 1 ♖f6? line and draws easily after 2...♖b6 3 ♖g6 ♖a5 4 ♖f5 ♖b4 5 ♖e4 ♖xc4 6 ♖e3 ♖c3 7 a4.

2 ♖f6! h4

2...♖xc6 3 ♖g5 draws as before.

3 ♖e5

Threatening ♖d6, so Black must take.

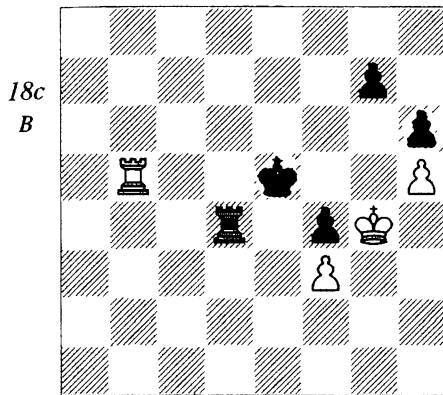
3...♖xc6 4 ♖f4 ♖b6 5 ♖g4 ♖a5 6 ♖xh4 ♖b4

Compared to 1 ♖f6?, White has taken the pawn on h4 instead of h7, which allows the following saving move.

7 ♖g3!

Not 7 ♖g4? ♖xc4 8 ♖f3 (or 8 ♖f4 ♖d3 and the pawn promotes with check) 8...♖d3! 9 a4 c4 10 a5 c3 11 a6 c2 12 a7 c1 ♜13 a8 ♜ ♖h1+ and White loses his queen to a skewer.

7...♖xc4 8 ♖f2 ♖c3 (8...♖d3 9 a4 is also a draw) 9 ♖e2! c4 10 a4 and White draws after 10...♖b2 11 a5 or 10...♖b4 11 ♖d2.



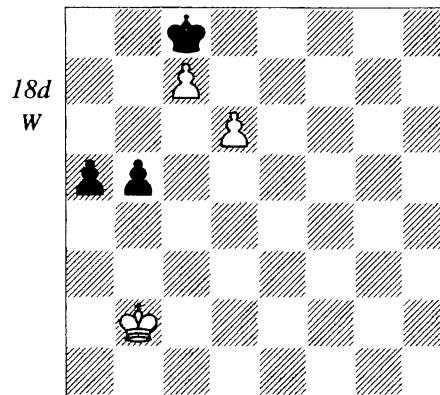
Hebden – Flear
British Ch, Brighton 1980

Black played **1...♞d5**, after which the *British Chess Magazine* reported: “The players now agreed to a draw, but Black’s last move is a losing blunder!” The analysis given to support this ran **2 ♜xd5+ ♝xd5 3 ♜f5**, and now:

1) **3...♞d4 4 ♝xf4 ♞d3 5 ♜f5 ♞e3 6 ♞g6 ♝xf3 7 ♝xg7 ♞g4 8 ♝xh6** wins for White.

2) **3...♞d6 4 ♞g6 ♞e5** (or **4...♞e6 5 ♝xg7 ♜f5 6 ♝xh6 ♞f6 7 ♝h7 ♞f7 8 h6** and White wins) **5 ♝xg7 ♞d4 6 ♝xh6 ♞e3 7 ♞g5 ♝xf3 8 h6 ♞e3 9 h7 f3 10 h8♖ f2** and White wins thanks to the proximity of his king (see also 77c): **11 ♖h1 ♞e2 12 ♖e4+ ♞f1 13 ♞g4 ♞g1 14 ♞g3 f1♖ 15 ♖e3+ ♞h1 16 ♖h6+** and mates.

However, Black can draw after **3 ♜f5** with a move not considered in the *British Chess Magazine*. The key point is that in order to draw, Black’s king must be able to do two things: first, to defend the g7-pawn in case of ♝xf4 and ♜f5-g6; second, to meet ♝xh6 by ...♝xf3 if White heads for g7 directly by playing ♞g6 and ♝xg7. These conditions are satisfied precisely if Black’s king is both within three squares of f8 and within three squares of f3. There is only one move available which satisfies both criteria, namely **3...♞c5!!**. This does indeed lead to a draw after **4 ♞g6 ♞d4 5 ♝xg7 ♞e3 6 ♝xh6 ♝xf3 7 ♞g5 ♞g3** or **4 ♝xf4 ♞d6 5 ♜f5 ♞e7 6 ♞g6 ♞f8**. White can try to be subtle with **4 ♞e5**, but it’s a draw all the same after **4...♞c6 5 ♞e6 ♞c5 6 ♞f7 ♞d4 7 ♝xg7 ♞e3**.



M. Karstedt (version by J. Nunn)
Deutsches Wochenschach, 1921

We end the king and pawn section with an extreme example of a surprise move.

1 ♞a2!!

The only move to win. The lines **1 ♞a3? a4 2 ♞b4 ♞b7, 1 ♞b3? b4 2 ♞a4 ♞b7** and **1 ♞c3? a4 2 ♞b4 ♞b7** all lead to a draw. Any position in which the white king occupies a hole in the fourth rank (i.e., ♞a4 vs ♞a5 + ♞b4 or ♞b4 vs ♞a4 + ♞b5) and Black’s king is on b7 is a draw if White is to move, but a win if Black is to play. White must triangulate to lose a move, but at the same time he can only go to the third rank when Black’s king is on b7, as then he can occupy the hole if Black pushes a pawn.

1...♞b7

1...a4 2 ♞a3 ♞b7 3 ♞b4 ♞c8 4 ♝xb5 a3 5 ♞c6 wins for White, while **1...b4 2 ♞b3 ♞b7 3 ♞a4** transposes to the main line.

2 ♞a3

2 ♞b3 ♞c8 3 ♞b2! is just as good.

2...♞c8 3 ♞b2!

Triangulation completed.

3...♞b7 4 ♞c3!

This is only possible when Black’s king is on b7, as White must be able to meet ...a4 by ♞b4. That is why White had to lose a move.

4...♞c8 5 ♞d4 b4

5...a4 6 ♞c5 ♞b7 7 ♞b4 ♞c8 8 ♝xb5 and White wins.

6 ♞c5 ♞b7 7 ♞c4!

White can now occupy the hole under favourable circumstances.

7...♞c8 8 ♞b3 ♞b7 9 ♞a4 ♞c8 10 ♝xa5 b3 11 ♞b6 b2 12 ♞c6 b1♖ 13 d7#

Knight Endings

The knight is a tricky piece to handle, as anyone who has fallen victim to a knight fork (and who hasn't?) can testify. The possibilities for knight forks are more limited in the endgame, but that doesn't mean that the knight is any easier to handle. Section 19 deals with the ending of knight vs pawn and shows that even in this basic case there are many subtleties. The knight might have to take the long way round to stop the pawn, as in 19c, while sometimes the knight can be held at bay by tricky king manoeuvres, as in 19d and 19e. In a few cases the knight can even win by mating in a corner, as in 19f. This has some practical importance because certain endings can only be won by using this mating idea. One important point arises even in this basic ending: a knight has more trouble fighting against a rook's pawn than any other pawn. The reason is that the knight can only operate from one side of the pawn, which severely limits its mobility.

In most cases the knight can stop a single pawn, except possibly if it is far advanced. When a knight faces two pawns, it is often possible to draw by giving up the knight for one pawn, while the king deals with the other one. However, if one of the pawns is a rook's pawn then the knight may face more of a struggle, as in 20a. Problems really start to arise when there are three pawns against a knight. If the pawns are far apart, the short-range knight is usually overwhelmed, but matters are less clear-cut if the three pawns are connected. The knight can usually save the day if the pawns are far back, but when they are well advanced the knight stands no chance. The attacker has better chances if his king is actively posted in front of the pawns, and in this case there may be winning chances even if the pawns have barely moved, as in 20c.

An extra knight doesn't guarantee a win if there are very few pawns left. The knight can easily get tied down, due to the necessity of defending a friendly pawn or restraining an enemy passed pawn, and in this case the extra piece may be of no help. Section 21 covers some of the situations that can arise in this case. Some of these positions are surprisingly complex, even if there are few pawns on the board. A number of examples in this section show respected grandmasters getting it wrong even in the relatively simple case of one pawn on each side.

An extra pawn is a considerable advantage in a knight ending, and indeed a knight and a pawn often beat a knight if the defending king is far away from the pawn. In the more general case, the extra pawn is of greater value if it is a passed pawn, and especially if it is an outside passed pawn lying far away from the remaining pawns. If the defender has to use his knight to blockade such a passed pawn, then he will be virtually a piece down on the other side of the board. If the defender can blockade the distant passed pawn with his king then he has better drawing chances, as he may be able to use his knight to force pawn exchanges on the opposite flank (see 23d).

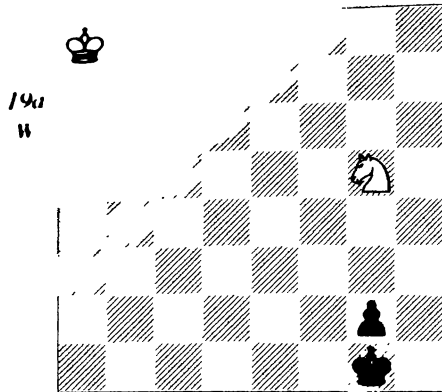
When all the pawns are on one side, there are good winning chances with knight and four pawns against knight and three pawns, but with fewer pawns the extra pawn is unlikely to be enough to win. All these cases are discussed in Sections 22 and 23. Section 23 also considers other positional factors, such as an active king or knight. An active king is especially important in knight endings, as a king penetrating amongst the enemy pawns usually represents a decisive advantage. Knights benefit especially from *outposts*, which are advanced squares from which they cannot be driven by enemy pawns. If the knight can occupy an outpost which enables it to attack enemy pawns, the knight can virtually paralyse the opposing army, as in 23b.

Tactical possibilities arise quite often in knight endings. Zugzwang, which we met several times in the previous section on king and pawn endings, also arises frequently in knight endings. One

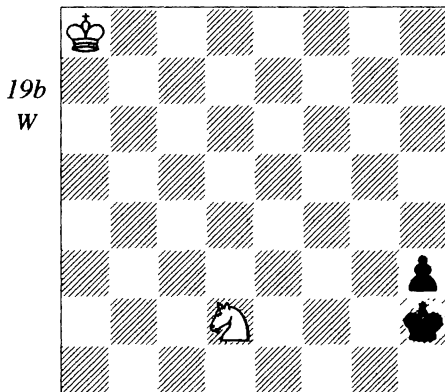
reason for this is a peculiarity of the knight's move, that if it is defending a pawn or square, then any move by the knight will abandon that defence. By contrast, a rook or bishop can usually move along the line of defence and maintain its guard. Thus a knight can be immobilized if it has to defend an important target, and in this situation zugzwang can easily arise (see 24a and 24b). Another relatively common tactical idea is to sacrifice a knight in order to obtain runaway passed pawns, as in 24c. A knight and a couple of pawns can make a dangerous attacking force if they are supported by the king, and it occasionally happens that the attacker can create mating threats against the enemy king. 24d is a famous example.

19

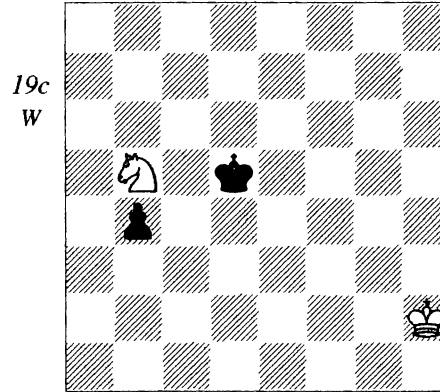
Knight vs Pawn

19a
W

Normally this ending is drawn, except if the pawn is far advanced or the knight very badly placed. In general, a knight can even stop a non-rook's pawn on the seventh rank. Here White draws by any king move: 1 ♔b7 (but not 1 ♖f3+? ♗f2 2 ♖g5 ♗g3 3 ♖e4+ ♗g4 nor 1 ♖h3+? ♗h2 2 ♖g5 ♗g3 and the pawn promotes) 1...♗f2 (1...♗h2 2 ♖f3+ ♗g3 3 ♖g1 ♗f2 4 ♖h3+ is the same) 2 ♖h3+ ♗g3 3 ♖g1 ♗f2 (3...♗h2 4 ♖e2) 4 ♖h3+ and Black can only go round in circles.

19b
W

The knight has more trouble dealing with a rook's pawn, but in general it can still stop a rook's pawn on the sixth rank: 1 ♖c4! (1 ♖f3+? ♗g2 2 ♖e1+ ♗g3, 1 ♖f1+? ♗g1 and 1 ♖e4? ♗g2 all lose) 1...♗g3 (1...♗g1 2 ♖e5 ♗g2 3 ♖g4 also draws) 2 ♖e3 ♗f2 (2...h2 3 ♖f1+) 3 ♖g4+ ♗f3 4 ♖h2+ ♗g3 5 ♖f1+ ♗g2 6 ♖e3+ ♗f3 7 ♖f1 and the knight saves the day.

19c
W

N. Grigoriev
1938

Problems start to arise if the knight is badly placed and cannot easily control a square the pawn has to cross. Such situations can be surprisingly complicated.

1 ♖c7+!

White mustn't waste time; after 1 ♗g3? ♗c5! 2 ♖c7 b3 3 ♖e6+ ♗c4 4 ♖g5 b2 5 ♖e4 ♗d3 6 ♖c5+ ♗e3 the pawn cannot be stopped.

1...♗c4

1...♗d6 is also met by 2 ♖e8+!

2 ♖e8!

Amazingly, the only way to stop the pawn is to go via the far edge of the board. The coming check on d6 offers the knight a variety of routes to stop the pawn, such as b5-a3 or e4-d2. Not, however, 2 ♖e6? b3 and the pawn will queen.

2...b3 3 ♖d6+ ♗c3

Black cannot prevent the knight's return; for example, 3...♗d3 4 ♖b5 b2 5 ♖a3 or 3...♗b4 4 ♖e4 b2 5 ♖d2.

4 ♖e4+

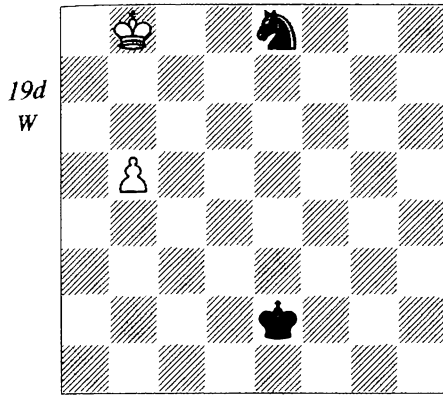
Not 4 ♖b5+? ♗b4 and the knight is cut off from b1.

4...♗c2 5 ♖d6!

The last difficult move, returning to d6. Black's king is poorly placed on c2 to prevent the knight from returning via b5 (except if Black retraces his steps by ...♗c3).

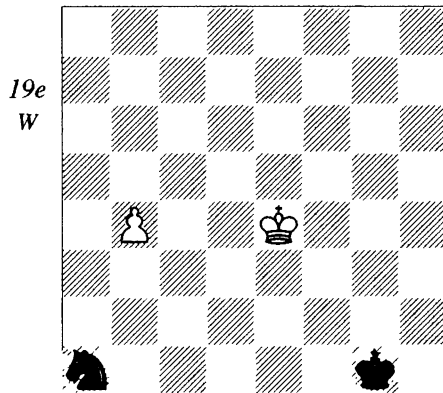
5...b2 6 ♖c4 b1 ♖ 7 ♖a3+

and draws. The knight has returned just in time!



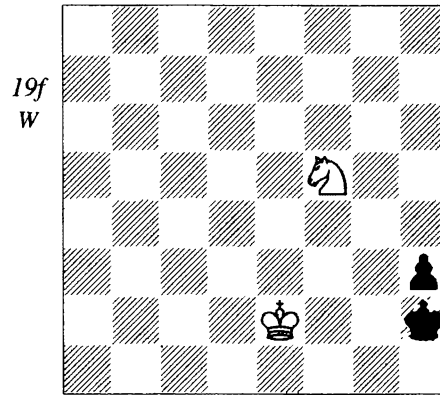
H. Grondijs
Springerzauber, 1998

Here are a couple of examples in which the knight is unable to stop the pawn. White wins by 1 **b6** ♞d3 2 **♗b7!** (threatening 3 ♞c6 , but not 2 ♞c8? ♞c4! 3 ♞d7 ♞f6+! 4 ♞c6 ♞d5! 5 b7 ♞b4+ 6 ♞b6 ♞d5+! 7 ♞a5 ♞b4 drawing) 2... ♞d6+ (or 2... ♞g7 3 ♞c8 ♞f5 4 ♞d7) 3 ♞c7 (3 ♞c6? ♞c4 4 b7 ♞a5+ is a draw) 3... ♞e4 4 ♞c6 and the pawn queens (but not 4 b7? ♞c5 5 b8♞ ♞a6+ and Black saves the day).



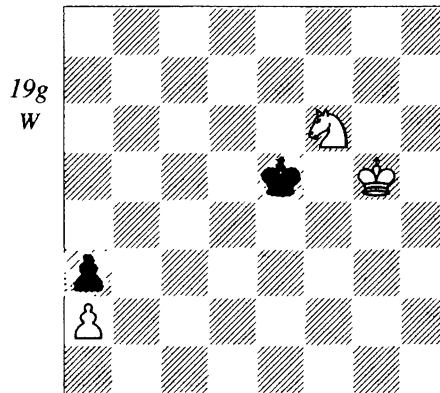
F. Prokop
Casopis Československý Šach, 1925

White exploits the knight's bad position by 1 ♞d3! ♞b3 (1... ♞f2 2 ♞c3 followed by b5 is an easy win) 2 ♞c3! ♞c1 3 **b5!** (not 3 ♞c4? ♞f2 4 b5 ♞e3 5 b6 ♞d3 6 b7 ♞e5+ and Black makes it back) 3... ♞e2+ 4 ♞c4 ♞f4 (or 4... ♞g3 5 b6 ♞e4 6 ♞d5 ♞f6+ 7 ♞c6 , keeping the knight away) 5 **b6** ♞g6 6 ♞d5 ♞e7+ 7 ♞c5! , followed by b7 , and the pawn queens.



There are a few situations with an advanced rook's pawn in which the knight can even win. Here White forces mate by 1 ♞f1! (but not 1 ♞f2? ♞h1 2 ♞g3+ ♞h2 and White cannot make progress) 1... ♞h1 2 ♞f2 ♞h2 (2... h2 3 ♞g3#) 3 ♞e3 ♞h1 4 ♞f1 h2 5 ♞g3# .

This finish is important mainly because there are several endings with more pawns which can only be won by making use of it.

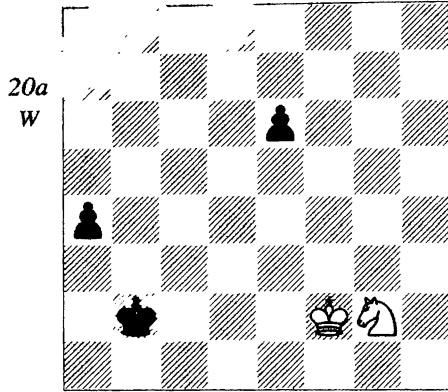


Nogueiras – Gongora Reyes
Cuban Ch, Las Tunas 2001

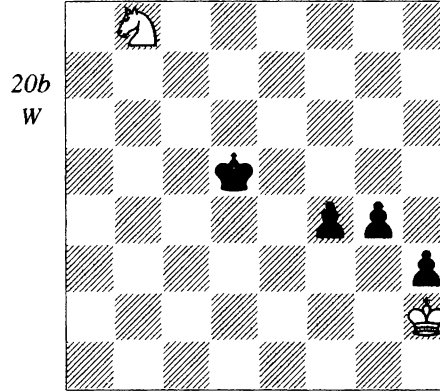
Black is losing. He can make a run for the a2-pawn, only to fall into the above finish: 1 ♞d7+! (the only winning move; the knight must be in range of the mating square b3) 1... ♞d4 2 ♞f4 ♞c3 (2... ♞d3 3 ♞f3 ♞d2 4 ♞e4 ♞c3 5 ♞e3 transposes) 3 ♞e3 ♞b2 4 ♞d2 ♞xa2 (4... ♞b1 5 ♞c5! ♞b2 6 ♞d3+ ♞b1 7 ♞d1 ♞a1 8 ♞c2 ♞xa2 9 ♞b4+ ♞a1 10 ♞c1 also mates) 5 ♞c2 ♞a1 6 ♞c5 ♞a2 7 ♞d3 ♞a1 1-0. The finish would be 8 ♞c1 a2 9 ♞b3# .

20

Knight vs More Pawns



A. Kovačević – Sulskis
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008



Polei – Cioara
Stockholm 2005

Knight vs two pawns is usually a draw, as the knight can deal with one pawn while the king deals with the other. This example is an exception because the knight has problems coping with the advanced a-pawn, and this should enable Black to win.

1 ♖f4

Or 1 ♖e3 ♜c3 2 ♜e2 a3 3 ♜d1 a2 4 ♖c2 e5 and Black wins.

1...♜c2?

Allowing a later check on b4. 1...♜c3! was correct; then 2 ♖e2+ (or 2 ♜e3 a3 3 ♖e2+ ♜b2) 2...♜d2 3 ♖d4 a3 4 ♖b3+ ♜c2 5 ♖d4+ ♜d3 6 ♖b3 e5 7 ♜e1 ♜c2 wins for Black.

2 ♜e2?

White needs to prevent a later ...e4, so 2 ♜e3! was the right defence, when White draws after 2...e5 3 ♖d5 a3 4 ♖b4+ ♜b3 5 ♖d3 or 2...a3 3 ♖d3 ♜c3 (3...e5 4 ♜e4) 4 ♖c1.

2...a3?

2...e5! was correct, to deny squares to the white knight. Black wins after 3 ♖d5 (or 3 ♖d3 e4 4 ♖b4+ ♜b3 5 ♖c6 a3 6 ♜d2 a2 7 ♖d4+ ♜b2 8 ♖c2 e3+) 3...a3 4 ♖b4+ ♜b3 5 ♖d3 e4 6 ♖c1+ ♜c2 7 ♖a2 ♜b2 8 ♖b4 ♜b3.

3 ♖d3!

Now everything is in order and White manages to draw.

3...e5 4 ♜e3! ♜c3 5 ♖c1 ♜c2 6 ♖d3 ♜b3 7 ♜e4 ♜c3 8 ♖c1 ♜d2 9 ♖a2 ½-½

Three pawns usually beat a knight if the pawns are separated, as the short-range king and knight cannot cope with all three pawns. If the pawns are connected, the basic rule is that the pawns usually win if all three pawns can reach the fifth rank; otherwise the knight has good drawing chances. Here Black's advanced pawns should win, but care is still required.

1 ♖d7 ♜e4

Black must play actively. Not 1...♜e6? 2 ♖c5+ ♜f5 3 ♖d3 ♜e4 4 ♖f2+ ♜f3 5 ♖d3 ♜e3 6 ♖e5 and White draws.

2 ♖c5+

Or 2 ♖f6+ ♜f3 3 ♖d7 g3+ 4 ♜xh3 ♜e2! and Black wins.

2...♜e3 3 ♖d7 ♜f2?

3...g3+! 4 ♜xh3 f3 would have won directly.

4 ♖f6?

Missing 4 ♖e5! g3+ 5 ♜xh3 g2 6 ♖g4+ ♜f1 7 ♖h2+ ♜f2 (or 7...♜g1 8 ♖f3+) 8 ♖g4+ ♜g1 9 ♖h2 ♜h1 10 ♖f3 with a draw.

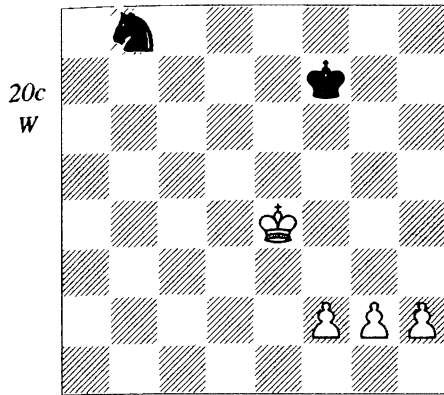
4...♜f3

If Black were to play, this would be a draw, but now White is in zugzwang.

5 ♖h7 g3+ 6 ♜xh3 g2?

6...♜f2? 7 ♖g5 g2 8 ♖e4+ is also a draw, but Black could have won by 6...♜e2! 7 ♖g5 f3 8 ♖e4 g2. After the text-move it's just a draw.

7 ♖g5+ ♜f2 8 ♖e4+ ♜g1 9 ♖g5 ♜f2 10 ♖e4+ ♜f1 11 ♖d2+ ♜f2 12 ♖e4+ ♜e3 13 ♜xg2 ½-½



Bellon – Fraguera Gil
Las Palmas 1976

Even if the pawns are not yet on the fifth rank, the attacker can often win if his king is in front of the pawns. This position is drawn, but it only takes one slip to give White a won position.

1 f4 ♖a6?

Black should have kept the white king back. 1...♟f6 would have drawn after 2 g4 ♞d7 3 h4 ♞c5+! 4 ♟d4 ♞e6+ 5 ♟e3 ♞c5 6 h5 ♞e6 7 h6 ♞d8 8 g5+ (or 8 ♟e4 ♞f7 9 g5+ ♟g6 10 ♟d5 ♟f5) 8...♟f5 9 h7 ♞f7 and Black is safe.

2 g4?

Missing 2 ♟f5!, which wins after 2...♞b4 3 g4 ♞d5 4 h4 ♞e3+ 5 ♟g5 ♟g7 6 f5 ♟f7 7 h5 ♞g2 8 h6 ♞e1 9 ♟h5 ♞d3 10 g5.

2...♞c5+?

The only drawing move is 2...♟f6!, which transposes to the note to Black's first move after 3 h4 ♞c5+.

3 ♟d4?

White again overlooks a win by 3 ♟f5!.

3...♞e6+?

3...♞d7 4 h4 ♟f6 5 h5 ♞f8 6 ♟e4 ♞e6! 7 h6 ♞d8 draws as in the note to Black's first move.

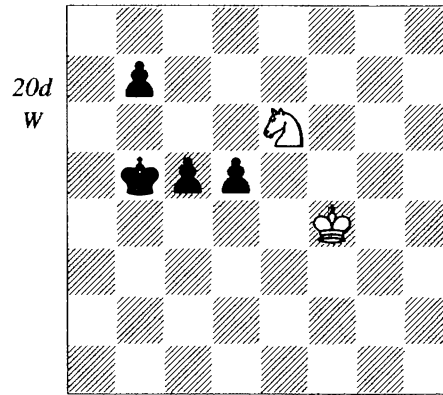
4 ♟e5!

White finally gets the right idea.

4...♞c5 5 h4 ♞d3+ 6 ♟f5 ♞e1 7 h5 ♟g7 8 g5 ♞f3 9 ♟g4

9 h6+ ♟h7 10 ♟g4 ♞d4 11 ♟h5 wins quickly, which explains why Black did not repeat at move 10.

9...♞h2+ 10 ♟f5 ♞f1 11 h6+ ♟h7 12 ♟g4 ♞d2 13 ♟h5 ♞e4 14 g6+ ♟h8 15 ♟g4 ♞f2+ 16 ♟f5 ♞d3 17 ♟g5 1-0



Blatny – Stoczek
Czech Team Ch 2006/7

Some positions with this material are quite complicated. Here White can draw by bringing his king in front of the pawns, but a series of accurate moves is required.

1 ♟e5?

The route to the draw was rather narrow: 1 ♟e3! ♟c4 2 ♟d2 b5 3 ♞d8! (not 3 ♟c2? d4! 4 ♞f4 b4 5 ♞g2 ♟b5! 6 ♞f4 c4 and Black wins) 3...b4 (3...d4 4 ♞c6! b4 5 ♞a5+ ♟b5 6 ♞b3 draws) 4 ♟c2 d4 5 ♞b7! d3+ 6 ♟d2 b3 (6...♟d4 7 ♞xc5 draws at once) 7 ♞d6+ ♟d5 8 ♞b5 b2 9 ♞a3 (now White can set up a blockade) 9...♟d4 10 ♞b1 c4 11 ♞c3 ♟c5 (what else?) 12 ♞a4+ ♟b4 13 ♞xb2 c3+ 14 ♟xd3 cxb2 15 ♟c2 ♟a3 16 ♟b1 and White is safe.

1...♟c4?

1...d4! 2 ♟e4 ♟c4 3 ♞f4 was the correct move-order, avoiding the following draw.

2 ♞f4?

Overlooking 2 ♞d8! b5 3 ♞f7 d4 4 ♞d6+ ♟b4 5 ♟e4, when the pawns are stuck.

2...d4! 3 ♟e4 b5?

3...b6! was correct. With Black to play this would be a draw, but White to play is in zugzwang and loses after 4 ♞d3 b5 5 ♞b2+ ♟c3 6 ♞d1+ ♟c2 7 ♞f2 b4 8 ♞d3 b3.

4 ♞d3 b4 5 ♞b2+ ♟b3

The key point is that with the pawn on b4, 5...♟c3 can be met by 6 ♞a4+.

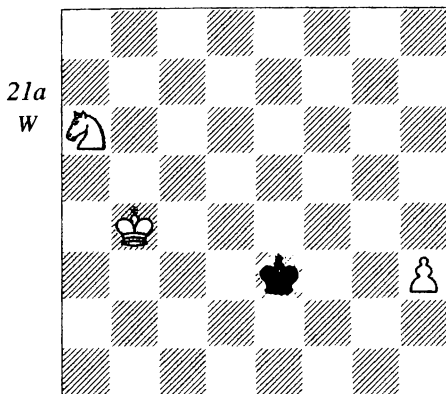
6 ♞d3 ♟c4

Or 6...c4 7 ♞c5+ ♟c3 8 ♞a4+ and draws.

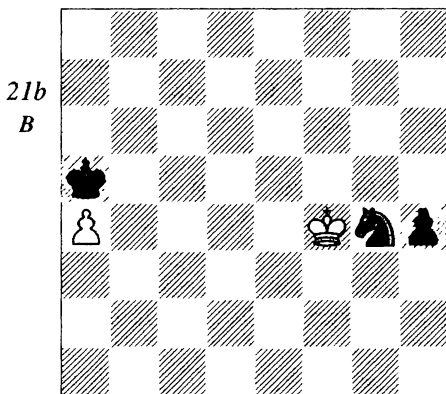
7 ♞b2+ ♟b5 8 ♟d3 b3 9 ♞c4 ♟b4 10 ♞d2 b2 11 ♟c2 c4 12 ♟xb2 c3+ 1/2-1/2

21

Extra Piece

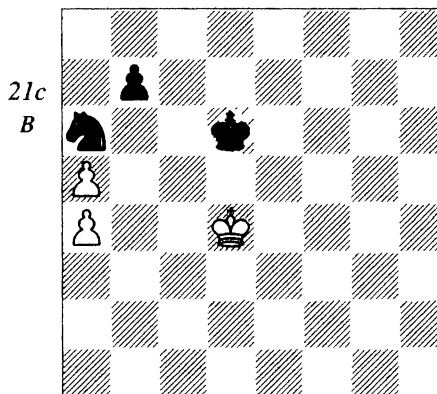


When you have an extra piece, it often happens that the knight has to support a passed pawn in the absence of the king. In this case it is better for the knight to defend the pawn **from behind**. In the above diagram, White can only win by **1 ♖c5! ♜f3 2 ♘d3!** (2 ♘e6? ♜g3 3 ♘g5 ♜h4 is a draw) **2... ♜g3 3 ♘f2** and if Black takes the knight then the pawn promotes. White can then bring his king closer and win.



Azmaiparashvili – Korchnoi
Moscow (rapid) 1995

However, there is an exception with a rook's pawn on the seventh rank. The game continued **1...h3? 2 ♜g3 h2 3 ♜g2 ♜xa4 4 ♜h1** 1/2-1/2. The position is drawn as any attempt by Black to defend the h2-pawn with his king results in stalemate. Black could have won by **1...♘e5! 2 ♜e3 ♘g6**, securing the pawn further back. Then there is no stalemate and Black wins.



Yakovich – Abdelnabbi
Dubai 2001

An extra piece usually wins if you have at least one pawn, but there are a number of exceptions. Problems can arise if the knight is tied to the defence of your only pawn. This can leave your pieces in such a tangle that it is impossible to make progress.

This position is a win and the simplest method is to play the king to a7, followed by attacking the a5-pawn with ...♜a6 and ...♘c6. A sample line is **1...♜c7! 2 ♘d5 ♜b8 3 ♜c4 ♜a7 4 ♘d5** (or **4 ♜b5 ♘c7+ 5 ♜c5 ♜a6**) **4...♘b8 5 ♜c5 ♜a6 6 ♜b4 ♘c6+**. This plan wins both White's pawns in perfect safety.

1...♘c5?!

A step in the wrong direction, although not yet throwing away the win.

2 ♜c4 ♘xa4?

Black's eagerness to snap up a pawn proves his undoing. He could still have retracted his steps by **2...♘a6**.

3 ♜b5!

Now it is a draw, because White can tie down the knight to the defence of the b7-pawn.

3...♘c5 4 ♜b6 ♘d5 5 ♜b5 ♘d6

5...♘d7 is met by **6 a6**.

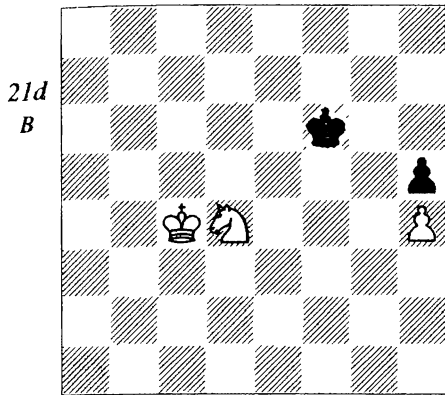
6 ♜b4?

Repeating by **6 ♜b6** was correct.

6...♘e6?

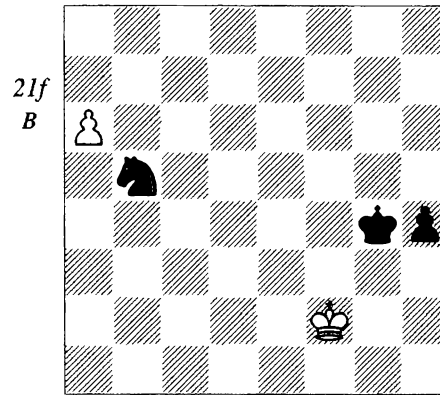
Missing **6...♜c6 7 ♜c4 ♘a6**, winning.

7 ♜b5 ♘d5 8 ♜b6 ♘c5 9 ♜b5 ♘d6 10 ♜b4? ♘d5? 1/2-1/2



Short – Grazzini
São Paulo simul 2001

It's easy to make mistakes in positions of this type. The game ended 1...♔e5 2 ♔d3 ♕f4 3 ♕e2 ♖g3 4 ♗f3 ♕f4? 5 ♕f2 ♔e4 (5...♖g4 6 ♖g2 ♕f4 7 ♗h2 also wins for White) 6 ♖g3 ♕e3 7 ♗g5 ♔e2 8 ♕f4 ♕f2 9 ♗h7 1-0. Black should have played 4...♖g4! 5 ♕f2 ♖h3! (not 5...♕f4? 6 ♗h2) 6 ♔e3 ♖g3 7 ♔e4 ♖g4 with a draw as White cannot make progress.



Seret – Szabolcsi
French Team Ch 1994

Because the knight is a short-range piece, it can be almost immobilized by having to deal with an enemy passed pawn. In this position, Black is not able to win solely on the kingside, but the knight has to hold back the white pawn, so it isn't easy to see how it can help. The game concluded:

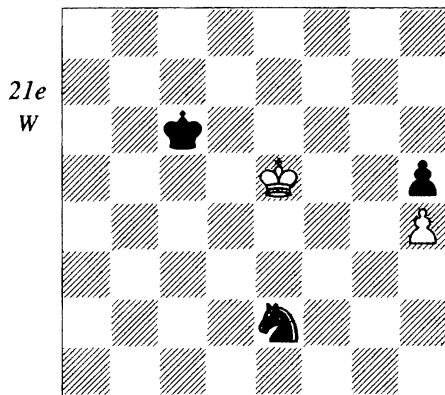
1...h3? 2 ♖g1 ♖g3 3 ♕h1 ♗a7

3...♗d6 4 a7 ♗e4 5 a8♞ ♗f2+ 6 ♖g1 h2+ 7 ♕f1 h1♞+ would mate by ...♞d1+ and ...♞d3#, except for the unfortunate fact that White can play 8 ♞xh1. Of course, 3...h2 is met by 4 a7 and White forces stalemate.

4 ♖g1 ♕f3 1/2-1/2

Even though Black has an infinite supply of reserve tempi with his knight, he cannot use these to win with an h-pawn. After 5 ♕h2 ♖g4 6 ♕h1! ♖g3 7 ♖g1 Black cannot make progress.

Surprisingly, Black could have won in the diagram position with 1...♕h3!, which looks rather unlikely as it blocks the h-pawn. However, after 2 ♖g1 (2 ♕f3 ♕h2 3 ♕f2 h3 4 ♕f1 ♖g3 5 ♖g1 transposes to the main line) 2...♖g3 3 ♕h1 h3 we arrive at the same position as in the game, but with the crucial difference that it is White to play. After 4 ♖g1 h2+ Black advances his pawn to the seventh rank with gain of tempo and wins by 5 ♕h1 ♗c3 6 a7 ♗e4 7 a8♞ ♗f2#. Note that playing ...h2 with check wins when the knight is on b5 but not when it is on a7, as then it is too far away from f2.



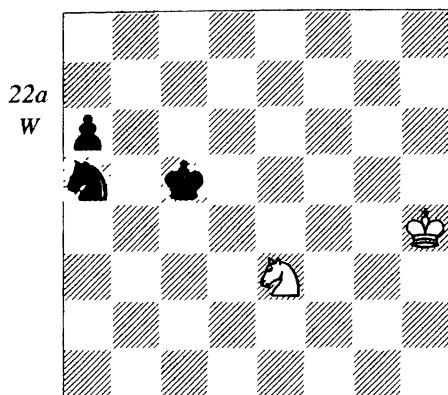
Kiriakov – Volkov
Russia Cup, Perm 1997

In the game White lost after 1 ♕f5? ♔d5 2 ♖g5 ♗g3 3 ♕f4 ♗e4 4 ♕f5 ♔d4 5 ♕f4 ♔d3! 6 ♕f3 ♗c5 7 ♕f4 ♗e6+ 8 ♕f5 ♗g7+ 0-1 due to 9 ♖g6 ♔e4 10 ♕xg7 ♕f5! 11 ♕f7 ♖g4 12 ♕f6 ♕xh4 13 ♕f5 ♖g3 and wins.

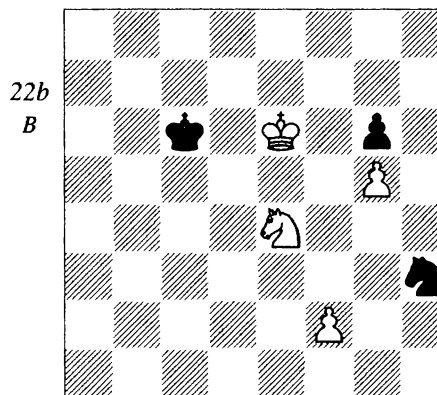
He should have dislodged the black knight by 1 ♔e4! ♔d6 (or 1...♔c5 2 ♔e3 ♗d4 3 ♕f4 ♗e6+ 4 ♔e5 ♗g7 5 ♕f6) 2 ♔e3 ♗g3 3 ♕f4 with a comfortable draw.

22

Extra Pawn



Miroshnichenko – J. Polgar
European Ch, Ohrid 2001



Miladinović – Dervishi
Bratto 2004

Knigh and pawn vs knigh is usually drawn, but if the defending king is far away from the pawn then there are often winning chances.

1 ♖g3 ♜b3 2 ♜f2 a5 3 ♜e2

The king rushes back as fast as possible.

3...♞d4 4 ♜f5+ ♞c3 5 ♞d1 a4 6 ♜d6!

Active defence is necessary; if the pawn can advance to the seventh rank, Black will generally win.

6...♞d3 7 ♜b5 ♞c4 8 ♜a3+ ♞c3 9 ♜b5+?

A serious mistake. Black is not threatening anything, since ...♞b4 is met by ♜c2+ and ...♞b2 by ♜c4+, so White should have waited with 9 ♜e2!. After 9...♜c5 (9...♜c1+ 10 ♞d1 ♜d3 11 ♜e2 and 9...♜d4+ 10 ♞d1 ♞b3 11 ♜b1 ♞b2 12 ♜d2 don't help Black) 10 ♜b5+! (not 10 ♞d1? ♞b2 11 ♜c4+ ♞b3 12 ♜d2+ ♞c3 13 ♜b1+ ♞b2 14 ♜d2 ♜e4! 15 ♜c4+ ♞c3 16 ♜a3 ♞b3 17 ♜c2 ♞b2 and White collapses) 10...♞b4 11 ♜d4 White continues to hold up the pawn, and Black cannot make progress.

9...♞b4 10 ♜c7 a3

Once the pawn advances White is doomed.

11 ♜d5+ ♞c4 12 ♜e3+ ♞c3 13 ♜d5+ ♞b2 14 ♜b4 ♜c5 15 ♞d2 ♞b3 16 ♜c2 a2 17 ♜a1+ ♞b2 18 ♞d1 ♜b3

Avoiding the last trap: 18...♞xa1? 19 ♞c1! draws as the white king can never be driven away from c1 and c2.

0-1

White resigned since 19 ♜c2 ♞c3 is fatal.

♜+2♜ vs ♜+♜ is usually a draw if all the pawns are close together, especially if there is no passed pawn. This position represents a relatively favourable case as White's pieces are active and Black's king is cut off, but it should still have been a draw.

1...♜f4+ 2 ♜e5 ♜d3+ 3 ♜f6 ♜f4 4 f3 ♞d5 5 ♜f2 ♞c6?

Too passive. 5...♞d4! 6 ♜g4 ♞d3 7 ♜e5 ♜h5 8 ♜f6 ♜g3 9 ♜f4 ♜e2+ 10 ♜g4 ♜d4, keeping Black's pieces active, would have drawn.

6 ♜g4?

Missing 6 ♜e5! ♜g2 7 ♜d3, followed by ♜f4 or ♜f6, and White wins.

6...♞d6 7 ♜h6 ♞d5

Now Black activates his king and the position should again be a draw.

8 ♜f7 ♞d4 9 ♜g7 ♜e3 10 ♜e5 ♜h3?!

Creating problems for himself. Simply waiting by 10...♜f2 was simplest, as 11 ♜xg6 ♜e6+ 12 ♜f6 ♜xg5 is an immediate draw.

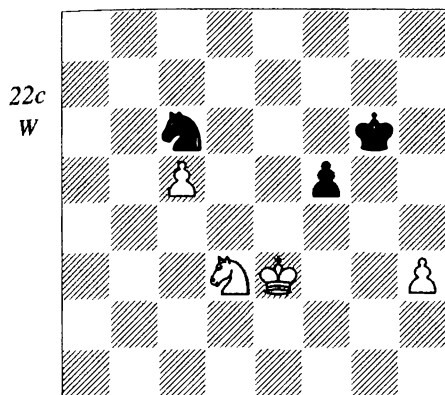
11 ♜h6 ♜f4?

Black could still have saved the game with the remarkable defence 11...♜f4! 12 ♜xg6 ♜e6 13 ♜h4 (or 13 ♜e5 ♜f4) 13...♜f4 14 g6 ♜g3 15 ♜h5 ♜f4!, when White is so tangled up that he cannot win despite the two extra pawns.

12 ♜xg6+ ♜f5

Or 12...♞xf3 13 ♜h4+, followed by g6, and again White wins.

13 ♜h4+ ♜e6 14 g6 ♜f6 15 g7 1-0



Karpov – Andersson
Reggio Emilia 1989/90

This position is much more favourable for White. Both his pawns are passed and they are well-separated, a factor which always causes defensive problems in knight endings. However, White must take care not to give Black counterplay with the f-pawn.

1 ♖f4

This should win, but 1 ♖e1! ♜g5 2 ♖f3+ ♜f6 3 ♜d3 was simpler. Black's king is kept out, and White just marches his own king to support the c-pawn; for example, 3...♖a7 4 ♜c4 ♜e6 5 h4 ♖c8 6 ♖d4+ ♜e5 (or 6...♜f6 7 ♜d5) 7 c6 and White wins.

1...♜f6

Or 1...♖d8 2 h4 ♖e6+ 3 ♜f3 and wins.

2 h4 ♖d4 3 ♜e3 ♖c2+ 4 ♜d2?

The key idea is to occupy f4 with the knight, blocking the f-pawn. White could have won by 4 ♜f2! ♖d4 5 ♖f4 ♖c6 (or 5...♜e5 6 h5) 6 ♜f3 ♖e5+ 7 ♜e3 ♖c6 8 ♜d3 ♜e5 9 h5, etc.

4...♖d4 5 ♜c3 ♖e6 6 c6 ♜e7?

Too passive. 6...f4! 7 ♜d2 (7 ♜c4 f3 8 ♜d5 ♜f5 9 h5 ♖c7+ 10 ♜d6 ♖b5+ 11 ♜c5 ♖c7 is also a draw) 7...♜f5 8 ♖e1 ♜g4 9 ♖f3 ♖c7 10 ♜e2 ♖d5 would have held the game.

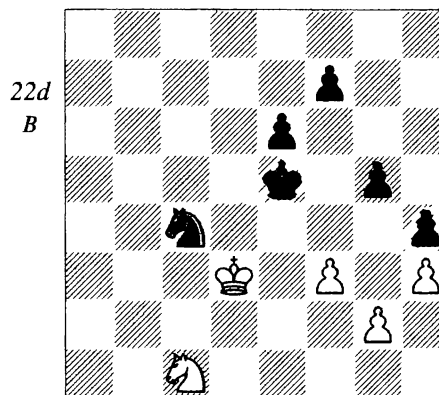
7 h5 ♜d6 8 ♖b4?

White fails to play with sufficient energy; he could have won by 8 h6! ♖g5 9 ♖e5 f4 10 ♜d4 ♜c7 11 ♜d5 ♜d8 12 ♜d6 ♖e4+ 13 ♜e6.

8...f4

This time Black takes his chance.

9 h6 ♖g5 10 ♜d4 f3 11 ♜e3 ♜c7 12 ♜f2 ♜d6 13 ♜g3 ♜c7 14 ♜h2 1/2-1/2



Pinter – M. Gurevich
French Team Ch 1999

When all the pawns are on the same side and there are no passed pawns, ♖+3♖ vs ♖+2♖ is usually a draw, but ♖+4♖ vs ♖+3♖ is very unpleasant for the defender. It is perhaps going too far to declare it lost, but in practice it is won more often than not.

1...♖b6!

Heading for f4 to tie White's king down to the defence of the g2-pawn.

2 ♜e2 ♖d5 3 ♖b3 ♖f4+ 4 ♜f2 ♜d5

Black intends ...f5 and ...e5-e4 to create a passed pawn.

5 g3?

An instructive mistake. White liquidates the weakness at g2, but ends up with a weak pawn on h3 which is even more awkward to defend. The only chance was to play 5 ♖a1!; after 5...f5 6 ♖c2 ♜c4 7 ♖a3+ or 5...♖d3+ 6 ♜e2 ♖b4 7 ♖b3 e5 8 ♖d2 White is still fighting.

5...♖h5!

Not 5...♖xh3+? 6 ♜g2, nor 5...hxg3+ 6 ♜xg3 and White has possibilities of counterplay by h4 or ♜g4.

6 gxh4 gxh4 7 ♖d2

7 ♜g2 ♖f4+ 8 ♜h2 f5 is hopeless, because White's king is immobilized on the edge of the board.

7...f5 8 ♜e3 e5 9 ♖b1 ♖f4

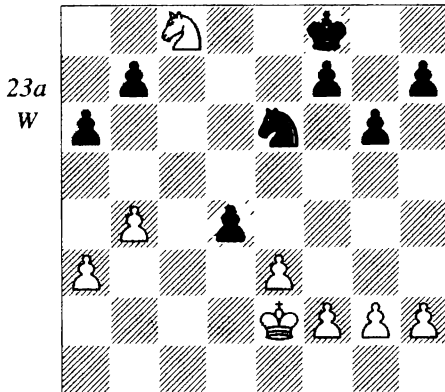
Now the h3-pawn falls, after which the win presents no problems for Black.

10 ♖c3+ ♜e6 11 ♖a4 ♖xh3 12 ♖c5+ ♜d5 13 ♖d7 ♜d6 14 ♖f8 ♖f4 15 ♜f2 ♜e7 0-1

After 16 ♖h7 ♜f7 17 ♜f1 ♜g7 18 ♖g5 ♜g6 the knight is trapped.

23

Positional Factors



Ponomarev – Vallejo Pons
Leon (rapid) 2003

Many of the positional factors mentioned in the chapter on king and pawn endings also apply to knight endings. In the above position, White is able to occupy a dominant position with his king, a factor which decides the game.

1 exd4 ♖xd4+ 2 ♔d3 ♚e6 3 ♔e4

White's king is already on the fourth rank, and Black is unable to activate his own king because e7 is covered and ...♔e8 is met by ♖d6+.

3...h5

Or 3...♗c7 4 ♖d6 b5 5 ♔d4 ♔e7 6 ♖b7 ♔d7 7 ♔c5 ♗a8 8 g4 and Black is in serious trouble.

4 ♔e5 h4

After 4...♗c7 5 a4 b5 6 a5 ♔e8 7 ♖b6 ♔e7 White liquidates to a winning pawn ending by 8 ♖d5+ ♖xd5 9 ♔xd5 ♔d7 10 ♔c5 ♔c7 11 h4 f6 12 f4 (see also Section 15 on reserve tempi).

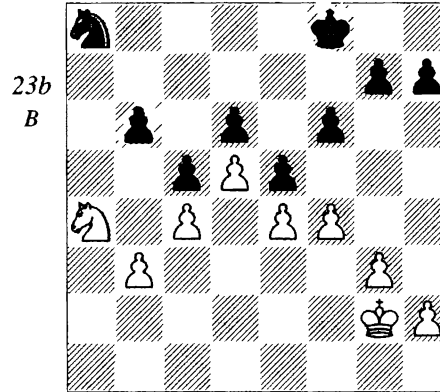
5 ♖d6 b5 6 ♔f6 ♖f4

Passive defence by 6...♖d8 would have lasted longer, but White should win after 7 h3 ♔g8 8 g3 hxg3 9 fxg3 ♔f8 10 g4 ♔g8 11 h4 ♔f8 12 ♖e4 ♖e6 13 ♖c5 ♖f4 14 ♖xa6 ♖d5+ 15 ♔e5 ♖e3 16 ♔d4 ♖c2+ 17 ♔c5 ♖xa3 18 ♖c7, picking up the b5-pawn, when the extra outside passed pawn will decide the game.

7 ♖xf7 ♖xg2 8 ♖e5 h3 9 ♖xg6+ ♔e8 10 ♔e6

White's active king makes the task of exploiting the extra pawn a simple one.

10...♖e1 11 f4 ♖f3 12 f5 ♖d4+ 13 ♔f6 ♖f3 14 ♔g7 ♔d7 15 f6 1-0



Kasparov – Hübner
Hamburg (4) 1985

Knights are particularly strong on *outposts*, squares from which they cannot be driven away. If a knight on an outpost is also attacking some enemy pawns, the opposing army can be totally immobilized.

1...g6?!

Eventually White's knight will arrive on f5 and this is especially strong if White's h-pawn is on h5. 1...g5! was simplest; after 2 ♔f3 h5 or 2 fxg5 fxg5 3 g4 ♔f7 Black can draw.

2 ♔f3 ♔f7 3 h4 h6 4 g4 g5?

Black should have waited by 4...♔g7 5 h5 ♔f7 6 fxe5 fxe5 7 ♔g3 ♔f6 8 hxg6 ♔xg6, when it is doubtful if White can win.

5 fxg5 fxg5 6 h5

Now the outpost on f5 will be especially strong for White's knight, since it can target the weak pawns on d6 and h6.

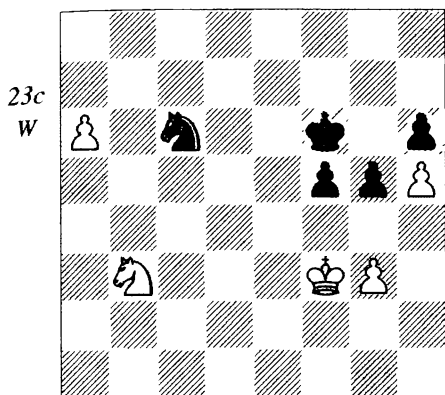
6...♔e7 7 ♖c3 ♖c7 8 ♖d1 ♖e8 9 ♖e3 ♖g7

Black prevents the knight from arriving on f5, but he cannot at the same time defend his queenside.

10 ♔e2 ♔d7 11 ♔d3 ♔c7 12 ♔c2 ♔c8 13 b4 ♔c7 14 ♔b3 ♔b7 15 ♔a4 ♔b8

Black must give way, as 15...♔a6 loses to 16 ♖f5 ♖xf5 17 gxf5 g4 18 f6 g3 19 f7 g2 20 f8♗ g1♗ 21 ♗a8#.

16 bxc5 bxc5 17 ♔a5 ♔b7 18 ♔b5 ♔c7 19 ♔a6 ♔c8 20 ♔b6 ♔d7 21 ♔b7 ♖e8 22 ♖f5 (at last!) 22...♖f6 23 ♖xh6 ♖xe4 24 ♖f5 ♖f6 25 h6 e4 26 ♔b6 ♖h7 27 ♔b5 1-0



Gyimesi – Lukacs
Hungarian Team Ch 2002

Outside passed pawns are not as effective as in king and pawn endings, but they still confer a considerable advantage.

1 ♖a5! g4+

Or 1...♗a7 2 ♖c4 ♖c6 3 ♖d6 ♗a7 4 g4 fxg4+ (4...f4 5 ♖f5) 5 ♖xg4 ♖g7 6 ♖f5 ♖c6 7 ♖e6 g4 8 ♖f5+ ♖h7 9 ♖d6 and White wins.

2 ♖f2

Not 2 ♖f4? ♖b4 threatening ...♖d5#.

2...♗a7 3 ♖c4 ♖g5 4 ♖e3 ♖xh5 5 ♖f4 ♖g6 6 ♖d6?

White should have taken the chance to activate his king; after 6 ♖e5! h5 (6...f4 7 gxf4 g3 8 ♖e3 h5 9 ♖e4 also wins for White) 7 ♖e3 ♖b5 8 ♖xf5 ♖g5 9 ♖d6 Black has no chance.

6...♖f6?

The best square for Black's knight is c6, since it creates a barrier for White's king – d4 and e5 are covered directly, and ♖d5 can be met by ...♖b4+. Therefore 6...♖c6! 7 ♖xf5 h5 was correct, and Black should draw.

7 ♖xf5 h5 8 ♖d4!

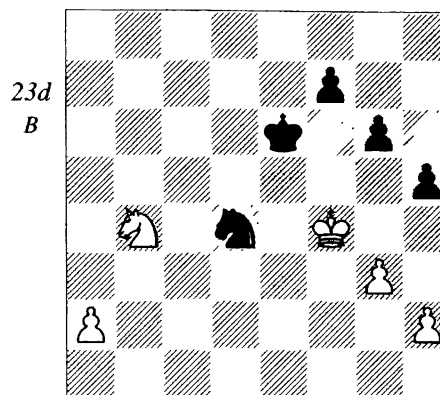
Preventing ...♖c6 and forcing Black to move his king.

8...♖g6

White also wins after 8...♖e7 9 ♖g5 ♖d6 10 ♖xh5 ♖c5 11 ♖e2 ♖b6 12 ♖xg4 ♖xa6 13 ♖f5.

9 ♖e5 ♖g5 10 ♖e6+ ♖g6 11 ♖f4+ ♖g5 12 ♖g2 ♖g6 13 ♖e6 ♖g5 14 ♖h4 ♖b5 15 ♖d7 ♖f6 16 ♖c6 ♗a7+ 17 ♖b7 1-0

After 17...♖b5 18 a7 ♖xa7 19 ♖xa7 White wins, since even if Black plays his king to f2, White just replies ♖f5.



Blatny – Popović
Vienna 1996

However, an outside passed pawn doesn't always win. The defender's best chance is for his king to cope with the passed pawn, while his knight helps to hold the fort on the other side of the board.

1...♖d6

Starting to edge towards White's a-pawn.

2 a4

White cannot penetrate with his king yet since 2 ♖g5 is met by 2...♖f3+, so he pushes the passed pawn.

2...♖e6+

Forcing the king back.

3 ♖e3 f5

Black starts to erect a barrier on the kingside. The knight and pawns keep White's king out.

4 a5 g5!

Accurate defence is necessary. After 4...♖c5? 5 ♖d3+ ♖b5 6 ♖f4 ♖f8 7 ♖d4 g5 (7...♖xa5 8 ♖e5 also wins for White) 8 ♖xh5 ♖g6 9 ♖g7 f4 10 g4 ♖f8 11 ♖e4 ♖xa5 12 ♖f5 f3 13 ♖h5 f2 14 ♖g3 White's active king will pick off the weak black pawns. The move played keeps the white knight away from f4.

5 a6 ♖c7 6 ♖d5+ ♖b8 7 ♖f6

White tries his best, but his knight cannot decisively damage Black's kingside.

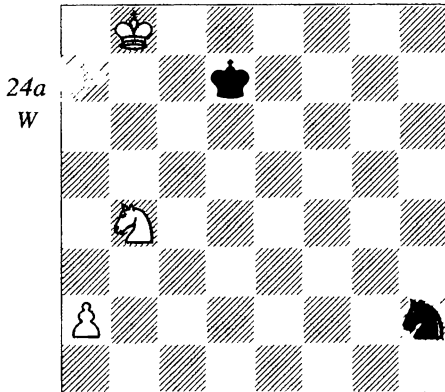
7...♖a7 8 ♖xh5 ♖xa6 9 h4 ♖b5 10 ♖f6 f4+ 11 ♖f3 fxg3 12 h5 g2 13 ♖f2

13 ♖xg2 ♖f4+ followed by 14...♖xh5 is an immediate draw.

13...♖c6 14 h6 ♖f8 15 ♖xg2 ♖d6 1/2-1/2

24

Tactical Ideas

24a
W

J. Nunn

Secrets of Minor-Piece Endings, 1995

Tactical ideas are particularly frequent in knight endings. Zugzwang is especially common and there is sometimes a subtle battle for tempi. In this position, the obvious line for White is 1 a4? ♖f3 2 a5 ♗d4 3 a6 ♗b5, but now it turns out that there is no good move; for example, 4 ♗b7 ♗d6+ 5 ♗b6 ♗c8+ or 4 ♗c2 ♗c6 5 ♗d4+ ♗b6 and White cannot win. The winning idea is simple but astonishing.

1 a3!

This is White's only opportunity to lose a tempo and thereby arrive at the critical position with Black to move.

1...♗f3

White also wins after 1...♗d8 2 a4 ♗f3 3 a5 ♗e5 4 ♗b7! (not 4 a6? ♗d7+ drawing) 4...♗d7 5 ♗d3 followed by a6, or 1...♗d6 2 a4 ♗c5 (2...♗f3 3 a5 ♗d4 4 a6 ♗b5 transposes to the main line) 3 a5.

2 a4 ♗d4 3 a5 ♗b5 4 a6

Now it is Black to move and he cannot avoid worsening his position.

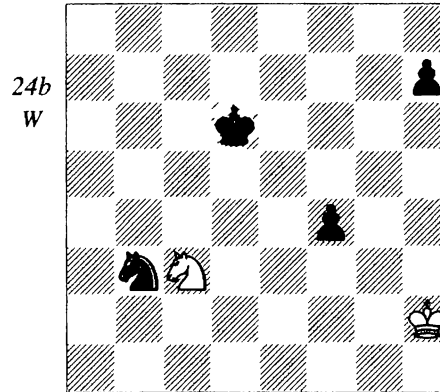
4...♗d6

4...♗d8 5 ♗c2 ♗d7 6 ♗a3 transposes.

5 ♗b7! ♗d7

Or 5...♗c5 6 ♗d3+ ♗c4 7 ♗f4 ♗d6+ (or 7...♗c5 8 ♗e6+ ♗b4 9 ♗c7 ♗d6+ 10 ♗b8 and again White wins) 8 ♗c6 ♗b5 9 ♗d5 ♗d4+ 10 ♗b6 ♗b5 11 ♗c7 and White wins.

6 ♗c2 ♗d6+ 7 ♗b8 ♗b5 8 ♗a3! ♗d4 9 ♗b7 ♗c6 10 ♗c4 ♗d8+ 11 ♗b6 and wins.

24b
W

Gashimov – Svidler

FIDE Grand Prix, Sochi 2008

Another common tactical idea is that of sacrificing the knight to ensure promotion of a passed pawn. In this position, the two extra pawns indicate a win for Black, but White can utilize the temporary absence of Black's knight to create enough counterplay to draw.

1 ♗e4+ ♗e5 2 ♗g5 h5 3 ♗h3 ♗c5 4 ♗h4 ♗e6 5 ♗h3! ♗g7 6 ♗g5

By accurate play, White has made the most of his chances and has established his pieces on active squares.

6...f3 7 ♗g6?

After 7 ♗f2! Black is in zugzwang and must surrender the h-pawn, after which White draws by 7...♗e6+ 8 ♗xh5 ♗f4 9 ♗h4 ♗e3 10 ♗g4+ ♗e2 11 ♗g3. Curiously, the position after 7 ♗f2 is only drawn if Black is to play; with White to play it would be lost.

7...h4!

The refutation; Black offers his knight.

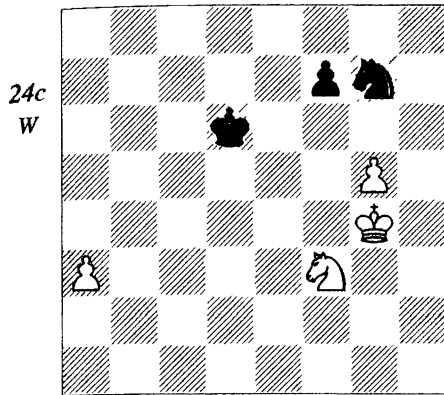
8 ♗g5

Or 8 ♗xg7 ♗f5 9 ♗h6 ♗g4 10 ♗f2+ ♗g3 11 ♗e4+ ♗g2 12 ♗h5 h3 and Black wins.

8...♗e4 9 ♗xh4

9 ♗f2+ ♗e3 10 ♗g4+ ♗e2 11 ♗xh4 ♗f5+ 12 ♗h3 ♗e3 13 ♗h2 f2 14 ♗h4 ♗c4 is winning for Black.

9...♗e3 10 ♗g4 ♗e6! 11 ♗g3 ♗d4 12 ♗h2 (Black also wins after 12 ♗g4 ♗e2 13 ♗f5 ♗g1! 14 ♗xg1 f2) **12...♗e2 13 ♗h1 ♗f4 14 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 15 ♗g1 ♗e3 0-1**



Salov – Kosashvili
Barcelona ECC 1993

White is a pawn up, but Black's king is quite active and this should enable him to draw.

1 d2 d5?!

It is simpler to head directly for the a-pawn: 1...c5 2 f4 b5 3 e5 h5 4 d6 f4 draws.

2 f4 d4?!

2...e6+ 3 f5 f8 4 e4 c6 draws safely, since 5 f6 allows 5...h7+ 6 xf7 dxg5+.

3 a4 e6+?

The losing move; 3...d5 4 a5 e6+ 5 f5 f8! would still have held on, as in the last note. Now White wins by a series of accurate moves.

4 f5 f8 5 e4!

Not 5 a5? c5 6 c4 h7! 7 g4 b5 8 h5 f8 9 e5 h7 and White cannot win.

5...e6

The key line is 5...d5 6 f6!, offering the knight and winning after 6...xe4 7 xf7 d7 8 e6 c5+ 9 d6 b7+ 10 c6 a5+ 11 b5 or 6...h7+ 7 xf7 dxg5+ 8 dxg5 c5 9 e4+ b4 10 c3.

6 a5!

Not 6 f6? xe4 7 g6 fxg6 8 xe6 d4 and Black draws.

6...d5 7 f6!

7 a6? c6 8 g6 h7+! 9 f6 fxg6 10 xg7 b6 11 c5 g5 lets Black off.

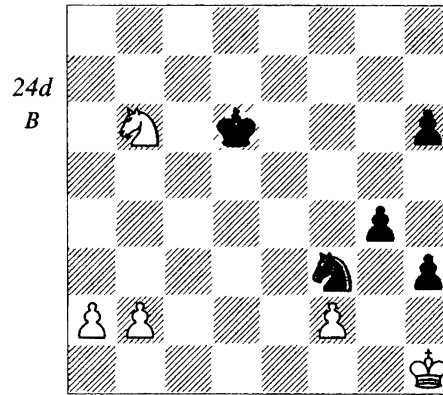
7...c6

7...xe4 8 a6! and White wins after 8...c7 9 xf7 xa6 10 g6 or 8...f4 9 g6!.

8 d2! d6

Or 8...b5 9 b3 followed by g6.

9 c4+ d5 10 b6+ c6 11 g6! 1-0



Tartakower – Botvinnik
Groningen 1946

Sometimes a direct attack on the enemy king is possible. Here material is equal and White has two connected passed pawns, but Black's mating threats are more important.

1...h5!

Intending ...h4 followed by ...g3-g2#.

2 h4+!

Better than 2 a4 e5! (2...d2?! is less accurate due to 3 b3 c5 4 d7+) 3 a5 (or 3 b3 c5 and there is no check on d7) 3...h4 4 a6 g3 5 fxg3 (5 a7 loses to 5...gxf2) 5...hxg3 6 a7 g2+ 7 h2 f3+ 8 xh3 g1 9 a8 h2+ 10 g4 e5+ 11 f5 f2+ and Black mates in a few moves.

2...d5 3 e3+ e4 4 a4?

White should have played 4 b4!; after 4...d4 (4...d3 5 b5 e2 6 b6 xf2 7 f5 h4 8 hxh4 g3 9 xf3 xf3 leads to a draw) 5 b5! hxb5 6 a4 c7 7 a5 f3 8 g1 e2 9 f5 h2+ 10 xh2 xf2 11 g3 h4 12 e4+ f3 13 g5+ f4 14 f7 White has good drawing chances.

4...d3!

Now Black is winning by a direct attack.

5 d5

Or 5 a5 e2 6 a6 xf2 7 a7 g3 8 d1+ e2 9 c3+ d3 10 a8 g2#.

5...e2 6 f4+ xf2 7 hxh3+

White is also mated after 7 hxh5 g3 8 dxg3 xg3 9 a5 h2 10 a6 g5 and ...e4-f2#.

7...f1

7...gxh3 also wins, but this is simpler.

8 f4 g3 9 g2 f2 10 a5 h4 11 f4 f1 12 g2 h3 13 e3+ f2 14 g4+ e2 0-1

It's mate in two more moves.

Same-Coloured Bishop Endings

I have divided the coverage of bishop endings into two parts, because same-coloured and opposite-coloured bishop endings are fundamentally different. Cases in which only one side has a bishop are dealt with in this part. In Section 25, we consider the situation in which a lone bishop faces a collection of enemy pawns. Unlike the corresponding case with the knight, a bishop can always stop a lone pawn except if the pawn can promote immediately; moreover, almost all situations with a bishop against two pawns are drawn. Three pawns present the bishop with more of a challenge and, as with the knight, the pawns are more dangerous if they are widely separated. The reason for this is that the bishop is most effective if it can restrain more than one pawn along the same diagonal; for example, a white bishop on d1 can, in the absence of the kings, hold back enemy pawns on e3, f4 and g5. If the pawns are close together, a single-diagonal blockade is often feasible but it is not possible if the pawns are far apart. A white bishop on d7 can still hold up black pawns on a5 and h4, but not along one diagonal, a factor which has two consequences. Firstly, if the bishop cannot stay on d7 (for example, if it is attacked by Black's king) then it will have to allow one of the enemy pawns to advance. Secondly, the bishop is tied to d7, which raises the spectre of zugzwang. If the pawns are further advanced, it is often possible to push one pawn, sacrificing it in order to free the other to advance. If the three pawns are connected, the result is rather similar to that with a knight: if the pawns are far advanced then they win, but otherwise the result is a draw.

There is one exceptional situation with a bishop, which has no parallel in other types of endgame. If White has an h-pawn and a light-squared bishop, then Black draws with a lone king provided the king can reach h8. The same thing happens if White has an a-pawn and a dark-squared bishop; the key factors are that the pawn is a rook's pawn and the bishop does not control the queening square. This rather bizarre draw is an important resource which allows some apparently hopeless positions to be saved, as we shall see in Section 26.

When both sides have a bishop, the most basic ending is that of bishop and pawn vs bishop (I am only talking about same-coloured bishops here). This ending, however, is quite tricky and is often misplayed in practice, even by very strong players. If the defender can get his king in front of the pawn, almost all positions are drawn, so the only interesting cases involve the defender's king being cut off from the promotion square. There are two main possibilities: the defender's king can try to approach the pawn from behind, or from the side. The former case offers more drawing chances, and it can sometimes save the game even when the pawn is on the seventh rank, as in 27a. When the defender's king approaches from the side, the attacker has better chances, but he must be aware of the importance of playing his king ahead of the pawn, as in 27c. In some cases in which the defender's king is initially to the side of the pawn, he can draw by manoeuvring it behind the pawn, even though this may take some time (see 27d and 27e). In general, the attacker's chances improve when the pawn is nearer to the edge of the board, and the best prospects of all occur with a rook's pawn. In this case the defender's bishop is only able to operate from one side of the pawn and can more easily be prevented from blocking the pawn's advance. Positions 28b to 28e deal with this case, and these also provide some examples of typical mistakes in this type of ending.

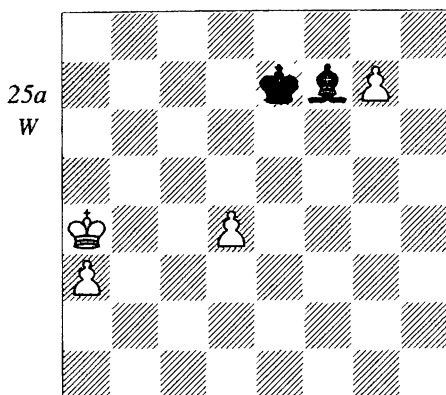
Moving on to endgames with more pawns, an extra pawn is less of an advantage here than in knight endings, especially if all the pawns are on one side. In particular, an ending with bishop and four pawns vs bishop and three pawns (all pawns on one side) is usually a comfortable draw (see 29a), although there can be winning chances if the defender has pawn weaknesses, as in 29b. An

outside passed pawn is still a considerable advantage, although less so than in knight endings, since the defender can restrain the pawn with his bishop while still using it to exert influence on other parts of the board. See 29c and 29d for details.

Because a bishop can only travel on squares of one colour, its mobility is profoundly influenced by its own pawns. If, for example, a player has a light-squared bishop and many of his own pawns are stuck on light squares, then the bishop's movements will be severely restricted and the bishop is said to be *bad*. Conversely, a bishop not restricted by its own pawns is said to be *good*. Even if all other factors are equal, a bad bishop can sometimes be a fatal handicap. Section 30 discusses bad bishops and the poisonous effect they can have on a position.

25

Bishop vs Pawns



Ye Jiangchuan – Wang Rui
HeiBei Zonal 2001

A bishop can stop a single pawn except if it can promote straight away, while four or more pawns almost always overwhelm a bishop. Thus the most important practical situations are those involving ♗ vs 2♙ and ♗ vs 3♙ , with the latter predominating.

In the above position, Black will take the g7-pawn with his king, and White must ensure that the resulting ♗ vs 2♙ position is a win.

1 ♗b5?

The wrong square. 1 ♗b4! ♙f6 2 ♗c5 would transpose to the game without allowing Black the resource in the following note.

1... ♗f6?

Missing 1... ♗e8+! (now if White wants to advance his a-pawn, he has to retreat his king to b4, losing a tempo) 2 ♗b4 (or 2 ♗c5 ♗f7 3 ♗d6 ♗xg7 4 d5 ♗f6 5 ♗c7 ♗e5 6 d6 ♗e6 , drawing) 2... ♗f7 3 a4 ♗xg7 4 a5 ♗c6 5 ♗c5 ♗a8! (not 5... ♗b7? 6 d5 ♗f6 7 d6 ♗e6 8 ♗b6 and White wins) 6 d5 ♗f7 7 d6 ♗e6 with a draw.

2 ♗c5!

Now all is well again for White.

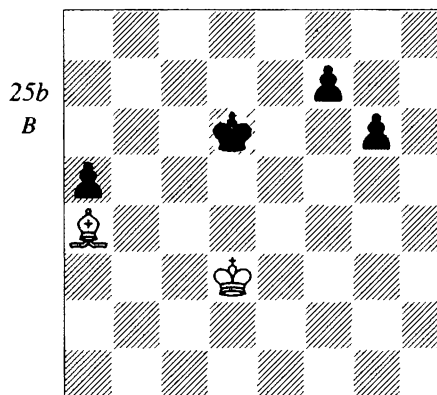
2... ♗xg7 3 a4 ♗h5 4 ♗d6 ♗f8

White also wins after 4... ♗e2 5 d5 ♗c4 6 ♗c6 ♗f7 7 d6 and 4... ♗d1 5 a5 ♗e2 6 d5 ♗c4 7 ♗c6 ♗f7 8 d6 ♗e6 9 ♗c7 ♗b5 10 a6.

5 a5 ♗e2 6 d5!

Threatening 7 ♗c7 .

6... ♗c4 7 ♗c5! ♗e2 8 ♗c6 ♗e7 9 ♗c7 1-0



Onishchuk – Novikov
Washington 2002

A bishop struggles against three non-connected pawns, except if the pawns are far back. Here White can just about draw, but only with very precise play.

1...f5 2 ♗d4 g5 3 ♗c2!

The only move. 3 ♗d1? g4! and 3 ♗b3? g4 4 ♗d1 g3 5 ♗f3 a4 are winning for Black.

3... ♗e6

3...f4 4 ♗d1! ♗e6 5 ♗e4! is only a draw, so Black renews the threat of ...g4.

4 ♗e3!

Preparing to blockade the g-pawn on g3.

4... ♗e5 5 ♗f3! f4

Now 5...g4+ 6 ♗g3 leaves Black without a move, so he tries pushing the f-pawn instead.

6 ♗g4 ♗d4 7 ♗a4 ♗d3

7... ♗e3 is met by 8 ♗c6 .

8 ♗b5+ ♗d2 9 ♗a4 ♗d3 10 ♗b5+ ♗d4 11 ♗a4 ♗c4

A good try which demands a precise reply.

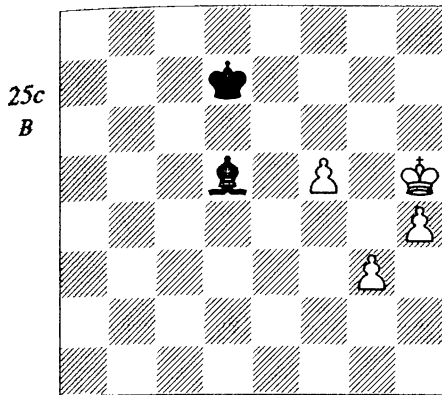
12 ♗d1! ♗c3 13 ♗xg5 ♗d2 14 ♗h5?

The correct line was 14 ♗f3! ♗e3 15 ♗g4 a4 16 ♗d5! a3 17 ♗c4! f3 18 ♗g3 f2 19 ♗g2 with a safe draw.

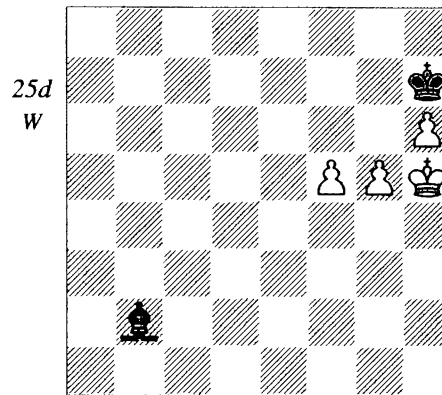
14... ♗e3! 15 ♗g4 a4 16 ♗f7 a3?

Overlooking 16...f3! 17 ♗g3 f2 18 ♗c4 (or 18 ♗g2 ♗e2 19 ♗c4+ ♗e1) 18... ♗d4! 19 ♗b5 a3 and wins. After the move played it is again a draw.

17 ♗c4 ♗e4 18 ♗a2 ♗e3 19 ♗c4 ♗d4 20 ♗a2 ♗e4 21 ♗b3 f3 22 ♗g3 ♗e3 23 ♗c4 1/2-1/2



Nakamura – Hillarp Persson
Malmö/Copenhagen 2005



Adly – Balje
Groningen 2007

The result of bishop vs three connected pawns varies according to which files the pawns are on and how far advanced they are. If the pawns do not include a rook's pawn (the most favourable case for the pawns), then getting all three pawns to the fifth rank suffices for victory.

If there is a rook's pawn, it is better for the pawns if the bishop does not control the corner square in front of the pawns. In this favourable case, getting all three pawns to the fifth usually wins (although there are exceptions). White wins in the above position because Black's king is badly placed.

1...♖e7

Threatening to draw by ...♗f7.

2 ♖g5?

White could have won by 2 ♖g6! ♗f8 (2...♗f7+ 3 ♖g7 ♗h5 4 g4 and 2...♗f3 3 ♖g7 ♗h5 4 g4 are also winning) 3 g4 ♖g8 4 g5 ♗e4 5 ♗f6 ♗h7 6 ♗e6! ♗f3 7 ♗f7 ♗e4 8 g6+ ♗h6 9 g7 ♗d5+ 10 ♗f8 and the g-pawn promotes.

2...♗f7 3 g4 ♗f3 4 h5 ♖g7!

Black must not delay; 4...♗e2? loses after 5 h6 ♗c4 6 ♗f4 ♖g8 7 g5 ♗h7 8 ♗e5 ♗d3 9 ♗e6.

5 ♖h4

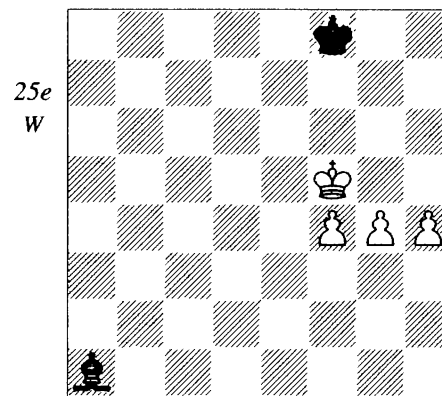
5 h6+ ♗h7 and 5 f6+ ♗h7 also draw.

5...♗d1?

A fatal error. 5...♗e4!, preventing g5, was the only move to draw.

6 g5! ♗c2 7 h6+ ♗h7 8 ♖g4 ♗b1 9 ♗f4 ♗c2 10 ♗e5 ♗d3 11 ♗e6 ♗c4+ 12 ♗e7 ♗b3 13 f6 ♖g6 14 f7 ♗xf7 15 h7 ♗xh7 16 ♗xf7 ♗h8 17 ♖g6 1-0

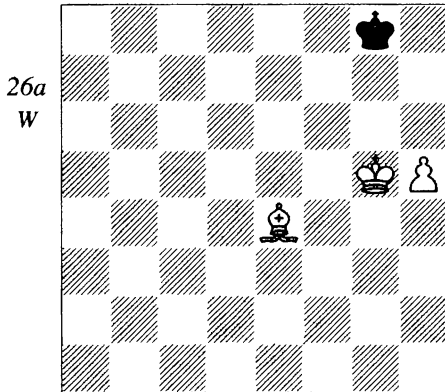
When the bishop controls the corner square in front of the pawns, the position is generally drawn even if all three pawns reach the sixth rank. However, it is easy to go wrong, as these two examples prove. The game concluded 1 f6 (1 g6+ ♖g8 2 ♖g5 ♗c1+ is also a draw) 1...♗a3? (1...♖g8! 2 ♖g6 ♗c1! was correct, with a draw after 3 f7+ ♗f8, 3 h7+ ♗h8 4 f7 ♗a3 5 ♗f6 ♗xh7 6 g6+ ♗h6 or 3 ♖f5 ♗d2) 2 g6+ ♖g8 3 g7! ♗b2 4 ♖g6 1-0.



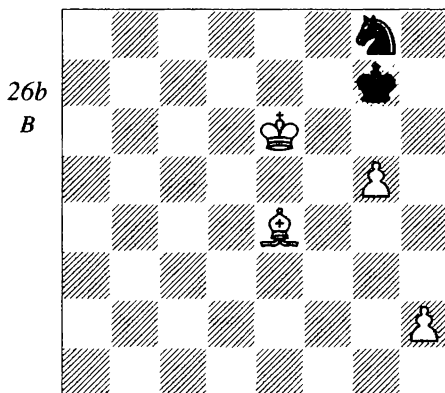
Dzindzichashvili – Coudari
New York 1980

1 ♖g6 ♗e8? (1...♖g8 2 f5 ♗c3 3 f6 ♗d4 4 g5 ♗f2! 5 h5 ♗e3 6 h6 ♗d2 draws) 2 f5 ♗d4 3 f6? (3 ♗h7 is the simplest win) 3...♗f2? (3...♗f8! 4 g5 ♗f2! 5 h5 ♗e3! is a draw) 4 h5? (4 ♖g7! was the way to win) 4...♗g3? (4...♗f8! was again a draw) 5 f7+? (anything but this; 5 h6 or 5 g5 were easy wins) 5...♗f8 6 ♗h7 1-0(?). Just when Black could have drawn by 6...♗f4!

26 Rook's Pawn and Wrong Bishop

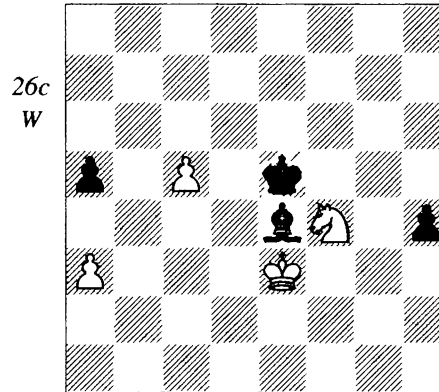


It's one of the odd quirks of chess that a bishop and pawn sometimes do not beat a lone king. If the pawn is a rook's pawn and the bishop does not control the pawn's queening square, then the position is a draw provided the defender can occupy the queening square with his king. The diagram position is typical; it's a draw after 1 ♖g6 ♜h8 2 h6 ♜g8 3 h7+ (or 3 ♜d5+ ♜h8) 3...♜h8 4 ♖g5 ♖g7 5 ♜f5 ♜h8 and White can stalemate, but he cannot win.



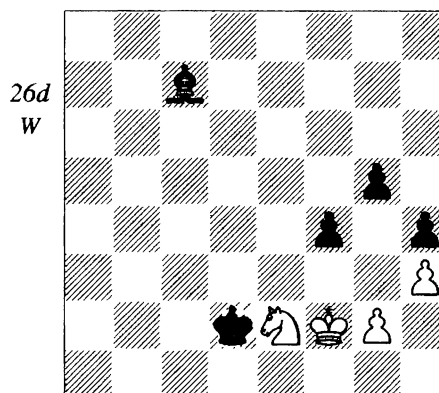
Chandler – Zsu. Polgar
Biel 1987

After 1...♜h6, White played 2 gxf6+? but was shocked by 2...♜h8! (not 2...♜xh6? 3 ♖f6 ♜h5 4 ♜f5 ♜h6 5 h3 ♜h5 6 ♖g7 ♖g5 7 ♜g4 ♜h4 8 ♜h6 ♖g3 9 ♖g5 and White wins). The game ended 3 ♜d5 ♜h7 4 ♖f7 ♜h8 1/2-1/2. Instead, White could have won by 2 h4 ♜f7 3 ♖f5 ♜h6+ 4 ♖f4 ♜f7 5 ♜d5 ♜d6 6 h5, etc.



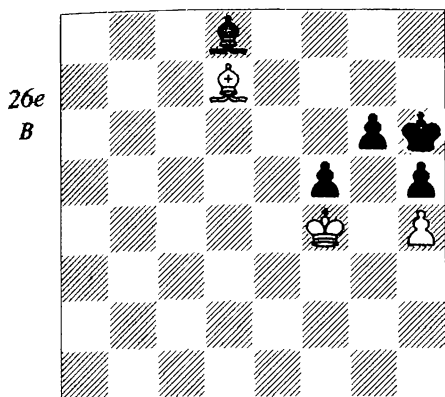
Gashimov – Kariakin
FIDE Grand Prix, Baku 2008

The draw with a rook's pawn plus the wrong bishop has enabled countless defenders to save apparently hopeless positions: 1 c6! ♜f5 2 ♖f3 ♜d6 3 ♜g2! h3 4 ♜f4 ♜g4+ (4...h2 5 ♖g2 and 4...♜xc6 5 ♜xh3 are also drawn) 5 ♖f2! (after 5 ♖g3? ♜xc6 6 ♜xh3 ♜xh3 the extra tempo gives Black a win) 5...♜xc6 6 ♜xh3! ♜xh3 7 ♖e3 ♜b5 8 ♖d2 (White makes it back just in time) 8...♖a4 9 ♖c1 ♖xa3 10 ♖b1 a4 11 ♖a1 ♖b3 12 ♖b1 a3 13 ♖a1 ♜f5 1/2-1/2.



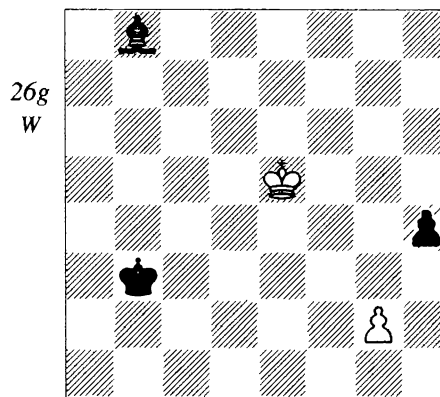
Clemente Lopez – Rodolfo Redolfi
Cordoba 1966

White drew by 1 ♖f3 (not 1 ♖f1? ♜b6) 1...♜b6 2 g3! (2 ♜xf4? loses to 2...gxf4 3 ♖xf4 ♜f2 4 ♖f3 ♖e1) 2...h3 3 ♜xg3 3 ♜xg3 f3 4 ♖xg3 (threatening 5 h4) 4...♖e2 5 ♖g4 (5 h4? loses to 5...♜f2+) 5...♜d8 6 h4 gxf4 7 ♜h3 1/2-1/2.



Anand – Karpov
Amber Blindfold, Monte Carlo 1994

If the defender can't get his king to the queening square, then he will lose. Here Black won with a neat finesse; after **1...♙xh4 2 ♜xf5** the immediate **2...gxf5?** **3 ♖xf5** is only a draw after **3...♜g3 4 ♖e4 h4 5 ♖f3** or **3...♜e1 4 ♖f4 h4 5 ♖g4!** (not **5 ♖f3?** h3). However, Black played **2...♜g3+!** **3 ♖e4** (**3 ♖xg3 gxf5** is an easy win) **3...gxf5+ 4 ♖xf5 ♜b8** and now White's king cannot reach h1. The game finished **5 ♖e4 h4 6 ♖f3 h3 7 ♖f2 ♜h2 0-1** since **8 ♖f3 ♖g5 9 ♖f2 ♖f4 10 ♖f1 ♖f3 11 ♖e1 ♜g1** promotes the pawn.



Stefansson – Radulski
European Ch, Antalya 2004

This example is more complex. Black must try to prevent White's king from reaching h1 by playing **...♜h2** at the right moment. The problem is that with the bishop on h2, White can play **g4** (since **...hxg3** is a positional draw; check for yourself) to which Black must reply **...h3** to prevent **♖g2**. Then Black's king must be in a position to catch White's g-pawn.

1 ♖e4?

This would draw without the g2-pawn, but here it should lose. The correct line was **1 ♖d4! ♜g3** (or **1...♖c2 2 ♖e3 2 ♖d3!** (not **2 ♖e3?** **♖c3 3 ♖e2 ♖d4 4 ♖f1 ♜h2 5 g4 h3 6 g5 ♖e5** and Black wins) **2...♖b4 3 ♖e2 ♖c3 4 ♖f1 ♜h2 5 g4!** and Black's king is too far away.

1...♖c2?

The wrong way. Black could have won by **1...♖c4!** (**1...♖c3!** is also good) **2 ♖e3 ♜g3! 3 ♖e2 ♖d4 4 ♖f1 ♜h2! 5 ♖e2** (after **5 g4 h3** Black's king can catch the pawn) **5...♖e5 6 ♖f3 ♜g3!** (**6...♖f5?** **7 g4+** draws, so first the g-pawn is blocked) **7 ♖e3 ♖f5 8 ♖f3 ♖g5 9 ♖e2 ♖f4 10 ♖f1 ♜h2 11 ♖f2 ♖g4.**

2 ♖e3 ♖d1 3 ♖f2 ♜a7+ 4 ♖f3

Not **4 ♖f1?** **♖d2** and Black wins.

4...♜b8 5 ♖f2 ♜h2 6 ♖f3?

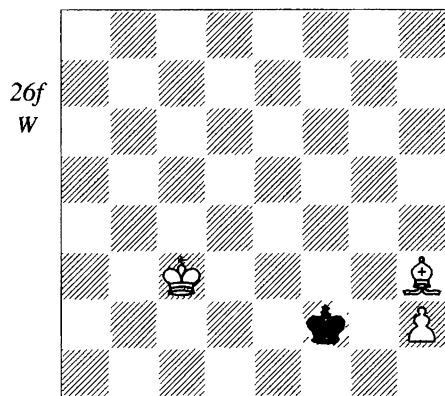
Just when White could have drawn by **6 g4!** **h3 7 g5**, he makes a serious mistake.

6...♖e1?

6...♜g3! was the winning move.

7 g4 ♖f1 8 g5 ♜f4? $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

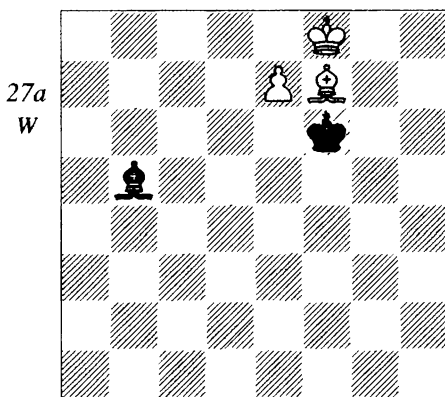
According to Mega Database, this is how the game ended, although now **9 ♖xf4** wins for White!



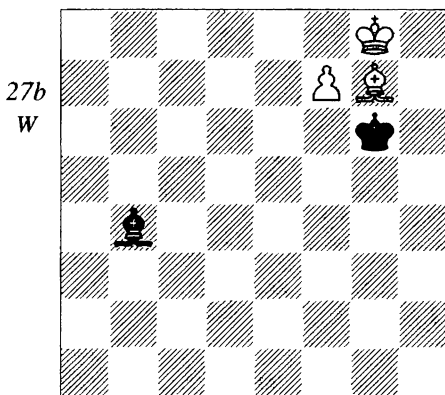
J. Vančura
České Slovo, 1922

Here an accurate first move enables White to keep Black's king away from h8: **1 ♜d7!** (not **1 ♜e6?** **♖e3 2 h4 ♖e4!** **3 h5 ♖e5 4 ♜d7 ♖f6**, nor **1 ♜g2?** **♖e3 2 h4 ♖f4**) **1...♖e3 2 h4 ♖e4** (**2...♖f4 3 ♖d4**) **3 h5 ♖e5 4 h6 ♖f6 5 ♜e8** and White wins.

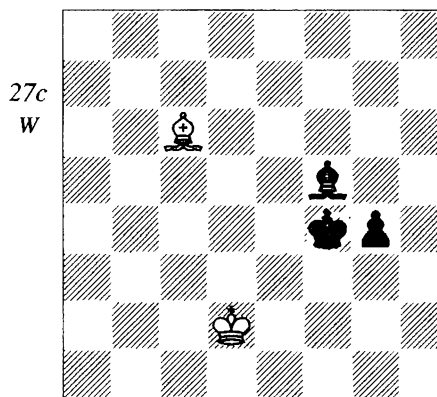
27 Bishop and Pawn vs Bishop (1)



When the defender's king is in front of the pawn, the result is always a draw except for a few exceptional positions with the pawn very far advanced. Thus we need only consider cases in which the defender's king is not in front of the pawn. There are two possibilities: the king can be behind the pawn or to the side of the pawn. The former case is usually preferable and sometimes draws even if the pawn is on the seventh rank. Here White can force the bishop from one diagonal to the other, but cannot win: **1 ♖e8 ♜e2 2 ♖a4 ♜h5 3 ♜b3 ♜g6!** (the only move; otherwise Black would be in zugzwang) and White can only go round in circles.



It is essential for both blockading diagonals to be quite long (this normally means at least four squares). Here White wins by forcing Black's bishop to the short diagonal: **1 ♜f8 ♜d2 2 ♖a3 ♜h6 3 ♜b2** (zugzwang) **3... ♜f5 4 ♜g7.**



Ravn – Vaitonis
Munich Olympiad 1958

Defending with the king to the side is usually less effective. The above position demonstrates this, but also illustrates a second crucial point: it is important for the attacker to have his king supporting the pawn, so it is often more important to advance the king than the pawn.

1 ♜e2?

The identical position (except for a reflection) occurred in Østenstad-Shabalov, Oslo Cup 1991. Østenstad made exactly the same mistake as Ravn and suffered the same consequences. White could have drawn by **1 ♖a4!** (**1 ♜b5!** and **1 ♜e8!** also draw), which prevents **1... ♜g3** due to **2 ♜d1** and **3 ♜xg4**. If instead **1...g3**, then **2 ♜e1!** (not **2 ♜c6?** **♜e4 3 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 4 ♜e2 ♜f4 5 ♜e1 ♜e3 6 ♜f1 ♜f3** and Black wins) **2... ♜d3 3 ♜c6 ♜g4 4 ♜g2** with a clear draw. It looks odd to move the bishop off the long diagonal, but it is vital to prevent Black from playing his king to h2.

After the move played, Black wins even though his pawn is only on the fifth rank.

1... ♜g3!

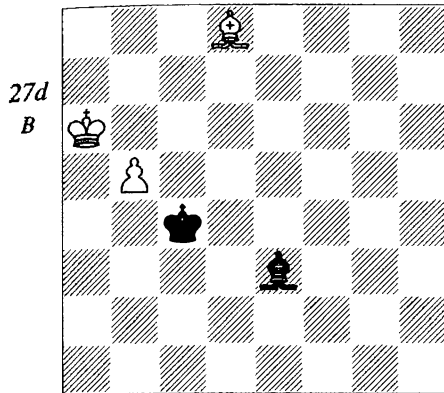
This prevents the white king from moving in front of the pawn.

2 ♜e3

Or **2 ♜f1 ♜h2** and wins as in the game.

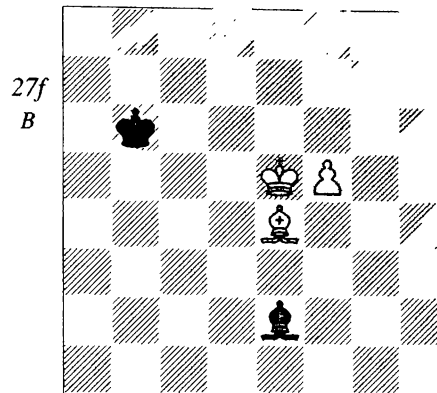
2... ♜h2 3 ♜f3 g3 0-1

After **4 ♜c6 ♜h3 5 ♜f4 ♜g2 6 ♜b5 ♜b7 7 ♜f1 ♜a6** the f1-h3 diagonal is too short for the white bishop to maintain control of g2.



Zapata – Mendoza
Colombian Ch, Bogota 1986

The defender can sometimes save the game by playing his king behind the enemy pawn on the same file as the attacker's king. Failure to spot such opportunities is one of the most common errors in endings of bishop and pawn vs bishop. Here Black can draw by 1...♖b3! 2 ♙b6 ♗g5 3 ♙f2 ♙d8 4 ♙e1 ♖a4 and he is in time to stop the winning move ♙a5. The game finished 1...♙a7? 2 ♙b6 ♙b8 3 ♙f2 ♙c7 4 ♙e1! ♙d8 5 ♙a5 ♙g5 6 ♖b6 ♙f4 7 ♖b7 ♙b8 8 ♖b6 ♖d5 9 ♙b4 ♖e6 10 ♖c6 ♙f4 11 ♙a5 ♙b8 12 ♙c7 ♙a7 13 ♖b5 1-0.



Mariotti – Larsen
Las Palmas 1978

However, no chess rule should be taken as absolute and it is always necessary to look at the concrete position on the board.

1...♖c5?

Perhaps intending to play the king behind the pawn, but this is impossible here due to the position of the white king. Black could have drawn by 1...♖c7! 2 ♖f6 (2 ♖f6 2 ♖f6 and 2 ♖e6 both allow 2...♙g4) 2...♖d8 3 ♙c6 (or 3 ♙g6 ♙c4) 3...♙h5 and White cannot make progress.

2 ♖f6 ♙h5

Defending along the other diagonal is no better; after 2...♙c4 3 ♙f5! ♙f7 4 ♙e6 ♙h5 5 ♙g8! the situation is essentially the same as in the game.

3 ♙d5

The plan is ♙g8, ♖e6 and ♙f7.

3...♙g6 4 ♙g8!

Not 4 ♖e6? ♖d4! 5 ♙a2 ♙h5 6 ♖e7 ♖e5! and Black has the ideal defensive set-up.

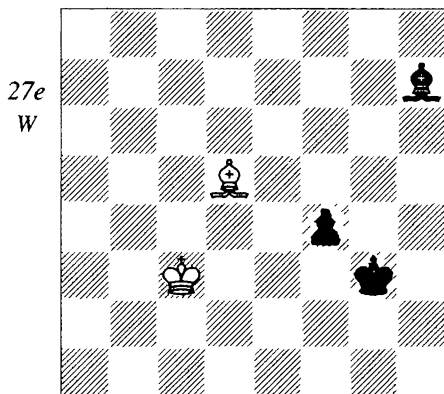
4...♙h5 5 ♙b3

Not yet throwing away the win, but a step in the wrong direction. White could have won by 5 ♖e6! ♖d4 6 ♙f7 ♙g4+ 7 ♖d6! (not 7 ♖e7? ♖e5) 7...♙d1 8 ♙e8 ♙b3 9 ♙d7 ♙f7 10 ♖e7 ♙h5 11 ♙e8, clearing the way for the pawn.

5...♙e8 6 ♖f5?

Now White really gives away a half-point. He could still have won by retracing his steps with 6 ♙g8.

6...♖d6 7 ♖g5 ♖e5 8 ♙c2 ♙f7 9 ♙f5 ♙c4 10 ♙d3 ♙f7 11 ♙c2 ♙c4 12 ♖g6 ♖f4 13 ♙a4 ♙d5 14 ♙e8 ♙c4 1/2-1/2

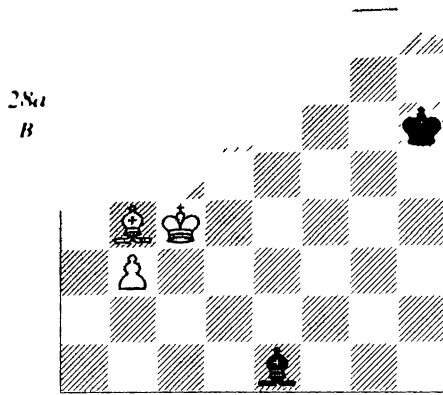


Smirin – Vaïsser
Tel Aviv 1992

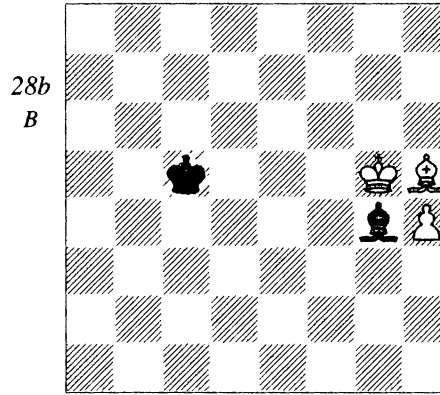
Here 1 ♖d4! draws after 1...♙f5 2 ♖e5 ♙g4 3 ♖f6! ♙f3 4 ♙c4 ♙g2 5 ♙e2 ♙h3 6 ♖g5!, in time to prevent ...♙g4. The game went 1 ♖d2? ♙f5 2 ♖c3 ♙h3 3 ♖d4 ♙g2 4 ♙c4 0-1, in view of 4...♖f3 5 ♖e3 ♖f2 6 ♙b5 ♙h3 7 ♙c4 ♖g2 8 ♙b5 ♖g1 9 ♙c4 ♙f1 10 ♙e6 ♙a6 11 ♙h3 ♙c8.

28

Bishop and Pawn vs Bishop (2)



Gheorghiu – Shabtai
Biel 1991



Voitsekhovskiy – Zagrebelny
Kstovo 1998

The winning chances for the attacker are increased if the pawn is near the edge of the board. The reason is that the pawn doesn't have to advance so far in order for one of the blocking diagonals to be less than four squares long (for example, when a b-pawn is on b6, the a6-c8 diagonal is only three squares). In this position, Black must defend accurately even though the pawn is only on the third rank.

1...♙h4?

Already a fatal error. The simplest draw is 1...♙g3 2 ♙d2+ ♖g6 3 b4 ♖f6 4 b5 ♙c7 5 ♖c5 ♖e7! 6 ♖c6 ♖d8, but 1...♙f2 also draws after 2 ♙c5 (or 2 ♙d2+ ♖g6 3 b4 ♖f6) 2...♙e1 3 ♙d4 ♖g6 4 ♙c3 ♙f2 5 b4 ♖f7! 6 ♙d4 ♙g3 7 ♖d5 ♖e7 8 ♖c6 ♖d8! 9 ♖b7 ♖d7 10 b5 ♙c7.

2 ♙d2+ ♖g6 3 b4 ♖f5

After 3...♖f6 4 b5 the king blocks the bishop's route to d8, and Black loses after 4...♙f2 5 ♙b4! ♖e6 6 ♙c5 ♙g3 7 b6 ♖d7 8 ♖b5 ♙f4 9 ♙f2 ♙e5 10 b7 ♙d6 11 ♖a6 ♙b8 12 ♖b6 ♖d8 (12...♙e5 loses to 13 ♖a7) 13 ♖c6 ♖e7 14 ♙b6 ♖e6 15 ♙c7 ♙a7 16 ♖b5 and 17 ♖a6. 3...♖f7 is no better: 4 b5 ♙d8 5 ♖d5 ♙b6 6 ♙b4 ♖e8 7 ♖c6 ♙d8 8 ♙d6 ♖f7 9 ♙c7 and White wins.

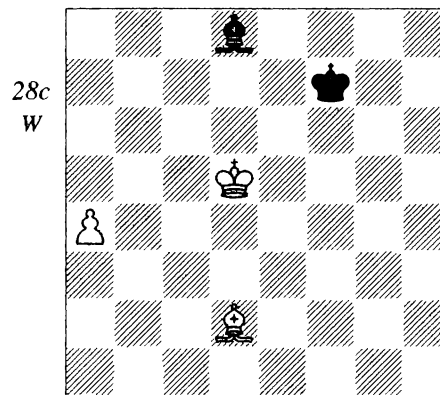
4 ♖d5 ♙e7

Or 4...♖f6 5 b5 ♖e7 6 ♖c6 ♙f2 7 ♙a5 ♙e3 8 ♙b6 ♙f4 9 ♙d4 ♖d8 10 ♖b7 and White wins.

5 b5 ♙d8 6 ♙b4 1-0

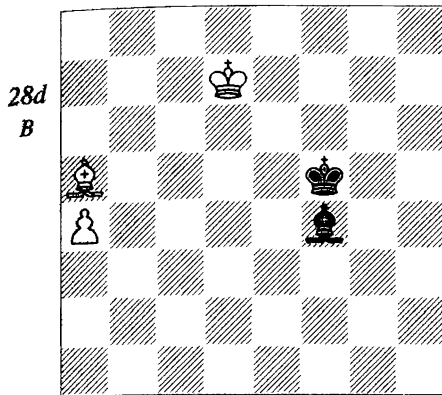
Black's position is hopeless after 6...♙b6 7 ♙c5 ♙d8 8 ♖c6 ♖e6 9 ♙d6.

The winning chances are greatest of all with a rook's pawn; indeed, if the defender's king cannot move in front of the pawn then the position is generally won once the pawn reaches the fifth rank. Thus the case of the pawn on the fourth rank is often critical. Play continued **1...♙e6?** (1...♙d7! draws, as after 2 ♖f6 ♖d6 3 ♖f7 ♙e6+ 4 ♖f6 ♙d7 Black is always ready to move his bishop to the h5-e8 diagonal) **2 ♖f6! ♙d7 3 ♙g6?** (missing 3 ♖f7! ♖d6 4 ♙d1 ♖e5 5 h5, winning) **3...♙g4 4 ♖g5 ♙e2 5 h5 ♙xh5 1/2-1/2.**

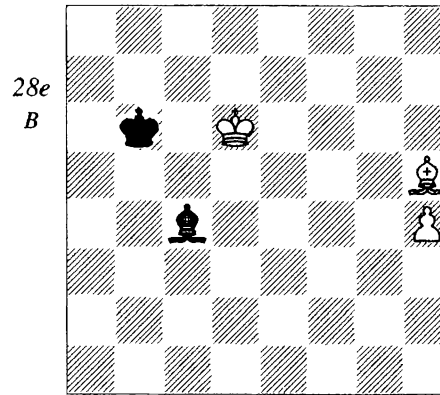


G. Thomas – Maroczy
Weston super Mare 1922

1 ♖c6 ♖e6 2 ♙b4 ♖e5? (Black must play his king to the f-file, as he has no other way to wait; 2...♖f5 3 ♙d6 ♙a5 4 ♙c7 ♙e1 is a draw) **3 ♙d6+ ♖d4 (3...♖e6 4 ♙c7) 4 ♙c5+! 1-0.**



Badea – Lanzani
Bratto 1996



Eliskases – Bogoljubow
Mannheim (19) 1939

Although such positions can be quite tricky, it's nevertheless amazing how often they are misplayed. The crucial factor for the defender is to maintain the flexibility of the bishop, so that it can block the pawn from both diagonals. This is a general principle for all endings of bishop and pawn vs bishop, but in the case of the rook's pawn a higher level of subtlety may be required.

1...♖e4?

Black is relying on using his king to draw after 2 ♗e1? ♜d5 3 a5 ♜c5 or 2 ♗b4? ♜d5 3 a5 ♜c4, but in fact the king is badly placed on e4 and now White can win. Black should have continued 1...♗e3! 2 ♜c6 ♗g5! (always ready to move to the a5-d8 diagonal if White plays ♗e1) 3 ♗b4 ♗d8 4 ♗d6 ♗a5 5 ♜b5 ♗d8 6 ♗c5 ♜e6 7 ♗b6 ♜d7 8 a5 ♜c8 (Black's king makes it back in time from f5, but this is not possible from e4) 9 a6 ♗xb6 10 ♜xb6 ♜b8 with a draw.

2 ♜c6

Preventing the approach of Black's king.

2...♜d3

Now 2...♗g5 doesn't work: 3 ♗b4 ♗d8 4 ♗d6 ♗a5 5 ♜b5 ♗d8 (or 5...♗e1 6 ♗b4) 6 ♗c5 ♜d5 (Black's king is too far away from c8) 7 ♗b6 ♗h4 8 a5 ♗g3 9 a6 ♗b8 10 ♗g1 followed by ♜b6-b7 and White wins.

3 ♗e1 ♜c4 4 a5 1-0

After 4...♗e3 5 a6 ♗g1 6 ♗a5 (threatening ♗b6) 6...♗a7 7 ♜b7 White will promote his pawn.

In the diagram, White is threatening to win by 1 ♗g4 ♗f7 2 ♜e7 ♗g6 3 ♜f6 ♗e8 4 ♗f5 ♗h5 5 ♜g5, a standard manoeuvre which ensures that White will cut Black's bishop off by ♗g4 or ♗g6 next move. At the moment Black cannot approach with his king, which leaves him with just one constructive move.

1...♗d3!

The only drawing move. Now if White plays ♗g4, Black replies ...♗g6 and White does not immediately gain a tempo with his king by attacking the bishop.

2 ♜e7 ♜c7 3 ♜f6

Covering g6, and so threatening ♗d1.

3...♗b5!

Another accurate move, preparing to move to e8 if necessary.

4 ♜g7 ♗d3?

Wrong, as from d3 the bishop cannot move to the h5-e8 diagonal. 4...♜d6! 5 ♗d1 ♗e8 6 ♗c2 ♗h5 was the way to reach a draw.

5 ♜f6?

5 ♗d1 ♜d6 6 h5 ♜e5 7 h6 ♜f4 8 ♜f6! ♗b1 9 ♗h5, followed by ♗g6, would have won.

5...♗b5

Now Black is safe again.

6 ♜e7 ♗d3! 7 ♜f7 ♜d8

Not 7...♜d7? 8 ♗d1, when Black's bishop cannot reach e8.

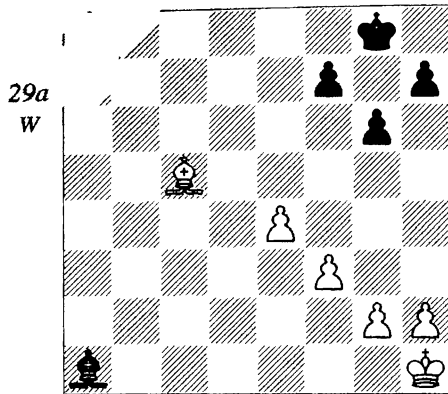
8 ♗d1 ♗b5

To meet 9 h5 by 9...♗e8+.

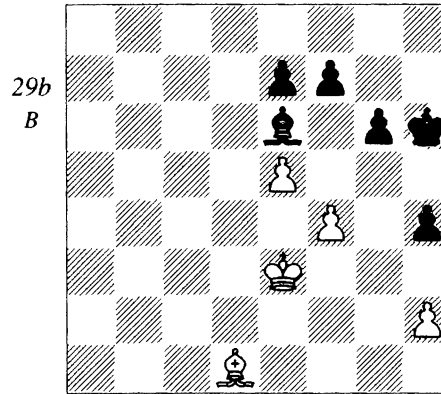
9 ♜f6 ♗e8 10 ♗g4 ♜c7! 11 ♜e7 ♗g6 12 ♗d7 ♗h5 13 ♗e8 ♗e2 ½-½

29

Extra Pawn



Z. Almasi – Khalifman
Wijk aan Zee 1995



Korchnoi – Ma. Tseitlin
European Senior Ch, Davos 2006

In a bishop ending, when all the pawns are on one side, an extra pawn by itself is usually not enough for victory. If the defender has no other weaknesses, the draw is generally straightforward.

1 ♖g1

Attempting to prevent ...f5 by playing 1 g4 doesn't help, as after 1...f5 2 exf5 gxf5 3 gxf5 ♜f7 Black draws easily.

1...f5

Reducing the number of pawns.

2 ♜f2

2 exf5 gxf5 3 ♜f2 ♜e5 also offers no hope as Black just posts his king on e6. Bishop endings with all the pawns on one side are drawish because it is impossible to dislodge the enemy king from a square of the opposite colour to the bishop.

2...♜e5 3 g3 fxe4 4 f4

Or 4 fxe4 ♜f7 5 ♜e3 ♜e6 6 ♜d4 ♜c7 7 ♜f3 ♜d6 8 ♜g4 ♜e7 and White's king cannot advance further.

4...♜f6 5 ♜e3 ♜f7 6 ♜xe4 h5

Black sets up a pawn-chain on g6 and h5, which makes it impossible for White to advance his pawns without allowing pawn exchanges.

7 ♜d4 ♜e7 8 f5 ♜g5 (Black can also draw by 8...gxf5+ 9 ♜xf5 ♜d8 10 ♜e3 ♜e7 11 ♜g5 ♜c5, but the move played is even simpler) 9 h3 ½-½. White cannot make progress.

However, if the defender has pawn weaknesses then it can be a different matter.

1...g5

If White exchanges on g5, then Black's king becomes active and the e5-pawn is weak, but if White ignores the g5-pawn Black will play ...g4.

2 ♜e2

Black also wins after 2 fxg5+ ♜xg5; for example, 3 ♜f3 ♜f5 4 ♜d4 ♜f4 5 ♜c6 ♜f5 6 ♜d5 ♜g6 (White is in zugzwang) 7 ♜g2 ♜b1 8 ♜d5 f6 9 exf6 exf6 10 ♜c6 f5 11 ♜g2 ♜e4 12 ♜h3 ♜c2 13 ♜g2 ♜b1 (zugzwang again) 14 ♜c6 ♜e4 15 ♜b5 ♜f3 and the king penetrates.

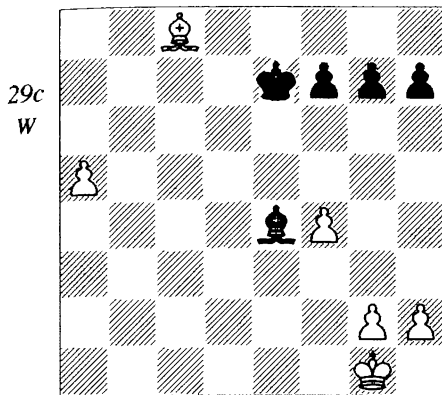
2...g4 3 ♜f2 ♜f5 4 ♜d1 ♜g7 5 ♜a4 f6 6 exf6+ exf6 7 ♜c6 ♜f8 8 ♜d5

It is no good trying to play actively with the king, as after 8 ♜e3 ♜e7 9 ♜d4 ♜d6 10 ♜b7 ♜d7 Black threatens ...h3, followed by ...♜c6 and ...g3, so the king must go back to f2 anyway.

8...♜e7 9 ♜c6 ♜d6 10 ♜b7 ♜c5 11 ♜e3 ♜c4 12 ♜c6 ♜c3 13 ♜b7 ♜d7 14 ♜e4 f5 15 ♜b1

Or 15 ♜b7 ♜b5 16 ♜d5 ♜d3 17 ♜f2 (17 ♜c6 g3 18 hxg3 h3 19 ♜f2 ♜e4 also wins for Black) 17...♜d4 18 ♜c6 ♜c4, followed by ...♜d5 and ...♜e4.

15...♜e6 (putting White in zugzwang) 16 ♜e2 ♜d4 17 ♜f2 ♜d7 18 ♜c2 ♜c3 19 ♜b1 ♜d2 20 ♜a2 ♜a4 21 ♜e6 ♜c2 22 ♜c8 ♜e4 23 ♜a6 ♜c3 24 ♜b5 ♜d3 25 ♜c6 ♜d4 26 ♜b7 ♜c4 27 ♜g2 ♜d5 28 ♜f1 ♜f3 0-1



Bacrot – Khenkin
Bundesliga 2006/7

When the extra pawn is an outside passed pawn, the attacker normally wins provided the passed pawn is far away from the mass of pawns. Here it is ideally posted on the distant a-file, so the win is straightforward.

1 ♖f2 ♜d6 2 ♙a6

White transfers his bishop to e2, where it can securely defend the pawn on a6.

2...♝c5 3 ♙e2 h6

There is no point forcing the pawn to advance to a6 by 3...♝b4 4 a6 ♝c5, because after 5 g4 ♝b6 6 ♝e3 ♙c6 7 ♝d4 Black will have no time to play his bishop round to capture it.

4 g4 f6 5 ♝e3 ♙c2 6 a6 ♝b6 7 ♝d4

Black has set up a temporary blockade to keep out White's king, but this is easily broken by a7 followed by ♝c5. First of all, however, White improves the situation on the kingside to ensure that there won't be any counterplay once his king does finally penetrate.

7...♙b3 8 h4 ♙c6 9 h5 ♙b3 10 f5 ♙f7 11 a7

The time has come for decisive action.

11...♝xa7 12 ♝c5 ♙b3 13 ♝d6 ♝b6

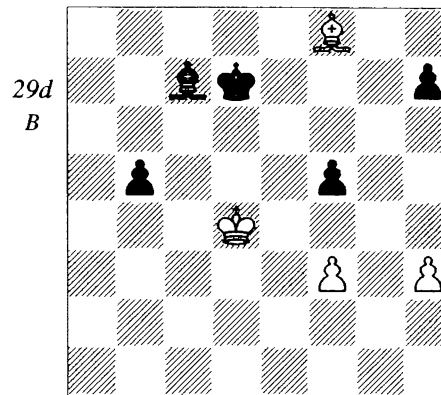
Black is far too slow to trouble White.

14 ♝e7 ♝c5 15 ♝f8 ♝d6 16 ♝xg7 ♝e7 17 ♝xh6 ♝f7 18 ♝h7 ♙d5 19 h6 ♙b3 20 ♙b5 ♙d1

If 20...♙a2, then 21 ♙d7 and 22 ♙e6+.

21 ♙c4+ ♝f8 22 ♝g6 ♙xg4 23 ♝xf6 1-0

White avoided the final trap 23 h7?? ♙xf5+ 24 ♝xf5 ♝g7 25 ♙g8 ♝h8, drawing, so Black decided to give up.



V. Kovačević – Smirin
Solin 1999

In this case the passed pawn is not so distant, and in addition White's king is actively placed.

1...♙d6?

Black would like to push White's king back, but he is worried about ♝c5. However, he could have played 1...♝e6! 2 ♝c5 (2 ♙h6 ♙b6+ 3 ♝c3 ♙c5 4 ♙f4 ♝d5 is winning for Black) 2...♝f7 3 ♙h6 ♝g6 4 ♙d2 ♝h5 5 ♙e1 ♝g5, when White's kingside pawns are too weak.

2 ♙h6 ♝e6

Black has stopped ♝c5, but cannot dislodge White's king from d4. Black therefore adopts the alternative plan of playing his king to h5.

3 ♙d2 ♙e7 4 ♙f4 ♝f6 5 ♙d2 ♝g6 6 ♝d5 ♝h5 7 ♝e6?

After 7 ♙e1 b4 8 ♝c4 White retains drawing chances; e.g., 8...♙d6 9 h4 ♙e7 10 ♝b3 ♙xh4 11 ♙xb4 ♙g3 12 ♙e7 ♝g6 13 ♝c2 h5 14 ♝d3 h4 15 ♝e2 and the king makes it back in time.

7...♙a3?

7...♙f8! is better, as here the bishop blockades a possible passed f-pawn: after 8 ♝xf5 b4 9 ♝e4 ♝h4 10 f4 ♝xh3 11 f5 h5 12 f6 ♝g4 13 ♝e3 b3 14 ♙c3 ♝f5 15 ♝f3 ♙h6 16 ♙b2 ♝g6 followed by ...♙g5 Black wins comfortably.

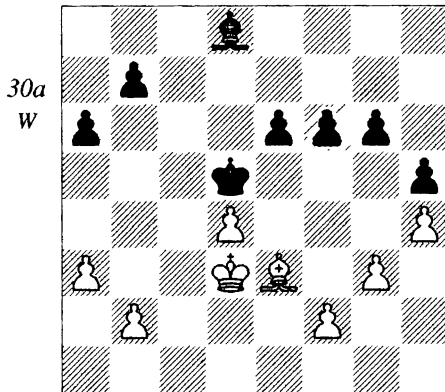
8 ♝xf5 b4 9 ♝e4! b3

The key line is 9...♝h4 10 ♝d3 ♝xh3 11 f4 ♝g4 12 f5! ♝xf5 13 ♙xb4 ♙xb4 14 ♝e3 with a rook's pawn and wrong bishop draw.

10 ♝d3 ♝h4 11 f4 ♝xh3 12 f5 ♝g4 13 f6 h5 14 ♙e1 ♝g5 15 f7 ♝g6 16 ♝c3 b2 17 f8♙ b1♘+ 18 ♝c2 ♙xf8 19 ♝xb1 ♝f5 20 ♝c2 ♝e4 21 ♙h4 1/2-1/2

30

Bad Bishop



Ponce – Enevoldsen
Buenos Aires Olympiad 1939

A bishop is easily impeded by friendly pawns which are stuck on the same-coloured squares as the bishop. Such a bishop is termed a *bad bishop*. In this position every one of White's pawns is on a dark square. This not only restricts White's bishop, but also makes the pawns into targets for the enemy bishop.

1 f4

To stop ...g5. If White waits, then Black wins; for example, 1 b3 ♖e7 (not 1...g5? at once due to 2 g4! with counterplay) 2 a4 g5! 3 hxg5 (or else the exchange on h4 will leave White's h-pawn fatally weak) 3...fxg5 followed by ...h4, with a deadly outside passed pawn.

1...b5 2 ♗d2 ♖b6 3 ♖e3?!

This makes it easy for Black, but even 3 ♗c3 loses in the end after 3...a5 4 b4 (4 b3 a4 5 bxa4 bxa4 6 ♖b2 ♗d8 7 ♗c3 ♖e7 8 ♖b2 g5! 9 fxg5 fxg5 10 hxg5 ♖xg5 11 ♗c3 ♖e7 12 ♖b2 ♗d6 also wins for Black) 4...a4 5 ♖b2 e5! 6 dxe5 fxe5 7 ♖xe5 ♖f2 8 ♖f6 ♖xg3 9 ♖g5 ♖f2! 10 ♖f6 ♖b6 11 ♗c3 (11 ♖g5 ♖d4 and ...♖b2) 11...♖d8 12 ♖e1 ♖f6 followed by ...♖b2.

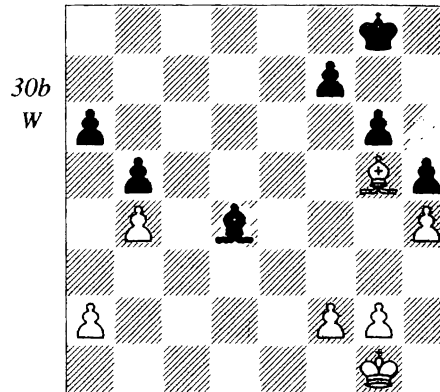
3...a5 4 b3 a4 5 b4 ♖a7

White is in zugzwang. If now 6 ♖f2, then 6...e5 wins.

6 g4

Desperation.

6...hxg4 7 ♖f2 ♖b8 8 ♖g3 ♖d6 9 ♖h2 ♖f8 10 ♖g3 ♖h6 11 ♖h2 f5 12 ♖g3 ♖g7 13 ♖f2 ♖f6 0-1



Predojević – Atalik
European Ch, Kusadasi 2006

Here just two white pawns are stuck on dark squares, but this is enough to cause his downfall.

1 ♖f1 f6 2 ♖e3 ♖e5!

2...♖xe3? 3 fxe3 only leads to a draw.

3 ♖e2 ♖f7 4 ♖d3 ♖e6 5 ♖e4?!

This simplifies Black's task by giving him some extra tempi.

5...f5+ 6 ♖d3 f4! 7 ♖d4

Or 7 ♖d2 f3! 8 g3 (after 8 gxf3 ♖f6 the coming passed h-pawn will be decisive) 8...♖f5 9 ♖e1 ♖g4 10 ♖e3 ♖c7 11 ♖c3 ♖b8! (zugzwang) 12 a3 ♖c7 13 ♖d4 (or 13 ♖e1 ♖b6+ 14 ♖e4 ♖a7 with another zugzwang; Black wins after 15 ♖e5 ♖h3) 13...♖xg3! 14 fxg3 ♖xg3 15 ♖d2 ♖xh4 16 ♖e1 ♖g3 17 ♖f1 g5 18 ♖c3 h4 19 ♖f6 ♖f4 20 ♖e7 h3 21 ♖d6+ ♖e4 22 ♖f2 g4 23 ♖b8 ♖d4 and Black wins by heading for the a3-pawn.

7...♖d6 8 ♖e4

There is no time to defend b4 by 8 a3 as 8...f3! 9 g3 ♖f5! wins as in the previous note.

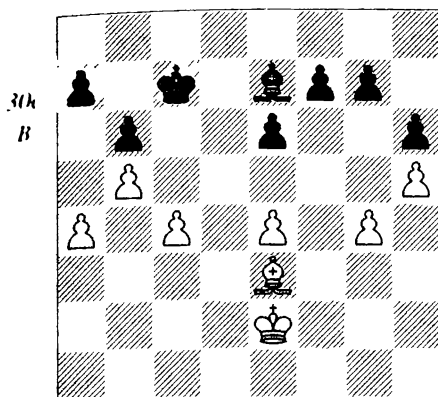
8...♖xb4 9 ♖xf4 ♖e7 10 g3 a5

Now Black can create an outside passed pawn on the queenside. The game is over.

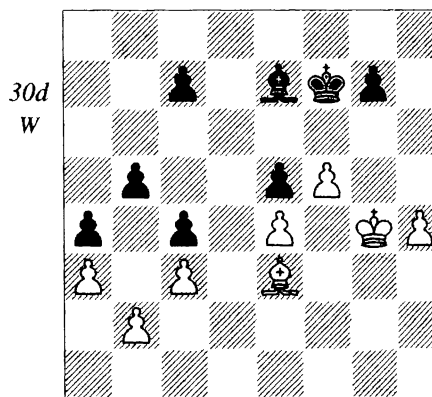
11 ♖e4 a4 12 ♖h8 b4 13 ♖d3

Or 13 ♖d4 b3 14 axb3 a3 15 ♖d3 ♖c5 16 f3 ♖f2 17 g4 ♖xh4 18 gxf4 gxf4 and Black wins.

13...♖d5 14 ♖g7 ♖c5 15 f3 ♖d6! 16 g4 ♖e7! 17 gxf4 gxf4 18 f4 ♖xh4 19 f5 ♖e1 20 ♖f6 h4 21 ♖d8 h3 22 f6 h2 23 f7 h1 ♖ 24 f8 ♖ ♖e4# (0-1)



Morozevich – Lautier
Wijk aan Zee 2002



Pujol Sans – Nunn
Norwich U-18 1972

In a good bishop vs bad bishop situation, the main hope for the defender is often to set up a blockade. Here Black has chances to save the game in spite of his bad bishop.

1...e5!

Waiting is inferior: after 1...♗d6? 2 ♖d3 ♜b7 3 c5 bxc5 (or 3...♗xc5 4 ♗xc5 bxc5 5 a5 ♜c7 6 ♜c4 ♖d6 7 e5+ and White wins) 4 a5 ♗c7 5 ♗xc5 ♗xa5 6 g5! ♗c7 7 gxh6 gxh6 8 ♗e3 the passed h-pawn will be decisive.

2 ♖d3 ♗c5 3 ♗d2!

3 ♗xc5?! bxc5 4 a5 a6! is only a draw.

3...f6?

This removes all flexibility on the kingside. 3...♖d6 4 ♜c3 ♜e6 was the correct defence: after 5 ♜b3 ♗f2 6 ♗b4 g6! 7 ♜c2 gxh5 8 gxh5 f5 Black's counterplay suffices to draw.

4 a5! ♖d6 5 axb6?

A serious error. 5 a6! ♜c7 6 ♜c2 ♖d7 7 ♜b3 ♗d4 8 ♗b4 wins, as after 8...♗c5 9 ♗xc5 bxc5 White's king can reach a5 by triangulation, after which b6(+) wins.

5...axb6 6 ♜c2 ♖d7 7 ♜b3 ♜e6!

7...♜c7? 8 ♗b4 ♜b7 9 ♜a4! and White wins, as he is now threatening ♗xc5.

8 ♗b4 ♗d4 9 ♜a4 ♗f2 10 ♗f8 ♜f7 11 ♗a3 ♜e6 12 c5! bxc5??

A blunder. 12...♗xc5! 13 ♗xc5 bxc5 14 b6 ♖d7 15 ♜b5 c4 16 ♜xc4 ♜c6 17 b7 ♜xb7 18 ♖d5 ♜b6 19 ♜e6 ♜c5 20 ♜f7 ♖d4 21 ♜xg7 ♜xe4 22 ♜xf6 ♜f4 23 g5 e4 24 gxh6 e3 leads to a drawn ending of queen and pawn vs queen.

13 b6 ♖d6 14 ♜b5 1-0

Sometimes a sacrifice is the only way to lift a blockade. Here Black has a bad bishop and a crippled queenside majority, but for the moment White has no way in.

1 h5 ♗f8 2 ♗f2 c6

Black can liquidate some queenside pawns by 2...b4 3 axb4 ♗xb4 4 ♗e3 a3 5 bxa3 ♗xa3, but White still wins after 6 ♜g5 ♗e7+ 7 f6 gxf6+ 8 ♜f5 ♗d6 9 h6 ♗f8 10 ♗c1 ♗c5 11 h7 ♜g7 12 h8♖+ ♜xh8 13 ♜xf6 ♗d6 14 ♜e6 ♜g8 15 ♗g5, followed by ♗f6 and ♗xe5.

3 ♗e3 ♜f6 4 ♜h4 ♜f7 5 ♜g5 ♗e7+ 6 f6!

The key move, giving up a pawn to clear f5 for the king.

6...gxf6+ 7 ♜f5 c5

Or 7...♗d6 8 h6 ♗f8 9 h7 ♗g7 10 ♗c1 ♗h8 11 ♗h6 (zugzwang) 11...c5 12 ♗e3 ♜g7 13 ♗xc5 ♜f7 14 ♗b6 ♜g7 15 ♜e6 ♜xh7 16 ♖d6 ♜g6 17 ♜c5 f5 18 ♜xb5 fxe4 19 ♜xa4 and White wins.

8 h6?!

It was simpler to prevent ...b4 altogether by 8 ♗d2!, but the move played doesn't spoil anything.

8...b4 9 ♗f2 ♗f8 10 h7 ♜g7 11 h8♖+ ♜xh8 12 ♜xf6?

Missing 12 ♜g6! and White wins despite being two pawns down: 12...♜g8 13 ♗h4 bxa3 14 bxa3 ♗e7 15 ♗xf6 ♗d6 16 ♜f5, etc.

12...♗h6

Now Black has enough counterplay.

13 ♗xc5 b3 14 ♜xe5 ♗c1 15 ♖d4 ♗xb2 16 ♜xc4 ♜g7 17 ♖d3 ♜f6 18 ♗b4 ♜e5 1/2-1/2

Opposite-Coloured Bishop Endings

Opposite-coloured bishop endings are quite different from same-coloured bishop endings. For example, bishop and pawn vs bishop is drawn, except if the pawn can promote at once. The reason is that once the defender's bishop covers a square the pawn has to cross, it can never be driven away and can always sacrifice itself for the enemy pawn when it advances.

It follows that the first interesting case is that of bishop + two pawns vs bishop. When the pawns are connected, the most important factor is how far advanced the pawns are, but the position of the defending bishop is also relevant. 31a shows the standard draw, while 31b demonstrates how a restricted bishop can prove fatal. When the defender's king is not in front of the pawns, the result often depends on whether the king can return in time. Such positions can be quite complex, as we can see in 31c.

With disconnected pawns, the number of files between the pawns is often the deciding factor; if there are only two files between the pawns, the result is usually a draw, while three or more files often indicates a win. These are only general principles, however, and there are many exceptions, not the least of which is that if the attacker has a rook's pawn together with the 'wrong' bishop for it (as in Section 26), then the result is much more likely to be a draw. In 31d we see a well-played defence with two files separating the pawns, while 31e shows how it is possible to go wrong in this situation. 31f provides an example of a three-file separation and shows how the attacker often has to use *zugzwang* in order to make progress.

An advantage of one pawn is often not enough to win in an opposite-coloured bishop ending, and in some cases even two extra pawns may not be sufficient. The defender's main resource is to set up a blockade which prevents the attacker from making progress (see 32b and 32c). Thus, in contrast to almost all other endings involving a bishop, it is often a good idea for the defender to put his pawns on the same coloured squares as his bishop, so that they cannot be attacked by the enemy bishop. Position 32a is an example of this idea. However, it may not be easy to establish whether a blockade is truly watertight since there may be possibilities for the attacker to break through by sacrificing a pawn or two. In 32d Black had various ways to create a blockade, but only one of these was truly impregnable. 32e is a relatively complex case, and the analysis given here differs from that in the standard endgame textbooks.

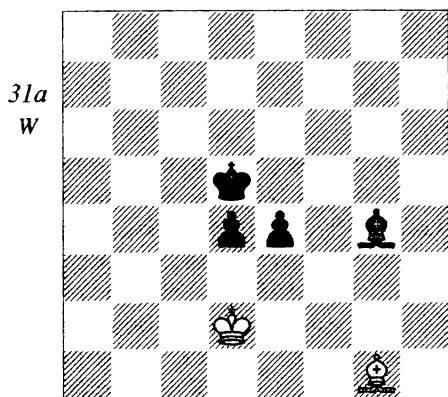
It is worth making two important points about opposite-coloured bishop endings. The first is that it is usually the number of passed pawns which is the most important factor, rather than the total number of pawns. Two widely-separated passed pawns can prove overwhelming for the defender, whereas two blockaded passed pawns may be almost valueless. In positions 33b and 33c, for example, the attacker sacrifices some pawns to create deadly passed pawns on both wings, which stretch the defence to breaking point.

The second point is that apparently small changes to the pawn-structure may have far-reaching consequences. There are many possibilities for both the blockading of pawns and the release of a blockade by a sacrifice, and these possibilities can be created or destroyed by apparently insignificant pawn moves. Therefore, in opposite-coloured bishop endings you have to take special care before pushing a pawn.

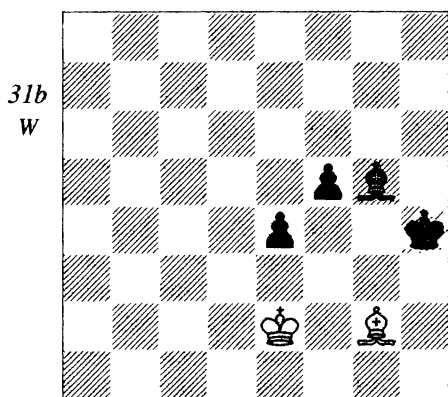
Another, much more dramatic, method of lifting a blockade involves sacrificing the bishop. If, for example, you are two pawns up but cannot make progress, giving up your bishop for even a single pawn may be a way to radically alter the structure of the position to your advantage. In 33d, for

example, White's bishop sacrifice led to the creation of three connected passed pawns. If there had been no other pawns on the board, this wouldn't have been enough to win, but the presence of some additional pawns ensured the success of the sacrifice.

31 Bishop and Two Pawns vs Bishop

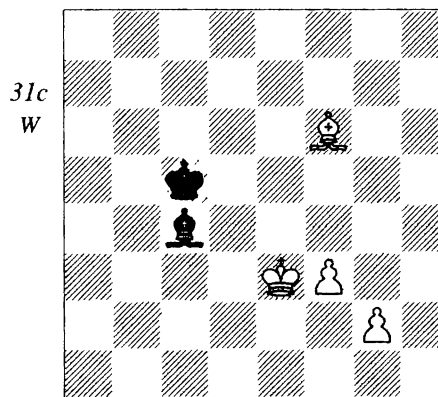


When a bishop and two connected pawns face a lone bishop (with opposite-coloured bishops) the result is in general a draw. The above position is typical; Black's king must defend d4 and provided both white pieces cover e3, he can always meet ...e3+ by ♙xe3 . 1 ♜f2 is the only move to draw, but it is sufficient.



Reinderman – Van der Sterren
Dutch Ch, Rotterdam 2000

Problems arise if the defender's bishop has too little space, either because the enemy pawns are too far advanced or because the bishop is restricted by the edge of the board. Here Black won after $1 \text{ ♜f2 ♜g4 2 ♜h1 ♜d8 3 ♜g2 ♜b6+ 4 ♜e1 ♜g3 5 ♜f1}$ (5 ♜f1 ♜h2 is the key line, winning by zugzwang) $5...f4 6 ♜b5 f3 7 ♜c6 e3 8 ♜b5 ♜f4$ (8...♜g2 9 ♜a6 f2+ is quicker) $9 ♜a6 ♜a5+ 0-1$. Black wins after $10 ♜d1 ♜g3$ or $10 ♜f1 ♜e5$, playing the king round to d2.



Zviagintsev – Sveshnikov
Russian Ch, Elista 1996

In more marginal situations it is easy to go wrong.

1 g4

White could have won more simply by $1 \text{ f4 ♜e6 2 g3 ♜d5 3 ♜f3 ♜c8 4 g4 ♜e6}$ (Black would draw with his king on g6, but it has no time to get there) $5 ♜d4 ♜b7+ 6 ♜e3 ♜f7 7 f5$.

$1...♜b3!$

Playing the bishop to d1 offers the most resistance.

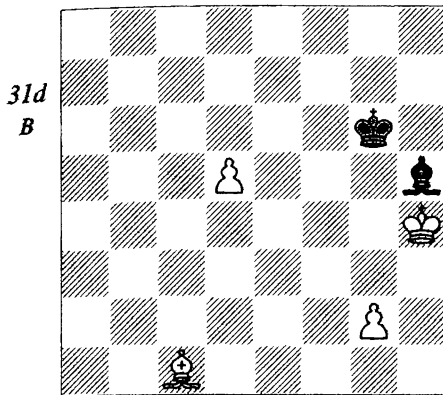
$2 ♜f4 ♜d1 3 ♜g3 ♜d5 4 f4?$

Throwing the win away. $4 ♜b2 ♜e2 5 ♜c1 ♜d1$ (5...♜e6 6 f4 ♜d3 7 ♜h4 ♜f6 8 ♜h5 also wins for White) $6 f4 ♜e4 7 ♜h4$ (this is the point of playing the bishop to c1; now f4 is defended) $7...♜f3 8 g5 ♜e4 9 g6 ♜f5 10 g7 ♜b3 11 ♜h5 ♜a2 12 ♜h6 ♜g8 13 ♜d2 ♜f6 14 ♜c3+ ♜f5 15 ♜e5$ and White wins by zugzwang.

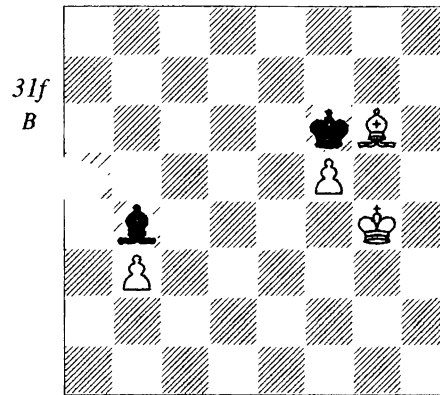
$4...♜e4 5 f5 ♜c2 6 ♜b2 ♜d1 7 ♜h4 ♜a4?$

Missing $7...♜f4!$ $8 ♜c1+ ♜f3 9 ♜g5 ♜b3! 10 ♜h5$ (or $10 f6 ♜e6 11 ♜h4 ♜f7$) $10...♜f7+ 11 ♜h4 ♜b3 12 g5 ♜e4 13 f6 ♜f7!$ and draws.

The finish was $8 ♜g5?$ ($8 f6 ♜e8 9 ♜g5 ♜f3 10 ♜c1 ♜g3 11 ♜d2 ♜f3 12 ♜f5 ♜d7+ 13 ♜e5 ♜e8 14 g5 ♜g4 15 ♜e6$ would have won) $8...♜e8?$ ($8...♜f3!$ $9 f6 ♜b3$ is a draw) $9 ♜c1 ♜f3 10 ♜f4?$ ($10 f6!$ wins) $10...♜d7 11 ♜c7 ♜c8 12 ♜h4 ♜d7 13 ♜g5 ♜c8 14 f6 ♜e6 15 ♜h2 ♜g8 16 ♜d6 ♜e6 17 ♜b4 ♜g3 18 ♜d2 ♜h3?$ (the final mistake; $18...♜f3!$ was the drawing move) $19 ♜f4! ♜f7 20 ♜f5 ♜b3 1-0$.



Karpov – J. Polgar
Hoogeveen 2003

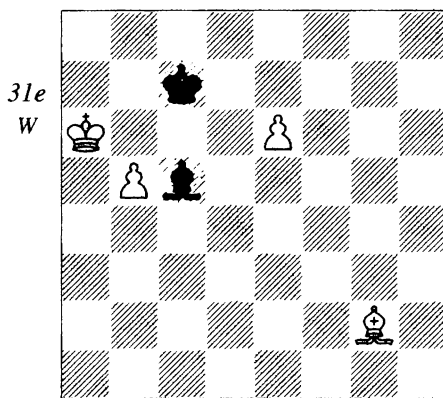


Malakhov – Dreev
FIDE Knockout, New Delhi 2000

With disconnected pawns, the result usually depends on the distance between the pawns. If it is only two files, the result is normally a draw. Here Black defended accurately: 1...♔d1! 2 g4 ♗b3 3 d6 ♖e6 4 ♗g5 ♗c8 5 ♖e7 ♗d7 6 ♖g3 ♗c8 7 ♖f4 ♗d7 8 g5 ♖f7 9 ♖e5 ♖e8 10 ♖d5 ♗a4! (the only move to draw; 10...♗d7? 11 ♖c5 and 10...♗b5? 11 ♖c5 are lost) 11 ♗d8 (11 ♖c5 ♖e6 12 g6 ♖d7! draws) 11...♖e8 12 ♗a5 ♖f7 13 ♗c3 ♖e8 14 ♗b2 ♗a4 15 ♗c1 ♖e8 16 ♗b2 ♗a4 17 ♖c5 ♖e6 18 g6 ♖d7 19 g7 ½-½. After 19...♗b3 followed by ...♗g8 it is an easy draw.

If there are three or more files between the pawns, then the result is usually a win (although there are many special cases; for example, if the attacker has a rook's pawn and wrong bishop combination, then the result is usually a draw). The attacker's main weapon is zugzwang, which he may have to use repeatedly.

Black's best defence runs 1...♖e5 2 ♗f7 (first White places his bishop where it defends both pawns; the immediate 2 ♖f3 ♗c5 3 ♖e2 ♖d4 only leads to problems as 4 f6? ♖c3 is a draw) 2...♖f6 3 ♖e6 ♗d2 4 ♖f3 (heading for c4) 4...♖e5 5 ♖e2 ♗b4 6 ♖d3 ♗f8 7 ♖c4 ♖d6 8 b4 ♗g7 9 b5 ♗f6! 10 ♗c8! (10 ♖b4 can be met by 10...♗d8, so now White's king treks back to the kingside) 10...♗d8 (meeting White's threat of b6) 11 ♖d4 ♗f6+ 12 ♖e4 ♗d8 13 ♖f4 ♖c7 14 ♗a6! (14 ♗e6 ♖b6 15 ♗d7 ♖c7 16 ♗c6 ♖d6 only lengthens the win) 14...♖d6 15 ♖g4 ♖e5 16 ♗c8 (zugzwang; 16...♖f6 17 ♖f4 heads for c6, while other king moves allow ♖h5-g6, so Black must allow the pawn to advance) 16...♗e7 17 b6 ♖f6 18 b7 ♗d6 19 ♖h5 (White's plan is to force his king to g8 and then along the eighth rank) 19...♗f4 20 ♗e6 (zugzwang again) 20...♗g3 21 ♖h6 ♗f4+ 22 ♖h7 ♗g3 23 ♖g8 ♗d6 24 ♗c8 (yet another zugzwang) 24...♗g3 25 ♖f8 ♗e5 26 ♖e8 ♗g3 27 ♗e6 followed by ♖d7-c8, and White wins.



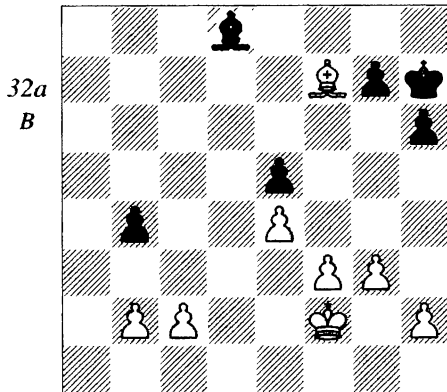
Kotronias – Grivas
Iraklion 1992

But accidents can happen: 1 ♗h3 ♖b8?? (1...♗d6 2 b6+ ♖d8 draws easily after 3 b7 ♗b8 or 3 ♖a7 ♗c5 4 ♖b7 ♗g1 5 ♖c6 ♗f2) 2 b6 ♗e7 3 ♖b5 1-0. White wins after 3...♖b7 4 ♗g2+ ♖c8 5 ♖c6.

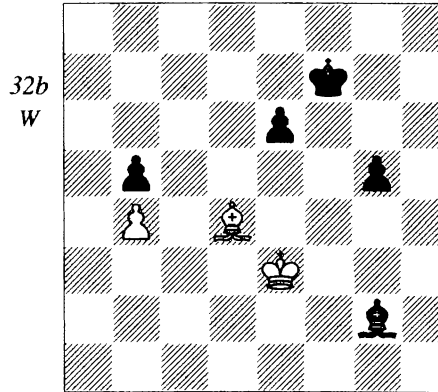
The game actually concluded 1...♗d6 2 ♗e8 ♖e7 3 ♗b5 ♖f6 4 ♗c4 ♗c5 1-0. After 5 ♖f4 ♗b4 6 ♖e4 White wins much as in the line given above, only more quickly.

32

Blockade



Kasparov – Gelfand
Linares 1997



Kramnik – Kasparov
World Ch (8), London 2000

In opposite-coloured bishop endings, one of the defender's main weapons is the blockade. The idea is to set up an impenetrable barrier on the squares of the same colour as the defender's bishop. In the above position, Black used this idea to draw despite being two pawns down.

1...♗b6+ 2 ♖e2 ♗d4

When setting up the blockade, the defender should seek to force the enemy pawns onto squares of the opposite colour to the defender's bishop. This can usually be done by simply attacking them with the bishop. Then it is much harder for the attacker to breach the blockade later. Here after 3 b3 g5 4 ♖d3 ♗c3 5 ♖c4 ♖g7 6 ♗e8 ♖f6, for example, Black can simply sit tight. Kasparov instead gives up a pawn to create a queenside passed pawn.

3 c3 bxc3 4 b3

After 4 b4 c2 5 ♖d2 ♗c3+! 6 ♖xc2 ♗xb4 the draw is clear.

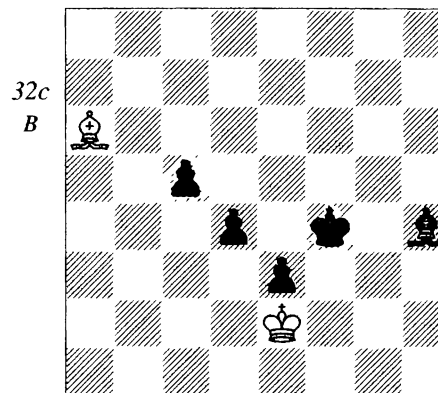
4...g5 5 ♖d3 ♖g7 6 ♗e8 ♖f6 7 b4 ♗g1

Black aims to force White's kingside pawns onto light squares, thereby removing any chance of a later breakthrough by f4.

8 h4 gxh4 9 gxh4 ♗f2 10 h5 ♖e7 11 ♗a4 ♗g3 12 ♖xc3 1/2-1/2

After 12...♗f4 13 ♖c4 ♖d6 Black blockades the b-pawn with his king, while leaving his bishop to defend the kingside pawns from f4. The only danger is zugzwang, but it is easy to see that Black will always have a bishop move.

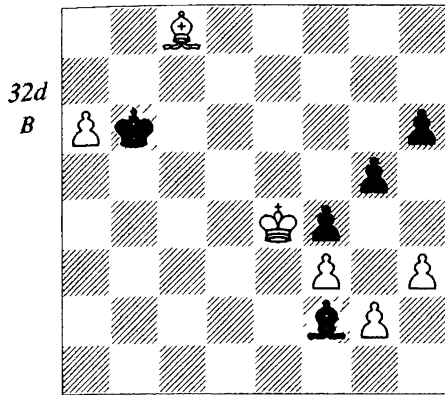
Here are two further examples of a blockade. In the first, after 1 ♗e5! the players agreed to a draw (1/2-1/2) since White's king and bishop create a barrier; for example, after 1...♖g6 2 ♖d4 ♖f5 3 ♗d6 ♖g4 (or 3...g4 4 ♗e5 ♖g5 5 ♗g3) 4 ♖e3 ♖h3 5 ♖f2 Black's king cannot penetrate. Nor does playing the king round to c6 help, as White just puts his king on d4.



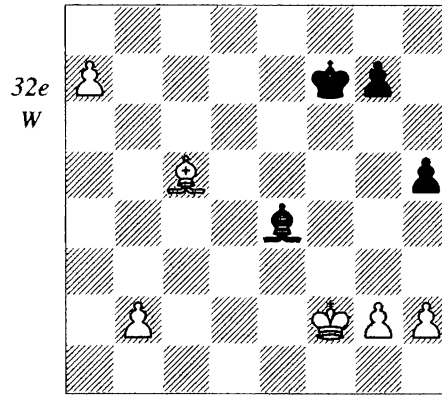
A. Chéron

Nouveau Traité complet d'Échecs, 1952

Even three extra pawns are not enough to win here. After 1...♖e4 2 ♗c4 ♗f6 3 ♗a6 ♖d5 4 ♖d3 ♖c6 (4...e2 is met by 5 ♗c4+! and only then ♖xe2) Black threatens to penetrate on the queenside, but by 5 ♖c2! ♖b6 6 ♗e2 ♖a5 7 ♖b3! White reorganizes his defence and keeps the enemy king out. Result: draw.



Vass – Cernousek
Slovakian Team Ch 2006/7



Euwe – Yanofsky
Groningen 1946

Sometimes the difficulty lies in recognizing whether a blockade is truly impenetrable. Care must be taken in cases where the attacker has the possibility of a breakthrough by offering one or more pawns. In this position Black is already one pawn down and faces the loss of a second pawn on the kingside. He has various ways to give up this pawn, but only one leads to a true blockade.

1...♗h4?

This is wrong. 1...♗c5 is also bad due to 2 h4!. Then 2...gxf4 3 ♖xf4 gives White a passed f-pawn which will eventually cost Black his bishop, while otherwise the pawn advances to h5. Then White wins the h6-pawn by playing his king to g6, forcing ...♗f8, followed by ♖f7 and ♖g7. The resulting passed h-pawn is decisive. The correct defence is 1...h5! 2 ♖f5 h4 3 ♖xg5 ♗g3, setting up a genuine blockade in which Black simply waits by ...♖a7 and ...♖b6. If White plays his king to the queenside, Black can move his bishop since g4 is never possible for White.

2 ♖f5 ♖a7

Or 2...♗e1 3 ♖g6 ♗b4 4 ♖xh6 ♗e7 5 ♖g6 ♗d8 6 ♖f5 ♗e7 7 h4 and White wins.

3 ♖g6 ♖b6 4 ♖xh6 ♖a7

This may look like a blockade but it is not.

5 ♖h5 ♖b6 6 ♖g4 ♖a7 7 ♗b7 ♖b6 8 g3!

1-0

After 8...♗xg3 9 ♖xg5 White wins with his h-pawn, while 8...fxg3 9 f4 both stops Black's g-pawn and creates a winning passed pawn of White's own.

This is a more complex example. White cannot penetrate with his king to the queenside directly, so first he must make progress on the kingside. He should try to play g4 and exchange his g-pawn for Black's h-pawn; a position with White's king on g5 and an h-pawn against Black's g-pawn is winning (see the game).

1 g3?

1 g4! wins. After 1...hxg4 (1...g6 2 ♖e3 and ♖f4, as in the game) 2 ♖g3 ♗f3 (if ♖xg4 ever happens, White wins as in the game) 3 ♖f4 ♖e6 4 ♗d4 g6 5 h3 Black is in zugzwang. A bishop move allows ♖xg4, a king move to anywhere apart from d6 allows hxg4 followed by ♖e5, ...♖d6 allows hxg4 followed by ♖g5 and a8♞. Finally, ...g5+ is met by ♖g3 and the g5-pawn is fatally weak.

1...♖e6 2 ♖e3

It's too late for 2 g4, as after 2...hxg4 3 ♖g3 Black can play 3...♖f5.

2...♗g2?

After 2...♖f5! 3 ♗f8 g6 4 ♖d4 ♗g2 5 ♖c5 ♖e6! 6 h3 ♗h1 White can never arrange to take back with his king on g4, so it is a draw.

3 ♖f4 g6 4 g4 hxg4 5 ♖xg4 ♗h1 6 ♖g5 ♖f7

Or 6...♗e4 7 a8♞ ♗xa8 8 ♖xg6 and White wins.

7 ♗d4 ♗g2 8 h4 ♗h1 9 b4 ♗g2 10 b5 ♗h1 11 ♗f6 ♗g2

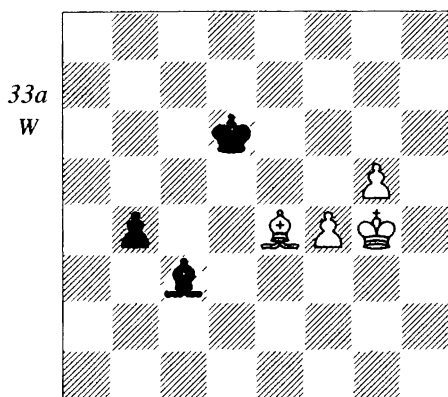
11...♗e4 12 ♖f4 followed by ♖e5 wins for White.

12 h5! gxf5 13 ♖f5 1-0

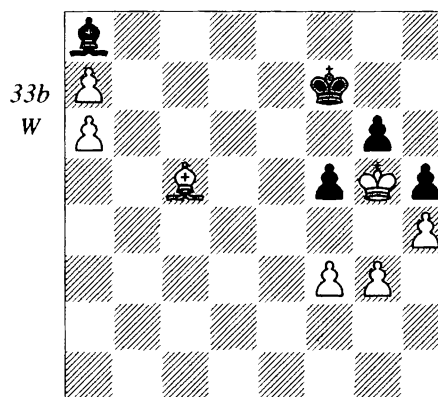
After 13...♗h1 14 ♗h4 ♗g2 15 ♖e5 White's king simply marches to c7.

33

Passed Pawns



Topalov – Leko
Dortmund 2005



Y. Averbakh
Shakhmaty, 1951

In opposite-coloured bishop endings, the most important feature is often not the number of pawns, but rather the number of passed pawns. The precise position of passed pawns is also very important, because if the enemy bishop can block them by operating along a single diagonal, then they may not be much of an asset. Two widely separated passed pawns are especially strong because it is often impossible for the bishop to stop them both by itself.

The above position teaches us a valuable lesson. Thanks to Black's slightly offside king, this position is a win without the black pawn. One might expect White's task to be made more difficult by the presence of an enemy pawn, but in fact it doesn't make the slightest difference. White's bishop can manoeuvre freely while all the time retaining control of b3 and so neutralizing the enemy pawn. This enables us to make the point that in opposite-coloured bishop endings, a lone passed pawn unsupported by the king is not worth much.

The game concluded **1 ♖c2 ♜e7 2 ♜h5!** (the only move to win, as White must prevent Black's king from occupying g7; 2 f5? ♜f7 3 ♜h5 ♜g7 is only a draw) **2... ♜f7 3 ♜h6!** (this second accurate move guarantees the win) **3... ♜g8 4 f5 ♜h8 5 ♜g6 ♖d4 6 f6** (now the pawns cannot be stopped) **6... ♖e3 7 ♜f5 ♜g8 8 ♖b3+ ♜h8 9 g6 ♖h6 10 ♜e6 ♖g7 11 fxg7+ 1-0.**

In this position, White already has two passed a-pawns, but he can only win if he can make another passed pawn on the kingside.

1 f4!

Not **1 g4? hxg4 2 fxg4 fxg4 3 ♜xg4 ♜e6! 4 ♜g5 ♖e4 5 a8 ♖ ♖xa8 6 ♜xg6 ♜d7** and Black will give up his bishop for the h-pawn.

1... ♖e4 2 ♖f2!

After White's g4 and h5 breakthrough, the bishop will be well posted to stop Black's pawns.

2... ♜g7

2... ♖f3 3 g4! and White wins much as in the main line.

3 g4!! hxg4

Or **3... fxg4 4 f5 gxf5 5 ♜xh5 ♜f6 6 ♖g3 ♖f3 7 ♜h6 ♖e4 8 h5 ♜f7** (8... ♖f3 loses to **9 ♖h4+ ♜f7 10 ♜g5**) **9 ♖h4!** followed by ♜g5 and White wins.

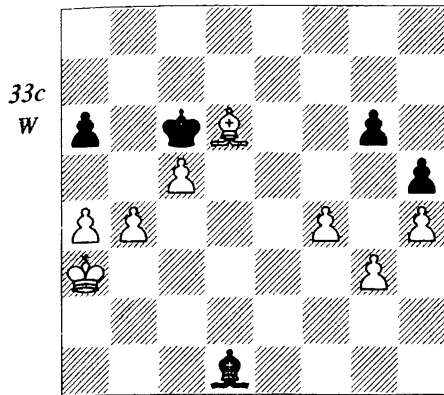
4 h5 gxh5 5 a8 ♖ ♖xa8 6 ♜xf5

Material is equal, but Black's passed pawns are blockaded, while White's widely-separated pawns prove too much for Black's forces.

6... ♜f7 7 ♖h4 ♖f3 8 a7 ♖a8 9 ♜g5 ♖f3

White also wins after **9... ♜e7 10 ♜g6+ ♜f8 11 f5.** The move played saves the h5-pawn, but doesn't change the result.

10 f5 ♜g7 11 ♖g3 ♜f7 12 ♖e5 (putting Black in zugzwang) **12... ♖e4** (or **12... ♜f8 13 ♜f6** followed by ♖d6+) **13 ♜xh5! g3 14 ♖xg3 ♜f6 15 ♜g4 ♖xf5+ 16 ♜f4** and White wins.



Ehivest – Kupreichik
Moscow (TV rapid) 1987

Despite the three extra pawns, it's clear that there is no easy win here for White. His kingside majority is crippled, b5 is under Black's control and White's king is tied to the a4-pawn.

1 b5+ axb5 2 a5

The correct course, surrendering one pawn to create a second passed pawn.

2...cxb7

Black tries to keep his bishop active. Passive play by 2...g4 3 cxb4 e8 4 e5 f5 5 d4 e8 6 g1 d7 loses after 7 a6 c7 8 a7 cxb7 9 g4! hxg4 (or 9...e8 10 c6+ e6 11 gxh5 gxh5 12 f5) 10 f5 e5 11 c6+ a8 12 cxb5 g3 13 b6 d3 14 c7 e5 15 d6 followed by c7.

3 cxb4 e2 4 e5 e4?!

Allowing White to create a third passed pawn on the kingside. 4...d3 was a better chance, although White should still win by putting his bishop on b4 and playing his king to g5, after which Black will be unable to prevent g4.

5 g4!

Just as in 33b, this thrust creates a passed pawn which stretches Black's forces beyond breaking point.

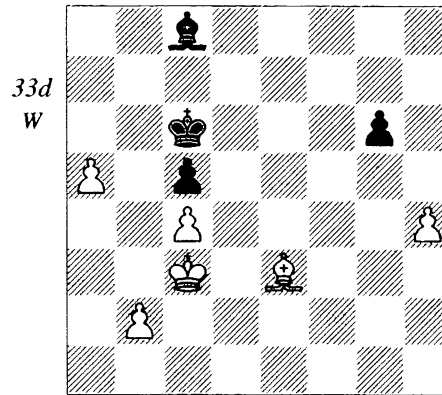
5...hxg4 6 f5 gxf5 7 h5

Material is temporarily equal, but Black's pawns are blocked while White's are mobile.

7...f4 8 e4 d3 9 h6 c6

White also wins after 9...e2 10 cxb5 d3+ 11 cxb4 e5 12 c4, heading for g7.

10 a6 e4 11 a7 cxb7 12 cxb5 d3+ 13 cxa5 xa7 14 c6 a8 15 cxb6 e4 16 c7 a7 17 e3+ a6 18 d8 e6 19 h7 1-0



Shirov – Topalov
Linares 1997

Here White is two pawns up, but again there is no easy win visible. The direct 1 b4 cxb4+ 2 cxb4 does not lead to victory, as White's passed pawns are too close together to pose Black serious problems. The solution to White's dilemma is dramatic but effective: he sacrifices his bishop to obtain three connected passed pawns on the queenside. The possibility of sacrificing the bishop arises surprisingly often in opposite-coloured bishop endings; indeed Shirov again beat Topalov with a similar sacrifice at Linares a year later. That game is so well-known that I have preferred to take this simpler but nevertheless instructive example.

1 e5! c5 2 b4+ d6 3 d4

We know from 25d that this position would be a draw without the kingside pawns, but here White is winning. He pushes his pawns as far as possible and then heads off to attack the g6-pawn with his king.

3...e3 4 b5 f1 5 a6 c7 6 c5 e2 7 cxb4 f1 8 c5 e2 9 a5 f3 10 c6 cb8 11 cb6 e2 12 a7+ a8 13 a6 f3 14 c7 b7+ 15 a5!

Not 15 cxb6? e8 and White is in zugzwang.

15...e8

Or 15...xa7 16 b6+ a8 17 cb5 e8 18 c6 e6 19 d7 with an easy win. There is no stalemate thanks to the g6-pawn.

16 b6 1-0

White wins after 16...cxb7 17 cb5 e3 18 c5 e4 (or 18...e8 19 a8+ xa8 20 c6) 19 d6 e3 20 e7 e4 21 f6 e5 22 h5.

Bishop vs Knight Endings

It is remarkable that the bishop and knight have roughly similar strength, even though they move in totally different ways, and chess-players have discussed their relative merits for centuries. These days it is recognized that the bishop is generally worth slightly more than the knight, but there are many situations where the knight is more effective. The superiority of the bishop is often more pronounced in the endgame, since exchanges are likely to have produced the type of position which favours the bishop. In general, the bishop likes open positions, especially those in which the centre is free of pawns, while the knight prefers positions with a blocked centre. If the bishop is restricted by its own pawns (i.e., a 'bad' bishop), then the knight's prospects are considerably improved.

Section 34 covers the ending of bishop and pawn vs knight. This is usually drawn if the defending king can get in front of the pawn, but otherwise the knight can be in trouble, as it usually cannot hold up the pawn on its own. Therefore, such endings often depend on whether the defender's king can arrive in front of the pawn quickly enough to save the day. Such endings can be quite tricky, especially for the defender. The most obvious knight move may not be the best, and even strong grandmasters struggle to play such positions accurately, as the examples in this section demonstrate.

The analogous ending knight and pawn vs bishop (Section 35) offers far fewer winning chances; indeed, if the pawn is not far advanced then the bishop can prevent the pawn's advance without any assistance from the king. In order to have winning chances, the pawn must either be far advanced or be a rook's pawn, which causes special difficulties for the bishop. Once again, it's surprisingly easy to make mistakes even in such apparently simple positions. 35d is a situation which has arisen many times; if you don't know the winning idea, it is very easy to overlook it, as even grandmasters have demonstrated.

Section 36 presents several positions in which the bishop dominates the knight. In these examples, the bishop is aided by factors such as an open position, better pawn-structure or possession of a passed pawn. A characteristic feature of these positions is the way in which the knight hops around, making trivial threats which are easily countered, while the attacker steadily improves his position.

Section 37 discusses the relative merits of bishop and knight in more detail. This is the section for knight supporters as there are a number of examples of the knight running rings around a bishop. In these examples the bishop is either 'bad' or in some other way restricted in its mobility. In the case of a 'bad' bishop, the attacker's main problem is often to penetrate with his king into the enemy position; a pawn sacrifice is often the key to success, as in 37c.

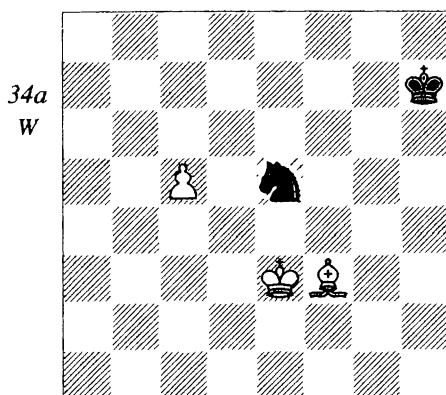
The bishop's main asset is its long-range power, while its main defect is that it can only reach half the squares on the board. If you have the two bishops, then you have all the advantages of a single bishop without the disadvantages, because between them the two bishops can reach every square on the board. That is why the bishop-pair is considered an asset, and in the endgame the two bishops can be a decisive advantage in themselves. The factors which favour a single bishop apply equally to the bishop-pair.

In Section 38, the two bishops face a bishop and a knight. In an open position (such as 38a and 38b), the bishops are at an advantage, which is enhanced if the knight is unable to find a stable square to settle on. 38c is an interesting case in which the side with the bishops is a pawn up, but with all the pawns on one side. With just one pair of minor pieces this would probably be a draw,

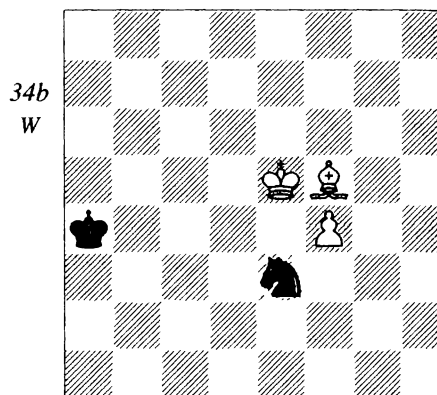
but the two bishops can achieve what one cannot, and the pressure exerted by the bishop-pair makes life very awkward for the defender. In the game the bishops notched up an almost effortless victory. If the position is blocked, the knight may be the most effective of the four minor pieces and this may tip the balance against the bishop-pair (see 38d).

Two bishops face two knights in Section 39, and this is the most extreme case. Except in blocked positions, the bishops have a sizeable inherent advantage, and the knights must have some counterbalancing advantage, such as better pawn-structure, to have a chance. In 39a the bishops slaughter the hapless knights in spite of the symmetrical pawn-structure, while in 39b the bishop-pair proves sufficient compensation for the pawn. In 39c the side with the bishops has an inferior pawn-structure and the position is roughly balanced. Finally, 39d considers a case where there are more minor pieces.

34 Bishop and Pawn vs Knight



Kharitonov – Yagupov
Russian Army Ch 1995



Beliavsky – Liberzon
Baden 1980

Bishop and pawn vs knight is almost always a draw when the defending king is in front of the pawn, so we need only consider the case in which the defending king is at a distance. In this situation the knight must be used to hold up the pawn while the king tries to return, but it is often possible to drive the knight away. Then everything depends on timing. If the pawn is far advanced or the defender's king is far away, then the position can often be won. This position is a marginal case; it is a draw, but accurate defence is required.

1 ♖e4 ♜c6!

Allowing the pawn to advance by 1...♗d7? is a mistake; after 2 c6 ♗f6+ 3 ♖e5 ♗e8 4 ♖e2 ♗g6 5 ♖c4 ♗g7 6 ♖e6 ♗c7+ 7 ♗d7 ♗a8 8 ♗d6 ♗f6 9 ♖a6 ♗f7 10 ♖b7 ♗b6 11 c7 White wins.

2 ♗d5 ♗a5?

This move is natural but wrong. 2...♗b4+? is also bad due to 3 ♖c4 ♗a6 4 c6 ♗g7 5 ♖b5 ♗c7+ 6 ♖b6 ♗e8 7 ♖h5 ♗d6 8 c7 ♗f6 9 ♖g4 ♖e7 10 ♖c6, winning. The drawing line is 2...♗a7! 3 ♗d6 ♗g6! (not 3...♗g7? 4 ♖c6! ♗f6 5 ♖d7 ♗f7 6 ♖c7 ♖e7 7 ♖c6 ♖e6 8 ♖b7) 4 ♖c6 ♗f5! 5 ♖c7 ♖e5! and the king is in time.

3 ♖e5! (the surprising refutation of Black's play; White threatens ♖d5 immobilizing the knight) 3...♗g7 (or 3...♗c4+ 4 ♗d4 ♗a5 5 ♖c3 and White wins) 4 ♖d5! ♗g6 5 ♗d4 ♗f6 6 ♗c3 ♖e5 7 ♖h1 1-0

The attacker's main weapons are the possibility of trapping the knight (as in 34a) and zugzwang, as in this example.

1 ♖e4 ♗f1

Black could have drawn more simply by 1...♗g2 2 ♖d7+ ♖b4 3 f5 ♖c5 4 ♖e5 ♗h4 5 f6 ♗g6+ 6 ♖e6 ♗f8+ 7 ♖e7 ♗g6+ 8 ♖e8 ♗e5, but the text-move is not yet fatal.

2 ♖g6 ♖b4?

But this mistake is decisive. 2...♖b5! was correct, keeping open the option of moving to c6 or c5 later; after 3 ♗d3 (3 ♗d4 can now be met by 3...♖c6) 3...♖c5 4 ♖e2 ♗h2 5 ♖h5 (or 5 ♖f5 ♗d4 6 ♗f2 ♗f1!) 5...♗d5! (not 5...♗d4? 6 ♖f3! and White wins) 6 ♖f3+ ♗xf3 7 ♖xf3 ♖e6 Black draws the king and pawn vs king ending.

3 ♗d4!

Keeping the black king away for the moment.

3...♗g3

Or 3...♗d2 4 ♖d3 ♗b3+ 5 ♗d5 ♗c5 6 ♖b1 ♗b7 7 ♖g6 ♗c5 8 ♖e8! and White wins.

4 ♖e3 ♗f1+ 5 ♖e2 ♗h2 6 ♖h5 ♖c4 7 ♗f2 ♗d5

White also wins after 7...♗d4 8 ♖e2.

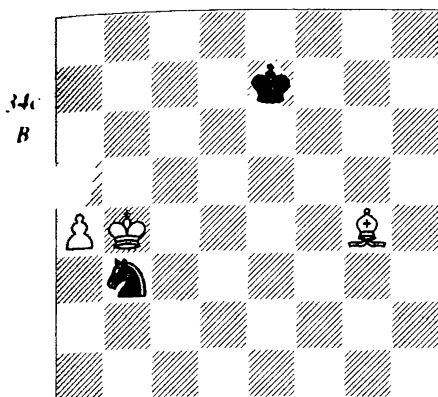
8 ♖e2 ♗d4 9 ♗g2!

But not 9 ♗g3? ♖e4 and it is White who is in zugzwang.

9...♖e3

After 9...♖e4 10 ♗g3 White has passed the move to Black, who is now in a fatal zugzwang.

10 f5 ♖xe2 11 ♖xh2 1-0



Delchev – Aloma Vidal
Balaguer 2007

Knights are notoriously poor at fighting against rook's pawns, and the attacker's chances increase when the pawn is near or on the edge of the board. In this position Black must defend accurately to draw, even though his king is relatively close to the pawn.

1...♖d4?

Obvious, but bad. The tricky drawing line is 1...♖c1! 2 ♖c5 (2 a5 ♖d6 3 ♖b5 ♖c7 and 2 ♖c3 ♖d6 3 ♖c2 ♖a2 are also drawn) 2...♗d3+! 3 ♖c6 (3 ♖b6 ♗b2 draws) 3...♗e5+ 4 ♖b7 (4 ♖c7 ♗xg4 5 a5 ♗f6 followed by ...♗d5+ draws) 4...♖d6! 5 a5 ♗d3! 6 ♖b6 ♗c5! and Black saves the game.

2 ♖c5 ♗b3+ 3 ♖b6?

Keeping the enemy king away is the main priority. White could have won by 3 ♖c6! ♗a5+ (or 3...♖d8 4 ♖b6 ♖e7 5 ♗d1 ♗d2 6 ♖c7 ♗c4 7 ♗b3) 4 ♖b6 ♗c4+ 5 ♖c7 ♗a5 (5...♖f6 6 ♗e2 ♗a5 7 ♖b6 ♗b3 8 ♗c4 is also a win for White) 6 ♗e2 ♖f6 7 ♖b6 ♗b3 8 ♗c4 ♗d2 9 ♗d5 ♖e5 10 ♖c5 ♗f1 11 a5 ♗e3 12 ♗c6 ♗c2 13 a6 and the pawn cannot be stopped.

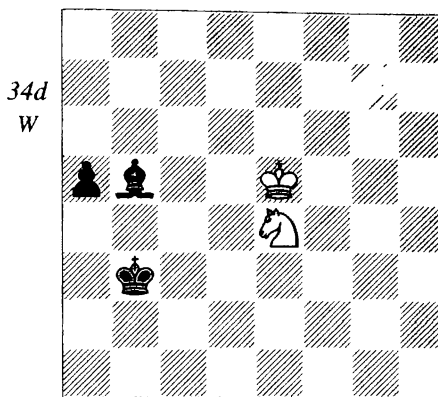
3...♖d6

Now Black can draw with accurate defence.

4 ♗d1 ♗c5 5 a5 ♗d7+ 6 ♖b7 ♗c5+ 7 ♖c8 ♗a6 8 ♗e2 ♗b4 9 ♖b7 ♖c5!

Not 9...♖d5? 10 ♖b6 ♖d6 11 ♗c4 ♖d7 12 ♖c5 and White wins.

10 ♗f1 ♖d6! 11 ♖b6 ♗d5+ 12 ♖b7 ♗b4 13 ♗b5 ♖c5 14 ♗e8 ♖d6 15 ♗h5 ♖c5 16 ♗e2 ♖d6 17 ♗c4 ♗c6 18 a6 ♗a5+ 19 ♖b8 ♗xc4 20 a7 ♗b6 21 ♖b7 ♗a8 1/2-1/2



J. Piket – Timman
The Hague rapid (1) 1995

This differs from the previous example in that Black has a rook's pawn plus wrong bishop combination. Therefore White will draw if he gets his king to a1, even if he loses his knight in the process.

1 ♗c5+?

The drawing line was 1 ♖d4 ♖b4 2 ♗c3 ♗c4 3 ♗a4!.

1...♖b4?

We have seen this type of mistake before. Black should have focused on keeping White's king at bay with 1...♖c4!, which wins after 2 ♖d6 ♗e8! 3 ♗e4 a4 4 ♖e5 a3 5 ♗d6+ ♖c5 6 ♗e4+ ♖b4.

2 ♖d4 ♗c4 3 ♗e4?

The simplest draw is 3 ♖e3! ♖xc5 4 ♖d2, giving up the knight to reach a1, although 3 ♗a4 is also adequate.

3...a4 4 ♗d2 ♗b3 5 ♗b1 ♗c2 6 ♗c3 a3 7 ♗a2+ ♖b3 8 ♗c3 ♗g6

Black starts to show signs of uncertainty. The most direct win is by 8...♗h7 9 ♗e2 ♖c2 10 ♗c3 ♗g8 and White is in zugzwang.

9 ♗e2 ♖b2 10 ♗c3 ♗e8?

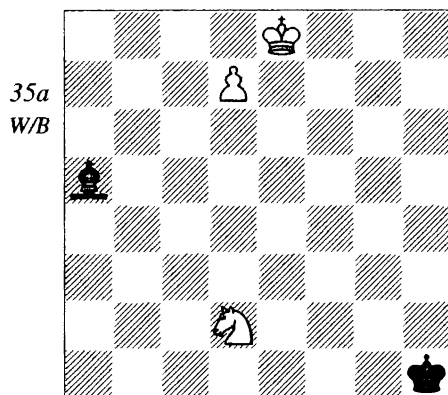
This allows White's king to cross to b4, after which it's a draw. Black could still win by 10...♗h7 11 ♖c4 ♗c2! 12 ♖d4 (or 12 ♖b4 ♗b3 with zugzwang) 12...♖b3 13 ♗e2 ♗h7 14 ♗c3 ♗f5 15 ♗e2 ♖c2 16 ♗c3 ♗e6 and again White falls into zugzwang.

11 ♖c4 ♗b5+

Or 11...♗f7+ 12 ♖d3!, but not 12 ♖b4? ♗b3.

12 ♖b4 ♗e2 13 ♗a4+ ♖a2 14 ♗c3+ 1/2-1/2

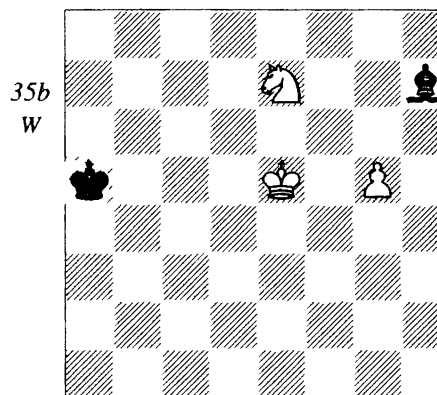
35 Knight and Pawn vs Bishop



Winning chances are relatively few with this material. Even when the defender's king is far away from the pawn, the bishop can hold up the enemy pawn at long range. Then the king and knight must manoeuvre to cut off the bishop from the blockading square, and this often gives the defender's king time to return. Indeed, if the pawn is not far advanced then the bishop can sometimes hold up the pawn without any help from the king (this is possible if both diagonals passing through the blockading square contain at least five squares). Even when the pawn is on the seventh rank and the defender's king is far away, some positions are still drawn. The above diagram is a marginal case.

White to play can win by 1 ♖b3 (the winning idea is to play the knight to e6 and the king to d6 or c6, when ♜c7 cannot be prevented; note that it is important for the knight to control d8; otherwise Black could switch his bishop to the other diagonal with ...♗d8) 1...♗b6 2 ♜c5 ♗g2 3 ♜e6 ♗a5 (Black gives himself a check on the a3-f8 diagonal; 3...♗f3 loses at once to 4 ♗e7 ♗e4 5 ♗d6) 4 ♗e7 ♗b4+ 5 ♗f6 ♗a5 6 ♗e5 ♗c3+ 7 ♗f5 (7 ♗d6 ♗f6 8 ♜d4 also wins, but is more complicated) 7...♗a5 8 ♗e4! (keeping the black king at bay and heading for c6) 8...♗g3 9 ♗d5 ♗g4 10 ♗c6 followed by ♜c7.

If Black is to play, he saves the game by 1...♗g2 2 ♜b3 ♗b6 3 ♜d4 ♗g3 4 ♜e6 ♗g4 5 ♗e7 ♗f5 6 ♗d6 ♗a5! (the check on b4 is essential) 7 ♜c7 ♗b4+ 8 ♗c6 (Black's king prevents the winning move ♗e6) 8...♗e7 with a draw.



Predojević – E. Romanov
World Junior Ch, Istanbul 2005

The winning chances increase when the pawn is near the edge of the board. The reason is that one of the diagonals passing through the blockading square in front of the pawn will be rather short, so the bishop may be restricted to just one diagonal in its fight to stop the pawn. This position is drawn, but requires careful play by Black.

1 ♗f6 ♗b6 2 ♜g6

A typical ploy to force the pawn to g7. The threat is ♗g7, so the bishop must move.

2...♗g8 3 ♜f8

This prevents the bishop from returning to h7. In order to draw Black needs his king.

3...♗c7?

3...♗c5! would have saved the game; for example, 4 ♗e7 ♗d5 5 g6 ♗e5 6 g7 ♗f5, 4 g6 ♗d6! 5 g7 ♗b3 6 ♜g6 ♗d7! 7 ♜e5+ ♗e8 or 4 ♗e5 ♗c6 5 g6 ♗c5 6 ♜d7+ ♗c6! 7 ♜f6 ♗b3 8 g7 ♗c4 9 ♗f5 ♗d6 and in each case the black king arrives back in time.

4 ♗e7!

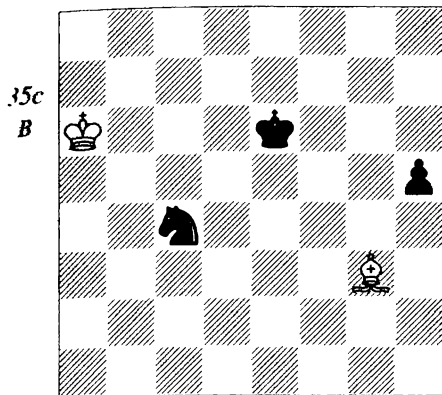
A common idea: keeping the enemy king away gives White time to improve his position.

4...♗c6 5 g6 ♗d5 6 ♜d7 ♗d4

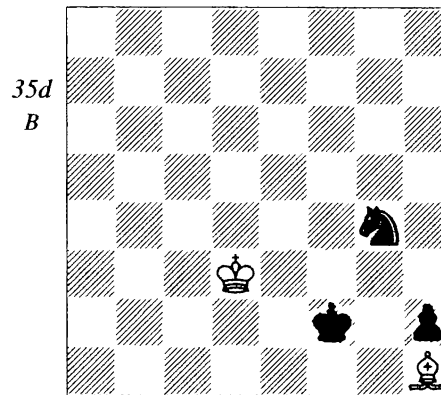
Or 6...♗e4 7 ♗f6 ♗f4 8 ♜e5! ♗b3 9 ♜f7 ♗c2 10 g7 ♗h7 11 ♜g5 ♗g8 12 ♗g6 ♗g4 13 ♜f7 ♗f4 14 ♜h6 ♗a2 15 ♜f7 and White wins.

7 ♗f6 ♗b3 8 ♜e5 ♗c2 9 g7 ♗h7 10 ♜f3+ 1-0

White wins after 10...♗e3 (or 10...♗d5 11 ♗f7) 11 ♜g5 ♗g8 12 ♗e7 ♗f4 13 ♗f8.



Gonzalez Zamora – Leon Hoyos
Aguascalientes 2007



Brito Garcia – Kurajica
Las Palmas 1994

The best chances of all are provided by a rook's pawn. Aided by the distant enemy king, this position is winning for Black, although high-quality play is necessary.

1...♟f5?

This allows the white king to take a more direct path back towards the kingside via b5 and c4. Black could have won by 1...♞d6!, and now:

1) 2 ♙h4 ♟f5 3 ♚e7 ♞c8! (it is remarkable that Black can win with his knight as far away as c8, but it can quickly move to g5 via d6 and f7) 4 ♙d8 ♟g4 5 ♟b5 (this gives Black a tempo with his knight, but otherwise the king cannot move towards the kingside) 5...♞d6+ 6 ♟c6 (Black also wins after 6 ♟c5? ♞b7+ and 6 ♟b4 ♞f7! 7 ♙f6 ♞g5) 6...♞f7 7 ♙e7 ♞g5 8 ♟d5 h4 9 ♟d4 h3 10 ♙d6 ♟f3 11 ♟d3 ♞e4 12 ♙h2 ♟g2 followed by ...♞g3 and Black wins.

2) 2 ♟b6 ♞e4 3 ♙h4 ♟f5 4 ♟c6 ♟g4 5 ♙e7 (or 5 ♙d8 ♞g5 6 ♟d5 h4) 5...♞g5 6 ♟d5 h4 transposing into line '1'.

2 ♟b5 ♟g4 3 ♙e1?

A serious error, because the bishop can easily be chased off the short e1-h4 diagonal by ...♞e5-d3. 3 ♙c7! (3 ♙b8? loses to 3...♞d2 as the bishop cannot control h4) is the only drawing move; after 3...♞d2 4 ♙d8 ♞e4 5 ♟c4 ♞g5 White can simply play 6 ♙xg5.

3...♞e5

3...♞e3 followed by ...♞f5-g3 also wins.

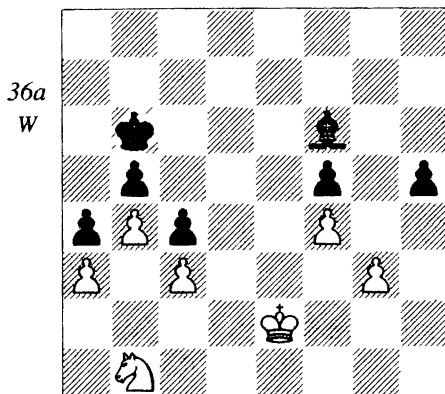
4 ♙c3 ♞f3 5 ♙f6 ♞g5 6 ♟c4 h4 7 ♟d3 h3 8 ♙e5 ♟f3 9 ♙h2 ♞e4 10 ♟d4 ♟g2 0-1

There is one situation with a rook's pawn which is worth examining carefully, because it is so often mishandled in practice, even by grandmasters (the above position is a case in point). It arises when the rook's pawn is on the seventh rank with the bishop defending on the long diagonal. The game continued **1...♟g1? 2 ♟e2 ♞f2** (2...♟xh1 3 ♟f1 is a draw; the knight cannot lose a tempo and so White's king cannot be driven away from the squares f1 and f2) **3 ♙b7 ♞h3 4 ♙h1 ♞f4+ 5 ♟e1 ♟xh1 6 ♟f2 1/2-1/2**.

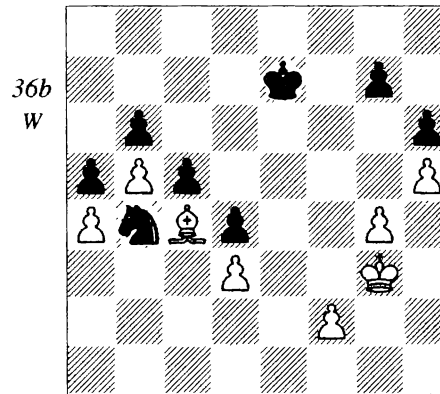
However, the diagram position is won provided Black is careful not to play ...♟g1 until the right moment. This moment only arises after some preliminary manoeuvres by the king and knight. Here's the winning method: **1...♞e5+** (the first step is to play the knight to the key square h4; this fixes the bishop on h1, because if it moves then ...♞g2 wins) **2 ♟d2** (or 2 ♟e4 ♞g6 and now 3 ♟f5 ♞h4+ 4 ♟g4 ♟g1 is an easy win, while 3 ♟d3 ♞h4 4 ♟d2 ♟f1 transposes to the main line) **2...♞g6 3 ♙b7 ♞h4 4 ♙h1 ♟f1!** (now White is in zugzwang) **5 ♟d1** (or 5 ♟e3 and now 5...♟g1! is the correct moment to put the king on g1 as White cannot reply ♟e1; after 6 ♟e2 ♞g2 White is in zugzwang – see the main line at move 8) **5...♞f5!** (now the bishop cannot move due to ...♞e3+ followed by ...♞g2) **6 ♟d2 ♟g1 7 ♟e1** (Black also wins after 7 ♙b7 ♞h4 or 7 ♟e2 ♞g3+) **7...♞h4 8 ♟e2 ♞g2** and White is in a fatal zugzwang. After **9 ♟f3 ♟xh1 10 ♟f2 ♞e3** White must release the black king.

36

The Dominant Bishop



Onoprienko – Khasangatin
Pardubice 1997



Topalov – Adams
Sarajevo 1999

Bishop and knight are of approximately equal value, but in the endgame, situations favouring the bishop are considerably more common than those favouring the knight. This position is perfect for the bishop: White's pawns are fixed on dark squares and so can be attacked by the bishop, and the knight is immobilized by the attack on the weak c3-pawn. Nevertheless there is no immediate win for Black, who must still work for the full point.

1 ♖d2 ♜c6 2 ♜e2

White cannot free his knight by 2 ♜c2 ♖d5 3 ♖d2, since 3...h4 4 gxh4 ♜xh4 wins the f4-pawn.

2...♖d5 3 ♜e3 ♜g7 4 ♖f3 ♜h8 5 ♜e3 ♜g7 6 ♖f3 ♜f6 7 ♜e3 h4

After some aimless bishop moves, Black takes the next step in the winning process, opening an avenue for his king on the kingside.

8 gxh4 ♜xh4 9 ♖f3 ♜f6 10 ♜e3 ♜e6 11 ♖f3 (or 11 ♖d2 ♖f7 12 ♜c2 ♖g6 13 ♖d2 ♖h5 followed by ...♖g4) **11...♖f7 12 ♖g3 ♖g6 13 ♖h3 ♖h5 14 ♖g3** (the next step is to transfer the bishop to c1, where it attacks both a3 and f4; this will restrict both White's pieces) **14...♜e7 15 ♖h3 ♜h4 16 ♖d2 ♜e1 17 ♖b1 ♜f2 18 ♖g2 ♜e3 19 ♖f3 ♜c1 20 ♖g3 ♖g6! 0-1**

The final step is to triangulate so as to transfer the move to White: after 21 ♖f3 ♖h6 22 ♖g3 ♖h5 White is in zugzwang and will soon lose a pawn (for example, after 23 ♖f3 ♖h4).

This example greatly favours White. Black's queenside majority is crippled, while White can make a passed pawn on the kingside. However, the main point is that the bishop is much stronger than the knight. Black's knight can only hop around making trivial threats, but is perpetually dominated by the bishop.

1 ♖f4 ♖c2 2 ♜e5 ♖a3

Threatening ...♖xc4, but White can easily avoid this. 2...♖e1 3 f4 ♖f3+ 4 ♖d5 ♖d7 5 ♜b3 is also very unpleasant for Black.

3 ♜b3 ♖b1 4 f4 ♖d2 5 ♜d5

Black takes two moves to make a threat that White can sidestep in one move.

5...♖f1 6 g5 ♖g3 7 ♜f3

Again the bishop easily nullifies the knight.

7...♖f1 8 gxh6

8 ♖d5 was simpler, but this is also good.

8...gxh6 9 f5 ♖e3 10 f6+ ♖f7 11 ♜e2!

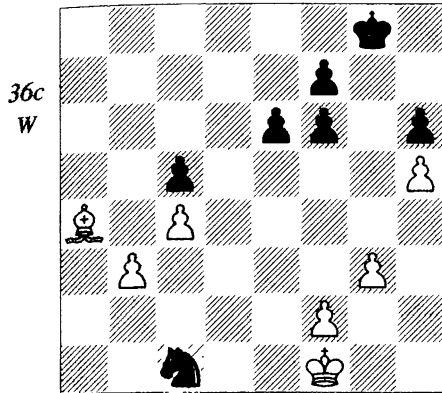
The first of a number of zugzwangs. If Black moves his king, White wins by ♖d6; otherwise, White can transfer his bishop to a better square.

11...♖g2 12 ♜g4 ♖e3 13 ♜e6+ ♖f8 14 ♜b3 ♖g4+ 15 ♖f5 ♖f2 16 ♜c4 ♖d1 17 ♜b3 ♖f2 17...♖b2 18 ♜c2 c4 19 dxc4 ♖xc4 20 ♖g6 also wins for White.

18 ♜c2! ♖f7 19 ♜b1

After a slight waste of time, White finds the correct path and again puts Black in zugzwang.

19...♖f8 20 ♖g6 ♖g4 21 ♜a2 ♖e5+ 22 ♖xh6 ♖xd3 23 ♖g5 1-0



Salov – Karpov
Buenos Aires 1994

Domination of the knight and zugzwang of-ten go hand in hand.

1 b4! ♖f8

After 1...cxb4 2 c5 the pawn is unstoppable.

2 b5! ♜e7 3 ♙c2

Preventing the knight from escaping via d3.

3...f5

After 3...♘a2 4 g4! White will eventually create a passed h-pawn with f4 and g5.

4 ♜e1 ♘a2 5 ♜d2 ♖b4 6 ♙b1

Now Black's knight is totally immobilized.

6...♜d6 7 ♜e2 ♜e5 8 ♜e3 ♜f6

After 8...f6 9 f3 ♜d6 10 ♜f4 ♜e7 the sacrifice 11 ♙xf5! exf5 12 ♜xf5 wins, much as in the game; for example, 12...♘c2 13 b6 ♘e3+ 14 ♜f4! ♘g2+ 15 ♜e4 ♜d6 16 b7 ♜c7 17 ♜f5 ♘e3+ 18 ♜xf6 ♘xc4 19 g4 ♘d6 20 g5 c4 21 gxh6 c3 22 h7 ♘e8+ 23 ♜g6 c2 24 h8 ♜c1 ♜25 b8 ♜+ ♜xb8 26 ♜xe8+ is hopeless for Black.

9 ♜f4 ♜e7

Or 9...e5+ 10 ♜e3 ♜g5 11 f3 f6 12 ♜f2 ♜xh5 13 ♙xf5 and White's king can penetrate via d5.

10 ♜e5

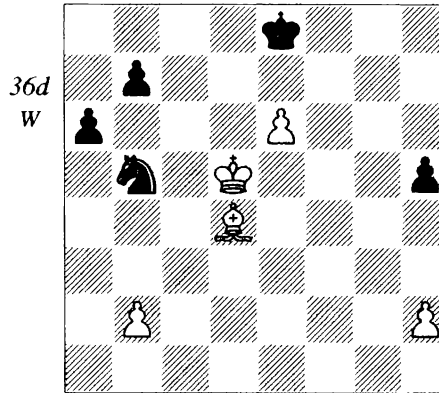
Now Black is in zugzwang and must weaken his pawn-structure.

10...f6+ 11 ♜f4 ♜f7 12 b6 ♘c6 13 b7 ♜e7 14 ♙xf5! ♜d6

White also wins after 14...exf5 15 ♜xf5 ♜f7 16 g4 ♘d4+ 17 ♜e4 ♘c6 18 ♜d5.

15 ♙e4 ♘b8 16 ♙g6 ♜c7 17 ♙f7 ♜d6 18 ♙e8 ♜e7 19 ♙b5 ♜d6 20 ♜e4 ♜c7 21 g4 1-0

After 21...♜xb7 22 f4 ♜c7 23 g5 the passed h-pawn will be decisive.



Gelfand – Korchnoi
Dos Hermanas 1999

Here's another example of the bishop dominating the knight. White's next move takes away the last square from Black's knight.

1 ♙b6!

Now Black can only move his king.

1...♜e7 2 ♜e5 ♜e8 3 h3! ♜e7 4 h4 ♜e8

Thanks to White's cunning pawn hesitation, Black must now allow White's king to f6.

5 ♜f6 ♘d6

Black takes the chance to activate his knight.

6 ♜g6 ♘c4

After 6...♜e7 7 ♙c5 ♜xe6 8 ♙xd6! ♜xd6 White wins the pawn ending; e.g., 9 ♜xh5 ♜e7 10 ♜g6 ♜f8 11 ♜f6 a5 12 ♜e6 ♜g7 13 ♜d6.

7 ♙c5!

This prevents Black from activating his king and threatens ♜xh5. The immediate 7 ♙d4 ♜e7 8 ♜xh5 ♜xe6 9 ♜g6 ♘d6 is less clear.

7...b6

The only move, since 7...♘b2 8 ♜xh5 ♘d3 (or 8...b6 9 ♜g6 ♘d3 10 ♙d6 ♘f2 11 h5 ♘g4 12 ♜g5 and White wins) 9 ♙d6 b5 10 ♜g5 b4 11 h5 is a clear win, but now the b6-pawn is vulnerable.

8 ♙d4 ♜e7 9 ♜xh5 ♜xe6 10 ♜g6 ♘d6 11 ♙xb6

Picking off the pawn which was lured to b6 at move 7.

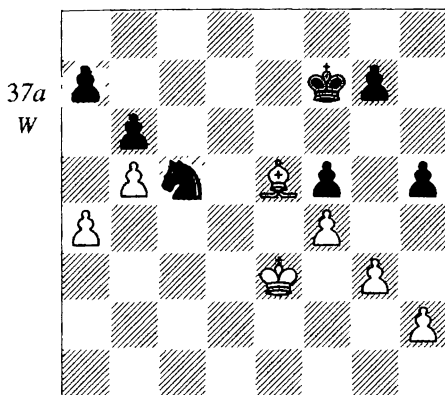
11...♘f5 12 h5

12 ♙d8 followed by h5 wins at once, but this also suffices for victory.

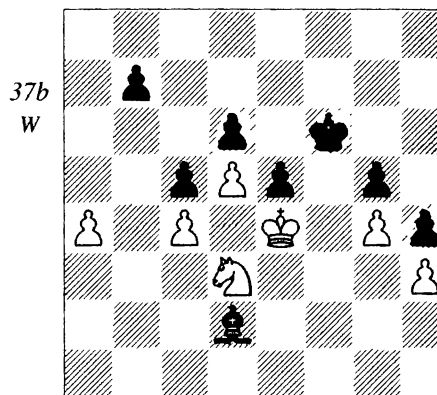
12...♘e7+ 13 ♜g7 ♘f5+ 14 ♜g6 ♘h4+ 15 ♜g7 ♘f5+ 16 ♜f8 ♜f6 17 ♙d8+ ♜e6 18 ♜g8 ♘h6+ 19 ♜g7 ♘f7 20 ♙c7 1-0

37

Bishop or Knight?



Kasparov – Salov
USSR Ch, Moscow 1988



Nunn – T. Upton
Ramsgate 1982

In the previous section we saw some positions in which there was play across the whole board, which favours the bishop since it can easily operate at long range. However, even in symmetrical positions the power of the bishop should not be underestimated. Here Black must take care as his queenside pawns are stuck on dark squares.

1 ♖d4 ♜xa4?

The correct path was 1...♗e6! 2 ♙b8 (after 2 ♙xg7 ♜xa4 3 ♙f8 ♜b2 4 ♙a3 ♜d1 the knight escapes via the kingside) 2...a5 3 bxa6 ♜xa6 4 ♙a7 ♜c5 with a draw.

2 ♙b8 ♗e6 3 ♙xa7 g6

The critical line is 3...♗d7 4 ♗e5! ♗c7 5 ♗xf5 ♜c3 6 ♗g6 ♜xb5 7 ♙xb6+ ♗xb6 8 ♗xh5 ♗c7 9 ♗g6 ♗d7 10 ♗xg7 ♜d4 11 ♗f6 ♗e8 12 f5 ♗f8 13 h3! (zugzwang) 13...♗g8 14 h4 ♜f3 15 h5 ♜h2 16 ♗e7 ♜g4 17 f6 ♜h6 18 g4 and White wins. Also 3...♗d6 4 ♙b8+ ♗e6 5 ♗c4 ♗d7 6 ♙e5 g6 7 ♙d4 offers Black no hope.

4 ♗c4 h4 5 gxf4?!

5 ♗b4! is simpler.

5...♜b2+?! (5...♗d6 6 ♗b4 ♜c5 7 ♙xb6 ♜d3+ 8 ♗c4 ♜xf4 offers more resistance, although 9 ♙f2 ♜e6 10 ♙g3+ f4 11 ♙f2 ♗e5 12 b6 ♜d8 13 ♗c5 ♜b7+ 14 ♗c6 ♜a5+ 15 ♗c7 f3 16 ♗d7 wins in the end) 6 ♗c3 ♜a4+ 7 ♗b4 ♜c5 8 ♙xb6 ♜d3+ 9 ♗c4 ♜xf4 10 ♙f2 ♜h3 11 ♙a7 ♗d7 12 ♗d5 ♜f4+ 13 ♗e5 ♜h5 14 ♙c5 f4 15 ♙f2 ♗e7 16 ♗e4 ♗e6 17 ♙d4 ♗d6 18 ♗f3 ♗d5 19 b6 1-0

The bishop doesn't always defeat the knight. The bishop's weakness, that it can only reach half the squares on the board, is exacerbated when it is a 'bad' bishop, in other words when it is restricted by its own pawns. Here all but one of Black's pawns are fixed on dark squares. Even though Black is a pawn up he must take care.

1 ♗f3

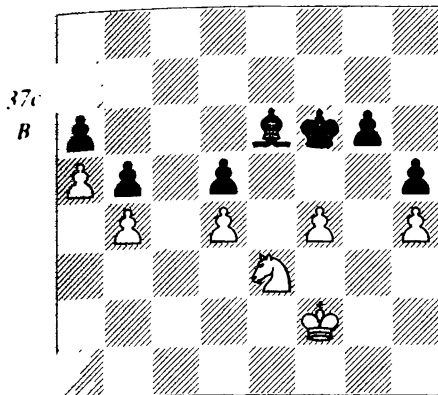
Clearing e4 for the knight.

1...♙a5?

Passive defence doesn't work; for example, 1...♙f4 2 ♜f2 ♙c1? 3 ♜e4+ ♗e7 4 ♜c3! ♙f4 5 ♜b5 ♗d7 6 ♗e4 ♙c1 (or 6...♙d2 7 ♗f5 ♗e7 8 ♜c7! ♗f7 9 ♜e6 e4 10 ♗xe4 ♗f6 11 ♜d8 b6 12 ♜e6 ♙c3 13 ♜c7 ♙d2 14 ♜b5 ♙f4 15 ♜a7 ♙d2 16 ♜c8 and White wins) 7 ♗f5 ♙d2 8 ♜a3! ♗c7 (8...♗e7 9 ♜b1 ♙f4 10 ♜c3 ♗f7 11 ♜e4 ♗e7 12 ♜xg5 ♙xg5 13 ♗xg5 wins for White) 9 ♜b1 ♙f4 10 ♜c3 ♗b6 11 ♜e4 ♗a5 12 ♜xd6 and Black has no chance.

The correct defence is 1...e4+! 2 ♗xe4 b6, which allows the bishop to defend the d6- and g5-pawns from f4. After 3 ♜b2 ♙f4 4 ♜d1 ♙d2! Black draws, as he can always prevent the knight from reaching b5.

2 ♜f2 ♙c7 3 ♜e4+ ♗g6 4 a5! ♗h6 5 ♗e3 ♗g6 6 ♗d3 ♗g7 7 ♗c2 ♗f8 8 ♗b3 ♙xa5 (or 8...♗g7 9 ♗a4 ♗g6 10 ♗b5 ♗h6 11 a6 bxa6+ 12 ♗xa6 ♗g6 13 ♗b7 ♙d8 14 ♜xd6 and White wins) 9 ♜xd6 ♙b6 10 ♜e4 ♙d8 11 ♜xc5 b6 12 ♜d7+ 1-0



Khalifman – Barua

FIDE Knockout (rapid), Las Vegas 1999

The result in 'bad bishop' positions often depends on whether the attacker's king can penetrate (see also 100b). This position should be a draw, but only if Black finds the correct plan.

1...♟f7?

Black must be ready to meet f5 by ...g5, so 1...♟f7! 2 ♟g3 ♟g8! was correct. Then 3 f5? g5! favours Black, so White cannot make progress.

2 ♟g3 ♟g7

2...♟f6 3 f5! is similar to the game.

3 f5!

This pawn sacrifice has three benefits: it seals in Black's bishop completely, breaks up Black's kingside pawns and, most importantly, opens a path for the white king.

3...♟xf5 4 ♟f4 ♟f6 5 ♖c2

The knight is heading to d3, from where it can jump to c5 or f4.

5...♟d7 6 ♖e1 ♟c8 7 ♖d3 ♟e6

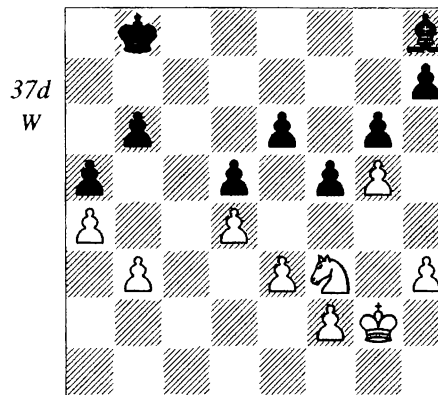
White also wins after 7...♟b7 8 ♟f3 ♟g6 9 ♖f4+ ♟h6 10 ♟e3 (zugzwang) 10...♟c6 11 ♖e6 ♟b7 12 ♟f4 ♟g6 13 ♟e5 and his king penetrates.

8 ♟f3 ♟e7

Or 8...♟g7 9 ♟g3! (now Black is in zugzwang) 9...♟f6 10 ♖c5 ♟c8 11 ♟f4 and the second zugzwang is decisive.

9 ♟g3 ♟f6 10 ♖c5 ♟c8 11 ♟f4 ♟g6 12 ♟e5 f4 13 ♟xf4 ♟f6 14 ♟g3 ♟g7 15 ♟f3 ♟g6 16 ♖d3 ♟g4+ 17 ♟e3 ♟e6 18 ♖f4+ ♟f5 19 ♖xh5 ♟g4 20 ♖f4 ♟f7 21 ♖d3 ♟e6 22 ♖c5 ♟c8 23 h5 1-0

After 23...♟xh5 24 ♟f4 ♟g6 25 ♟e5 Black's pawns will rapidly fall.



Gelfand – Malakhov

Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2005

Here Black's bishop, although theoretically 'good', is poorly placed on h8 and is seriously impeded by White's central pawns. In addition, Black's king is far away and there is a weak square on e5; taken together, all these factors give White a decisive advantage.

1 h4 ♟c7 2 h5 gxh5

Forced, or else hxg6 followed by ♖h4 wins.

3 ♟g3 ♟g7 4 ♟h4 ♟d6 5 ♟xh5 ♟f8

White also wins after 5...♟e7 6 ♖e5 ♟d6 (or 6...♟e8 7 g6 hxg6+ 8 ♟xg6) 7 f4 ♟e7 8 g6, much as in the game.

6 ♖e5

The immediate 6 g6! hxg6+ 7 ♟xg6 ♟e7 8 ♖g5 is a simpler win.

6...♟g7 7 ♖d3 ♟e7 8 ♖e5 ♟d6

Or 8...♟e8 9 g6 h6 10 ♖f7 and White wins.

9 f4! ♟e7

9...♟f8 10 g6 hxg6+ 11 ♟xg6 ♟e7 12 ♖f7+ ♟d7 13 ♖g5 followed by ♟f7 is decisive.

10 g6 hxg6+

After 10...h6 11 ♖f7 ♟f6 12 ♖xh6 ♟e7 13 ♖f7 ♟d7 14 ♟g5 ♟e7 15 ♖e5 White wins by playing his knight around to h5.

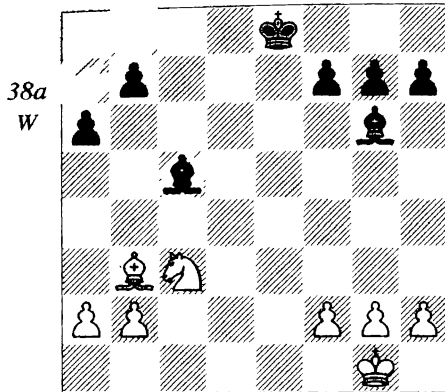
11 ♟xg6 ♟h8

Or 11...♟f8 12 ♖f3 ♟d7 13 ♖g5 ♟b4 14 ♟f6 ♟d2 15 ♖xe6 ♟xe3 16 ♟e5 and White wins.

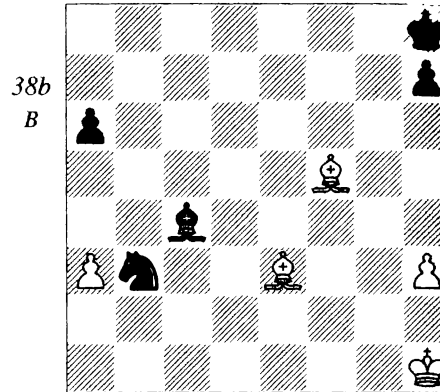
12 ♖f7 ♟f6 13 ♖g5 ♟h8 14 ♖h7 ♟e8 15 ♖f6+ ♟f8 16 ♖h5 ♟g8 17 ♟h6 1-0

After 17...♟f7 18 ♟h7 ♟f6 19 ♖xf6 ♟xf6 the pawn ending is winning; for example, 20 ♟g8 ♟e7 21 ♟g7 ♟e8 22 ♟f6 ♟d7 23 ♟f7 ♟d6 24 ♟e8 and Black's pawns will fall.

38 Two Bishops vs Bishop and Knight



Krasenkow – Vallejo Pons
Spanish Team Ch, Lugo 2006



Ye Rongguang – Nunn
World Team Ch, Lucerne 1989

Two bishops are often a powerful force in the endgame. They have the long-range power of a single bishop, but without the lone bishop's weakness of only being able to reach half the squares on the board. In a wide-open position such as this, they are considerably stronger than a bishop and a knight.

1 ♖d5 b6 2 ♜b7 a5 3 ♜e4?!

3 ♜f1 is better, trying to activate the king.

3...♗d4 4 b3 ♜d7 5 a4 ♜c7 6 ♗d5 f5 7 ♜g5

After 7 ♜d2 ♜d6 the king is ready to advance to c5 and then b4.

7...♗f6?!

7...♜d6 8 ♗c4 h6 9 ♜e6 ♗f6 10 ♜f4 ♗e8 is slightly more accurate.

8 ♜h3?

8 f4 ♜d6 9 ♗c4 h6 10 ♜f3 ♗e8 11 ♜f2 would have offered defensive chances.

8...♜d6 9 ♗g8 ♗e8 10 ♜f4

10 ♗xh7 ♗f7 11 ♗xf5 ♗xb3 is hopeless, as Black obtains two connected passed pawns.

10...g5 11 ♜d3 b5! 12 axb5

Or 12 ♗xh7 bxa4 13 bxa4 ♗xa4 14 ♗xf5 ♗c2, followed by the advance of the a-pawn.

12...♗xb5 13 ♜e1

Black also wins after 13 ♜c1 ♗b2 14 ♜a2 h6, followed by ...♗d3-b1.

13...♗c3 14 ♜c2 ♗d3 15 ♜a3 ♜c5 16 ♜c4 0-1

After 16...f4 White has no reasonable defence to the deadly threat of ...a4.

Even when material is limited, the two bishops can dominate on an open board. The problem here is the same as in 38a: the knight gets chased around and can never find a decent square to settle on.

1...♜g7 2 ♜g2 ♗d5+ 3 ♜g3 ♜a5 4 ♗d4+ ♜g8 5 ♜f4 ♜c4

Or 5...♜c6 6 ♗c3 ♗c4 7 ♜g5, heading towards the weak h-pawn.

6 ♗c5 ♜g7 7 h4 ♜g8 8 ♜g5 ♜e5 9 ♜f6 ♜f3 10 ♗f2

A typical situation. Wherever the knight goes, its influence is easily constrained by the enemy bishops.

10...♗b3

After 10...♜d2 11 ♗a7 ♜c4 12 a4 ♜b2 13 ♗d4 ♜xa4 14 ♗c2 the knight is trapped and White wins by a direct attack on the king; e.g., 14...♗c6 15 ♜e7 h5 16 ♗b3+ ♜h7 17 ♜f7 and Black must give up a piece to avoid mate.

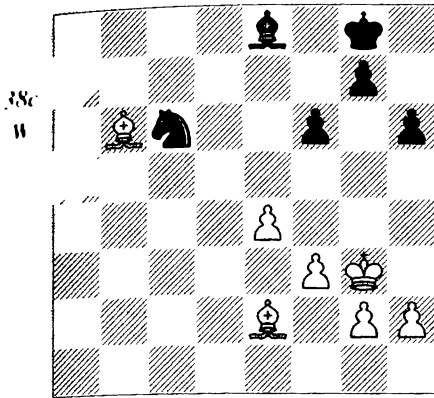
11 ♗g4 ♗d5 12 a4 ♜d2 13 ♗e1 ♜f3 14 ♗g3 ♜d2 15 a5

White's plan is to improve his position as much as possible, and then march his king to the queenside to win the a6-pawn.

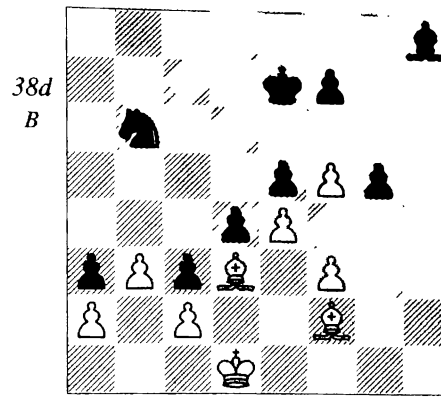
15...♗c4 16 ♗e1 ♜b3

Or 16...♜f1 17 ♗f3 ♜e3 18 ♗d2 ♜d5+ 19 ♜e5 ♜e7 20 ♗e4, followed by ♜d4-c5-b6.

17 ♗c3 ♜c5 18 ♜e5 ♜b3 19 ♜d6 ♜f7 20 ♗h5+ ♜g8 21 ♜c6 ♜f8 22 ♗b4+ ♜g7 23 ♜b6 ♜f6 24 ♗g4 ♜c1 25 ♗c8 ♜d3 26 ♗a3 1-0



Ivanchuk – Kariakin
Wijk aan Zee 2006



Nunn – Stohl
Dortmund 1991

This would almost certainly be a draw with a bishop against either a bishop or a knight, but two bishops can do what one cannot. Note how useless Black's knight is in the subsequent play.

1 ♖f4 ♜e5 2 ♙c7 ♙d7 3 ♜e3!

Not 3 ♙xe5? g5+ 4 ♜e3 fxe5 with a draw.

3...♜f8 4 ♙d4

At the moment White's pawns are secure, so he advances his king as far as possible before undertaking any irreversible commitment.

4...♜f7 5 ♙a5 ♜e5 6 ♙b4+ ♜e8 7 ♜c5 ♜g6 8 ♙d2 ♜e5 9 ♙d6 ♙a4 10 f4

The constriction process begins, with White gradually gaining space by pushing his pawns.

10...♜f7+ 11 ♜c7 ♙d7 12 ♙b4 ♙a4 13 ♙c4 ♜h8 14 g3 ♜f7 15 h4 ♜h8 16 ♙d6 ♜g6

16...♜f7 17 e5 fxe5 18 fxe5 ♜d8 19 e6 ♜c6 20 ♙c5 h5 21 ♙e2 g6 22 ♙d6 is an easy win.

17 ♙e2 ♜h8

Or 17...♙b3 18 ♙h5 ♙f7 19 ♙c5 and Black is in zugzwang; White wins after 19...♜h8 20 ♙g4 ♙c4 21 e5.

18 ♙c4

White need not hurry and simply returns to the previous position.

18...♜g6 19 e5!

This breakthrough is decisive.

19...fxe5 20 fxe5 ♜e7 21 e6 g6

Or 21...♜f5 22 ♙d3 ♜e7 23 ♙c5 ♜d5+ 24 ♙d6 ♜e7 25 ♙d4 and White wins.

22 ♙c5 ♜f5 23 ♙d3 ♜e7

23...h5 loses to 24 g4 hxg4 25 h5.

24 ♙d6 h5 25 ♜e5 ♜f5 26 ♜f6 ♙c6 27 e7

1-0

Finally, a nightmare for the bishops. In this blocked position, all three bishops are severely restricted and Black's possession of the one really effective minor piece proves decisive.

1...♜d7

Heading for b4.

2 ♜e2

Passive defence loses in the end; e.g., 2 ♜c1 ♜b8 3 ♙b5 ♙d6 4 ♙e8 f6 5 ♙b5 ♜c5 6 ♙e2 ♜c6 7 ♙c4 ♜b4 8 ♜b1 ♙g7 9 ♙g3 ♙f8 10 ♙f2 ♜b6 11 ♙g3 ♙c5 12 ♙e1 ♜c6 13 ♙f1 ♙d6 14 ♙e2 ♜e7 15 ♙f1 ♜f7 16 ♙e2 ♜g7 17 ♙f1 ♜h6 18 ♙e2 g4! 19 fxg4 ♜g5 20 ♙g3 ♙b6 21 ♙d1 d3 22 cxd3 ♙d4 and Black will win.

2...♜b8 3 ♙b5 ♙d6 4 b4

So as to defend the a2-pawn with the bishop.

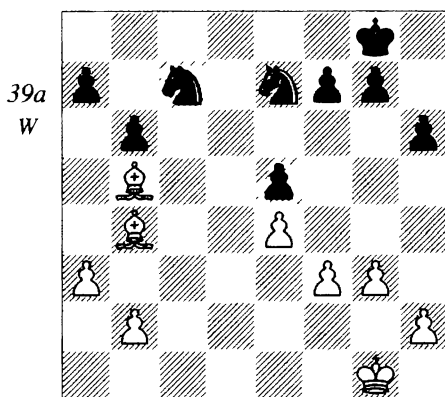
4...♜c6 5 ♙c4

After 5 ♙xc6 ♜xc6 Black takes the b4-pawn, plays ...♙g7-f8-c5 and then penetrates with his king on the kingside.

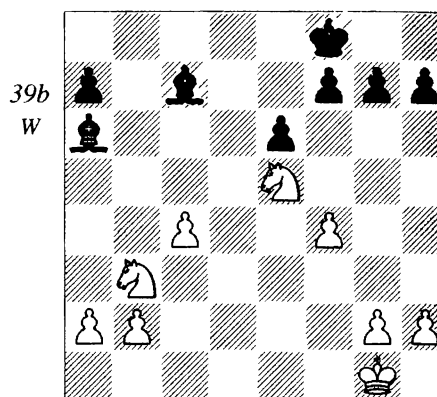
5...♜xb4

Black wasted considerable time but won in the end: 6 ♙d1 ♜e7 7 ♙g3 f6 8 ♙e1 ♙g7 9 ♙b3 ♙h6 10 ♙f2 ♜a6?! 11 ♙d5 ♜c5 12 ♙g1 ♜a4 13 ♙b3 ♜b2+?! 14 ♜e2 ♙d6 15 ♙f2 ♜c5 16 ♙e1 ♜b4 17 ♙f2 ♜a4 18 ♙d5 ♜c5 19 ♙d1 ♙f8 20 ♙g1 ♜a4 21 ♙f2 ♙c5 22 ♙e1 ♙b6 23 ♜e2 ♜c5 24 ♙f2 ♜a6 25 ♙e1 ♜b5 26 ♙d1 ♜b4 27 ♙b3 d3! 28 ♙xc3 (28 cxd3 ♙d4 also wins for Black) 28...dxc2+ 29 ♙xc2 ♜xa2 30 ♙d3+ ♜c5 31 ♙e1 ♜b4 32 ♙b1 ♜c4 33 ♙xb4 ♜xb4 34 ♜c2 ♜c4 35 ♙a2+ ♙d4 36 ♙f7 g4 37 fxg4 ♜xe4 0-1 as 38 ♜c3 ♜f4 39 ♙c4 e4 40 ♜b3 ♜xg4 wins easily for Black.

39 Two Bishops vs Two Knights



Shirov – Onishchuk
Tilburg 1997



J. Polgar – Shirov
Prague (6) 1999

On a reasonably open board, two bishops are much stronger than two knights. In this position Black's knights are sidelined by the power of the bishops, and White soon wins a queenside pawn.

1 ♖d7! ♜g6 2 ♖d6 ♜e6

2...♜f8 3 ♖c6 costs Black a pawn, while 2...♜a6? 3 b4 traps a knight.

3 ♖b8 ♜c5

Or 3...a6 4 ♖c8 ♜d4 5 ♖f2 a5 6 ♖c7 and the pawns start to fall.

4 ♖h3 a5 5 ♖a7 ♜a4 6 b3 ♜c5 7 b4 axb4 8 axb4 ♜a6

Black also loses a pawn after 8...♜d3 9 b5 or 8...♜a4 9 ♖d7.

9 b5 ♜c7 10 ♖d7 ♖f8

10...♜f8 11 ♖c6 doesn't help Black.

11 ♖xb6 ♖e7

White has won a pawn and the rest is not difficult.

12 ♖c6 ♖d6 13 ♖xc7+

13 ♖a5 is also very good, but White decides that one bishop will be enough.

13...♖xc7 14 ♖e8 ♜h8 15 ♖f2 ♖d8 16 b6! ♖c8 17 ♖c6

Black's knight remains ineffective.

17...♜g6 18 ♖e3 ♜e7 19 ♖d5 ♖b8

Or 19...♜xd5+ 20 exd5 ♖b7 21 ♖e4 f6 22 ♖f5 ♖xb6 23 d6 and White wins.

20 ♖d3 ♜c8 21 ♖c4 1-0

21...♜xb6+ 22 ♖c5 ♜xd5 23 ♖xd5 ♖c7 24 ♖xe5 is a winning king and pawn ending.

The position is roughly balanced: Black has two active bishops and a slight initiative, while White has an extra pawn.

1 c5

After 1 ♜d4 ♖xe5 2 fxe5 ♖xc4 3 b3 or 1 ♜c5 ♖xe5 2 ♜d7+ ♖e8 3 ♜xe5 f6 4 ♜c6 ♖xc4 5 b3 ♖d3 6 ♜xa7 the game should be a draw, but White has done nothing wrong yet.

1...g5 2 ♜c6 gxf4 3 a4?

However, this is a serious error. 3 ♜xa7? ♖e5 4 ♖f2 ♖xb2 5 c6 ♖e5 is also bad, but 3 ♜bd4! e5 4 ♜c2 ♖c4 5 b3 maintains the balance.

3...♖c4! 4 ♜d2 ♖d5 5 ♜xa7 ♖a5 6 ♜b1

The knights have been driven to the edge of the board and after the loss of the c5-pawn White won't even have an extra pawn to balance the power of the bishops.

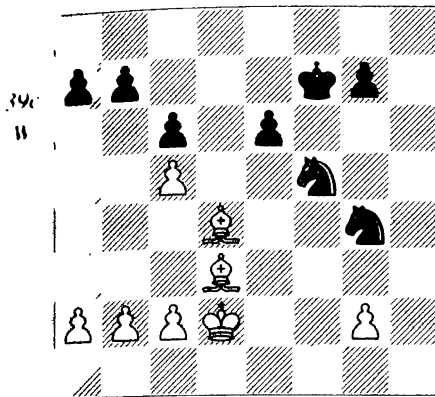
6...♖b4 7 ♜b5 ♖xc5+ 8 ♖f1 f3

Black secures two connected passed pawns.

9 gxf3 ♖xf3 10 ♜d2 ♖d5 11 ♖e2 ♖e7 12 ♖d3 f5 13 ♜c3 ♖b7 14 ♖c4 ♖e3 15 ♖d3 ♖g1 16 b4 ♖xh2 17 b5 h5 18 a5 h4 19 ♖e2

Or 19 a6 ♖g2 20 ♜c4 h3 21 b6 ♖b8 and Black wins.

19...h3 20 a6 ♖g2 21 ♖f2 ♖d6 22 ♜f3 ♖c5+ 23 ♖g3 f4+ 24 ♖g4 (24 ♖xf4 h2 25 ♜xh2 ♖d6+ 26 ♖e3 ♖xh2 27 ♖f2 ♖h1 28 b6 ♖d7 stops the pawns and wins) **24...♖g1 25 b6 ♖xf3+ 26 ♖xf3 h2 27 ♖g2 f3+ 0-1.** The end might be 28 ♖h1 f2 29 a7 f1♖ 30 a8♖ ♖e3+ 31 ♖xh2 ♖f4#.



Narciso Dublan – Jobava
Barcelona 2008

The position is approximately equal, with the two bishops being balanced by White's doubled pawn and Black's central passed pawn.

1 c3 ♖g6

1...♟xd4 2 cxd4 ♜f6 is a safe draw, but Black decides to maintain the tension.

2 b4 e5 3 ♗g1

Likewise, 3 ♗e2 exd4 4 ♗xg4 dxc3+ 5 ♜xc3 would have led to a quick handshake, but both players are trying to win.

3...♜g5 4 b5 ♟f6 5 b6 a5

An ambitious move which allows White's bishop to reach e6.

6 ♗c4 ♟e7 7 ♗e6 ♟fd5 8 g3 ♜f6 9 ♗d7?

A serious error losing a vital tempo. After 9 ♗h3! White would not be worse, since 9...♟f5 10 g4 ♟f4 11 ♗f1 ♟h4? allows 12 ♗a6!.

9...♜f7! 10 ♜d3 ♟f6 11 ♗h3 g5!

Now the light-squared bishop gets shut out of the game.

12 ♗f2 g4 13 ♗g2 ♟f5 14 a4 ♟g7 15 ♗f1 ♟e6

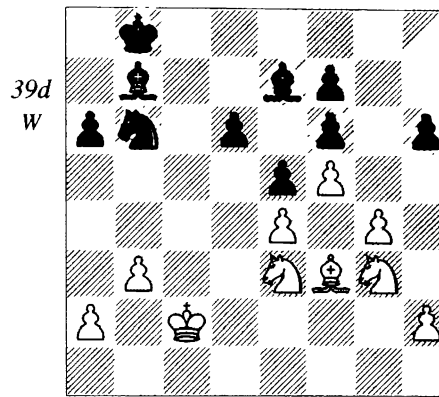
White's bishops are impotent and Black has taken hold of the initiative.

16 ♗e2 ♜g6 17 ♗d1 ♜f5 18 ♗c2 e4+ 19 ♜c4 ♟g5

19...♟d5! 20 ♗d4 ♟ef4! 21 gxf4 ♜xf4 was even more forceful.

20 ♗e3 ♟f3 21 ♜b3?! ♟h5 22 ♗f2 ♟d2+ 23 ♜b2 ♟f1 24 ♗b3 e3 25 ♗e1 ♟fxg3 26 ♗f7 ♟f6 27 ♗e8 0-1

This ends the game at once, but even 27 ♗xg3 ♟e4 28 ♗e1 g3 is an easy win for Black.



Bacrot – Chabanon
French Ch, Aix les Bains 2003

When there are more minor pieces, similar principles hold. Here Black has the two bishops, but White's positional advantages are far more important: the d5-square is weak, Black has a backward d-pawn and doubled f-pawns, and White has a mobile queenside pawn majority. Additionally, Black has severe problems with his dark-squared bishop. In the game, he tries to activate it via b6, but doesn't succeed.

1 ♟e2

Heading for c3 to keep an eye on d5.

1...♗d8 2 ♟c3 ♟d7

Or 2...♗c6 3 ♗e2 ♜b7 4 ♟c4 ♟xc4 5 ♗xc4 ♗e8 6 b4 and the queenside majority starts to make its presence felt.

3 ♟c4

By attacking d6, White prevents Black's intended ...♗b6.

3...♗c7 4 b4 ♜c8 5 ♗e2!

Intending to activate this piece by ♟d2 followed by ♗c4.

5...♜d8 6 ♟d2 a5 7 a3

A safe move, but 7 b5! ♟c5 8 ♗c4 was even stronger.

7...axb4 8 axb4 ♟b8 9 ♗b5 ♗b6 10 ♟c4 ♗c7 11 ♜d3 ♟d7 12 ♗xd7 ♜xd7 13 b5

White has liquidated to a 2♟ vs 2♗ ending in which neither enemy bishop shows the slightest sign of activity.

13...♗b8 14 ♟b6+ ♜d8 15 ♟bd5

White finally occupies the weak d5-square, winning the f6-pawn in the process.

15...♗a7 16 b6 ♗a6+ 17 ♜e3 ♗b8 18 ♟xf6 1-0

Rook Endings

Rook endings are the most common type of ending in practice, but they are also one of the most frequently misplayed. The reason for this is that many players, including some very strong ones, are unfamiliar with the key ideas and positions which are important in over-the-board play. It may be that they feel intimidated by the huge bulk of endgame theory relating to rook endings and hence have devoted little time to studying it. If so, this is a mistake, as it is possible to grasp the essentials of rook endings without months of study. I have chosen 27 essential topics relating to rook endings; if you know these, then you will already have an excellent grounding in this type of ending. 27 may sound a lot and indeed this is the largest part of the book, but that reflects the great importance of these endings and my resulting decision to cover them especially thoroughly. If you find the subject interesting, there are plenty of other books which go into the subject more deeply, but the material presented here should ensure that you can cope with most of the situations which are likely to arise in practice.

The starting point is the ending of rook vs pawn. This is more important than it might at first appear, because it often happens that one side has to give up his rook for an enemy passed pawn, and is forced to continue the battle with only his pawns. Such situations often result in positions of rook vs pawn. If the attacker has his king in front of the pawn, then the rook always wins, but in practice the attacker's king is usually far away, since it has been used to support a distant passed pawn and thereby win the enemy rook. At first sight such endings are just a matter of counting, but there are many finesses which can trip up unwary players. These are explained in Sections 40 and 41.

The next two sections cover the ending of rook vs two pawns, another common situation arising after one side has given up a rook for a passed pawn. Such endings can be a win for the rook, a draw, or even a win for the pawns if they are sufficiently far advanced. In Section 42, we consider the case in which the pawns are connected; the practical examples 42c and 42d show how easy it is for even very strong players to misplay such positions. Section 43 covers the case in which the pawns are not connected; the ideas here are rather different but also include some subtle finesses.

Moving on to the situation in which both sides have a rook, the ending of rook and pawn vs rook is absolutely fundamental to the whole theory of rook endings. Although the details are quite complicated, the basic ideas are not. When the defender's king is in front of the pawn, the result is usually a draw. The drawing idea is quite simple, but you have to know it. I have often seen this ending unnecessarily lost in weekend tournaments by players who did not know the key idea, but if you look at Section 44 this need never happen to you. Another standard idea, the Lucena Position, is important because a wide range of rook endings eventually reduce to it; this is the subject of Section 45.

Rook endings have many special features which have no analogy in bishop or knight endings. Many of these are a consequence of the fact that a rook, unlike a minor piece, can cut off the enemy king without the help of any other pieces. If White's rook is on e1 and Black's king is on the f-file, then the rook creates a barrier which the enemy king cannot cross. Section 46 deals with positions of rook and pawn vs rook in which Black's king is cut off from the pawn along a file. Once again, there are quite a few finesses which are worth knowing. It is also possible for the black king to be cut off by the rook along a rank (see 47a). This is usually even more unpleasant for the defender than the previous case and can be fatal even if the pawn is on the second or third rank. Positions 47c and 47d are practical examples in which the players demonstrated considerable skill.

Continuing with ♖+△ vs ♚, Section 48 deals with the case in which the defender tries to save the game by checking the enemy king from the side. In order for this to stand a chance of working, the defender's rook must stand well away from the king; this is what we call *checking distance*, and it is

in the defender's interests to maximize it as far as possible. Even if the checking distance is sufficient to draw, it is easy to go wrong, as 48a demonstrates. It sometimes happens that the defender has his king in front of the pawn, but due to a mating threat he cannot maintain this position. Then it is important to move the king to the *short side* of the board, so as to give the rook the maximum checking distance from the opposite side. The basic situation with a c-pawn is covered in 49a, but if the attacker has a central pawn it is more complicated, because depending on the position of the rook it may not be possible for the defender to achieve an adequate checking distance, even if his king is on the short side. See 49b and 49c for details.

Rook and rook's pawn vs rook is considered separately, because it is quite different from the situation with the pawn on other files. The defender has much better chances against a rook's pawn in part because it is easy for the attacker's king to get stuck in front of the pawn (see 50a), and so there is no real equivalent to the Lucena Position. The other problem for the attacker is that his king can only operate on one side of the pawn, and so it is particularly vulnerable to checks from the side, because it cannot run round to the opposite side of the pawn. When the attacker's rook is in front of the pawn, this sometimes allows a surprising defence called the *Vančura draw*, which is covered in Section 51.

Next we consider $\text{♞}+2\text{♟}$ vs ♞ . This is usually a win, except if the pawns are doubled, but there are many exceptions, for example if the attacker's rook is passively placed or the pawns are exposed to attack. Section 52 explains the general win and also considers difficulties that might arise. Section 53 consists of practical examples which reveal the type of mistakes which often occur in over-the-board play. The situation of $\text{♞}+f\text{♟}+h\text{♟}$ vs ♞ is the one general exception to the rule that rook and two (non-doubled) pawns beat a rook, because with the pawns on these files the result is usually a draw. However, two caveats apply. The first is that the pawns win if they are relatively far-advanced, and the second is that in practice it is incredibly easy to make a mistake and lose a drawn position. Section 54 should give you a good foundation in how to play this ending, whichever side you are on.

Moving on to positions with more pawns, the next few sections consider the situation in which one side has an extra pawn. If all the pawns are on one side, the result is usually a draw, although the case of $\text{♞}+4\text{♟}$ vs $\text{♞}+3\text{♟}$ may be awkward for the defender, depending on the initial arrangement of pawns (see Section 55). Positions often arise in which there are equal pawns on one side of the board, but the attacker has an extra passed pawn on the opposite side. It is to the defender's advantage to have his rook behind the enemy passed pawn, with the attacker's rook in front of the pawn, blocking its advance. One odd feature about this ending is that in many cases the attacker should not push his pawn to the seventh, since he may have better chances when the pawn is on the sixth rank. This is covered in Section 56. The attacker has much better chances when his rook is behind the passed pawn, because then the defender will usually be forced to block the pawn with his rook, after which the rook will be paralysed since any move by it will allow the pawn to advance. See Section 57 for this case.

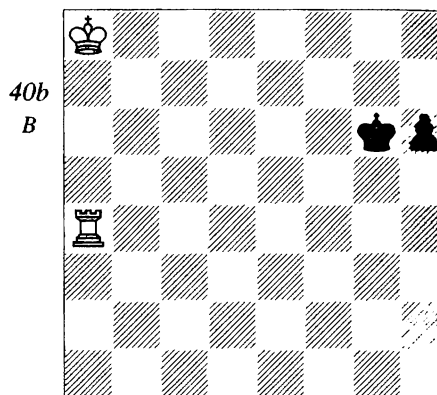
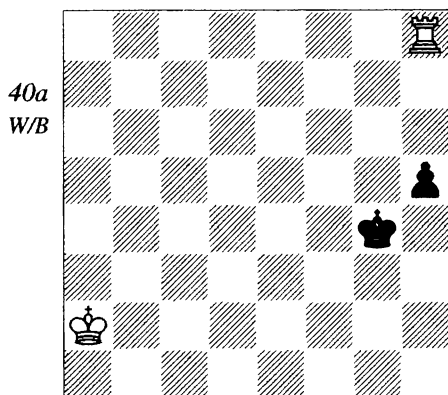
Connected passed pawns are a powerful force in any ending, but they are not a guarantee of victory. In Section 58 the connected pawns do battle with a single passed pawn or with disconnected passed pawns. In 58d, both sides have connected passed pawns, resulting in spectacular tactics.

The next few sections deal with the positional factors which have the most influence in rook endings. Pawn weaknesses may allow the enemy king to penetrate and are the subject of Section 59. King activity is especially important in rook endings and it is sometimes worthwhile to sacrifice a pawn or two in order to march the king into the enemy position; see Section 60. A rook permanently stationed on the seventh rank can be a decisive influence all by itself, as we shall see in Section 61.

Tactical tricks are common in rook endings, so we devote two sections (62 and 63) to explaining the most common ideas, which have notched up many points over the years. In many rook endings there is no immediate way for the attacker to make progress, and he must manoeuvre to improve his position; this is an art all its own, and is explained in Section 64. Section 65 summarizes the main ideas which can help save an inferior rook ending. Finally, we briefly consider four-rook endings in Section 66, focusing especially on the ways in which these differ from single-rook endings.

40

Rook vs Pawn (1)



In many positions a rook beats a pawn without problems. For example, if the defender's king is not near the pawn, then the rook can pick up the pawn immediately. Likewise, if the attacker's king can occupy a square in front of the pawn, then again the pawn will fall within a few moves.

However, in many cases which arise in practical play it's not so easy because the defender's king is near the pawn and can help usher it towards promotion. Then it's often a matter of timing: can the attacker's king make it back in time to help stop the advance of the pawn?

The above diagram features just such a race situation. If it's White to play, then he can win: 1 ♖b2 h4 2 ♜c2 h3 3 ♜d2 ♜g3 4 ♜e2 ♜g2 (4...h2 5 ♜f1 costs Black the pawn at once) 5 ♜g8+ ♜h1 6 ♜f3 ♜h2 (or 6...h2 7 ♜a8 and mate next move) 7 ♜g3 and Black must leave his pawn to be taken.

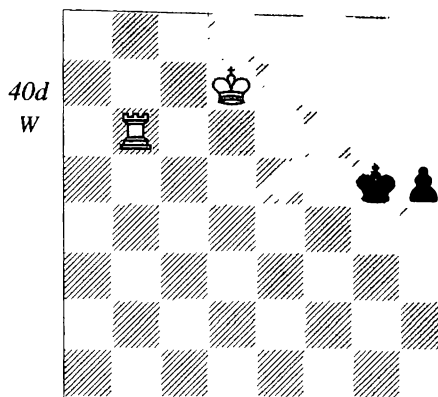
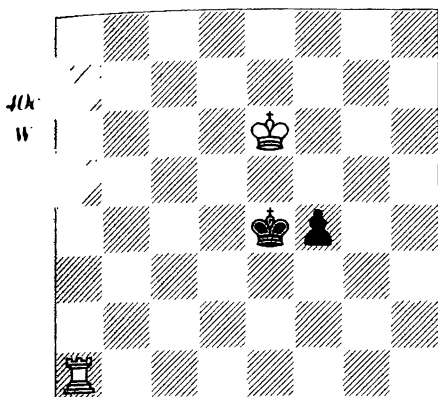
Black to play can make use of the extra tempo to draw: 1...h4 2 ♜b2 h3 3 ♜c2 ♜g3 4 ♜d2 h2 5 ♜e2 ♜g2 6 ♜g8+ ♜h1! (an important point; Black must avoid 6...h3? 7 ♜f2 and White wins after 7...h1♚ 8 ♜h8+ or 7...h1♘+ 8 ♜f3 ♜h2 9 ♜g7 and Black loses his knight) and White cannot win. He must lift the stalemate, but Black replies ...♜g2 and in order to prevent promotion White must check again, repeating the position.

If such endings were simply a matter of counting, they wouldn't present many problems, but there are several finesses which can trip up the unwary player.

It's Black to play in the above diagram and at first sight it doesn't matter whether he starts with 1...h5 or 1...♜g5, but in fact only one move draws. 1...h5? is a mistake because of 2 ♜a5!, cutting off the black king. After 2...h4 3 ♜b7 Black can't push the pawn any further since 3...h3 4 ♜a3 h2 5 ♜h3 wins the pawn. Thus Black can only wait with 3...♜h6, after which White wins by approaching the pawn with his king, for example by ♜c6, ♜d5, ♜c5, ♜d4, etc., all the time keeping Black's king cut off.

Black is able to draw, but he must start with 1...♜g5! (1...♜f5? is bad as Black must lose a tempo after 2 ♜b7 h5 3 ♜c6, when White wins by 3...♜g5 4 ♜d5 h4 5 ♜e4 ♜g4 6 ♜a8 ♜g3 7 ♜e3). Then 2 ♜b7 h5 3 ♜c6 h4 4 ♜d5 h3 5 ♜e4 h2 6 ♜a1 ♜g4 saves the game, as the black king can reach g2.

The ability of the rook to single-handedly create an impenetrable barrier for the enemy king makes rook endings fundamentally different from any of the endings considered earlier in this book. We shall see several examples of the rook's power in this chapter.



Our first two examples featured a rook's pawn. Are there any differences when the pawn is nearer the centre?

The most obvious plan here is to check the black king to the back rank. However, this fails to win: after 1 ♖a4+? ♔e3 2 ♔e5 f3 3 ♖a3+ ♔e2 4 ♔e4 f2 5 ♖a2+ ♔e1 6 ♔e3 Black draws by 6...f1♟+ 7 ♔d3 ♘g3. We haven't dealt with the ending of ♖ vs ♘ yet in this book, so you might like to take a look at Section 68 here. The position after 7 ♔d3 is one of the standard drawing positions in this ending. Note that if the position is shifted two files to the right, then this plan **does** win, because Black loses the newly promoted knight at once (the equivalent move to ...♘g3 would be off the edge of the board).

Despite this, White can win in the above position. The decisive line is 1 ♔f6! f3 2 ♔g5 f2 3 ♔g4 ♔e3 4 ♔g3 ♔e2 5 ♔g2, followed by ♖f1, and the pawn is lost. Curiously, this plan was only possible because Black's pawn is **not** an h-pawn and White was able to exploit the file to the right of the pawn for his king manoeuvre.

This line is an example of a general principle in rook vs pawn, that the attacker is better off when the kings are on opposite sides of the pawn (here 'opposite' means with respect to the file occupied by the pawn). The reason is that in this case the defender's king can't be used to keep the attacking king away from the pawn. When the kings are on the same side of the pawn, the attacker's king has a much harder job approaching the pawn.

The idea of using the defender's king to keep the attacking king at bay is called *shouldering away* (see also Section 5) and frequently arises in endings with ♖ vs ♔(s).

Sometimes this idea is the basis for some unlikely-looking defensive moves, as we shall see in the analysis below.

1 ♖b5+

The most awkward line for Black. After 1 ♔e6 h4 2 ♔e5 h3 3 ♖b8 ♔g4 4 ♖g8+ ♔f3 5 ♖h8 ♔g2 6 ♔f4 h2 Black draws comfortably.

1...♔g4 2 ♔e6 h4 3 ♖b4+ ♔g5!

It is more important to use the king to keep White's king at arm's length than to assist the pawn, at least at the moment. When the pawn has advanced further, the king will return. This paradoxical move is quite tricky, and would be easy to overlook in a game.

3...♔g3? loses after 4 ♔f5 h3 5 ♖b3+ ♔g2 (or 5...♔h4 6 ♔f4 h2 7 ♖b1 ♔h3 8 ♔f3 ♔h4 9 ♔g2 and the pawn falls) 6 ♔g4 h2 7 ♖b2+ ♔g1 8 ♔g3 h1♟+ 9 ♔f3 and the knight is lost.

4 ♔e5 h3 5 ♖b8

5 ♔e4 h2 6 ♖b1 ♔g4 draws more easily.

5...♔g4 6 ♔e4 ♔g3 7 ♔e3 ♔g2!

A second important finesse. Not 7...h2? 8 ♖g8+ ♔h3 9 ♔f2 h1♟+ 10 ♔f3 and White wins.

8 ♖g8+ ♔f1!

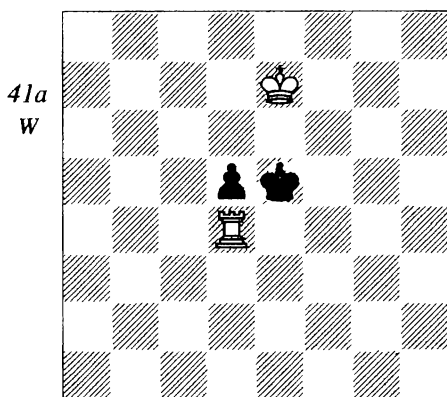
The only drawing move.

9 ♖h8 ♔g2 10 ♔e2 h2 11 ♖g8+ ♔h1

This is a draw, as we saw in 40a.

41

Rook vs Pawn (2)



R. Réti

Hastings and St Leonards Post, 1922

We have already made the point that the attacker is better off when the kings are on opposite sides of the pawn. This fact can lead to some subtle play.

1 ♖d2!

White can only win by losing a tempo with his rook, so as to gain the opposition at the critical moment. 1 ♖d3! d4 2 ♖d1 is equally good, but not 1 ♖d1? d4 2 ♖d7 ♖d5 and now White is in zugzwang. After 3 ♖c7 ♖c5 or 3 ♖e7 ♖e5 Black can keep his king on the same side of the pawn as the white king, while 3 ♖d2 brings the rook too close to Black's king and leads to a draw after 3...♖c4 4 ♖e6 ♖c3 (gaining a crucial tempo) 5 ♖d1 d3 6 ♖e5 d2 7 ♖e4 ♖c2.

1...d4 2 ♖d1!

The point. White's rook manoeuvre means that Black loses the opposition and is thus in zugzwang himself.

2...♖d5 3 ♖d7

White must not be too hasty: 3 ♖f6? only draws after 3...♖e4 4 ♖g5 d3 5 ♖e1+ ♖f3!.

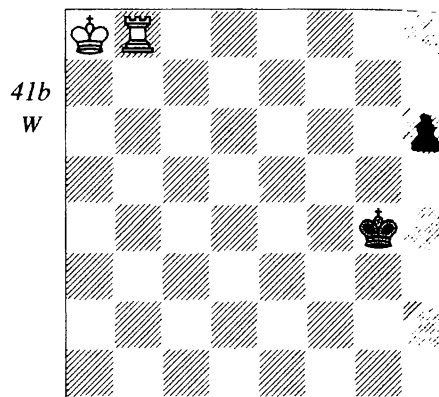
3...♖c4

Or 3...♖e4 4 ♖c6 with a mirror-image situation.

4 ♖e6 d3 5 ♖e5

With the kings on opposite sides of the pawn, Black cannot hold back White's king and the pawn is soon lost.

5...♖c3 6 ♖e4 d2 7 ♖e3 1-0



Sometimes it is necessary for the rook to give a preliminary check in order to force the enemy king into a less favourable position.

One might imagine 1 ♖b7? to be the most flexible move, but this only leads to a draw after 1...h5 2 ♖g8+ ♖f4 3 ♖h8 ♖g4 4 ♖c6 h4 5 ♖d5 ♖g3 6 ♖e4 h3 7 ♖e3 (or 7 ♖g8+ ♖f2) 7...♖g2 and we have reached a drawn position familiar from 40a. One line is 8 ♖g8+ ♖f1 9 ♖h8 ♖g2 10 ♖e2 h2 11 ♖g8+ ♖h1 and White cannot win.

The winning line is:

1 ♖g8+! ♖f4 2 ♖h8 ♖g5

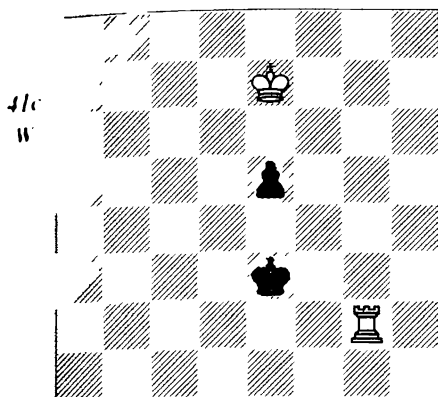
The effect of the first two moves has been to pull Black's king back from g4 to g5, and this gives White an extra tempo.

3 ♖b7 h5 4 ♖c6 h4 5 ♖d5 ♖g4 6 ♖e4 ♖g3 7 ♖e3 h3 8 ♖g8+ ♖h2

Black's king is blocking the pawn and now White can mate in a few moves.

9 ♖f2 ♖h1 10 ♖g1+ ♖h2 11 ♖g3

It's mate next move.



Y. Averbakh

2nd Special Prize, *Shakhmaty v SSSR*, 1981

This position combines two of the ideas we have seen previously: ensuring that the kings are on opposite sides of the pawn, and using rook checks to gain time.

1 ♖e6!

Not 1 ♜g5? ♖f4! 2 ♖f6 e4, nor 1 ♖d6? e4 2 ♜g5 ♖d2! (moving to the same side of the pawn as the white king) 3 ♜d5+ ♖c2 4 ♜e5 ♖d3 with a draw, as the white king cannot move to f5 as in the main line.

1...e4 2 ♜g5!

2 ♖e5? ♖f3 and 2 ♜a2? ♖f3 both lead to a draw. The rook must not move further down the file as it will later go to the e-file to hold up the enemy pawn, and playing to e7 or e8 is ineffective as the white king would be in the way.

2...♖d3

After 2...♖f3, the play is a mirror image of that in the main line: 3 ♜f5+! ♖g2 4 ♜e5 ♖f3 5 ♖d5 e3 6 ♖d4 e2 7 ♖d3 and the pawn falls. 2...♖e2 is even easier as 3 ♖e5 e3 4 ♖e4 ♖d2 5 ♜d5+ ♖e2 6 ♜d3 rounds up the pawn.

3 ♜d5+!

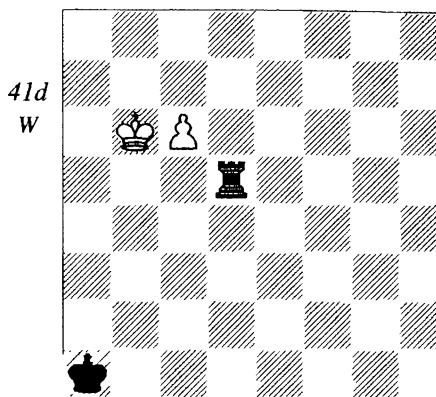
The rook-check finesse comes into play. White transfers his rook to the better square e5 with gain of time.

3...♖c2 4 ♜e5 ♖d3 5 ♖f5

The king moves to the opposite side of the pawn to the enemy king, and the pawn falls within a few moves.

5...e3 6 ♖f4 e2 7 ♖f3

White wins.



F. Saavedra (correcting J. Barbier)

Glasgow Weekly Citizen, 1895

If the pawn is far advanced, then there are a few rare cases in which the side with the pawn can even win. If you haven't seen this famous position before, then you are in for a surprise.

1 c7 ♜d6+

Black's only hope to save the game is to start checking, since if White can promote safely, then he will have the winning ending of queen vs rook (see Section 86).

2 ♖b5

The king heads down the board. 2 ♖b7? ♜d7 and 2 ♖c5? ♜d1 lead to immediate draws.

2...♜d5+ 3 ♖b4 ♜d4+ 4 ♖b3

The alternative 4 ♖c3 ♜d1 5 ♖c2 is equally good and transposes to the main line.

4...♜d3+ 5 ♖c2

White switches to the c-file at a moment when there is no danger of a skewer. It looks all over for Black, but he finds an amazing defence.

5...♜d4!

Now 6 c8♞? ♜c4+ 7 ♞xc4 is stalemate, while 6 ♖c3 ♜d1 and 6 ♖b3 ♜d3+ just repeat. But White has the last laugh after all.

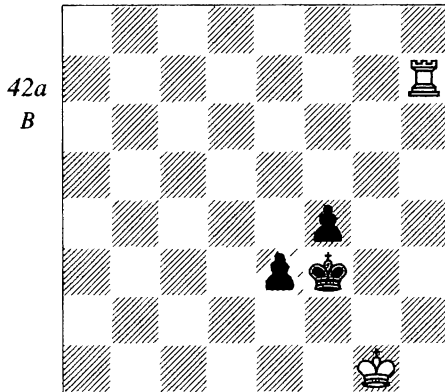
6 c8♞!

A stunning move, threatening to mate by 7 ♜a8+; the reply is forced.

6...♜a4 7 ♖b3

The threats of 8 ♜c1# and 8 ♖xa4 pick up the rook, so White wins.

42 Rook vs Two Connected Passed Pawns



Adams – Salov
Wijk aan Zee (blitz) 1998

The ending of rook against two pawns is interesting because, according to circumstances, it can be a win for the rook, a draw, or a win for the pawns. The first point to make is that if the side with the rook can get his king in front of the pawns, then he almost always wins.

In the above diagram, White is threatening to play ♔f1, which would ensure victory. The game continued:

1...♙e2

After 1...♙e4 we see the typical win in the case where the pawns are blockaded: 2 ♔f1 f3 3 ♜f7 ♔d3 (or 3...e2+ 4 ♔f2) 4 ♙e1! ♙e4 (4...f2+ 5 ♔f1 ♔d2 6 ♜d7+ ♔c2 7 ♙e2 and the pawns soon fall) 5 ♜f8 and Black is in a zugzwang which will cost him both pawns within a few moves.

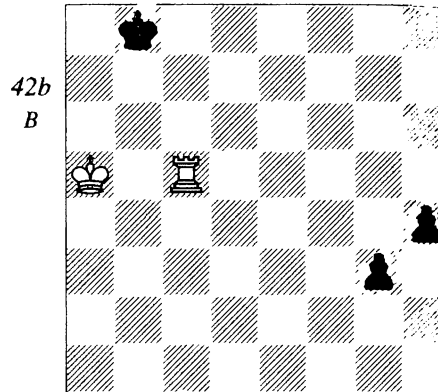
2 ♜f7?

Well, it was only a blitz game! White could have won by 2 ♜h2+! ♔d1 (or 2...♙e1 3 ♔g2 ♙e2 4 ♜h1 f3+ 5 ♔g3 f2 6 ♔g2 ♔d2 7 ♔f3 and Black is driven away from the pawns) 3 ♜a2 f3 4 ♜a1+ ♙e2 5 ♜b1 ♔d3 6 ♔f1 ♔d2 7 ♜a1 ♔d3 8 ♙e1 and White's king is safely in front of the pawns.

2...f3 3 ♜f6 ♔d2!

Black gives up one pawn to secure a draw with the other.

4 ♜xf3 e2 5 ♜f2 ♔d1 6 ♜xe2 ♙xe2 1/2-1/2



If the pawns are far away from both kings, the rook cannot stop them if both pawns are on the sixth rank, or one is on the seventh and the other the fifth. Otherwise the rook can not only stop the pawns but even win them. For example, if White's king were on a2 in the above diagram, then White to play would mop up the pawns by ♜g5, ♜g4, ♜xh4 and ♜g4, but Black to play would win by either ...g2 or ...h3.

Sometimes the side with the rook can draw an apparently hopeless situation by means of threats against the enemy king. In the above diagram, the pieces are favourably placed for this and White can save the game even though both Black's pawns can reach the sixth rank:

1...g2

Or 1...h3 2 ♔b6 h2 (2...g2 3 ♜g5 transposes to the main line) 3 ♜h5 ♔c8 4 ♔c6 ♔d8 5 ♔d6 ♙e8 6 ♙e6 ♔f8 7 ♔f6 ♔g8 8 ♜g5+ and Black's king can be checked back to f8.

2 ♜g5 h3 3 ♔b6 ♔c8

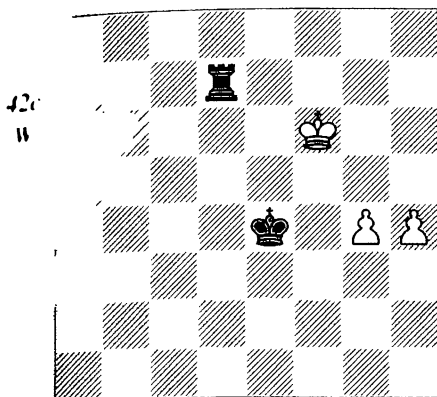
The only way to play for a win is to head for the kingside.

4 ♔c6 ♔d8 5 ♔d6 ♙e8 6 ♙e6 ♔f8 7 ♔f6 h2 8 ♜a5!

The key move. 8 ♜b5? fails as 8...♙e8 9 ♙e6 ♔d8 10 ♔d6 ♔c8 leaves White with no good move.

8...♔g8 9 ♜g5+ ♔f8 10 ♜a5! ♙e8 11 ♙e6 ♔d8 12 ♔d6 ♔c8 13 ♔c6 ♔b8 14 ♜b5+

Draw as Black cannot escape the checks and mate threats.



Narciso Dublan – Larino Nieto
Calvia (team event) 2007

It's easy to go wrong in endings with ♖ vs ♜. In the above diagram, White must decide which pawn to push.

1 g5?

A mistake giving the black king access to f5.

1 h5! would have drawn: 1...♞d6+ (1...♙f4 2 ♞d6+ 3 ♙e7! ♞a6 4 ♞g6 ♙g5 5 ♞g7 ♞a8 6 ♙f7 ♞a7+ 7 ♙f8 ♙f6 8 ♞g8♭+ ♙e6 is a draw after 9 h6 or 9 ♭h6) 2 ♙g5! (the shouldering-away idea again; White's main aim is to keep the enemy king at bay) 2...♙e5 (or 2...♙f3 3 h6 ♞d5+ 4 ♙g6 ♙xg4 5 h7 ♞d8 6 ♙g7 with a draw) 3 h6 ♙e6 4 h7 ♞d8 5 ♙g6 and White draws comfortably.

1...♞d6+ 2 ♙e7 ♞a6 3 h5 ♙f5

Here Black's king plays a far more active role than in the note to White's first move.

4 ♞g6 ♞a7+ 5 ♙f8 ♙f6 6 ♙g8 ♞a5?

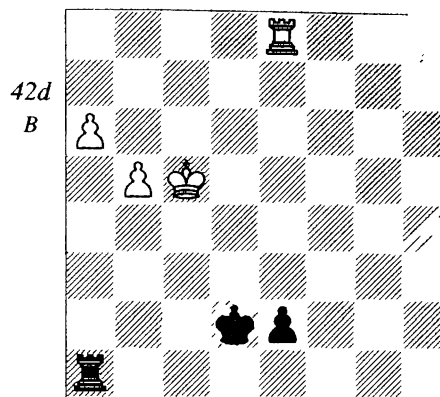
Just when Black has a simple win, he makes a mistake in turn and lets White off the hook. He could have won with a waiting move such as 6...♞b7. Then 7 ♙h8 ♞b5 does win, because the h-pawn falls with check: 8 ♞g7 ♞xh5+ 9 ♙g8 ♞g5 10 ♙h8 ♙f7 (but not 10...♞xg7?? stalemate) and mate in a few moves.

7 ♞g7

Now White saves the game by underpromoting to a knight.

7...♞xh5 8 ♙f8 ♞a5 9 ♞g8♭+ ♙e6 10 ♭h6

This is a standard draw (see Section 68) and Black eventually abandoned his attempts to win.



Topalov – Beliavsky
Linares 1995

Accurately assessing endings of ♖ vs ♜ is an important aspect of rook endings generally, because they often arise after one side has given up his rook for a passed pawn.

The game concluded:

1...e1♙? 2 ♞xe1 ♙xe1

White also wins after 2...♞xe1 3 a7 ♞a1 4 b6. **3 ♙b6!**

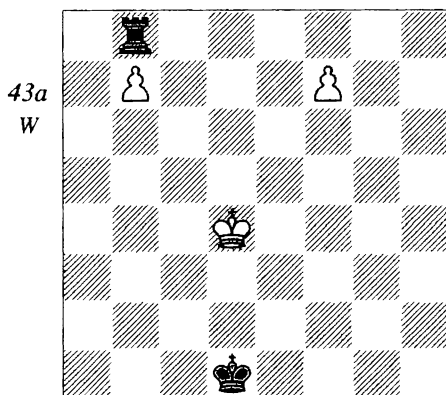
At first sight 3 b6 is strong, since 3...♞xa6? loses to 4 b7 and the pawn will promote, but the intermediary check 3...♞a5+! saves the day. It is worth noting this idea, as it is often overlooked in practice.

3...♙d2 4 ♙a7! 1-0

It's the b-pawn which will promote, and not the a-pawn. 4 a7? only draws after 4...♙c3 5 ♙b7 ♙b4 6 b6 ♙b5 (attacking the rear pawn with the king is a standard defensive idea). The text-move is decisive, as White will win the rook for the b-pawn, while retaining the a-pawn.

Mikhalchishin's notes to this game in *Informator* portrayed the whole ending as a clear win, but actually Black has a draw in the diagram with the surprising **1...♙d3!** (1...♞a3! also draws, but is more complicated). The point is that neither a7 nor b6 is possible at the moment, so Black effectively gains a tempo. After **2 ♙b6** (2 b6 ♞a5+ is still a draw) **2...e1♙ 3 ♞xe1 ♞xe1** Black's king is one square nearer to the pawns, and he draws comfortably after **4 a7** (4 ♙a7 ♞e7+ also draws) **4...♞a1 5 ♙b7 ♙c4 6 b6 ♙b5.**

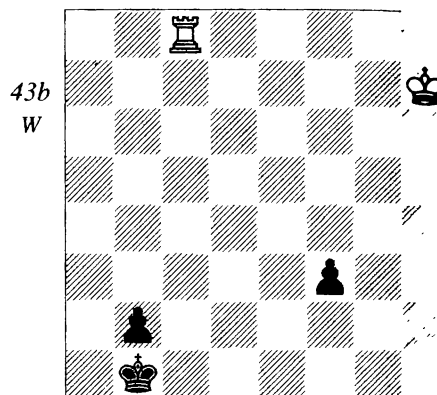
43 Rook vs Two Isolated Passed Pawns



Two isolated passed pawns are much less of a threat than two connected passed pawns. For one thing, in the absence of the kings, the rook can stop the pawns even if both of them are on the seventh rank. Indeed, the rook can sometimes draw against two pawns on the seventh even if they are supported by the king – it all depends on how far apart the pawns are.

In the diagram, White to play wins because there are only three files between the pawns. After 1 ♔d5 ♔d2 2 ♔d6 the king heads towards whichever pawn the rook is in front of: 2...♔d3 3 ♔c7 or 2...♚f8 3 ♔e7, and White wins.

Now move the pawn from f7 to g7 in the diagram. This position is a draw, and Black doesn't even need to use his king to prove it! If the white king threatens to go to f7, then Black puts his rook on b8, ready to meet ♔f7 by ...♚xb7+, while if the king threatens to go to c7, Black puts his rook on g8 with the same idea. The pawns are so far apart that the white king cannot threaten to go to c7 and f7 at the same time and so Black can always defend. One line might be 1 ♔d5 ♔d2 2 ♔d6 ♚g8 3 ♔e6 ♚b8 4 ♔f6 ♔d3 5 ♔g6 ♔d4 and 6 ♔h7 can be met by 6...♚xb7, so White cannot make progress.



Belkhdja – A. Sokolov
French Ch, Marseilles 2001

When fighting against advanced pawns, surprising moves are sometimes necessary. Here there are only three files between the pawns, so White will need to use his king to save the game.

1 ♔h6!

The only move to draw. The king approaches the f-pawn, but White avoids the square g6 which would allow the b-pawn to promote with check. Inferior moves:

1) 1 ♔g6? f2 2 ♚f8 ♔c1 3 ♚c8+ (3 ♚xf2 is impossible as 3...b1♚+ is check) 3...♔d1 4 ♚d8+ ♔e2 5 ♚e8+ ♔f3 6 ♚f8+ ♔g3 and Black wins.

2) 1 ♚f8? (this wastes a tempo) 1...♔c2 2 ♚c8+ ♔d2 3 ♚d8+ ♔e3 4 ♚e8+ ♔f4 5 ♚f8+ ♔e5 6 ♚e8+ ♔f6 7 ♚e1 f2 8 ♚d1 ♔e5 9 ♔g6 ♔e4 10 ♔g5 ♔e3 11 ♚b1 ♔d3 and Black wins.

3) 1 ♔g7? ♔a2 2 ♚a8+ ♔b3 3 ♚b8+ ♔c2 4 ♚c8+ ♔d3 5 ♚d8+ ♔e3 6 ♚e8+ ♔f4 7 ♚e1 f2 8 ♚b1 ♔e3 9 ♔f6 ♔d3 is decisive.

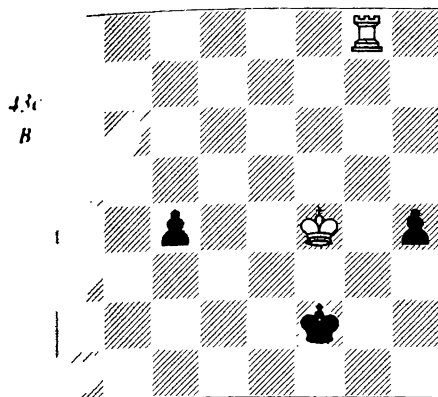
1...♔a2

Now 1...f2 2 ♚f8 ♔c1 can be met by 3 ♚xf2, so Black tries to extract his king.

2 ♚a8+ ♔b3 3 ♚b8+ ♔c2 4 ♚c8+ ♔d3 5 ♚d8+ ♔e3 6 ♚e8+ ♔f4 7 ♚f8+ ♔g4 8 ♚g8+ ♔h4

Black's king has to go all the way to the h-file to avoid the checks. On its return, White has just enough time to activate his own king.

9 ♚g1 f2 10 ♚b1 ♔g4 11 ♔g6 ♔f4 12 ♔h5 ♔e3 13 ♔g4 ♔d3 14 ♔f3 1/2-1/2



Leko – Markowski
Polanica Zdroj 1998

Endings with ♖ vs ♜ can be tricky, but the basic principles we have already met often help to find the right move. Here Black can draw, but accurate play is necessary.

1...h3!

The correct pawn to push, as 1...c3? loses to 2 ♖c8 h3 3 ♖xc3 h2 4 ♖c2+ ♜g1 5 ♜g3 h1♔+ 6 ♜f3.

2 ♖a8 ♜e2!

Not 2...h2? 3 ♖a2+ ♜g1 4 ♜g3 h1♔+ 5 ♜f3 c3 6 ♖c2 and the knight is lost.

3 ♜e4 ♜f2!

When the white king moves towards one pawn, Black's king must run to support the other one. 3...c3? 4 ♖a2+ ♜d1 5 ♜d3 is lost for Black.

4 ♜f4 ♜e2 5 ♖c8

White tries another tack.

5...♜d3 6 ♜f3 h2 7 ♖d8+ ♜c2 8 ♖h8 ♜d3?

The right idea, shouldering away the white king, but the wrong move-order. Black could have drawn by 8...c3 9 ♖xh2+ (or 9 ♜e2 ♜b1!), but not here 9...♜b2? 10 ♜d3 c2 11 ♖xh2 and White wins as the pawn is pinned) 9...♜d3!, followed by ...c2, and Black is safe.

9 ♜f2!

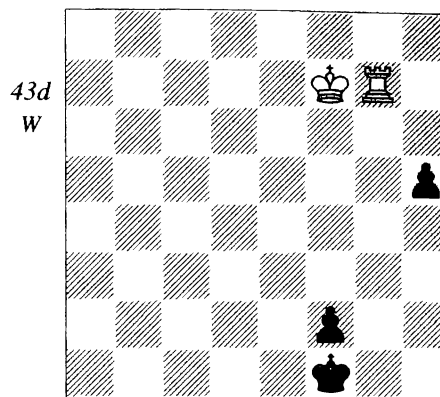
An important finesse, which forces Black's king to an inferior position on d1. 9 ♖xh2? c3 is a draw.

9...♜d2 10 ♖xh2 c3 11 ♜f1+ ♜d1

Or 11...♜d3 12 ♜e1 c2 13 ♖h3+ and White wins.

12 ♖h8 c2 13 ♖d8+ ♜c1 14 ♜e2 1-0

White wins after 14...♜b2 15 ♖b8+ ♜c1 16 ♖c8 ♜b2 17 ♜d2.



V. Chekhover

Commendation, *Shakhmaty v SSSR*, 1949

White can draw, but only by an unexpected tactical resource which is set up by a paradoxical first move.

1 ♜g8!

This absurd-looking move is the only way to draw. Black is threatening to win with 1...♜e1, so White must give his rook a checking-square on the e-file. However, White must also avoid Black promoting his f-pawn with check, and he must set up a later perpetual check with the rook along the g- and h-files. All these conditions are only satisfied when the king is on g8.

1 ♖g5? h4 2 ♖h5 h3 3 ♖xh3 ♜g2 and 1 ♜g6? h4! 2 ♖h7 ♜g2 are winning for Black.

1...h4 2 ♖h7 h3!

The only way to make progress, as otherwise White just checks the enemy king around; for example, 2...♜g2 3 ♖g7+ ♜h2 4 ♖f7 or 2...♜e2 3 ♖e7+ ♜f3 4 ♖f7+ ♜g3 5 ♖g7+ ♜h3 6 ♖f7.

3 ♖xh3

Forced, or Black wins by bringing his king out: 3 ♖h6? ♜g2 4 ♖g6+ ♜f3 5 ♖f6+ ♜g3 6 ♖g6+ ♜h4 7 ♖f6 h2 8 ♖f7 ♜g3 9 ♖g7+ ♜f3 10 ♖f7+ ♜e3 11 ♖e7+ ♜d4 12 ♖d7+ ♜e5 13 ♖d1 ♜f4 and wins by playing his king to g2.

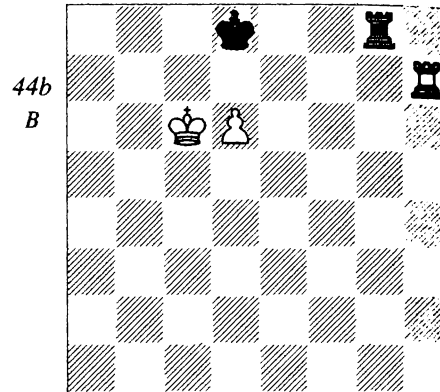
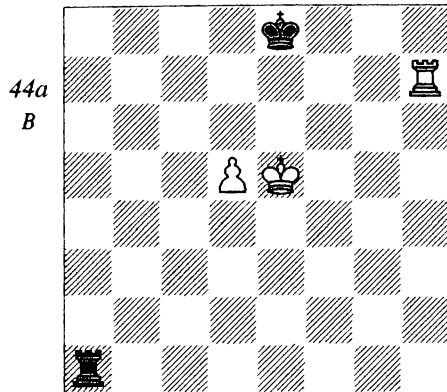
3...♜g2 4 ♖h7!

The reason why the king had to be on g8. It defends the f7-, g7- and h7-squares and ensures perpetual check.

4...f1♚ 5 ♖g7+ ♜h3 6 ♖h7+ ♜g4 7 ♖g7+ ♜h5 8 ♖h7+ ♜g6 9 ♖g7+ ♜h6 10 ♖h7+ ♜g6

Draw.

44 ♖+♙ vs ♜ – The Standard Draw



The ending of ♖+♙ vs ♜ is one of the basic endings which arises most often in practice, and it is also fundamental for a general understanding of rook endings. In view of its importance, we shall devote eight sections to this ending. The first point is that if the defender can establish his king in front of the enemy pawn, then the result is usually a draw. The above diagram is typical and is an example of the 'third-rank defence', the standard technique for drawing such positions.

1...♜a6

Black at once occupies the third rank, which prevents White from advancing his king to the sixth rank. There are other drawing moves, but this is by far the simplest.

2 ♜c7

Hoping for ♜c6 to drive Black's rook away.

2...♚d8 3 ♜h7

3 ♜c6 ♜xc6 and 3 ♜f7 ♚e8 4 ♜f6 ♜xf6 are clear draws.

3...♚e8 4 d6

4 ♜h8+ is safely met by 4...♚d7 (but not 4...♚e7? 5 d6+! ♚d7 6 ♜h7+ ♚d8 7 ♚e6 and White wins).

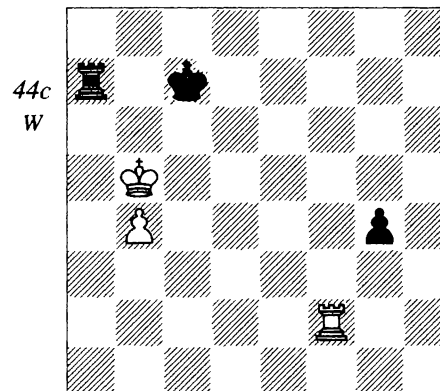
4...♜a1

This is the key idea. As soon as White pushes his pawn, Black plays his rook to the first rank so as to be able to check White's king from behind. The d6-square is blocked, so the king has no shelter from the checks.

5 ♚e6 ♜e1+ 6 ♚d5 ♜d1+ 7 ♚c6 ♜c1+

Draw.

If the attacker's king and pawn can both be advanced to the sixth rank without the king being instantly checked away, the position is usually lost with a bishop's pawn or a centre pawn. Even though Black is to play here, he cannot prevent ♜a7, which wins easily.



Harandi – Nunn
Hamburg 1984

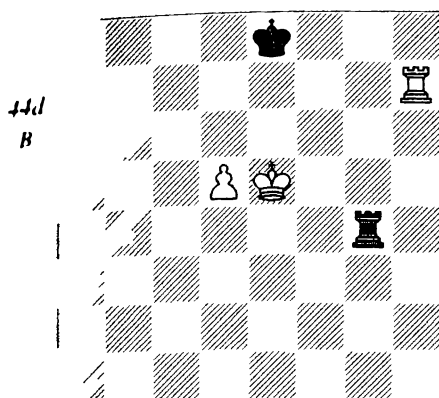
However, with a knight's pawn or a rook's pawn, the corresponding position is a draw, a fact which enabled me to save myself in the above position.

1 ♜f7+ ♚b8 2 ♜f8+ ♚b7 3 ♜g8 ♜a1

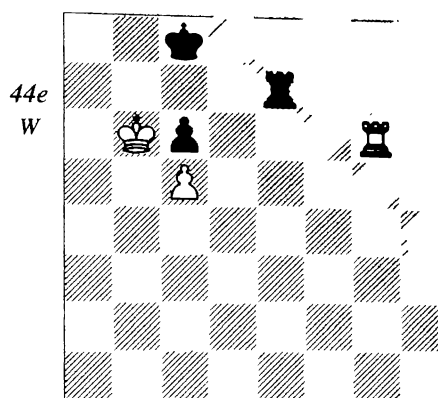
Extracting the rook from its bad position.

4 ♜g7+ ♚b8 5 ♚b6 ♜c1 6 b5 ♜c8 7 ♜xg4 ♜h8 8 ♚a6 ♜h6+ 9 b6 ♜h8 10 ♜g7 ♜f8 1/2-1/2

White cannot win as he has no room to switch his rook to the left of the pawn, as in 44b.



Pavia Miralles – Vilanova Corbi
Valencia 2003



Burn – Spielmann
San Sebastian 1911

Even though the third-rank drawing technique seems quite straightforward, there is probably no other drawn ending which is so often lost unnecessarily at club level. In this example, Black (rated over 2100) starts well but soon goes astray.

1...♠g6 2 ♔d4 ♕d8 3 ♖c5 ♜c8 4 ♜e7 ♜h6

4...♕d8! was simpler as then Black could just exchange rooks after 5 ♜e6.

5 ♜e6 ♜h7 6 ♕d6 ♕d8

Black could have chased White's king away by 6...♜d7+; for example, 7 ♖c5 (7 ♖e5 ♕d8) 7...♜c7+ 8 ♜c6 ♕d8 (but not 8...♕d7? 9 ♖b6 and White wins) and Black defends comfortably.

7 ♜g6 ♜h8?

The losing move. 7...♜d7+! 8 ♖e5 ♜e7+ would still have drawn; for example, 9 ♜e6 ♕d7 10 ♖f6 ♜h7 is safe.

8 ♖c6 ♕c8 9 ♜g7 ♜h6+ 10 d6 ♜h8 11 ♜a7

The rook switch is decisive.

11...♖b8 12 ♜b7+ ♖a8 13 d7?!

13 ♜b5 was more efficient, winning Black's rook for the d-pawn within a few moves. The text-move leads to the ending of ♜ vs ♜ (see Section 86), which is notoriously difficult to win.

13...♜h6+ 14 ♕d5

Avoiding the trap 14 ♖c7? ♜c6+, drawing.

14...♜h5+ 15 ♖e6 ♜h6+ 16 ♖f7 ♖xb7 17 d8 ♜c6 18 ♜d5 ♖b6 19 ♖e7 ♜c5 20 ♜b3+ ♕c6 1-0

The position is objectively lost but would still be quite tough to win in practice.

Rook and pawn endings frequently reduce to positions of ♜+♔ vs ♜, and the attacker often has to weigh up whether the resulting position is a win. In the game, White took the c-pawn straight away: 1 ♜xc6+? ♖b8 (not 1...♕d8? 2 ♜h6 ♕c8 3 c6 with a win as in 44b) 2 ♜h6 ♜b7+! (Black must chase the white king away from its dominant position) 3 ♖c6 ♜c7+ 4 ♕d6 ♖b7 (the simplest, preparing a check on c6) 5 ♜h8 (5 ♕d5 ♜g7 is also a draw) 5...♜c6+ 6 ♕d5 ♜g6 7 ♜h7+ ♕c8 1/2-1/2. Black has reached the standard third-rank drawing position.

However, White could have won by improving his king position before taking the c6-pawn. Then Black would not have been able to get his king in front of the pawn. The winning line runs:

1 ♜g8+! ♕d7 2 ♖b7 ♜e1 3 ♜g7+ ♕d8 4 ♕xc6

Black's king is only one square away from c8, but it cannot reach safety.

4...♜c1

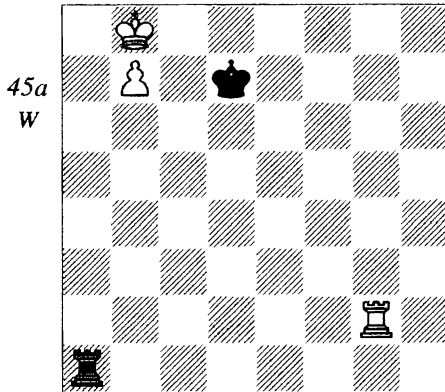
Or 4...♜e6+ 5 ♖b7 ♜e1 6 ♜g8+ ♕e7 7 c6 with a similar win.

5 ♜g8+ ♕e7 6 ♜c8

This position is a win as Black cannot prevent the king and pawn from edging forwards. One possible line is 6...♜a1 7 ♖b7 ♜b1+ 8 ♖c7 ♜a1 9 c6 ♜a7+ 10 ♖b6 ♜a1 11 ♜b8 ♜b1+ 12 ♖c7 ♜a1 13 ♜b6 ♜c1 14 ♕c8 ♜h1 15 c7 ♜c1 16 ♖b8 ♕d7 17 ♜b7 and Black must give up his rook for the pawn.

45

Lucena Position



'Lucena Position'

We have seen that when the defender's king is in front of the pawn, the result is usually a draw. However, if his king cannot move in front of the pawn, then the attacker can often use his king to usher the pawn to the seventh rank. The result is a position such as the above, in which the pawn is blocked only by the attacker's own king. A position of this type is referred to as the 'Lucena Position', even if the pawn is on a different file.

1 ♖d2+

Forcing Black to release White's king.

1...♜e6

Or 1...♜c6 2 ♜c8 and White wins at once, while 1...♜e7 2 ♜d4 is similar to the main line.

2 ♜d4!

The key move, a winning method known as 'building a bridge'. On the fourth rank the rook stands ready to nullify Black's checks later on.

2...♞a2

After 2...♜e5 3 ♞b4 ♜d5 Black's king is too far away from d7 and White wins by, for example, 4 ♜c7 ♞c1+ 5 ♜b6.

3 ♜c7

Everything is ready and the king emerges.

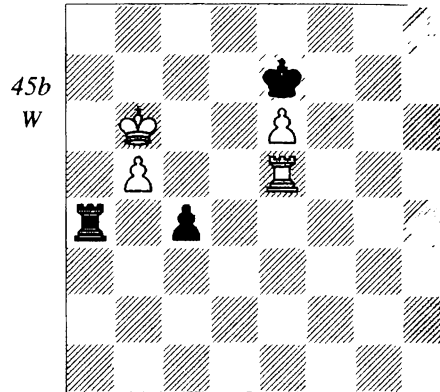
3...♞c2+ 4 ♜b6 ♞b2+ 5 ♜c6 ♞c2+

Or 5...♞b1 6 ♞a4 ♞b2 7 ♞a5 and 8 ♞b5.

6 ♜b5 ♞b2+ 7 ♞b4

The bridge is complete and White wins.

This technique applies whichever file the pawn is on, except for a rook's file (when the corresponding position is drawn).



Polak – Kalod

Czech Ch, Opava 2000

Knowing how to win the Lucena Position is a great point-scorer in rook endings, because a huge range of rook endings eventually reduce to it. Here is a typical practical example.

1 ♞e4!

Pinning the c-pawn virtually immobilizes Black.

1...♞a1

Since 1...♞b4 2 ♜c5 costs Black his c-pawn, Black has no choice but to allow the exchange of the c- and e-pawns.

2 ♞xc4 ♜xe6

The shape of an eventual Lucena Position emerges.

3 ♞d4

White could have played 3 ♜c6 at once, but there is no rush; he first cuts off the enemy king.

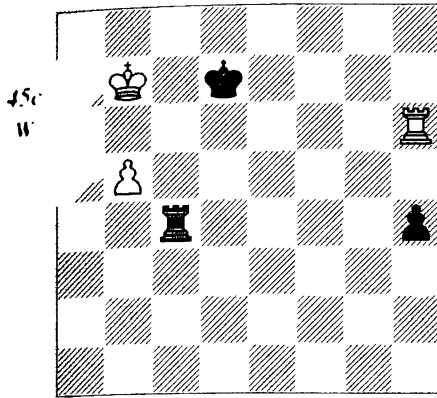
3...♜e5 4 ♞d2 ♞b1 5 ♜c6 ♞c1+ 6 ♜b7

A typical manoeuvre to edge the king and pawn up the board. By repeating the same manoeuvre over and over again, White can force the pawn to the seventh rank.

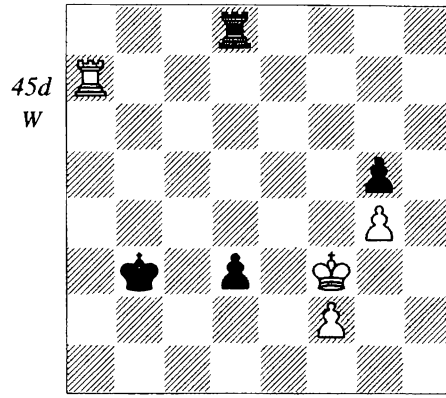
6...♞b1 7 b6 ♞c1 8 ♜a7 ♞a1+ 9 ♜b8 ♜e6 10 b7 ♜e7

Now we have essentially the position of 45a. White proves he knows how to 'build a bridge' and at once puts his rook on the correct square.

11 ♞d4! ♜e8 12 ♜c7 ♞c1+ 13 ♜b6 ♞b1+ 14 ♜c6 ♜e7 15 ♞d5 ♜e8 16 ♞b5 1-0



Topalov – Karpov
Cannes 2002



Eising – Nunn
Amsterdam 1975

Even if Black also has a pawn, the Lucena Position can still sometimes be won. In this case, subtle play by White eventually forces Black to part with his pawn.

1 b6 ♖b4 2 ♔a7 ♜a4+ 3 ♔b8

The familiar manoeuvre to advance the pawn to the seventh rank.

3...♜b4 4 b7 ♜a4

How does White make progress now? He cannot play his rook to the d-file since he must keep Black's h-pawn under control. The key idea is to transfer the move to Black.

5 ♜h7+ ♔d8

White also wins after 5...♔d6 6 ♔c8 ♜c4+ 7 ♔d8 ♜b4 8 ♜h6+ ♔e5 9 ♔c7 ♔f5 10 ♜b6 and 5...♔e6 6 ♔c7 ♜c4+ 7 ♔b6 ♔f6 8 ♔b5.

6 ♜h8+ ♔d7 7 ♜h6!

Now Black must make a concession. If he gives up his pawn, White wins as in the standard Lucena Position.

7...♔d8

Trying to keep the white king bottled up on b8. White wins easily after 7...♜b4 8 ♔a7 ♔c7 9 b8♙+ ♜xb8 10 ♜h7+ or 7...♔e7 8 ♔c7 ♜c4+ 9 ♜c6.

8 ♜h7!

The second and fatal zugzwang. Black must either surrender the pawn or release the white king.

8...♜b4

Or 8...♔e8 9 ♔c7 ♜c4+ 10 ♔b6 ♜b4+ 11 ♔c6 and wins.

9 ♔a7 ♜a4+ 10 ♔b6 1-0

In 45a, the 'building a bridge' plan is the only way to win, but if you move all the pieces to the right, then White has a second winning plan, based on releasing the king by ♜a2-a8-b8. It is worth knowing this alternative idea, because sometimes it is the only route to success.

In the above position, Black is threatening simply ...d2, so White must drive the black king in front of the pawn by a series of checks.

1 ♜b7+ ♔c2 2 ♜c7+ ♔d1

Now the threat is ...d2 followed by ...♔e1, and White takes action to prevent this.

3 ♔g2 d2 4 ♔f1

Now we have the typical Lucena structure, but with some additional pawns. The f2-pawn means that Black cannot release his king by a check along the f-file, but he can win using the alternative plan of playing the rook round to c1.

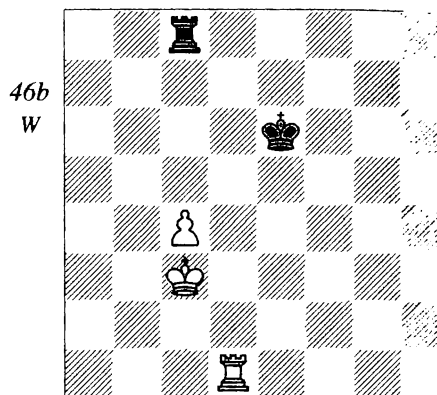
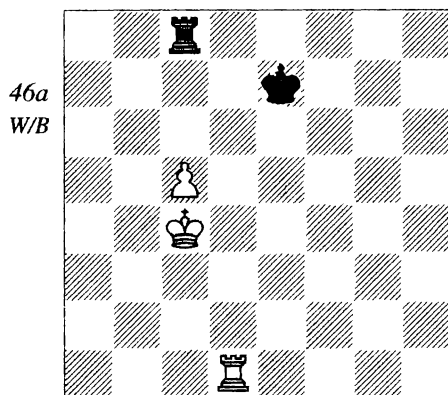
4...♜a8 5 f4

White makes a desperate bid for counterplay. After 5 f3, Black's plan runs smoothly: 5...♜a1 6 ♔f2 ♜c1 7 ♜d7 ♜c3! (Black's rook provides a shield for the black king after it moves to the c-file) 8 ♜d5 ♔c1 9 ♔e2 ♜c2 10 ♔e3 d1♙ 11 ♜xd1+ ♔xd1 12 f4 ♜c3+ 13 ♔d4 and now Black wins easily after 13...gxf4 or 13...♜g3.

5...♜a4 0-1

White resigned in view of 6 fxg5 ♜f4+ 7 ♔g2 ♜xg4+ 8 ♔f2 ♜xg5 and Black wins by the usual Lucena technique: 9 ♜d7 ♜g6 (but not immediately 9...♜f5+, when 10 ♔e3 forces Black to waste time) 10 ♜c7 ♜f6+ 11 ♔g3 ♜f5, etc.

46 ♖+♗ vs ♜ – Enemy King Cut Off (1)

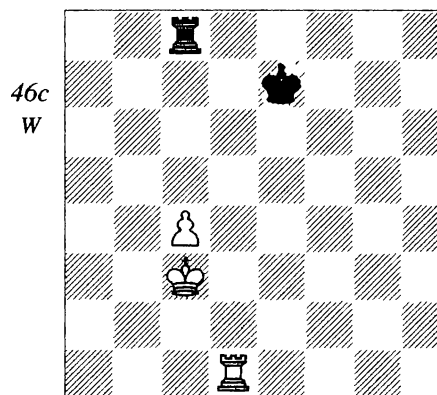


A common practical situation arises when the rook cuts the enemy king off from the pawn. In this case the attacker strives to advance the pawn with the support of his king. We first consider the case in which the attacker's rook operates along a file.

The above diagram is typical. We saw in Section 45 that Black has no chance of stopping the pawn when his rook operates from behind the pawn, so the standard method of defence is to put the rook in front of the pawn. However, if the pawn is already on the fifth rank then this plan doesn't work. Here White wins by **1 ♖b5 ♜b8+** (1...♜d8 2 ♜xd8 ♖xd8 3 ♖b6 ♖c8 4 ♖c6 is also a win for White) **2 ♖a6 ♜c8 3 ♖b6 ♜b8+** **4 ♖c7 ♜b2 5 c6** and White quickly reaches the Lucena Position.

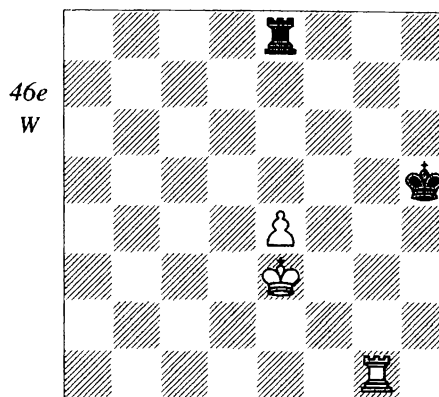
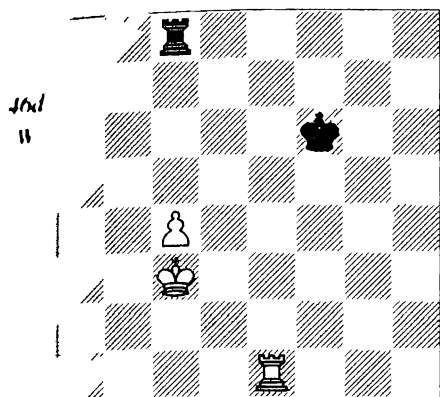
It follows that with the pawn on the fifth rank, Black's only hope is to challenge the white rook immediately and bring his king in front of the pawn. If Black is to move in the above diagram, this can be accomplished by **1...♜d8!**, since **2 ♜xd8 ♖xd8 3 ♖b5 ♖c7** is only a draw. This defence depends on the initially favourable position of Black's pieces; for example, if his king is on e6 instead of e7 then this defence is not available and Black loses even if he moves first.

When the pawn is on the fourth rank, then it cannot advance with just the support of the king, and therefore the above diagram is drawn. After **1 ♖b4 ♜b8+** **2 ♖a5 ♜c8 3 ♖b5 ♜b8+** **4 ♖a6 ♜c8** the only way to avoid a repetition is to try **5 ♜c1 ♖d7 6 ♖b6 ♜b8+** or **5 ♜d4 ♖e5 6 ♜h4 ♖d6**, but in both cases Black is able to bring his king in front of the pawn.



In this case Black's king is poorly placed, and White can advance his pawn by using his king and rook together: **1 ♖b4 ♜b8+** **2 ♖a5 ♜c8 3 ♜d4!** (intending ♖b6 followed by c5) **3...♖e6** (Black's king is too far away to dislodge White's rook in time) **4 ♖b6 ♖e5 5 ♜h4 ♜b8+** **6 ♖c7 ♜b4 7 ♜h5+ ♖e6 8 c5** and the Lucena Position is not far off.

Note that the white king's use of the a-file in the above line was critical; if the position is shifted one file to the left, then it is a draw.



If the defender's king is cut off at a greater distance, then the attacker's winning chances increase. In the above position, White wins by again using his king and rook in combination, but this time his rook must operate from behind the pawn.

1 ♖b4 ♜b8+ 2 ♔a5

White first of all zigzags his king up the board as far as possible.

2...♞c8 3 ♖b5 ♜b8+ 4 ♔a6 ♞c8 5 ♞c1!

Having brought his king to the optimum position, White switches his rook behind the pawn. This lowers the barrier holding the black king back, but although the king rushes to help, it arrives too late to save Black.

5...♔e7 6 ♖b7 ♞c5 7 ♖b6 ♞e5 8 c5 ♔d8

Black is able to bring his king in front of the pawn, but his rook is badly placed and White wins in any case.

9 ♞d1+ ♔c8

Or 9...♔e7 10 c6 ♞e2 11 ♖b7 leading to the Lucena Position.

10 ♞h1 ♞e2

If Black retreats his rook to the first rank, White wins as in 44b: 10...♞e8 11 c6 ♖b8 12 ♞h7 ♔c8 13 ♞a7.

11 ♞h8+ ♔d7 12 c6+ ♔d6 13 ♞d8+ ♔e7 14 c7

After Black's checks run out, White will promote his pawn.

Just as in 46c, White's winning plan here depends crucially on playing his king to the a-file. Thus if the whole position is shifted one file to the left, then White can no longer win.

When the attacker has a central pawn, the situation is often rather different. This looks like 46d, but the winning technique used there no longer works: 1 ♔d4?! ♞d8+ 2 ♔c5 ♞e8 3 ♔d5 ♞d8+ 4 ♔c6 ♞e8 5 ♞e1? (White could still win by backtracking with 5 ♔d5) 5...♔g6 6 ♔d7 ♞a8 7 e5 ♞a7+ and the harassing checks from the side prevent White from winning. In 46d, there wasn't enough room to the left of the pawn for Black to set up similar checks. White can win 46e, but it requires a different method based on mating threats against the black king.

1 ♞g2

The first step is to lose a tempo and thereby put Black in zugzwang.

1...♔h4

After 1...♞e7 2 ♔d4 ♞d7+ 3 ♔c5 ♞e7 4 ♔d5 ♞d7+ 5 ♔e6 the pawn advances, while 1...♔h6 loses as in the main line.

2 ♞g7 ♔h5

Or 2...♔h3 3 ♞g1 ♔h2 4 ♞g5 ♔h3 5 e5 ♔h4 6 ♔f4 with a comfortable win.

3 ♞g1! ♔h6

Black must make a concession. 3...♞e7 4 ♔d4 wins as after 1...♞e7, while 3...♔h4 4 e5! is the key tactical point, based on 4...♞xe5+ 5 ♔f4 and Black loses his rook.

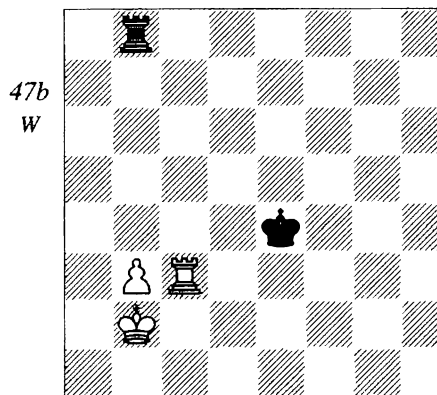
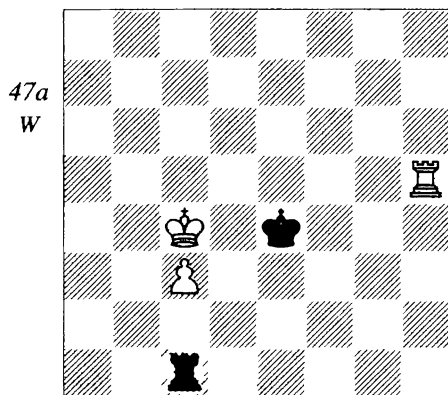
4 ♔d4 ♞d8+ 5 ♔c5 ♞e8 6 ♔d5 ♞d8+ 7 ♔e6 ♞e8+ 8 ♔f6

Now we see why the king is badly placed on h6. White gains a crucial tempo by threatening mate.

8...♔h5 9 e5 ♞f8+ 10 ♔e7 ♞f2 11 e6 ♞e2 12 ♔d7 ♞d2+ 13 ♔e8

with a Lucena win.

47 ♖+♙ vs ♜ – Enemy King Cut Off (2)



Donchev – Pinter
Prague Zonal 1985

In many ways, it's even worse for the defender to have his king cut off along a rank than to have it cut off along a file. Even if the pawn is far back, there may be no way to prevent the gradual advance of the pawn.

The above diagram shows a typical situation: White's rook prevents Black from improving his king position, leaving the white king to usher the pawn forward. The win may take some time, but there is nothing Black can do.

1 ♖b4 ♜b1+

Or 1...♔d3 2 ♜h3+ ♔e4 3 c4 ♔e5 4 ♜h6 (keeping the black king cut off along a rank) 4...♜b1+ 5 ♔c5 ♜c1 6 ♔b5 and White simply repeats his manoeuvre.

2 ♔c5 ♜a1 3 ♜h6

White must not ignore Black's threat of ...♜a5+, so he transfers his rook to a different rank which enables him to maintain the cut-off.

3...♔e5 4 c4

One step forward. White needs only to repeat the manoeuvre to edge forward with his pawn until he eventually reaches the Lucena Position.

4...♜c1 5 ♔b5 ♔d4 6 ♜h4+ ♔e5 7 c5 ♔e6 8 ♜h7

The pawn is now so far advanced that White could also win by 8 ♜d4, switching to a cut-off along a file.

8...♜b1+ 9 ♔c6 ♜c1 10 ♔b6 ♔d5 11 ♜h5+ ♔e6 12 c6

and the Lucena Position is not far off.

In 47a, White's king was already in front of the pawn, and then Black's cause is hopeless. There are better defensive chances if the white king is still behind the pawn. In the game, White did not take the chance to cut the black king off along a rank, and the finish was **1 ♜c7? ♔d5 2 ♔c3 ♔d6 3 ♜c4 ♜b7 4 b4 ♜c7 5 b5 ♜xc4+ 6 ♔xc4 ♔c7 7 ♔c5 ½-½**.

However, White could have won:

1 ♜c5!

Black's king is cut off along the fifth rank. Now White only has to advance his king to win.

1...♔d4

After 1...♜a8 2 ♔c3, followed by b4, White wins easily.

2 ♜a5!

The key move. 2 ♜h5? ♜a8! (and if 3 b4, then 3...♔c4) would enable Black to keep the white king bottled up.

2...♜h8 3 ♔a3 ♜h1 4 ♔a4!

White must take care. 4 b4? ♜a1+ 5 ♔b3 ♜xa5 is a draw.

4...♜a1+ 5 ♔b5

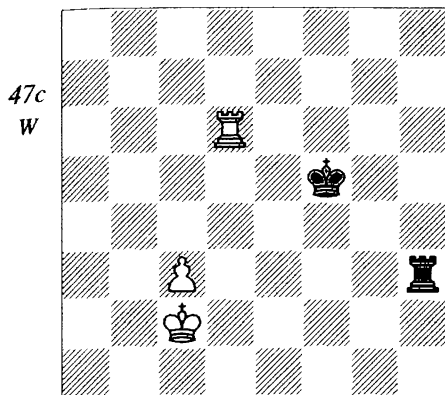
Now we have the situation of 47a, and White wins as before.

5...♜h1 6 b4 ♜h5+ 7 ♔a4 ♜h1 8 ♜g5 ♔c4 9 ♜g4+

9 ♜c5+ ♔d4 10 ♜c8 also wins.

9...♔d5 10 ♔b5 ♜h8 11 ♜g6 ♜b8+ 12 ♔a5 ♜a8+ 13 ♜a6 ♜h8 14 b5

and so on.



Perunović – Bogosavljević
Serbian Ch, Vršac 2007

We conclude with two well-played practical examples. White can win the above position, but accuracy is required.

1 ♖b3

Not 1 c4? ♕e5 and the white king is cut off.

1... ♕e5

Black must dislodge the rook, since White wins easily after 1... ♞h8 2 c4 ♞c8 3 ♖b4 ♕e5 4 c5.

2 ♞d8!

Playing for the cut-off along a file. 2 ♞g6! heads for the rank cut-off and also wins: 2... ♞h8 (2... ♕d5 3 ♖b4 ♞h4+ 4 ♖b5 and 5 c4+ wins) 3 ♖b4 ♞b8+ 4 ♕c5 ♞c8+ 5 ♞c6 ♞a8 6 c4, etc. However, 2 ♞d1? only draws after 2... ♞h8! 3 c4 ♞b8+ 4 ♕c3 ♞c8, as in 46b.

2... ♞h7

Thanks to White's occupation of the eighth rank, Black has to settle for this less satisfactory move, which shortens his checking distance.

3 c4 ♞b7+ 4 ♕a4 ♕e6

With the rook on the second rank, Black cannot keep checking; for example, 4... ♞a7+ 5 ♖b5 ♞b7+ 6 ♕c6 and the pawn advances.

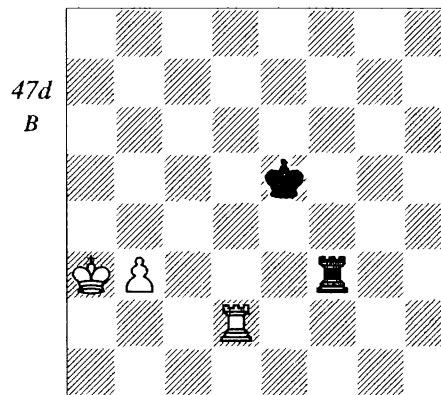
5 ♕a5 ♕e7 6 ♞d4 ♞b1

Or 6... ♞a7+ 7 ♖b6 ♞a4 8 ♖b5 ♞a1 9 c5 and again White wins.

7 c5 ♞b2 8 c6 ♞b1 9 c7 ♞c1 10 ♖b6 ♞b1+ 11 ♕c6 ♞c1+ 12 ♖b7 ♞b1+ 13 ♕c8

As usual, we end up with the Lucena Position.

13... ♞c1 14 ♞d7+ ♕e8 15 ♞d8+ ♕e7 16 ♖b7 ♞b1+ 17 ♕a6 1-0



Zviagintsev – Sveshnikov
Russian Team Ch, Togliatti 2003

Black can only draw by precise defence.

1... ♞f8!

Black must switch his rook to the front of the pawn straight away, lest White seize the eighth rank for himself (as in 47c). 1... ♕e6? loses after 2 ♞d8! ♕e7 (2... ♞f7 3 b4 ♞b7 4 ♕a4 ♞a7+ 5 ♖b5 ♞b7+ 6 ♕a5 ♞a7+ 7 ♖b6 also wins for White) 3 ♞d4! ♞f8 4 b4 ♞b8 5 ♕a4 ♞a8+ 6 ♖b5 ♞b8+ 7 ♕c6 (only possible thanks to White's accurate 3rd move) and the pawn advances.

2 b4 ♞a8+ 3 ♖b3 ♞b8 4 ♞d1

Trying to put Black in zugzwang.

4... ♕e6!

The only move. 4... ♕e4? loses to 5 ♞d7 ♕e5 6 ♖c4 ♞c8+ 7 ♖b5 ♞b8+ 8 ♕c5 ♞c8+ 9 ♖b6 and the rook can interpose on b7.

5 ♞d4

By defending the pawn, White threatens to advance his king and win by 6 ♖c4.

5... ♕e5!

Dislodging the rook. 5... ♕e7? loses after 6 ♖c4 ♞c8+ 7 ♖b5 ♞b8+ 8 ♕c6.

6 ♕c3 ♞c8+

6... ♞h8 draws slightly more simply; for example, 7 ♞d1 ♞b8 or 7 b5 ♞b8.

7 ♞c4 ♞b8 8 ♞c6 ♕d5 9 ♞a6

Playing to cut the king off along a rank and threatening to win by 10 ♖b3.

9... ♞c8+! 10 ♖b3 ♞c6!

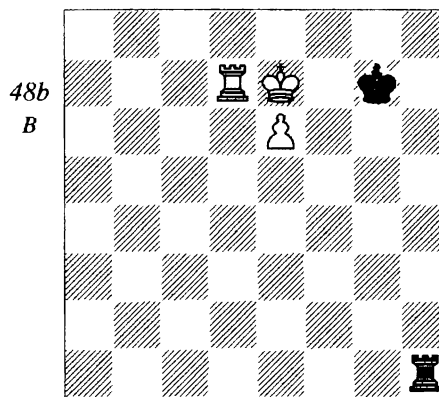
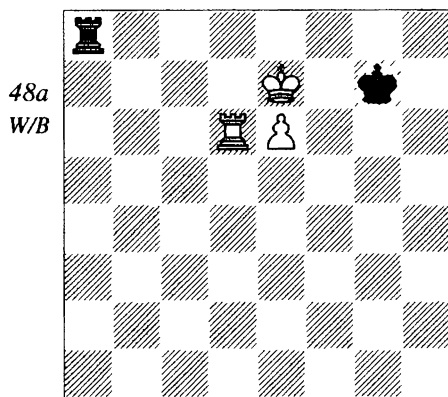
The right idea, driving White's rook away.

11 ♞a5+

11 ♞a7 ♞c1 is also drawn.

11... ♕d6 12 b5 ♞b6 ½-½

48 ♖+♙ vs ♜ – Checking from the Side



When there is sufficient space, the defender can sometimes save the game by checking with his rook from the side. I shall highlight the above position, because it is one of the most frequently misplayed positions in the whole of rook endings. It is a draw whoever moves first. White to play cannot make progress; e.g., 1 ♖d8 (or 1 ♔d7 ♕f6 2 e7+ ♕f7 3 ♜a6 ♜b8!) 1...♜a7+ 2 ♔d6 (2 ♕e8 ♕f6) 2...♜a6+ 3 ♔d7 ♜a7+ 4 ♕c6 ♜a6+ and the black rook is far enough away to maintain the harassing checks.

It's trickier when Black is to play, because there is only one drawing move. Black must avoid 1...♜b8? (played in Van der Sterren-Kuijf, Wijk aan Zee 1983 and Ho Van Huynh-Orr, Manila Olympiad 1992) due to 2 ♖d8 ♜b7+ 3 ♔d6 ♜b6+ 4 ♔d7 ♕f6 (Black's checking distance is now too short and he loses after 4...♜b7+ 5 ♕c6 ♜e7 6 ♔d6) 5 ♜f8+ ♕e5 6 e7 ♜b7+ 7 ♔d8 ♔d6 8 ♜f6+! and White wins. Another losing move is 1...♜a7+? (played in, for example, Aronian-Carlsen, Moscow 2006) when White wins by 2 ♕e8 (Carlsen resigned here) 2...♜a8+ 3 ♖d8 ♜a1 (3...♜a7 4 ♖d7+) 4 e7 ♜a7 5 ♜c8 ♜a1 6 ♜c2 ♖d1 7 ♜g2+ ♕h6 8 ♜g4 with the standard Lucena win.

Since 1...♜a1? also loses to 2 ♕e8, what is the drawing move? The answer is 1...♕g6!, which keeps the black rook on the first rank while maintaining the necessary checking distance. Then the play is essentially the same as in the White-to-play analysis given above.

We have previously seen on several occasions that checking distance can be a crucial factor in endings of ♖+♙ vs ♜, and it is particularly important in situations involving sideways checks.

In this position Black can draw, but only by taking the maximum checking distance immediately.

1...♜a1!

Not 1...♜b1?, when White wins after 2 ♖d8 ♜b7+ 3 ♔d6 ♜b6+ 4 ♔d7 as in 48a. 1...♜h8? is also bad due to 2 ♖d1 ♕g6 (if White drives the enemy king to the h-file, it is all over) 3 ♜g1+ ♕f5 4 ♜e1 ♜h7+ 5 ♔d8 ♕f6 6 e7 and the pawn will promote.

2 ♕e8+

Other moves are no better:

1) 2 ♜b7 ♜a8 is a draw. The safest way for Black to draw such positions is to keep his rook on a8, meeting ♖d8 by ...♜a7+. However, Black must also bear in mind diagram 48a.

2) 2 ♖d8 ♜a7+ 3 ♔d6 ♜a6+ 4 ♔d7 ♜a7+ 5 ♕c6 ♜a6+ draws.

3) 2 ♕d6+ ♕f6 3 ♜f7+ ♕g6 4 ♜f8 ♜a6+ 5 ♔d7 ♜a7+ 6 ♕c6 ♜a6+ and again the checking distance is sufficient.

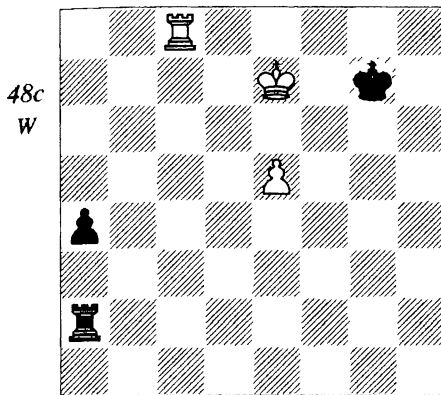
4) 2 ♖d6 ♜a8! (setting up the safe draw) 3 ♖d8 ♜a7+ 4 ♖d7 ♜a8, etc.

2...♕f6 3 e7 ♕e6

A noteworthy drawing idea. White cannot win due to the poor position of his rook.

4 ♖d2 ♜a8+ 5 ♖d8 ♜a7

White loses his pawn.



Polugaevsky – Nunn
Toluca Interzonal 1982

Here's a typical practical example.

1 e6

If Black were able to check on a7 then he would draw as in 48a, but unfortunately his own pawn is in the way. This obliges him to defend very accurately.

1...♖b2!

The only move to draw. 1...a3? 2 ♖c3! ♖b2 3 ♖g3+ ♖h6 4 ♖xa3 and 1...♖a1? 2 ♖a8 a3 3 ♖e8 a2 4 e7 ♖g6 5 ♖a3 ♖g7 6 ♖g3+ ♖f6 7 ♖f3+ ♖g7 8 ♖f2 ♖g8 9 ♖d2 ♖g7 10 ♖d8 win for White (e.g., 10...♖e1 11 ♖xa2 ♖d1+ 12 ♖e8 ♖b1 13 ♖e2 ♖d1 14 ♖g2+ ♖h6 15 ♖g4 arriving at the Lucena Position).

2 ♖a8 a3!

An important intermediary move which deflects White's rook to a bad position. 2...♖b7+? loses after 3 ♖d6 ♖b6+ 4 ♖d7 ♖f6 5 ♖f8+ ♖e5 6 e7 ♖b7+ 7 ♖d8 ♖d5 8 ♖f4! (a surprising twist; 8 e8 ♖? ♖b8+ 9 ♖c7 ♖xe8 10 ♖xe8 ♖c4 11 ♖c6 a3 is only a draw) 8...♖b8+ 9 ♖c7 ♖a8 10 ♖xa4 ♖xa4 11 e8 ♖ with a winning ending.

3 ♖xa3 ♖b7+ 4 ♖d8 ♖b8+ 5 ♖c7 ♖b1

The key moment. Black threatens to play his king to the f-file. To stop this, White must use his rook to cut off Black's king, but this allows Black to switch his rook to the a-file.

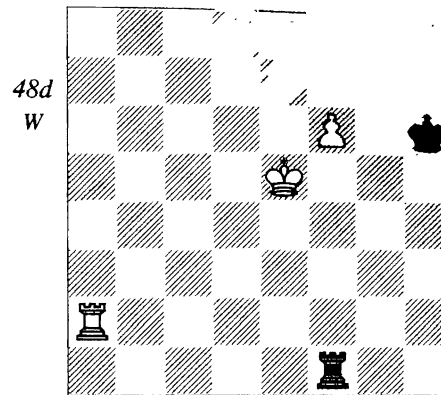
6 ♖f3

6 e7 ♖f7 7 ♖e3 ♖e8 is also drawn.

6...♖a1 7 ♖f7+

Or 7 e7 ♖a7+ 8 ♖d8 ♖a8+ 9 ♖d7 ♖a7+ 10 ♖d6 ♖a6+ 11 ♖c5 ♖e6 and again Black draws.

7...♖g6 1/2-1/2



If the pawn is on a different file, checking distance is still very important. If the pawn is on the d-file, with Black's rook checking from the a-file, then White's winning chances are increased. On the other hand, with the pawn on the f-file, the checking distance is greater and this helps Black. The above diagram is a draw even though White is to play and his rook occupies the a-file. However, Black needs to take care.

1 ♖e6 ♖b1!

The only move to draw. With the pawn on the e-file, occupying the b-file would not be enough to draw but here the extra file saves Black. After 1...♖c1?, White wins by 2 ♖f2! (2 ♖h2+? ♖g6 3 ♖g2+ ♖h7 throws away the win as Black's king is now in a better position; for example, 4 f7 ♖c8 5 ♖d7 ♖a8 saves the day) 2...♖c8 3 ♖e7! (threatening 4 f7, but not the immediate 3 f7? due to 3...♖g7) 3...♖c7+ 4 ♖d8 ♖f7 5 ♖e8 ♖g6 6 ♖g2+ ♖xf6 7 ♖f2+ and Black loses his rook.

2 ♖f2

The best try; 2 ♖h2+ ♖g6 3 ♖g2+ ♖h7 only helps Black.

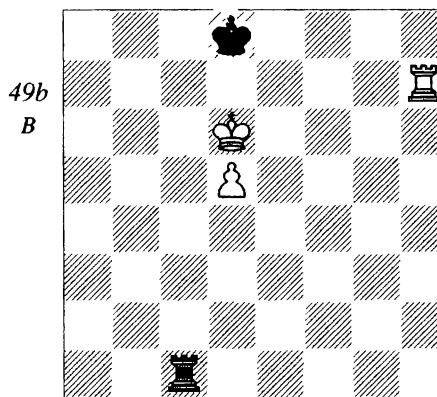
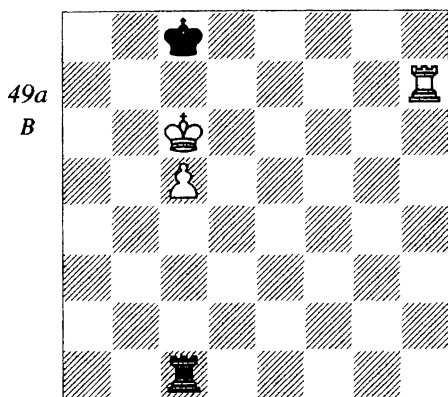
2...♖b6+ 3 ♖e5 ♖b5+ 4 ♖d6 ♖b8!

Once again, Black must choose the correct square for his rook. After 4...♖b6+? 5 ♖c7 the rook can no longer return to the first rank and White wins.

5 f7 ♖g7 6 ♖e7 ♖b7+

The sideways checks now draw easily.

49 ♔+♙ vs ♚ – Moving to the Short Side



This diagram shows another situation which is often misplayed in practice. Black is threatened with mate and must move his king, but which way should it go?

First, let's look at what Black should **not** do: 1...♙d8? 2 ♚h8+ ♜e7 3 ♚c8! (the key move, defending the pawn 'through' the king and so permitting ♜b7 followed by c6) 3...♚c2 (there is nothing Black can do to improve his position) 4 ♜b7 ♚b2+ 5 ♜c7 ♚a2 6 c6 ♚a7+ (this check causes no more than a momentary delay to White's plan) 7 ♜b6 ♚a1 8 ♚b8 (White's only remaining task is to improve the position of his rook) 8...♚b1+ 9 ♜c7 ♚a1 10 ♚b2 ♚c1 11 ♚e2+ ♜f6 12 ♜b7 ♚b1+ 13 ♜c8 and we reach the Lucena Position.

The correct plan is to move the king the other way: 1...♜b8! 2 ♚h8+ ♜a7 3 ♚c8 (3 ♙d6 is met by 3...♜b7) 3...♚h1 (Black moves his rook so as to ensure the maximum possible checking distance; we know from 48a and 48d that Black draws even if White's pawn advances to the sixth rank) 4 ♚d8 ♚h6+ 5 ♜c7 ♚h7+ 6 ♚d7 ♚h8 7 c6 (we have reached the standard draw of 48a) 7...♜a6 8 ♚d6 ♜a7 9 ♚d8 ♚h7+ and White cannot make progress.

The rule for deciding which way to move the king is normally expressed as **move the king to the short side**. This means that with a c- pawn or d-pawn, the defending king should move to the queenside, with an e- or f-pawn to the kingside. This leaves the 'long side' available for long-range checks from the rook.

The situation with a centre pawn is a little more complicated because it depends on the position of the two rooks. The above position is lost even if Black moves first, for two reasons. First, Black's rook does not stand immediately behind the pawn, and so it is easier for White to advance his king to the seventh rank. Secondly, White's rook occupies the h-file, which prevents Black from gaining the maximum checking distance.

1...♜c8

Moving to the short side is still relatively the best chance. After 1...♜e8 2 ♚h8+ ♜f7 3 ♙d7 White wins more easily.

2 ♚h8+ ♜b7 3 ♙d7 ♚g1

Black moves his rook as far away from the white king as possible, but it isn't enough. After 3...♚c7+ 4 ♜e6 ♚c1 5 d6 ♚e1+ 6 ♙d7 White wins much as in the main line.

4 d6

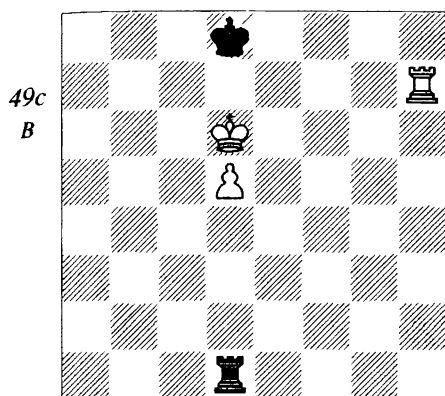
We know from the analysis of 48a that this position is a win.

4...♚g7+ 5 ♜e6 ♚g6+ 6 ♜e7 ♜c6

6...♚g7+ 7 ♜f6 ♚d7 8 ♜e6 also wins.

7 ♚c8+ ♜d5 8 d7 ♚g7+ 9 ♜e8 ♜e6 10 ♚c6+ followed by 11 d8♙, winning.

If the white rook were on g7 rather than h7 in the diagram, then the position would be a draw. The reason is that after 1...♜c8! (the only drawing move) 2 ♚g8+ ♜b7 3 ♙d7 ♚h1! Black secures the maximum checking distance and draws as in 48a.



The situation for the defender is better when his rook is directly behind the pawn, because White cannot immediately advance his king to the seventh rank. In fact, both king moves draw in the diagram and we shall look at both lines.

First of all the safer method: 1...♙c8 (moving to the short side draws comfortably) 2 ♖h8+ ♜b7 3 ♜d8 (3 ♙e6 ♙c7 4 ♖h7+ ♙d8 and 3 ♖h2 ♙c8 are also easy draws) 3...♞h1, preparing for harassing checks from the side, and the draw is now straightforward.

It is worth knowing the other drawing method because in some situations it is the only option.

1...♙e8 2 ♖h8+ ♙f7 3 ♜d8
3 ♙c6 is met by 3...♙e7.
3...♞a1!

Normally checks from the side would not work in this position, as the checking distance is too short, but Black is saved by the poor position of White's rook.

4 ♞b8

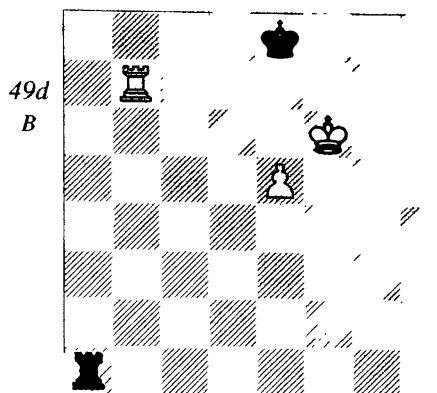
After 4 ♙c6 ♞a6+ 5 ♙b7 ♙e7! Black gains a vital tempo by attacking the rook. 4 ♞c8 is also met by 4...♞d1!

4...♞d1!

When White's rook is not on d8, Black must return to d1 with his rook, or else White's king can advance to the seventh rank, with d6 to follow. 4...♞a6+? loses after 5 ♙d7 ♞a7+ 6 ♙c6 ♞a6+ 7 ♞b6 ♞a8 8 ♙c7 ♙e8 9 ♞e6+ ♙f7 10 ♞e1 ♞a7+ 11 ♙c6 ♞a6+ 12 ♙b5 ♞d6 13 ♙c5 ♞d8 14 d6 and the pawn advances.

5 ♞b2 ♙e8 6 ♞e2+ ♙d8

White has not made progress.



Jansa – Hloušek
Czechoslovak Ch, Havirov 1970

Here's a practical example showing that mistakes are easy to make in such positions, even at national-championship level.

1...♞f1+ 2 ♙e6 ♙d8?

Apparently Black doesn't know the short-side rule. He could have saved the game by 2...♙f8 3 ♞b8+ ♙g7 4 ♙d6 (4 ♙e7 ♞a1 transposes) 4...♞d1+ 5 ♙e7 ♞a1 6 ♞b7 ♞a8 with the standard draw of 48a.

3 ♜d7+!

Once given his chance, White handles the position with great accuracy. First he transfers his rook to a7 with gain of tempo. This has two benefits. Firstly, it reduces Black's checking distance and secondly it moves the rook out of the range of Black's king in case of ...♙c7. After 3 ♞b8+ ♙c7 4 ♞h8? ♞e1! 5 ♞e8 ♞h1! Black draws as in 49c.

3...♙e8

After 3...♙c8 4 ♞d2 ♞h1 5 ♙f7 ♞h7+ 6 ♙g6 ♞h1 7 e6 White quickly reaches the Lucena Position.

4 ♞a7! ♙d8

Now even moving to the short side does not save Black: 4...♙f8 5 ♞a8+ ♙g7 6 ♙e7 and White wins as in 49b.

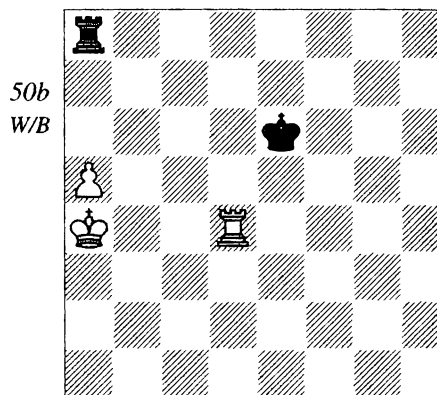
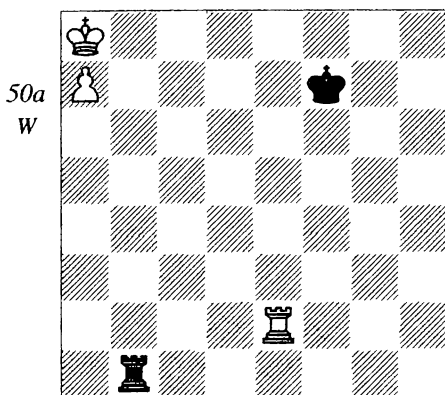
5 ♞a8+ ♙c7

White's rook is not under attack, so he is able to advance his king immediately to the seventh rank.

6 ♙e7 ♞h1 7 e6 ♞h7+ 8 ♙f6 1-0

The checking distance is too short and White wins easily.

50 Rook and Rook's Pawn vs Rook



The attacker's winning chances are much reduced if he has a rook's pawn. One of the main reasons for this is that there is no equivalent to the Lucena Position. If the attacker's king gets stuck in front of the pawn, the result is often a draw. The above position shows a marginal case. White can win, but if you move the white rook to d2 and the black king to e7, then the position would be a draw. This is in contrast to the situation with non-rook's pawns, where White wins no matter how close the enemy king is.

1 ♖c2 ♜e7 2 ♜c8!

The rook is heading to b8 to free the king. Not 2 ♜c7+? ♜d6 3 ♜b7 ♜h1 since then 4 ♜b8?? even loses after 4...♜h8#.

2...♜d6

Or 2...♜d7 3 ♜b8 ♜h1 4 ♜b7 ♜b1+ 5 ♜a6 ♜a1+ 6 ♜b6 ♜b1+ 7 ♜c5 and White wins.

3 ♜b8 ♜h1 4 ♜b7 ♜b1+ 5 ♜c8

With the black king on d6, White's king cannot escape via c5 and therefore he must seek an alternative escape-route.

5...♜c1+ 6 ♜d8 ♜g1

Black's last chance is to exploit the uncomfortable position of White's king.

7 ♜b6+ ♜c5 8 ♜c6+! ♜xc6

After 8...♜d5 9 ♜a6 ♜g8+ 10 ♜c7 ♜g7+ 11 ♜b6 ♜g6+ 12 ♜b5 White will win Black's rook in return for the pawn.

9 a8♙+ ♜b6 10 ♙b8+

and White will win Black's rook after a few more checks.

Here White wins if it is his move, but if Black is to play, he can draw by challenging White's control of the d-file. It is worth comparing this position with 46a; the conclusions are rather similar, even though here the black king is cut off by three files rather than one. This reflects the reduced winning chances of a rook's pawn.

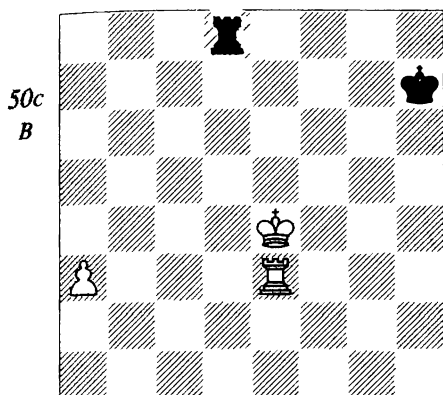
White to play wins by **1 ♜b5**, and now:

1) 1...♜b8+ 2 ♜c6 ♜a8 3 ♜b6 ♜b8+ 4 ♜c7 ♜a8 (4...♜b1 5 a6 ♜c1+ 6 ♜b6 ♜b1+ 7 ♜a5) 5 ♜a4 and White wins.

2) 1...♜e5 2 ♜h4 ♜b8+ 3 ♜c6 ♜c8+ 4 ♜b7 ♜c1 5 a6 ♜b1+ 6 ♜c6 ♜c1+ 7 ♜b6 ♜b1+ 8 ♜a5 and White can interpose his rook on a4. This line is typical in that White cannot afford to have his king trapped in front of the pawn, so in response to the checks, White's king must retreat to the rear of the pawn.

Black to play draws by **1...♜e7! 2 ♜b5 ♜d8!** (not 2...♜b8+?, losing to 3 ♜c6 ♜a8 4 ♜b6 ♜b8+ 5 ♜c7 ♜b1 6 a6 ♜c1+ 7 ♜b6 ♜b1+ 8 ♜a5) **3 ♜c4 ♜b8+!** (3...♜d7? 4 a6 ♜b8+ 5 ♜a5 ♜a8 6 ♜h4 ♜g8 7 a7 ♜c7 8 ♜h7+ ♜c6 9 ♜a6 and ♜b7-b8 wins) **4 ♜a4 ♜d7 5 a6 ♜b1 6 ♜a5 ♜a1+ 7 ♜b6** (after 7 ♜a4 Black can exchange rooks) **7...♜b1+** and White's king will end up trapped in front of the pawn.

If we move the white rook to d2 in the diagram, then it is a draw even with White to play as after 1 ♜b5 ♜b8+ 2 ♜c6 ♜c8+ 3 ♜b7 ♜c1 4 a6 ♜b1+ 5 ♜c6 ♜c1+ 6 ♜b5 ♜b1+ 7 ♜a4 ♜a1+ White cannot arrange to interpose his rook on the a-file.



J. Horvath – Marciano
Izmir ECC 2004

When the pawn is further back, a win is only possible if the enemy king is cut off by almost the whole width of the board.

1...♔g6

A good move, as White was threatening to establish a winning position by playing ♔g3.

2 ♖f3

White cuts off the king as far away as possible, but even this is insufficient for a win.

2...♞a8 3 ♕e5 ♞a5+ 4 ♔d4 ♞a8 5 ♕c5 ♔g5 6 ♔b4 ♞b8+ 7 ♕c4 ♞c8+ 8 ♔b3 ♞b8+ 9 ♔a2 ♞a8 10 ♞f2 ♔g6 11 ♞f1

White's plan is to play his king as far up the board as possible, and then support the pawn from behind with ♞a1.

11...♔g5 12 ♔b3 ♞b8+ 13 ♕c4 ♞a8 14 ♔b4 ♞b8+ 15 ♕c5 ♞a8 16 ♞a1

Threatening to win by pushing the a-pawn, so Black's king must run to the queenside.

16...♔f6 17 a4 ♕e7 18 ♔b5

After 18 ♔b6 ♔d7 19 a5 ♞b8+ White is virtually forced to play his king in front of the pawn, which allows Black an easy draw.

18...♔d8 19 a5 ♕c8?

19...♕c7 20 a6 ♞h8 leads to a draw.

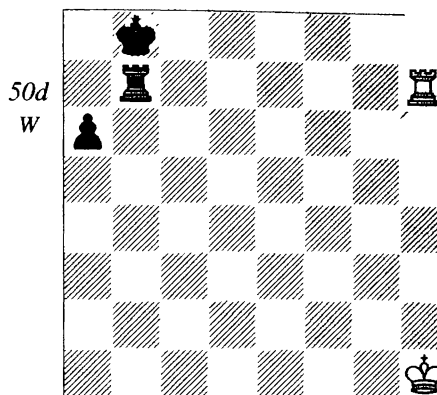
20 a6 ♔b8

Or 20...♕c7 21 ♞c1+ ♔d6 22 ♔a5 ♔d7 23 ♞h1 ♕c6 24 ♞h7 ♞g8 25 a7 and White wins.

21 ♔b6?

Missing 21 ♞h1! ♞a7 22 ♞h8+ ♕c7 23 ♞g8 ♔d6 24 ♔b6, winning. The move played allows Black to draw by a neat stalemate trick.

21...♞a7 22 ♞h1 ♞b7+! 23 axb7 1/2-1/2



Grandelius – Blazkova
Marianske Lazne 2007

1 ♞h6 ♔a7!

The only move to win; after 1...a5 2 ♔g2 ♞f7 3 ♞h5 a4 4 ♞h4 ♞a7 5 ♔f3 a3 6 ♞h1 White's king makes it back in time.

2 ♔g2 ♞f7

We know from 50c that this is a draw if the white rook is on a1, but here the rook occupies an inferior position and so Black should win.

3 ♞e6

White tries cutting off the black king along the sixth rank, but this should not succeed.

3...♞f5 4 ♔g3 a5 5 ♔g4 ♞b5?

Unnecessarily giving the white king freedom to move to the queenside. Black could have won by 5...♞f8 6 ♔g3 ♔b7! (not 6...a4? 7 ♞e4) 7 ♔g2 a4 8 ♔g3 ♞a8 9 ♔f3 a3 10 ♞e1 a2 11 ♞a1 ♔b6 12 ♕e3 ♔b5 13 ♔d3 ♔b4.

6 ♔f3 a4 7 ♞e4?

At the moment White's king cannot move to the e-file as 7 ♕e2? loses to 7...a3. However, the simplest draw was by 7 ♞h6 (threatening ♕e2) 7...a3 8 ♞h1 ♞a5 9 ♕e3 a2 10 ♞a1 ♔b6 11 ♔d3 ♕c5 12 ♕c3 and White is in time.

7...♞a5 8 ♞e1 ♔b6?

Missing 8...a3! 9 ♕e4 (9 ♞a1 ♔b6 10 ♕e3 ♔b5 11 ♔d2 ♔a4 12 ♕c2 ♞c5+ 13 ♔b1 ♞h5 14 ♕c2 ♞h2+ 15 ♕c3 a2 is a win for Black) 9...a2! 10 ♞a1 ♞a3! 11 ♔d4 ♔b6 12 ♕c4 ♔a5 13 ♕c5 ♞a4 14 ♔d5 ♔b4 and the black king reaches b2.

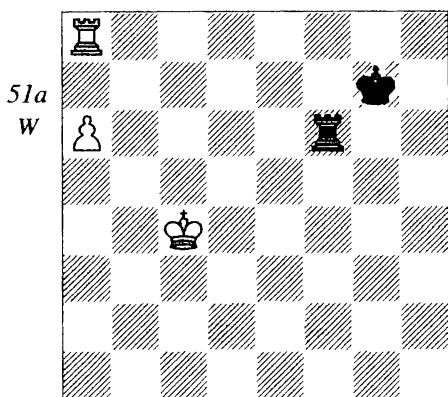
9 ♕e4! ♞b5

9...a3 10 ♔d3 a2 11 ♞a1 ♔b5 12 ♕c3 draws.

10 ♔d3 ♔a5 11 ♕c3 a3 12 ♞e8 ♞h5 13 ♞a8+ ♔b5 14 ♞xa3 1/2-1/2

51

Vančura Draw



J. Vančura
28 Rijen, 1924

It isn't always best for the defender to have his rook behind the enemy passed pawn. Against a rook's pawn, a side attack may be more effective. This position shows an important drawing idea against a rook's pawn with the attacker's rook in front of the pawn, called the *Vančura draw*. If White defends the pawn with his king and frees his rook, then he will win. However, Black can attack the pawn from the side, which ties the white rook to the a-file. White cannot hide his king on a7 because Black can check from the side.

1 ♖b5

Now the white king is defending the pawn, so White threatens to win by moving his rook along the eighth rank.

1... ♜f5+

The only drawing move. Black must not give White the chance to extract his rook.

2 ♖c6 ♜f6+ 3 ♖d5 ♜f5+ 4 ♖e6 ♜f6+ 5 ♖e5 ♜b6 6 ♖d5 ♜f6

Black returns to the f-file, ready to check the white king when it approaches the pawn.

7 a7

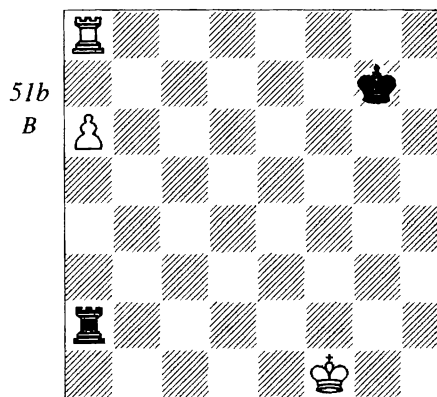
There is nothing else to try.

7... ♜a6

Now Black must play his rook behind the pawn, since 7... ♜f7? loses to 8 ♜g8+.

8 ♖c5 ♜a1 9 ♖b6 ♜b1+

Playing a7 means there is now no bolt-hole on a7, so checking from behind draws.



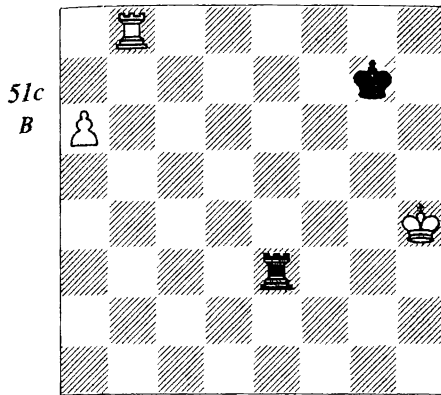
This diagram shows a common practical situation. Black's rook currently stands behind the pawn rather than to the side of it. Can he still draw?

Black's king is unable to approach the white pawn, because if the king moves to e7 or e6, White wins with a7 since Black cannot prevent either a rook check or, if the black king moves to d7, e7 or f7, the trick ♜h8 winning Black's rook with a skewer.

On the other hand, if Black simply waits then White will play his king to b1, forcing Black's rook to move along the a-file. Then White will advance his king, eventually hiding on a7. This will free his rook, after which the win is simple. Thus Black cannot afford to wait, and the simplest draw is immediately to transfer his rook to attack from the side: 1... ♜a5! 2 ♖e2 ♜e5+ 3 ♖d3 ♜e6 4 ♖c4 ♜f6 and we have reached the previous diagram.

In this example, Black's king was on g7 and his rook on the f-file; it is important to note that the Vančura draw also works if Black's king is on the h-file and his rook on the g-file. The key point is that the black rook should be defended by the king while it is checking, as otherwise White can win by approaching the checking rook with his king.

It is surprising how often strong players mis-play this type of position. Apparently the standard advice that rooks are best placed behind enemy passed pawns is hard to overcome.



Kazhgaleev – Hanley
Port Erin 2006

This position is drawn because Black can reach the Vančura position. In this he is helped both by the distant white king, and the fact that his own king is already ideally placed on g7.

1...♠a3 2 ♠a8

2 ♠b6 ♖f7 is an easy draw as the black king can approach the pawn.

2...♠a1

2...♠e3 was simpler. If White moves his rook along the eighth rank Black just returns to a3, while otherwise Black plays his rook to e6 and sets up the Vančura draw; for example, 3 ♖g5 ♠e6 4 ♖f5 ♠f6+ 5 ♖e5 ♠b6 as in 51a.

3 ♖g5 ♠a5+ 4 ♖f4 ♠a1?

Black waits too long to switch his rook to the side. 4...♠c5 followed by ...♠c6 was the correct path (4...♠b5 and 4...♠d5 are also good).

5 ♖e5 ♠a5+

Or 5...♠b1 6 ♠c8 ♠a1 7 ♠c6 ♖f7 8 ♖d6 and the king approaches the a-pawn.

6 ♖d6 ♠f5

Black tries to switch his rook to f6, but it is too late.

7 ♠a7+!

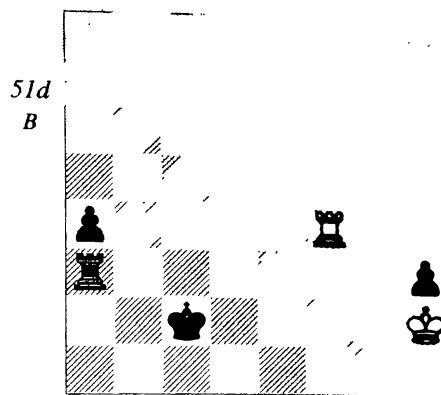
This unpleasant check leaves Black's king without a good square.

7...♖g6

7...♖f8 8 ♖e6 ♠a5 9 ♠a8+ ♖g7 10 ♖d7 ♠f5

11 ♠c8 also wins for White.

8 ♠e7 ♠a5 9 a7 1-0



Bologan – Dreev
Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2006

Knowledge of the Vančura draw helps in a wide range of positions involving a passed rook's pawn with the attacker's rook in front of the pawn. Although Black is two pawns up, he cannot win, as sooner or later he must surrender the h-pawn. Then, provided White has played accurately, he will be able to reach a Vančura draw.

1...♠a1

Black tries his best. He temptingly offers the h-pawn, hoping that White will accept the poisoned gift.

2 ♠f2+!

The only move. White cannot take on h3 with his king because then his pieces are misplaced: 2 ♖xh3? a3 3 ♠f2+ (3 ♠f3 a2 4 ♠f2+ ♖b3 5 ♠f3+ ♖c4 and Black wins) 3...♖d3 4 ♠f3+ ♖e4! 5 ♠f2 ♠c1 with a simple win now that the rook has escaped.

2...♖d3 3 ♠f4!

The h-pawn can wait; it is essential to keep the enemy rook tied to the a-pawn.

3...a3 4 ♠f3+ ♖d2

4...♖c2 5 ♠f2+ does not help.

5 ♠xh3

With the king on h2, taking the pawn with the rook is safe, since here 5...a2 can be safely met by 6 ♠a3.

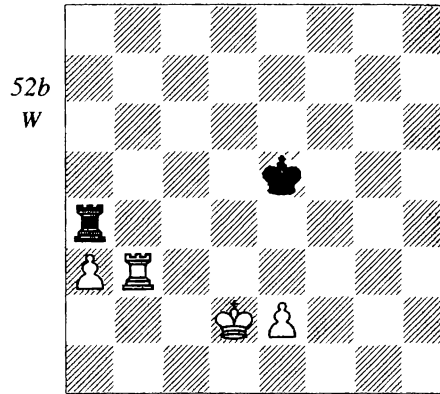
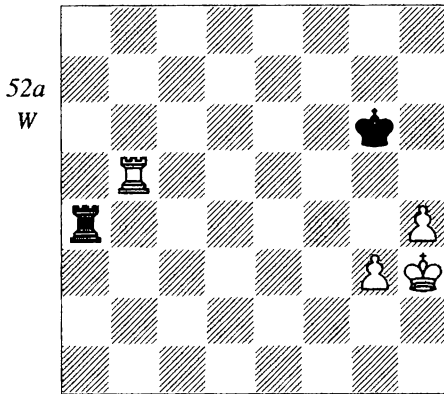
5...♖c2 6 ♠g3

Setting up the Vančura draw.

6...a2 1/2-1/2

It is an easy draw after 7 ♠g2+ ♖d3 8 ♠g3+ ♖e2 9 ♠a3.

52 Rook and Two Pawns vs Rook (1)



The ending of ♖+♙ vs ♜ is generally won, except if the pawns are doubled. However, there are a fair number of exceptions. If the pawns are connected, then the win is usually easy. The most difficult case involves a rook's pawn and a knight's pawn, although even this presents only slight difficulties.

1 h5+ ♜h6 2 g4

The simplest way to proceed. The h-pawn advances first, leaving the g-pawn to shield the king from the side.

2...♞a3+ 3 ♜h4 ♞a4 4 ♞b6+ ♜g7 5 h6+ ♜h7 6 ♜h5 ♞a1 7 ♞b7+ ♜g8 8 g5 ♞a5

8...♞a8 9 ♜b5 ♞c8 10 g6 ♞a8 11 ♜g5 ♞d8 12 h7+ ♜g7 13 ♞b7+ ♜h8 14 ♜h6 also wins. **9 ♞d7!**

It's OK to lead with the h-pawn until the sixth rank, but take care about pushing it to the seventh; here 9 h7+? only draws after 9...♜h8 10 ♜h6 ♞a6+ 11 g6 ♞xg6+!. The text-move is the key finesse in this ending, getting ready to interpose the rook on the d-file later.

9...♞b5 10 ♜g6 ♞b6+ 11 ♜f5 ♞b5+ 12 ♜f6 ♞b6+ 13 ♜e5 ♞b5+ 14 ♞d5! ♞b6

14...♞b8 loses to 15 g6.

15 ♞d6 ♞b1 16 g6 ♞e1+ 17 ♜f4 ♞f1+ 18 ♜g3 ♞f8

18...♜f8 19 g7+ ♜e7 20 ♜g2 wins for White, so Black must retreat his rook to the first rank, when the simple advance of the king is decisive.

19 ♜g4 ♞a8 20 ♜g5 ♞a5+ 21 ♜f6 ♞a8 22 h7+ ♜h8 23 ♜g5 ♜g7 24 ♞d7+ ♜h8 25 ♜h6 followed by mate.

When the pawns are disconnected, the winning process is often harder, especially if one of the pawns is a rook's pawn. It may be necessary to give up one pawn, so a good knowledge of ♖+♙ vs ♜ is essential.

1 ♜c2 ♞a8 2 ♜b2 ♜d5 3 ♞d3+

A typical idea. Black must decide which way to go with his king.

3...♜e4

If Black goes the other way, White cuts off the king. A typical line runs 3...♜c4 4 ♜c2 ♞a4 5 e3 ♜c5 6 ♜d2 ♜c6 7 ♜e2 ♞h4 8 ♜f3 ♞h8 9 e4 ♞h3+ 10 ♜e2 ♞h1 11 ♜e3 ♞h3+ 12 ♜d4 ♞h8 13 a4 and the pawns can slowly advance.

4 ♜a2!

Zugzwang. Now 4...♜e5 loses to 5 ♞d2 ♜e4 6 ♜b3 ♞b8+ 7 ♜c4 ♞c8+ 8 ♜b5 ♞b8+ 9 ♜c6 ♞a8 10 ♞a2! and the a-pawn starts to advance.

4...♞a7 5 ♜b3 ♞b7+ 6 ♜c4 ♞c7+ 7 ♜b5 ♞b7+

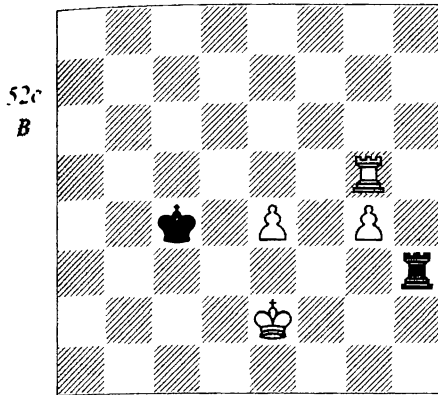
After 7...♞c2 White wins more easily as he need not surrender the e-pawn: 8 ♞d8 ♞b2+ 9 ♜c4 ♞a2 10 ♞e8+ ♜f4 11 ♜b3 ♞a1 12 a4 ♜f5 13 ♜b4 ♞b1+ 14 ♜c5 ♞c1+ 15 ♜b6, etc.

8 ♜a6 ♞b2 9 a4! ♞xe2 10 ♞d8!

The key move. White's rook stands ready to free the white king from the a-file by ♞b8.

10...♞a2 11 a5 ♜e5 12 ♜b6 ♞b2+ 13 ♜a7 ♜e6 14 a6 ♜e7 15 ♞b8 ♞c2 16 ♜b7 ♞b2+ 17 ♜a8 ♞c2 18 a7 ♜d6 19 ♜b7 ♞b2+ 20 ♜c8 ♞c2+ 21 ♜d8 ♞h2 22 ♞b6+ ♜c5 23 ♞c6+!

and White wins.



Topalov – Van Wely
Amber Rapid, Monte Carlo 1997

Drawn positions can arise for various reasons. One of the most common is that the attacker's pieces are poorly placed. In this position, White's king is cut off from supporting the pawns and his rook is passively placed.

1...♔d4!

The only drawing move, for otherwise ♖d5 cuts the king off from the pawns.

2 e5 ♜e3+?

Mistakenly playing to win the e-pawn directly. Black could have drawn by 2...♔d5! 3 ♕f2 (after 3 ♜f5 ♜g3 4 g5 ♕e6 White loses a pawn in unfavourable circumstances) 3...♕e6! 4 ♕g2 ♜a3 (for the moment Black can just wait) 5 ♜h5 (playing for ♜h3 is the only way to make progress, since 5 ♜f5 ♜b3 6 ♜f3 ♜xf3 is an immediate draw) 5...♜e3! (not 5...♜b3? 6 ♜h3 ♜b1 7 ♜e3, when White activates his rook and wins) 6 ♜h3 ♜xe5 (Black's king is already quite close to White's pawn and so this is an easy draw) 7 ♜f3 ♜g5 8 ♕g3 ♜g8 (see 46b) 9 ♕h4 ♜h8+ 10 ♕g5 ♜g8+ 11 ♕h5 ♜h8+ 12 ♕g6 ♜g8+ and White cannot make progress.

3 ♕f2 ♜xe5

Here Black's king is much further away and White can win by cutting it off along a rank.

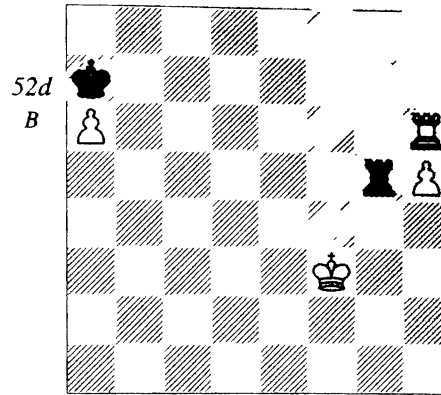
4 ♜g6!

Not 4 ♜g7? ♔d5 5 ♕g3 ♕e6 with a draw.

4...♔d5 5 ♕g3 ♜e8 6 ♕f4 ♜f8+ 7 ♕g5 ♕e5

White's pawn advances slowly but surely.

8 ♕h5 ♕f4 9 g5 ♕f5 10 ♜h6 ♜f7 11 ♜h8 ♕f4 12 g6 ♜f5+ 13 ♕h6 ♕g4 14 g7 ♜h5+ 15 ♕g6 ♜g5+ 16 ♕f6 1-0



Karpov – Yusupov
Linares 1991

Even if White's pawns are on the a- and h-files, a fairly unfavourable case, most positions are winning. For example, if the pawns are on the same rank and are defended by the rook along the same rank and are defended by the rook along the same rank, then almost all positions are winning. The win becomes problematic if the two rook's pawns are combined with a poor rook position. In this position Yusupov drew by a defensive plan based on the Vančura draw (Section 51).

1...♜c5 2 ♜h8

If the king approaches the pawn, then it is checked away: 2 ♕g4 ♜c4+ 3 ♕f5 ♜c5+.

2...♜g5!

Black is almost in zugzwang; for example, 2...♜b5? loses to 3 ♕g4 ♜b4+ 4 ♕g5 ♜b5+ 5 ♕g6 ♜b6+ 6 ♕g7 and there is no check on b7. 2...♜d5? is also a mistake, since 3 ♕g4 ♜d4+ 4 ♕f5 ♜d5+ 5 ♕g6 ♜d6+ 6 ♕f7 ♜d5 (the rook is too close to White's king and so the checks run out after 6...♜d7+ 7 ♕e6) 7 h6 ♜d7+ 8 ♕e6 ♜c7 9 ♜d8 activates the rook and wins.

The move played prevents ♕g4, and so Black can simply return to c5 next move. 2...♜c3+! was the only other drawing move.

3 ♕e4 ♜c5 4 ♕f4

After 4 ♕d4 Black can simply reply 4...♜g5.

4...♜c4+

g5 is out of bounds, so Black must check.

5 ♕e5 ♜c5+ 6 ♕e6 ♜g5 7 ♕f7 ♜c5!

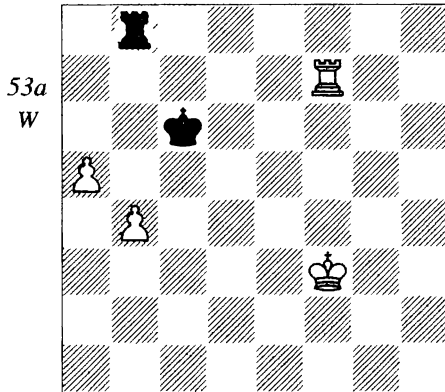
Black regains his checking distance.

8 ♜h7

8 h6 ♜c6 9 h7 ♜c7+ is also a draw.

8...♕xa6 9 h6 ♜c7+ 1/2-1/2

53 Rook and Two Pawns vs Rook (2)



Malakhov – Kveinys
FIDE Knockout, New Delhi 2000

Endings of ♖+2♙ vs ♜ are often misplayed in practice, even by very strong players. The most common error is to underestimate the drawing possibilities. This position is a draw because of an unusual blockade of White's pawns, but Black fails to appreciate the key features of the position.

1 ♖f4 ♗b5?

In fact White isn't threatening anything, and the only drawing move was the waiting 1...♗b7!. The point is that if Black has a rook check, then he can play ...♗b5, meeting ♖f6 by check followed by ...♗xb4. Thus 2 ♗e3 is met by 2...♗b5 3 ♖f6 ♖e7+ 4 ♗d4 ♗xb4 with a draw. It follows that White can only wait by 2 ♗f2, but after 2...♗b8! the situation remains the same and White cannot make progress.

2 ♖f6!

White pinpoints the flaw in Black's last move and transfers his rook to a more active position. Black cannot play 2...♗xb4 due to 3 ♖b6+, while if Black moves his rook along the rank, 3 ♖b6+ wins easily. Thus Black waits.

2...♗b7 3 ♗f4 ♖b8 4 ♗f5

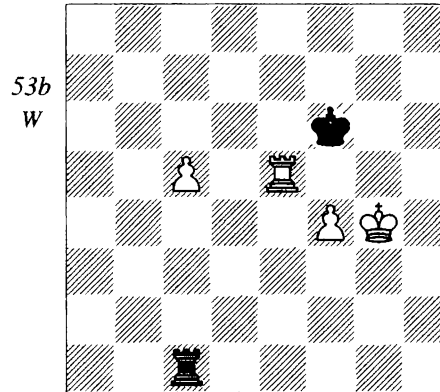
Making sure that Black never has a rook check.

4...♗b7 5 ♗e4?

White could have won by 5 ♗g6! ♖b8 6 ♗f7 ♖b7+ 7 ♗e8 ♖b8+ 8 ♗d7 ♖b7+ 9 ♗c8, etc.

1-0?

5...♖e7+ 6 ♗d5 ♗xb4 7 a6 ♗b5 draws.



Larsen – Torre
Leningrad Interzonal 1973

1 ♖h5

For the moment White does not know how to proceed. The simplest win is to play the king over to support the c-pawn: 1 ♗f3! ♖c4 2 ♗e3 (now Black is in zugzwang) 2...♗f7 (or 2...♖a4 3 ♖e4 ♖a3+ 4 ♗d4 ♗f5 5 ♗d5, etc.) 3 ♗d3! ♖xf4 4 c6 with an easy win.

1...♗g6 2 ♖d5 ♗f6 3 ♗f3 ♖c3+ 4 ♗e4 ♖c4+ 5 ♗e3 ♗e6 6 ♖h5 ♗d7 7 ♗f3

7 ♖e5, cutting Black's king off from the f-pawn, was simpler.

7...♗e7 8 ♗g4 ♖c1 9 f5 ♗f8 10 ♖h8+ ♗e7 11 ♖h7+ ♗e8 12 ♖c7 ♗d8 13 ♖c6 ♗d7 14 ♖d6+ ♗e7 15 f6+?

Now White throws the win away. He should have continued 15 ♖e6+ ♗f7 16 c6 ♖f1 17 ♗g5 ♖f2 18 ♖h6 ♖c2 (or 18...♖g2+ 19 ♗f4 ♖c2 20 ♗e5, heading for the c-pawn) 19 ♖h7+ ♗g8 20 ♖c7 ♗f8 21 ♗f6 and Black's position is hopeless.

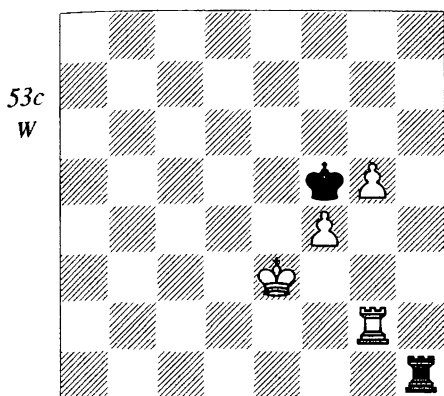
15...♗f7 16 c6 ♗g6!

The only drawing move. White's rook is curiously paralysed and his only hope is to bring his king to the c-pawn.

17 ♗f3 ♖e1!

Once again Black's only move, frustrating White's plan.

18 ♗f4 ♖e2! 19 ♖d5 ♖c2 20 ♖d6 ♖e2 21 f7+ ♗xf7 22 ♗f5 ♗e7 23 ♖d7+ ♗e8 24 ♗f6 ♖e1 25 ♖d5 ♖c1 26 ♖d6 ♖f1+ 27 ♗e6 ♖e1+ 28 ♗d5 ♖d1+ 29 ♗c5 ♖xd6 30 ♗xd6 ♗d8 1/2-1/2



Van Wely – Nikolić
Wijk aan Zee 2000

The possibility of a blockade can also cause problems for the attacker. The above position is won, but the correct method eluded White.

1 g6! ♖h8 2 g7 ♜g8 3 ♜g5+ ♔f6 4 ♔e4 ♜e8+

The only move, as 4...♔f7 5 ♔f5 is an easy win for White.

5 ♔f3?

One mistake is all it takes. The winning line was 5 ♔d5! ♜d8+ 6 ♔c6 ♔f7 (6...♜g8 7 ♔d7 ♔f7 8 f5 ♔f6 9 ♜g1 ♔f7 10 ♜g6 reaches the zugzwang position White is aiming for) 7 f5 ♜a8 8 ♔c7! (Black is in zugzwang) 8...♔g8 (8...♜g8 9 ♔d7 ♔f6 10 ♜g1 ♔f7 11 ♜g6 and 8...♜e8 9 ♔d7 ♜e7+ 10 ♔d6 ♜e8 11 g8♙+ also win for White) 9 f6 ♔f7 10 ♔d6 ♜a6+ 11 ♔e5 ♜a5+ 12 ♔f4 ♜a4+ 13 ♔g3 ♜a3+ 14 ♔h4 ♜a8 15 ♔h5 ♜g8 16 ♜g6 and Black is defenceless.

5...♔f7 6 ♔g4 ♜a8

Not 6...♔g8?, losing to 7 f5 ♜e1 8 f6 ♜f1 9 ♜f5. When Black's king is on g8, White generally wins if he can advance his pawn to f6.

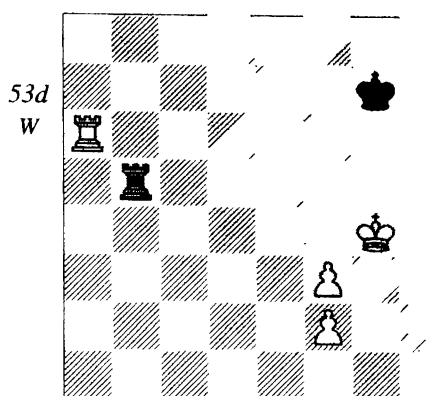
7 ♔h5

7 g8♙+ ♜xg8 8 ♜xg8 ♔xg8 is only a draw.

7...♔g8 8 ♜g6

The point is that 8 f5 may be met by 8...♜a6!, preventing f6. This contrasts with the note to Black's 6th move, in which Black's rook could not move to the third rank.

8...♜a1 9 ♜g4 ♜h1+ 10 ♔g6 ♜h4 11 ♔f5 ♜h6 12 ♔e5 ♜a6 13 ♜g5 ♜a5+ 14 ♔f6 ♜a6+ 15 ♔f5 ♜a5+ 16 ♔g4 ♜a4 17 ♜g6 ♜a1 18 ♔f3 ♜a3+ 19 ♔e4 ♜a4+ 20 ♔f5 ♜a5+ 21 ♔g4 ♜a1 22 f5 ♜g1+ 23 ♔h5 ♜xg6 24 ♔xg6 ½-½



Moiseenko – Minasian
Kemer ECC 2007

The ending of rook + doubled pawn vs rook is generally drawn. From a typical starting position, such as the above, the defence requires only moderate care.

1 f4 ♔f7

For the moment Black can simply wait as his rook is well-placed, preventing the white king from advancing to g5. This play is analogous to the third-rank defence from 44a.

2 f5

Now White intends ♔g5 followed by ♜a7+, so Black moves his rook, intending to meet ♔g5 by ...♜g1+.

2...♜b1 3 f3 ♜g1+ 4 ♔f4 ♜b1 5 ♜e6 ♜a1

Leaving the rook in the corner is the simplest plan. Then ♔g5 can be answered by ...♜g1+, and ♔e5 by ...♜e1+.

6 ♜h6 ♜b1 7 ♜a6 ♜c1 8 ♜b6 ♜a1 9 ♜d6 ♜b1 10 ♜d2 ♔f6 11 ♜e2 ♜a1 12 ♜e4 ♜b1 13 ♜e6+ ♔f7

White gives his rook plenty of exercise, but it makes no difference; there is no way round Black's defensive plan.

14 ♜a6 ♜c1 15 f6

Finally White commits himself, but now that the fifth rank is open, Black can switch his rook back to prevent the white king from advancing.

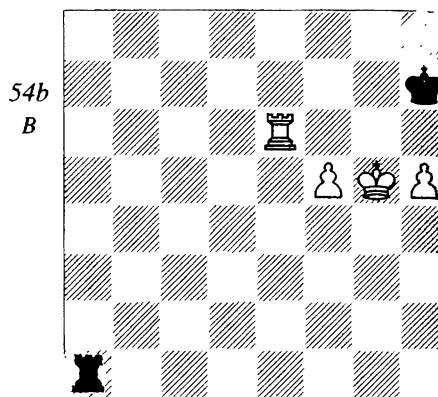
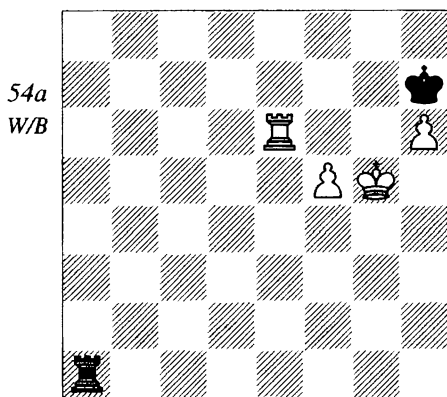
15...♜c4+ 16 ♔g5 ♜c5+ 17 ♔g4 ♜b5 18 f4 ♜c5 19 ♜d6 ♜a5 20 ♔f3 ♜a4 21 ♔g4 ♜a5 22 f5

The last chance, but a final rook switch frustrates White's attempts to play ♔g5.

22...♜a1 23 ♜d3 ½-½

54

♖+f♙+h♙ vs ♜



The one general exception to the rule that rook and two (non-doubled) pawns beat a rook is the ending of ♖+f♙+h♙ vs ♜, which is usually drawn. The defence is quite difficult, especially at faster time-limits, and it is often misplayed in practice. If the pawns get too far forward, then the position is lost, but unfortunately the defender cannot prevent the advance of the pawns until they reach a certain point. The reason for this is that the defence involves checking from behind, but this only works when the pawns are far enough forward to give the defender an adequate checking distance. This means that at some stage the defender will have to cope with a marginal situation in which any mistake will be fatal.

The diagram shows a key position. White to play wins by **1 ♖e7+ ♔g8 2 f6** (if both pawns reach the sixth rank with the defender's king cut off on the back rank, the situation is hopeless) **2...♞g1+ 3 ♔f5 ♞f1+ 4 ♔e6 ♞e1+ 5 ♔d7 ♞f1 6 ♞e8+ ♔h7 7 ♞e6!** (7 ♔e7 also wins, but more slowly) **7...♔xh6 8 ♔e8!** (not 8 ♔e7? ♔g6 drawing) **8...♞f2 9 f7+ ♔g7 10 ♞e7.**

Black to play draws by **1...♞g1+ 2 ♔f6 ♞f1!** (the only move; after **2...♞a1?** 3 ♔f7 ♞a8 4 ♞e8 ♞a6 5 ♞e1 ♞a7+ 6 ♔f8 ♔xh6 7 ♞e6+ ♔g5 8 f6 the position is winning) **3 ♞e5** (or **3 ♞e8 ♞a1 4 ♔f7 ♔xh6 5 f6 ♞a7+ 6 ♞e7 ♞a8** with a draw as in the main line) **3...♔xh6 4 ♔f7 ♞a1 5 ♞e6+ ♔h7 6 f6 ♞a8!** with a draw as in 48a.

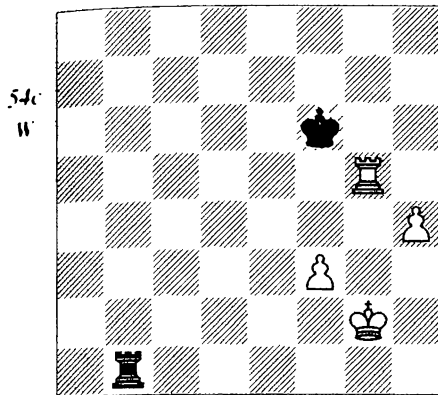
However, if we move White's pawn back to h5 then he wins even with Black to move. This is counter-intuitive, and is one of the reasons why this ending is often misplayed. Pushing the pawn to h6 is a critical decision, since it gives the defender extra possibilities, but against correct defence White cannot make progress without this pawn advance.

Both Black's plausible defences fail:

1) **1...♔g7 2 h6+ ♔f7** (after **2...♔g8 3 ♞e8+ ♔h7 4 ♞e7+** White wins as in 54a) **3 ♞e4!** (preparing to switch behind the h-pawn, which is not blocked by the enemy king) **3...♞g1+ 4 ♞g4 ♞h1 5 ♞h4 ♞g1+ 6 ♔f4 ♞f1+ 7 ♔g4 ♔g8** (7...♞g1+ 8 ♔f3 wins at once) **8 ♔g5 ♞g1+ 9 ♞g4 ♞h1 10 ♔g6 ♞h2 11 f6 ♞h1 12 f7+ ♔f8 13 h7 ♞h2 14 h8♙+ ♞xh8 15 ♞e4** and White wins.

2) **1...♞g1+ 2 ♔f6 ♞f1 3 ♞e5 ♔h6** (now we can see why it is better to have the pawn on h5 rather than h6; Black's king has to travel one square further in order to capture the pawn) **4 ♔f7 ♔xh5 5 f6+ ♔h6 6 ♞e2 ♔g5** (White also wins after **6...♞g1 7 ♔e7** or **6...♞a1 7 ♞h2+ ♔g5 8 ♔g7**) **7 ♔g7 ♔f5 8 f7 ♞g1+ 9 ♔f8 ♞a1 10 ♞g2** followed by ♔g8 and the f-pawn promotes.

When White plays with his rook at the side, Black's best defence is to keep his rook in the a1-corner, so as to counter ♔g5 by ...♞g1+. In this way Black can always meet a check on the seventh rank by moving his king to the third rank, thus avoiding having his king cut off on the back rank.



Sandipan – Navara
Dubai 2005

In this example White tries a second dangerous plan, which is to push his h-pawn with the rook behind the pawn.

1 ♖g4 ♜b5

Perhaps 1...♞a1 was simpler, when 2 ♔g3 ♜g1+ 3 ♕f4 ♜h1 and 2 h5 ♞a5 3 ♜h4 ♕g5 4 ♕g3 ♕h6! are drawn.

2 ♕g3 ♜b1?

A serious error, allowing White to play h5 followed by ♜h4. Waiting with 2...♞a5 was correct, and if 3 ♜g8 only then 3...♞a1.

3 h5! ♜h1

White also wins after the more resilient defence 3...♜g1+ 4 ♕h2 ♞a1 5 h6 ♞a7 6 ♕g3 ♜h7 7 ♞a4 ♕g6 8 ♞a6+ ♕g5 9 f4+ ♕f5 10 ♞a5+ ♕g6 11 ♕g4 and Black's pieces are too passively placed.

4 ♜h4 ♜g1+ 5 ♕f2?

Too modest. 5 ♕f4! ♜g7 6 h6 ♜h7 7 ♕g4 ♕g6 8 f4 would have won as Black has no time to transfer his king to h7.

5...♜g7! 6 h6 ♜h7 7 ♕g3 ♕f7!

Black hits on the correct plan – he must put his king on h7.

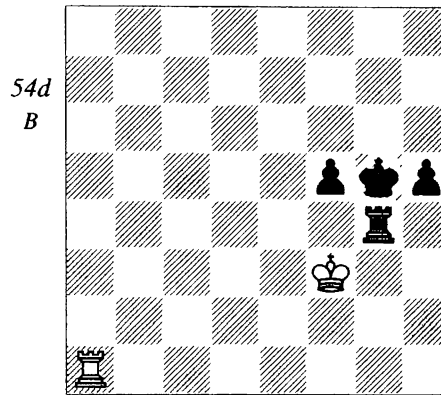
8 ♕f4 ♕g8 9 ♕g5 ♞a7 10 f4 ♕h7 11 f5 ♞a1 12 ♞b4 ♜g1+ 13 ♕f6 ♞a1 14 ♞e4 ♜f1?!

Making life difficult; 14...♞b1 15 ♕f7 ♕xh6 16 ♞e6+ ♕h7 17 f6 ♞b8! is a simpler draw.

15 ♕e6 ♕xh6?

A fatal error. 15...♞a1! would still have held on after 16 f6 ♕g6 17 ♜f4 ♞a6+ 18 ♕d5 ♞a5+.

16 f6 ♞a1 17 f7 ♞a8 18 ♕e7 ♞a7+ 19 ♕f6 ♞a6+ 20 ♞e6 ♞a8 21 ♞e8 ♞a6+ 1-0



Williams – Harrwitz
London (7) 1852

One of the earliest examples of this ending in my database. Williams defended accurately for a long time, showing he understood the correct way to conduct this ending, only to make a basic error just when the draw was within sight.

1...h4

Hoping for ...h3 followed by ...♜h4.

2 ♞a8!

The only drawing move. After 2 ♞a7? h3 3 ♜g7+ ♕h6 White loses through inadequate checking distance, while 2 ♕f2? ♜f4+ 3 ♕g2 ♕g4 4 ♞a8 h3+ 5 ♕h1 ♜f1+ 6 ♕h2 ♜f2+ 7 ♕g1 is wrong as the white king is cut off on the back rank.

2...♜g3+

White draws more easily after 2...h3 3 ♜g8+ ♕f6 4 ♜h8 or 2...♜f4+ 3 ♕g2 ♞b4 4 ♜c8.

3 ♕f2 ♕g4 4 ♜g8+!

The king must be checked away from g4 at once. Waiting with 4 ♞b8? fails to 4...♜f3+ 5 ♕g2 h3+ 6 ♕g1 ♜f4! 7 ♜g8+ ♕h4 8 ♜h8+ ♕g3 9 ♜h5 ♕g4 10 ♜h8 ♞a4 and Black wins.

4...♕f4 5 ♜h8 ♜f3+ 6 ♕g2 h3+ 7 ♕h2 ♕e3 8 ♞e8+ ♕f2 9 ♞e5 ♕f1 10 ♞e8 f4 11 ♞e4

11 ♜f8 ♕e2 12 ♜f7 ♕e3 13 ♞e7+ is simpler.

11...♕f2 12 ♞a4 ♕e3 13 ♞a3+ ♕e4 14 ♞a4+ ♕f5 15 ♞a8 ♞e3 16 ♜f8+ ♕g4 17 ♜g8+! ♕f3 18 ♜f8 ♞e4

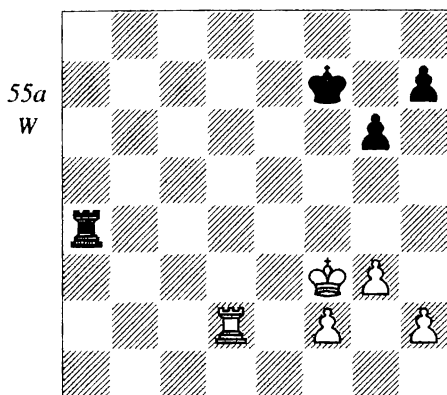
The last try, giving up the h-pawn.

19 ♕xh3 ♕f2 20 ♕h2?

Missing 20 ♞a8 ♞e3+ 21 ♕h2 f3 22 ♞a1!, with a draw as in 48a.

20...f3 21 ♜h8 ♕e2 22 ♞a8 f2 23 ♞a2+ ♕f3 24 ♞a3+ ♞e3 25 ♞a1 ♞e1 26 ♞a3+ ♕e4 0-1

55 Extra Pawn on One Side



Salov – Timman
Sanghi Nagar FIDE Ct (3) 1994

If all the pawns are on one side, then possession of an extra pawn is often not enough to win. In particular, the common cases of $\text{K}+3\text{P}$ vs $\text{K}+2\text{P}$ and $\text{K}+4\text{P}$ vs $\text{K}+3\text{P}$ (without a passed pawn) are generally drawn. The defender should adopt a pawn-structure so that the attacker cannot advance his pawns without exchanging some of them. Every pawn exchange brings the game nearer a draw.

The above case is relatively favourable for White, because he can cut off the black king on the back rank. Nevertheless, Black draws comfortably.

1 Kd7+ Kg8 **2** Ke7 Ka3+ **3** Kg4 Ka2

Forcing White to return.

4 Kf3 Ka3+ **5** Kg2 Ka4 **6** h3

After h4 Black again plays $6\dots\text{h5}$.

6 $\dots\text{h5}$

Black sets up a typical defensive pawn-structure. Once White's pawns are on h3 , g3 and f4 , any further advance will involve a pawn exchange.

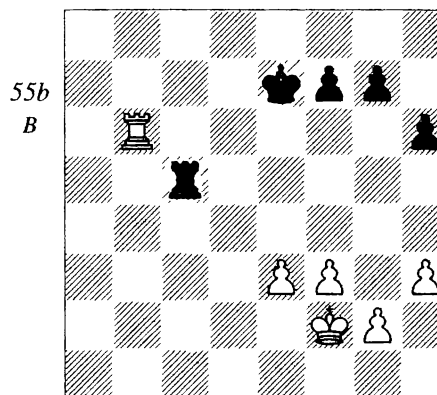
7 Kf3 Kf8 **8** Kd7 Kb4 **9** g4

Or $9 \dots\text{Ke3}$ Ka4 10 f4 Ka3+ 11 Kd3 Ka4 and White is not making progress.

9 $\dots\text{Kb3+}$ **10** Kg2 hgx4 **11** hgx4 Ka3 **12** f3 Ka5 **13** Kg3 g5

The simplest; this and the next move block in White's king.

14 Kf2 Ke5 **15** Kh7 Kg8 $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$



Karpov – Chernin
Tilburg 1992

The case of $\text{K}+4\text{P}$ vs $\text{K}+3\text{P}$ requires a bit more care from the defender. In the above position, the critical factor is whether Black can set up the ideal defensive pawn formation of f7-g6-h5 .

1 $\dots\text{h5!}$

Black wastes no time arranging his pawns.

2 h4 Kc2+ **3** Kg3 g6

Now that Black's pawns are on the correct squares, he is satisfied to wait.

4 e4 Ke2 **5** Ka6 Kf8 **6** Ka1

White manoeuvres his rook to f2 to release his king from the defence of the g2 -pawn.

6 $\dots\text{Kg7}$ **7** Kf1 Kf6 **8** Kf2 Ke1 **9** Kf4 Kh1 **10** g3 Ka1 **11** Ke2 Ka5 **12** Ke3 Kb5 **13** Ka3 Kg7 **14** Kd3 Ka5 **15** Ke3 Ka2 **16** Kd4 Kg2 **17** f4

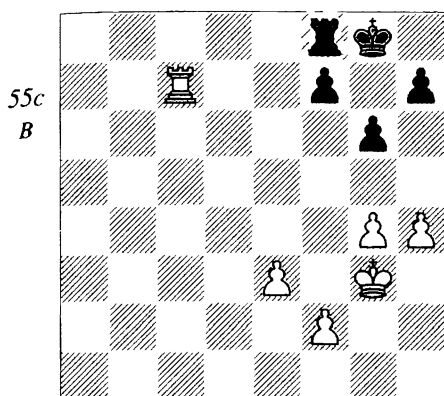
White edges forwards while not allowing any pawn exchanges for the moment.

17 $\dots\text{Kf6}$ **18** Kc3 Kd2+ **19** Ke3 Ka2 **20** Kc6+ Kg7 **21** f5

At some stage White will have to exchange pawns if he wants to make progress. Another idea is 21 Kd6 Ka3+ 22 Kd3 Ka7 23 e5 , but after $23 \dots\text{Kb7}$ 24 f5 (24 Kd6 Kb3+) $24 \dots\text{gxf5}$ 25 Kf4 f6 26 e6 Kb5 27 Kc3 Ka5 Black again draws.

21 $\dots\text{gxf5}$ **22** exf5 Ka4 **23** Kd6 Kg4 **24** Kf3 Ka4 $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$

White cannot get any further and decides to concede the draw.



Nikolić – Ftačnik

European Team Ch, Pula 1997

Here Black cannot set up the f7-g6-h5 pawn-structure and, while the position may still be objectively drawn, the practical difficulties facing the defender are considerable.

1...h6 2 f4 ♖a8 3 ♜c5! ♖a1 4 h5

White has already gained a great deal of space, which increases the pressure on Black.

4...♞g1+ 5 ♔f3 ♔g7 6 ♖a5 gxh5 7 ♞xh5 ♖a1 8 ♞d5 ♞g1?

8...♖a4 9 e4 f6!? 10 ♞d7+ ♔g8 looks ugly, but has a better defensive chance; e.g., 11 e5 fxe5 12 fxe5 ♖b4 13 e6 ♔f8 14 ♞f7+ ♔e8 15 ♞h7 ♖b3+ 16 ♔f4 ♞h3 and there is no clear win for White.

9 ♞d6 ♔h7

Now 9...f6 10 ♞d7+ ♔g8 is met by 11 ♔e4! ♞xg4 12 ♔f5 ♞g3 13 e4 and White's active pieces give him a decisive advantage.

10 e4 ♞f1+ 11 ♔g3 ♞g1+ 12 ♔h3 ♞f1 13 ♞f6! ♔g7 14 e5

Once White establishes this pawn-structure, Black's days are numbered.

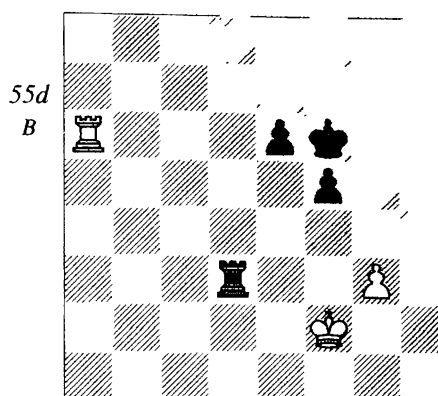
14...♞f3+ 15 ♔g2 ♖a3 16 ♞d6 ♖b3 17 ♔f2 ♖a3 18 ♞d7 ♖a2+

18...♔f8 19 ♞d8+ ♔g7 20 f5 ♖a7 21 ♔e3 ♖a1 22 f6+ ♔h7 23 ♞f8 ♖a7 24 ♔f4 is also winning for White.

19 ♔f3 ♖a3+ 20 ♔e4 ♖a4+ 21 ♞d4 ♖a1 22 f5 ♖e1+ 23 ♔d5 ♞f1

Or 23...♖a1 24 ♔d6 ♖a6+ 25 ♔e7 ♖a7+ 26 ♞d7 ♖a8 27 ♖b7 ♖c8 28 ♔d6 and White wins.

24 ♔d6 ♖a1 25 ♖c4 ♖a8 26 ♖c7 ♖a6+ 27 ♔e7 ♖a4 28 e6 fxe6 29 f6+ ♔g6 30 f7 ♞f4 31 f8 ♞xf8 32 ♔xf8 e5 33 ♖c4 1-0



de la Villa – Nunn

Leon 1997

The attacker is better off if he has a passed pawn, but many positions are still drawn.

1...♔e5 2 ♖a4 ♞d4 3 ♖a6 ♖c4 4 ♔e3 ♖c3+ 5 ♔f2 ♔d5 6 ♖a4 e5

Black's best chance to make progress is to push his e-pawn to e4.

7 ♖a2 e4 8 ♖a5+ ♖c5

Black has two possible plans. One is to get his king to d4 or d3 and then check on the second rank to force White's king back to the first rank. The other is to attack the g-pawn directly by ...♔f6-g5-g4. Neither plan should succeed against correct defence.

9 ♖a2 ♔e5 10 ♔e2?!

10 ♖a8 is safer, so as to give checks on the eighth rank if Black plays his king to g5.

10...♖c3 11 ♖a5+?

The losing move, allowing Black's king to g5 and then g4. 11 ♔f2! would have drawn:

1) 11...♔d4 12 ♞d2+ ♞d3 13 ♖a2 ♞f3+ 14 ♔g2 ♖c3 15 ♔f2 ♔d3 16 ♖b2 ♖a3 17 ♖e2 (White's rook appears passively placed, but Black cannot exploit it) 17...♖a1 18 ♖e3+ ♔d4 19 ♖e2 ♔e5 20 ♖b2 ♔f6 21 ♖b8 and Black has not made progress.

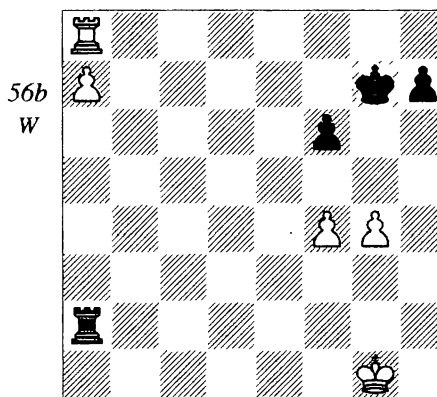
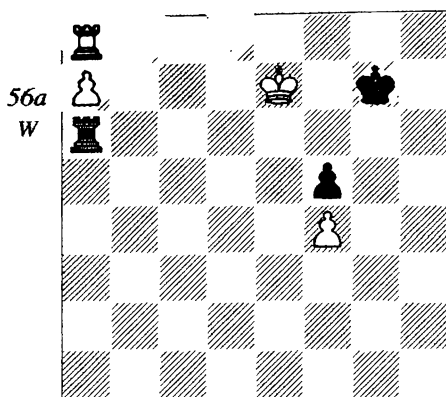
2) 11...♔f6 12 ♖a8! (not 12 ♖a6+?, which loses to 12...♔g5 13 ♖a8 ♖c2+ 14 ♔e3 ♔g4! 15 ♖g8+ ♔h3 16 ♖g5 ♖c3+ 17 ♔e2 ♞f3 18 ♔e1 ♔g2 19 ♔e2 ♞f2+ 20 ♔e1 e3) 12...♞f3+ 13 ♔g2 ♔e5 14 ♖a5+ ♔d4 15 ♖a4+ with a draw.

11...♔f6 12 ♔f2 ♖c2+ 13 ♔f1

13 ♔e3 ♞g2 14 ♔f4 ♞f2+ 15 ♔e3 ♞f3+ and Black wins.

13...♔g5 14 ♖b5 ♔g4 0-1

56 Extra Passed Pawn – Rook in Front of the Pawn



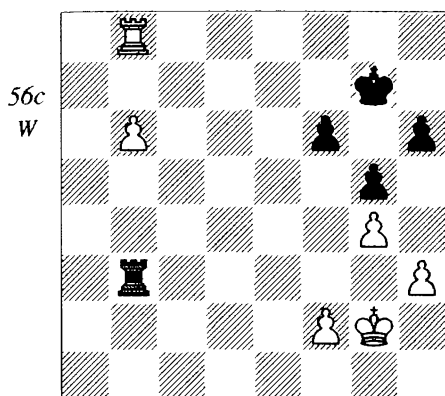
A common practical situation arises when the pawns are equal on one flank, but one player has an extra passed pawn on the opposite flank. Then much depends on the relative position of the rooks. It is better for the attacker to have his rook behind his passed pawn; for example, a situation with White's rook on a1 and pawn on a5 against Black's rook on a6 is very favourable for White. The reason is that Black's rook is immobilized; if it moves, the pawn advances. By contrast, if White's rook is on a6 and Black's rook is on a1, then Black has much better defensive chances. True, White can play ♖a8 and then a6-a7 (note that this is not always a good idea), but what then? If White's rook can check safely then the pawn will promote, but if not then White's rook is stuck.

When White's pawn is on the seventh rank with the rook in front, he can generally only win by playing on the other flank. In the above position, White can win the f5-pawn and this decides the game: 1 ♖d7 (White first displaces the rook from a6 so that his king can approach the f5-pawn) 1...♔h7 2 ♖c7 (threatening 3 ♖b7, so the rook must move) 2...♞a1 3 ♖d6 (3 ♖b7 ♞b1+ doesn't achieve anything) 3...♞a5 (or 3...♔g7 4 ♖e5 ♞a5+ 5 ♖e6 ♔h7 6 ♖f6) 4 ♖e7 (threatening 5 ♖f6) 4...♞a6 (4...♔g7 5 ♖e6 ♔h7 6 ♖f6 is the same) 5 ♖f7 ♞a1 6 ♖e6 ♞a5 7 ♖f6 (now the pawn falls) 7...♞a1 8 ♖xf5 ♔g7 9 ♖e6 ♞a6+ 10 ♖d5 ♞a5+ 11 ♖c4 ♞a1 12 f5 ♞a2 13 f6+ ♔f7 14 ♞h8 ♞xa7 15 ♞h7+ and Black's rook is lost.

In a situation with the pawn on the seventh and the rook in front, it sometimes happens that White can make a passed pawn on the opposite flank. In this case a passed pawn on the h- or g-file is usually not much help, since Black simply keeps his king in front of the pawn, at h7 or g7 respectively, and White cannot achieve anything. However, a passed pawn on the f-file is often decisive. The reason is that if Black's king is on, for example, g7 and White plays f6+ there is no safe square for the king: ...♔f7 is met by ♞h8! and ...♔h7 by f7, while other king moves allow a rook check.

The above position is a win because White can either force a passed f-pawn, or oblige Black to weaken his f-pawn by advancing it to f5, when White can win it in a similar way to 56a. Note that 1 f5? is wrong: after 1...h6 (preventing the threat of 2 g5!) 2 ♖f1 ♔h7 3 ♖e1 ♔g7 4 ♖d1 ♔h7 5 ♖c1 ♔g7 6 ♖b1 ♞a6 7 ♖b2 ♔h7 8 ♖b3 ♔g7 9 ♖b4 ♞a1 10 ♖c5 ♞a2 11 ♖d6 ♞a6+ 12 ♖d7 ♞a1 13 ♖c6 ♞c1+ 14 ♖d5 ♞a1 White cannot make progress.

The correct line is 1 g5! f5 (after 1...fxg5 2 f5! White wins, because as soon as Black's rook checks are exhausted, White will win with f6+) 2 ♖f1 ♞a3 (in this position Black has no tempo moves with his king and so must move his rook) 3 ♖e2 ♞a2+ 4 ♖d3 ♞a4 5 ♖c3 ♞a1 6 ♖d4 ♞a5 7 ♖c4 ♞a1 8 ♖d5 ♞a4 9 ♖e5 ♞a5+ 10 ♖e6 and Black is in zugzwang. He will have to surrender his f-pawn, after which White's own f-pawn advances as before.



Khasangatin – Vokarev
Russian Club Cup, Maikop 1998

The attacker often has more winning chances when the pawn is on the sixth rank. In the above position, White's plan is to play his king to b7, free his rook and then promote the b-pawn. Black cannot prevent this by ...♙f7 and ...♚e7, because then b7 wins Black's rook.

1 f3 ♖b2+ 2 ♔f1 ♖b1+

White wins after 2...h5 3 gxh5 f5 4 b7! f4 5 h6+ ♔h7 6 ♚e1 as his king eventually reaches g4, after which zugzwang costs Black his pawns.

3 ♚e2 ♖b3

The best defence, trying to tie White down to defending the f3-pawn.

4 ♔d2! ♖xf3 5 ♚c2

The key idea. White surrenders a pawn but gains time because Black's rook cannot easily return to the b-file.

5...♖f2+ 6 ♚c3 ♖f1 7 ♖d8!

This finesse transfers the rook to the sixth rank, and thus prevents the black king from coming to the queenside as then the f6- and h6-pawns would fall. 7 ♚c4? ♖b1 8 ♚c5 ♖c1+ 9 ♚b5 ♖b1+ 10 ♚a6 ♖a1+ 11 ♚b7 ♖a3 is less clear.

7...♖b1 8 ♖d6 ♔f7 9 ♚c4 ♚e7 10 ♖c6 ♖b2 11 ♚c5

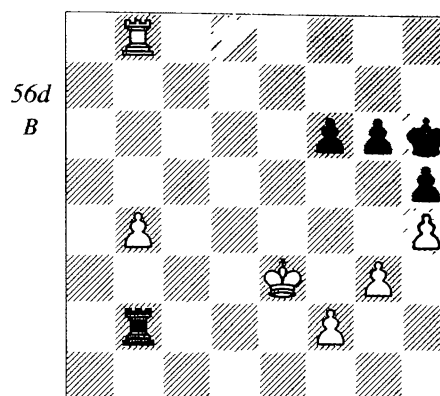
White's king arrives to support the pawn.

11...♖b3 12 ♖c7+ ♚e6

Or 12...♔d8 13 ♖h7 ♚c8 14 ♖xh6 ♚b7 15 ♖xf6 ♖xh3 16 ♖f5 and White wins.

13 b7 ♚e5 14 ♖f7 ♚e6 15 ♖h7 ♚e5 16 ♚c6 f5 17 gxf5 ♖c3+ 18 ♔d7 ♖d3+ 19 ♚c8 ♖c3+ 20 ♖c7 ♖b3 21 ♖c6 1-0

21...♔xf5 22 ♖xh6 is an easy win.



Portisch – Petrosian
Palma de Mallorca Ct (12) 1974

In this case the pawn-structure offers Black more chances of counterplay and the result should be a draw.

1...g5

Black must create an entry route for his king to attack the white pawns.

2 b5 gxh4 3 gxh4 ♔g6 4 b6 ♔f5 5 ♔d4 ♖xf2?

Black could have drawn by 5...♔g4! 6 ♖g8+ ♔xh4 7 ♚c5 ♖c2+ 8 ♔d6 ♖d2+ 9 ♚c7 ♖c2+ (forcing the king in front of the pawn before taking on f2) 10 ♚b8 ♖xf2 11 b7 ♖b2 12 ♚c7 f5 13 b8♖ ♖xb8 14 ♖xb8 f4.

6 ♖a8! ♖b2 7 ♚c5 ♖c2+ 8 ♔d4?!

Missing a win by 8 ♚b5! ♖b2+ 9 ♚a6 ♔g4 10 b7 ♔xh4 11 b8♖ ♖xb8 12 ♖xb8 ♔g3 13 ♚b5 h4 14 ♖g8+ ♔f2 15 ♖h8 ♔g3 16 ♚c4 h3 17 ♔d3 h2 18 ♚e2 ♔g2 19 ♖g8+ ♔h3 20 ♔f2.

8...♖b2 9 ♖a5+?

Returning by 9 ♚c5 would still have won.

9...♚e6

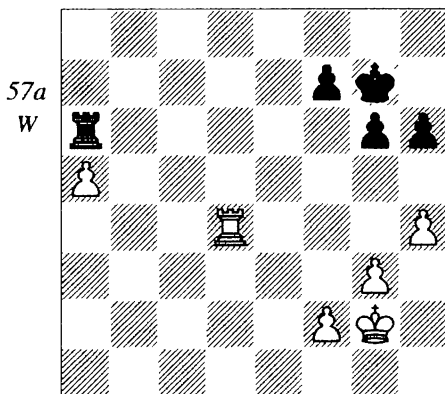
Here Black could have drawn with the study-like 9...♔g4! 10 ♖a4! ♔h3!! (10...♔g3? allows a later b8♖ with check) 11 ♚c5 f5 12 ♖b4 ♖xb4 13 ♔xb4 f4 14 b7 f3 15 b8♖ f2 16 ♖f4 ♔g2 17 ♖g5+ ♔h2 as the black king can never be forced in front of the pawn.

10 ♚c5 ♖c2+?

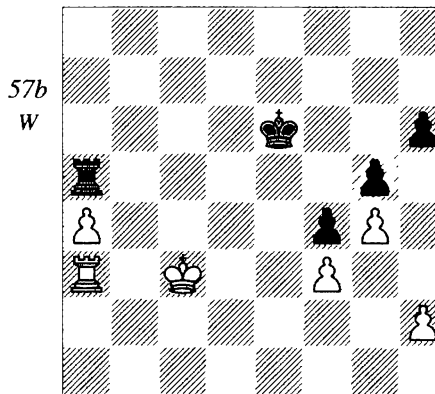
Black's last drawing chance was 10...♔d7 11 ♖a8 f5 12 ♖h8 f4 13 ♖xh5 f3 14 ♖f5 f2 15 ♖f8 ♖c2+ 16 ♚b5 ♖b2+ 17 ♚a6 ♚c6 18 ♖f6+ ♚c5.

11 ♚b5 ♔d6 12 ♚a6 ♚c6 13 ♖a1 ♖c4 14 b7 ♖b4 15 ♖c1+ ♔d7 16 ♖c8 1-0

57 Extra Passed Pawn – Rook Behind the Pawn



Alekhine – Capablanca
World Ch (34), Buenos Aires 1927



Bareev – Topalov
Dortmund Ct (3) 2002

The attacker has much better chances when his rook supports the pawn from behind. When he has an a-pawn, the position is generally won.

1 ♖a4 ♕f6 2 ♕f3 ♖e5 3 ♖e3 h5 4 ♕d3 ♕d5 5 ♕c3 ♕c5 6 ♖a2 ♕b5 7 ♕b3 ♕c5 8 ♕c3

Black is in zugzwang. A pawn move will only delay the inevitable and sooner or later he must move his king. If he plays ...♕d5, White plays ♕b4 and supports the a-pawn with his king. Therefore Black goes the other way, but this allows White's king to get among Black's kingside pawns.

8...♕b5 9 ♕d4! ♖d6+ 10 ♖e5 ♖e6+ 11 ♕f4 ♕a6

The only chance for the defender is generally to blockade the passed pawn with the king.

12 ♕g5 ♖e5+ 13 ♕h6 ♖f5 14 f4?!

The triangulation 14 ♕g7 ♖f3 15 ♕g8! ♖f6 16 ♕f8 ♖f3 17 ♕g7 ♖f5 18 f4 would have won straight away, but the line actually played also wins in the end.

14...♖c5 15 ♖a3 ♖c7 16 ♕g7 ♖d7 17 f5 gxf5 18 ♕h6 f4 19 gxf4 ♖d5 20 ♕g7 ♖f5 21 ♖a4 ♕b5 22 ♖e4 ♕a6 23 ♕h6 ♖xa5

23...♕a7 was a tougher defence, but then 24 ♖e5 ♖xf4 25 ♕g5! (simpler than 25 ♕xh5 f6) 25...♖f1 26 ♖f5! wins as Black loses both kingside pawns, after which the h-pawn will be decisive.

24 ♖e5 ♖a1 25 ♕xh5 ♖g1 26 ♖g5 ♖h1 27 ♖f5 ♕b6 28 ♖xf7 ♕c6 29 ♖e7 1-0

This position poses more problems for White due to the weakness of the f3-pawn, but he should still win.

1 ♕b4 ♖a8 2 ♕c5?!

White could have won more simply by 2 a5! ♕d6 3 a6 ♕c7 4 ♕a5 ♖e8 5 ♖c3+! ♕b8 6 ♕b6; for example, 6...♕a8 7 ♖c6 ♖b8+ 8 ♕c5 ♖b3 9 ♖xh6 ♖xf3 10 ♖g6 ♖a3 11 ♕b5 ♖h3 12 ♖xg5 ♖xh2 13 ♖f5 ♖f2 14 ♖f8+ ♕a7 15 ♖f7+ ♕b8 16 ♕b6 ♖b2+ 17 ♕c5 ♖f2 18 ♕d4 and White rounds up the f-pawn.

2...♕d7 3 a5 ♕c7 4 a6 ♖e8 5 ♖a2

White can also win by 5 ♖b3! ♖e5+ (5...♖b8 6 ♖xb8 ♕xb8 7 ♕b6 ♕a8 8 a7 wins) 6 ♕c4 ♖e6 7 ♖b7+ ♕c8 8 ♕b5 ♖e5+ 9 ♕b6 ♖e6+ 10 ♕a7, and White's active pieces are decisive.

5...♕b8?!

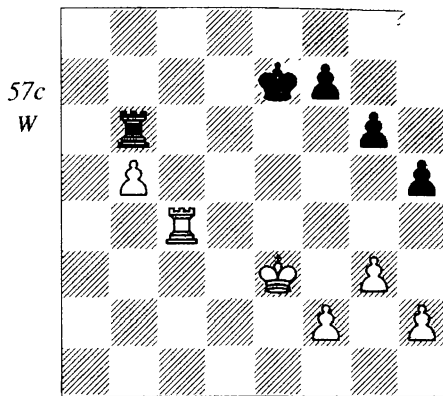
5...♖e5+!? 6 ♕d4 ♖e8 was a tougher defence, but White still wins after 7 a7 ♕b7 8 ♖a5! (not 8 a8 ♖+? ♖xa8 9 ♖xa8 ♕xa8 10 ♕e5 ♕b7 11 ♕f6 ♕c6 12 ♕g6 ♕d5 13 ♕xh6 ♕d4 14 ♕xg5 ♕e3 15 h4 ♕xf3, which leads to a drawn ending of ♖+♔ vs ♖) 8...♖a8 9 h4 gxf4 10 ♖h5 ♖h8 11 ♖xh4 ♕xa7 12 ♕e5 ♕b6 13 ♕xf4 ♕c6 14 ♕f5, followed by ♕g6.

6 ♖b2+! ♕a8

Or 6...♕a7 7 ♖b7+ ♕xa6 8 ♖b6+ ♕a7 9 ♖xh6 ♖e3 10 ♖h5 ♖xf3 11 ♖xg5 ♖h3 12 ♖f5 and White wins.

7 ♖b6 h5 8 gxf5 ♖e3 9 h6 ♖xf3 10 h4! 1-0

After 10...gxf4 11 h7 White wins easily.



Adams – Rozentalis
Bundesliga 1994/5

Black's defensive chances improve with a b-pawn, as his king doesn't have to go so far away to blockade the pawn.

1 ♖b4 ♕d7 2 h4 ♕c7 3 ♕d3?

The wrong direction. White could have won by 3 ♕f4! f6 (3...♕d6 4 ♕g5 ♕c5 5 ♖f4 f5 6 ♖f3 ♖e6 7 ♖e3 ♖d6 8 ♖e7 ♕xb5 9 ♖f7 and ♖f6 is decisive) 4 f3 ♖d6 5 b6+ ♕b7 (5...♖xb6 6 ♖xb6 ♕xb6 7 g4 and White wins) 6 g4 ♖d5 (after 6...hxg4 7 fxg4 ♖d5 8 ♕e3 ♖d1 9 ♖f4 f5 10 h5 gxh5 11 gxf5 the f-pawn is too strong) 7 ♕g3 hxg4 8 ♖xg4 g5 9 h5! ♕xb6 10 ♖b4+ ♕c5 11 ♖b8 ♖d7 12 ♕g4 ♖h7 13 ♖f8 ♖h6 14 ♖g8 ♕d6 15 ♖g6 ♖h8 16 ♖xf6+ ♕e7 17 ♖f5 and Black is doomed since his king is cut off and his rook is badly placed.

3...♖f6 4 ♖f4 ♖d6+ 5 ♕e3 f6 6 ♖d4

Or 6 g4 hxg4 7 ♖xg4 ♖b6 8 ♖xg6 ♕d8 9 ♕d3 ♖xb5 10 ♖xf6 ♕e7 with a drawn ending of ♖+f♯+h♯ vs ♖.

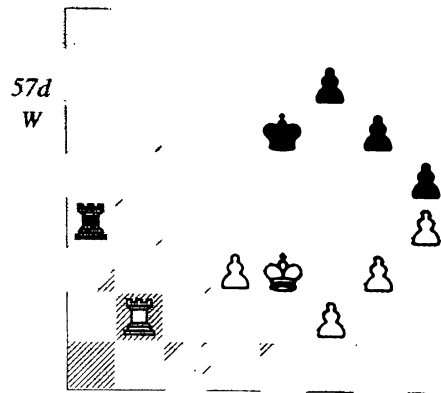
6...♖e6+ 7 ♖e4 ♖b6 8 ♖b4 ♖e6+ 9 ♕d3 ♖e5

White's indecision has allowed Black to set up the optimal defensive structure. The b-pawn is blocked by Black's king, while his rook cuts off the white king along the fourth rank.

10 ♖c4+ ♕b7 11 ♖f4 g5!

Black takes his chance to achieve a favourable liquidation.

12 ♖xf6 gxh4 13 gxh4 ♖xb5 14 ♖f4 ♕c6 15 ♖d4 ♕c5 16 ♕e3 ♖b1 17 ♖d8 ♖h1 18 f4 ♖xh4 19 f5 ♖h1 20 ♕f2 ♖a1 21 ♖d7 ♕c6 22 ♖d4 ♖a5 23 ♖f4 ♕d7 24 f6 ♕e8 25 f7+ ♕f8 26 ♕g3 1/2-1/2



Harikrishna – Minasian
Abu Dhabi 2004

There are no winning chances when the passed pawn is as close as this. Black's king can blockade the passed pawn while retaining an influence on the kingside. Indeed, if the passed pawn advances, Black may simply be able to take it off and draw the resulting pawn ending.

1 d4 ♖a1 2 ♖d2 ♕f5

It is perhaps even safer to play 2...♕d5, blockading the pawn at once.

3 ♕d3

Or 3 d5 ♕e5 (but not Marin's 3...♖a7?, as given in Mega Database, since then White wins by 4 ♕d4 ♕f6 5 ♖e2!) 4 d6 ♖a3+ 5 ♕e2 ♖a8 6 d7 ♖d8 7 ♕f3 ♕e6 8 ♕e4 ♖xd7 and the pawn ending is a draw.

3...♖a3+ 4 ♕c4 ♕e6 5 ♖e2+ ♕d6

Occupying a good blockading position.

6 ♖e3 ♖a2 7 ♖f3 f5

This slightly weakens the kingside pawns, but as White's rook is tied down to the defence of f2 there is no effective way of exploiting this. If Black wanted to avoid this weakening, he could have safely played 7...♕e6.

8 ♕d3

8 ♖b3 ♖c2+ 9 ♕d3 ♖xf2 10 ♖b6+ ♕e7 11 ♖xg6 f4 is also a safe draw.

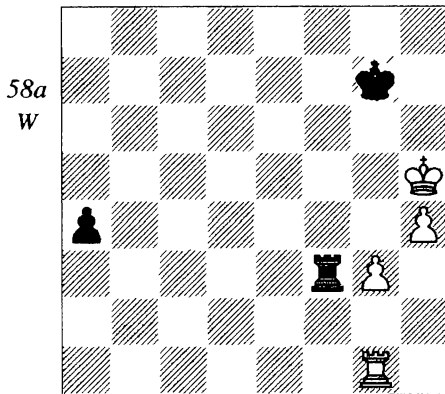
8...♕d5 9 ♕e3 ♕e6 10 d5+

White hopes to break through with his king to g5, but Black's next two moves dispel even this faint hope.

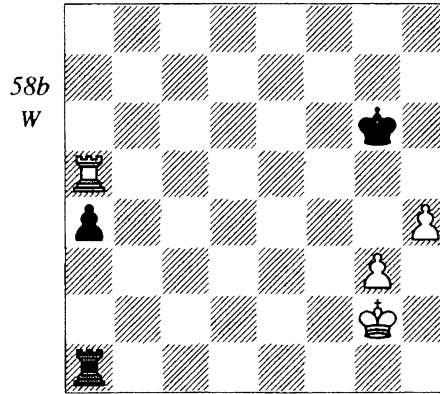
10...♕e5 11 d6 ♖a6! 12 d7 ♖d6 13 ♖f4 ♖xd7 14 ♖a4 ♖d6 15 ♖a5+ ♕f6 1/2-1/2

58

Connected Passed Pawns



Rowson – Devereaux
British Ch, Swansea 2006



Dautov – Lutz
Essen 2001

Two connected passed pawns are a powerful force in any ending, and rook endings are no exception. However, they are not a guarantee of victory. In this position, Black manages to draw because he can force White's rook into a passive position. Without the support of his rook, White's pawns soon become blockaded.

1 ♖g4

1 g4 a3 2 ♖a1 ♖c3 is also drawn.

1...♖f6 2 ♖a1 ♖a6 3 ♖a3

White prevents Black's pawn from advancing further, but with his rook stuck on a3 White's own pawns cannot advance far.

3...♖h6 4 ♖h3 ♖g6 5 g4 ♖f6 6 ♖g3 ♖e5

It was probably even simpler to play 6...♖g6; for example, 7 ♖f4 ♖a8 8 h5+ ♖h6 9 ♖f5 ♖a5+ is a comfortable draw.

7 h5 ♖f6 8 ♖h4

8 ♖f4 ♖a5 doesn't help White.

8...♖a5

The pawns are blockaded, and can only be set in motion again if White plays his rook away from a3, allowing Black's pawn to advance.

9 ♖f3+ ♖g7 10 g5 a3

The a-pawn advances just in time to save the game.

11 h6+ ♖g8 12 g6 ♖a4+ 13 ♖g5

Or 13 ♖g3 ♖a8! and Black draws.

13...♖a5+ 14 ♖f6 ♖a6+ 15 ♖g5 ♖a5+ 16 ♖h4 ♖a4+ 17 ♖g5 1/2-1/2

In this position, White's rook is actively placed behind Black's pawn, and from here it can simultaneously restrain Black's pawn and support the advance of White's own pawns. However, some accuracy is required.

1 ♖h3?!

The simplest win runs 1 g4! a3 2 ♖a6+ ♖g7 3 h5 a2 4 ♖h2! (but not 4 g5? ♖b1 5 ♖xa2 ♖b5 6 ♖a7+ ♖g8 7 ♖a8+ ♖g7 8 h6+ ♖g6 9 ♖g8+ ♖h7 10 ♖g7+ ♖h8 11 ♖g3 ♖b3+ drawing) 4...♖h7 (or 4...♖b1 5 ♖xa2 ♖b3 6 ♖a6 and White wins) 5 g5 ♖b1 6 ♖xa2 ♖b5 7 ♖g2! (revealing the point of White's fourth move) and the two pawns are decisive. 1 h5+ also wins, but is slightly more complicated.

1...a3 2 ♖g4?

The last chance was 2 g4! a2 3 ♖a6+ ♖g7 4 ♖h2! ♖h7 5 h5, winning as in the last note.

2...a2 3 ♖a7

White can no longer win; for example, 3 h5+ ♖g7 4 ♖g5 ♖g1 also leads to a draw.

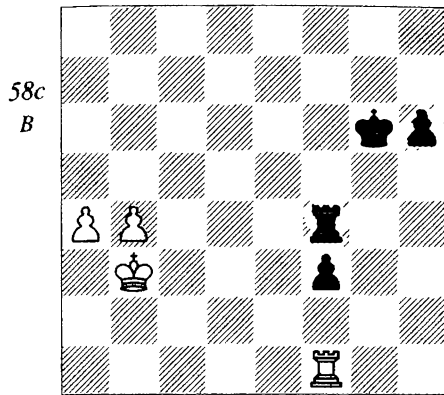
3...♖f6

Not 3...♖h6? 4 h5! and Black is in zugzwang.

4 h5 ♖e6! 5 h6 ♖f6! 6 h7 ♖h1 7 ♖xa2 ♖g7 8 ♖a5

Or 8 ♖g5 ♖b1! 9 ♖h2 ♖h8 10 g4 ♖b5+ 11 ♖f4 ♖b7 and Black draws.

8...♖b1 9 ♖h5 ♖h8 10 ♖h4 ♖b6 11 g4 ♖a6 12 ♖g3 ♖a3+ 13 ♖h4 ♖a6 14 g5 ♖a4+ 15 ♖g3 ♖a5 16 ♖f4 ♖a4+ 1/2-1/2



Gomez Esteban – Z. Almasi
Pamplona 1996/7

Two connected passed pawns are generally more powerful than two disconnected passed pawns. In this position, White is the only one with winning chances even though Black's rook is in an active position and he has the most advanced pawn.

1...♠f5!

Black's only chance is to use his king to fight against White's pawns.

2 a5 ♖e6 3 a6 ♔d6

3...♔d5! is a simpler draw; after 4 ♖c1 (or 4 a7 ♖f8 and 5 ♖xf3? is impossible as Black takes with check) 4...♖f7 5 b5 f2 6 b6 the third rank is open and so Black can defend by 6...♖f6! 7 b7 ♖b6+.

4 ♖c1! f2

Not 4...♖f7? 5 b5 f2 6 b6 and White wins.

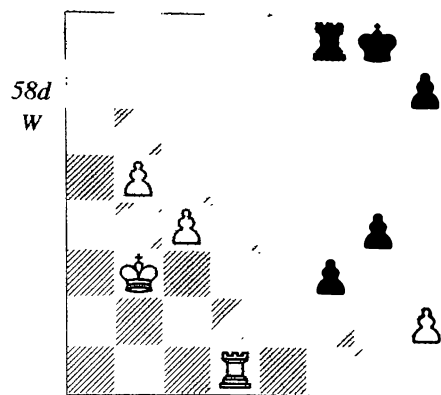
5 a7 ♖f3+!

Driving the king back. The immediate 5...♖f8 loses after 6 b5 ♔d7 (6...♖e8 7 ♔b4! is similar) 7 ♔b4! ♖e8 8 ♔a5.

6 ♔b2 ♖f8 7 b5 ♖a8?

Missing a tricky draw by 7...♖e8! 8 b6 (8 ♔a3 f1 ♖9 ♖xf1 ♔c5 10 ♔a4 ♔b6 11 ♖f7 ♖a8 draws in a similar way to 58a) 8...♖e2+ 9 ♔b3 ♖e3+ (there is no escape; as soon as White's king moves to the first rank, the c-file or the f1-a6 diagonal, Black plays ...♖e1) 10 ♔b4 ♖e4+ 11 ♔a5 ♖e5+ and White cannot win.

8 b6 f1 ♖9 ♖xf1 ♔c6 10 ♖f6+ ♔b7 11 ♖xh6 ♖g8 12 ♔d6 ♔a6 13 ♔c3 ♖c8+ 14 ♔b4 ♖h8 15 ♔c5 ♖c8+ 16 ♖c6 ♖h8 17 a8 ♖+ ♖xa8 18 ♖c7 1-0



Walbrodt – Zink
Leipzig 1894

When both sides have two connected passed pawns, play is likely to be complex and tactical. In this position, a knife-edged battle should have ended in White's favour.

1 c5 h5

White also wins after 1...f2 2 c6 (but not 2 ♖f1? h5 3 b6 h4 4 c6 g3 5 hxg3 hxg3 6 c7 ♔h7 7 b7 g2 8 c8 ♖ gxf1 ♖9 ♖xf8 with a draw) 2...f1 ♖ (or 2...♖f3+ 3 ♔b4) 3 ♖xf1 ♖xf1 4 c7 ♖c1 5 b6 and the pawns are too strong.

2 c6 h4 3 c7 f2 4 b6 g3

Both sides advance as fast as possible.

5 hxg3 hxg3 6 b7 g2 7 c8 ♖ f1 ♖8 ♖g4+ ♔h8 9 ♖h5+?!

The winning line is quite attractive: 9 ♖h3+! ♔g7 (9...♔g8 loses to 10 ♖xf1) 10 ♔d7+! (not 10 ♖xf1? gxf1 ♖ and White should take the draw by 11 ♖g4+! since 11 ♖xf1? ♖xf1 would even lose) 10...♖f7 11 ♖g4+ ♔h7 (White also wins after 11...♔f6 12 ♔d6+ or 11...♔h6 12 ♔d6+ ♖f6 13 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 14 ♖h3+ followed by ♖xg2+) 12 ♖e4+! ♔h6 (now Black's checks are covered so White can promote his other pawn) 13 b8 ♖ g1 ♖ (13...♖f3+ 14 ♔b4) 14 ♖h8+ ♖h7 15 ♖h4+ ♔g6 16 ♖8xh7#.

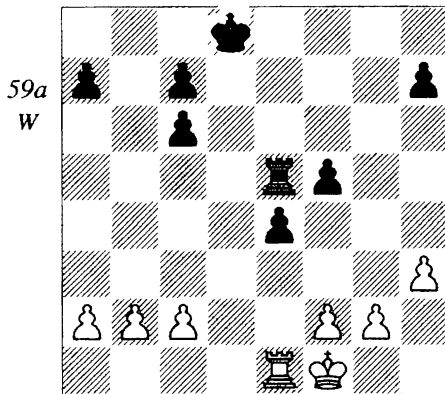
9...♔g8 10 ♖g6+ ♔h8 11 ♖h5+ ♔g8 12 ♖g4+ ♔h8 13 ♖h4+ ♔g8 14 ♖g5+ ♔h8 15 ♖h4+ ♔g8 16 ♖g3+ ♔h8 17 ♖h4+ ♔g8

The repetition rule was different in those days. Although White gives plenty of checks, he never plays his queen to the winning square h3.

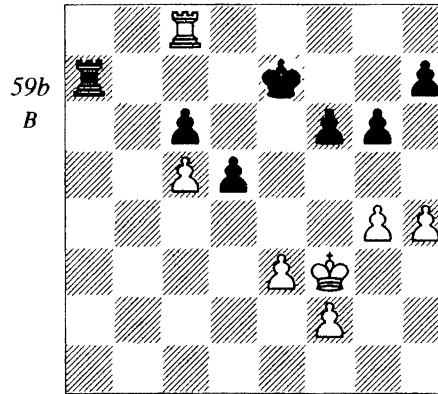
18 ♖g3+ ♔h8 19 ♖e5+ ♔g8 20 ♖g5+ ♔h8 21 ♖xf1? gxf1 ♖ 22 ♖h6+ ♔g8 1/2-1/2

59

Pawn Weaknesses



Karpov – Lautier
Ubeda (2) 1994



Kotov – Pachman
Venice 1950

Weak pawns are often a major handicap in any type of ending, but in rook endings they may be a particular problem since rooks can easily attack weak pawns along a file or rank. In this position, Black has four pawn-islands compared to White's two, a factor Karpov skilfully exploits.

1 ♖e2 ♜e7?!

Keeping the king out by 1...f4 was a better chance. After 2 g3 ♜f5! 3 ♜d1+ ♜c8 4 gxf4 ♜xf4 5 ♜g1 White is slightly better, but Black has drawing chances.

2 ♜e3 ♜b5 3 b3 ♜a5 4 a4 ♜d5 5 g4 ♜f6 6 ♜g1!

An excellent move, preparing for penetration along the g-file.

6...a5 7 h4! h6

White also has good winning chances after 7...c5 8 gxf5 c4 9 bxc4 ♜c5 10 ♜d4 ♜xf5 11 ♜g8.

8 gxf5 ♜xf5 9 ♜g8! ♜f3+ 10 ♜xe4 ♜c3

Thanks to White's 7th move, his h-pawn is not hanging. 10...h3 11 ♜g4! h5 12 ♜f4+ ♜e6 13 f3 is also winning for White.

11 h5! ♜xc2 12 ♜g6+ ♜e7 13 f4

13 ♜xh6 ♜xf2 14 ♜xc6 is simpler, but the text-move is also sufficient.

13...c5 14 ♜xh6 c4 15 bxc4 ♜xc4+ 16 ♜f5 ♜xa4 17 ♜c6 ♜b4 18 h6 ♜f8 19 ♜f6+ ♜g8 20 ♜g6 ♜b8 21 f5 1-0

21...a4 22 ♜e6 a3 23 f6 leads to mate.

When your opponent has one pawn weakness, in order to win it is often necessary to create play on another part of the board. Defending two weak points will usually prove impossible. Here Black has a weak c6-pawn, so White plays to fix a second weak pawn on h7.

1...♜d7 2 ♜h8 ♜e6 3 ♜d8 ♜e7

Or 3...♜c7 4 ♜d6+ ♜e5 5 ♜e2 g5 6 ♜f3! ♜c8 (6...gxh4 7 ♜e2 leads to mate) 7 ♜d7 and White will win a crucial pawn.

4 ♜d6 ♜a6

4...♜c7 5 g5 is similar to the game.

5 g5 fxg5 6 hxg5

Now Black must also worry about the h7-pawn.

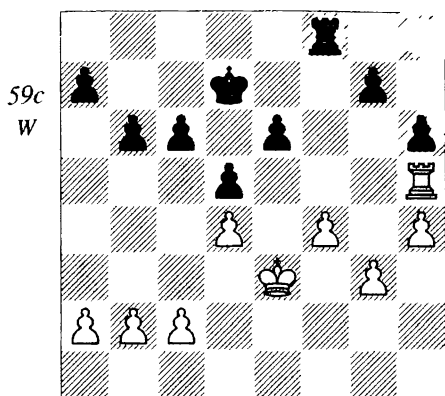
6...♜f7 7 ♜g3 ♜e7 8 f3 ♜a3 9 ♜f4 ♜a4+ 10 ♜e5 ♜a3 11 ♜xc6 ♜xe3+ 12 ♜xd5 ♜d3+ 13 ♜e4?

It's always possible to make a mistake, even when the win is close at hand. The correct line was 13 ♜e5! ♜e3+ (White also wins after 13...♜xf3 14 ♜c7+ ♜f8 15 ♜xh7 or 13...♜c3 14 ♜c7+) 14 ♜f4 ♜a3 15 ♜c7+ ♜e6 16 ♜xh7 ♜a4+ 17 ♜e3 ♜f5 18 ♜f7+ ♜xg5 19 f4+ ♜h6 20 c6 ♜c4 21 c7 and the c-pawn will be decisive.

13...♜c3 14 f4 ♜c1 15 ♜c7+ ♜d8?

There was a study-like draw by 15...♜e6! 16 ♜xh7 ♜xc5 17 ♜g7 ♜c4+ 18 ♜f3 ♜c6!, since 19 ♜xg6+ ♜f5 20 ♜xc6 is stalemate.

16 ♜xh7 ♜xc5 17 ♜f7 1-0



V. Mikhalevski – Matikozian
Burbank 2003

It's important to have a flexible attitude because sometimes the only way to win is to liquidate the enemy's weak pawn. Here Black has a backward e-pawn, but the way to make progress is to exchange it off to enable White's rook to penetrate.

1 g4 ♖e7 2 ♜e5 ♖d6 3 f5! ♜f6

If Black swaps, a typical line is 3...exf5 4 gxf5 ♜f6 5 h5 ♖d7 (5...c5 6 c3 doesn't help) 6 ♖f4 ♜f8 (6...♖d6 7 ♜e8 a5 8 a4 ♜f7 9 ♜e6+ also penetrates) 7 ♜e6 ♜f6 8 ♖e5 ♜f7 9 ♜d6+ ♖c7 10 f6 gxf6+ 11 ♜xf6 ♜h7 12 ♖e6 ♜h8 13 ♜f7+ ♖b8 14 ♖e7 and White wins.

4 h5 ♖e7 5 ♖f4 ♖f7

After 5...♖d6 6 b4 b5 7 ♜e3 a6 (giving up the reserve tempo, but 7...exf5 8 gxf5 is also hopeless for Black) 8 ♜xe6+ ♜xe6 9 fxe6 ♖xe6 (now this ending is a win, as White leads 2 to 0 on reserve tempi) 10 g5 hxg5+ 11 ♖xg5 ♖f7 12 ♖f5 ♖e7 13 ♖g6 ♖f8 14 h6 gxh6 15 ♖xh6 ♖f7 16 ♖g5 ♖e7 17 ♖f5 ♖f7 18 ♖e5 ♖e7 19 a3 ♖d7 20 ♖f6 ♖d6 21 ♖f7 ♖d7 22 c3 White wins.

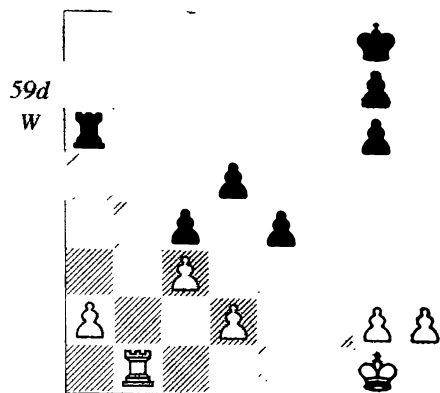
6 b4 exf5

Black cannot avoid exchanging forever; for example, 6...♖e7 7 b5 cxb5 8 g5 hxg5+ 9 ♖xg5 ♜xf5+ 10 ♜xf5 exf5 11 ♖xf5 ♖f7 12 ♖e5 ♖e7 13 ♖xd5 ♖d7 14 ♖e5 ♖e7 15 ♖f5 ♖f7 16 d5 and White wins.

7 gxf5 ♜d6 8 ♜e3

The switch to the g-file proves decisive.

8...♖f6 9 ♜g3 ♖f7 10 ♖e5 ♜d7 11 ♜g6 ♜e7+ 12 ♜e6 ♜xe6+ 13 fxe6+ ♖e7 14 b5 cxb5 15 ♖xd5 1-0



Rublevsky – Kasparov
Izmir ECC 2004

In this example, Black's weak pawns, coupled with White's active pieces, prove more important than an extra pawn.

1 ♖f2!

Giving up the a-pawn to activate the king.

1...♜xa2 2 ♖e3 ♖f7 3 ♜b7+ ♖f6 4 ♜b6+ ♖f7 5 ♜d6 ♜a5 6 h4!

At first sight Black can hardly be in trouble here, but he is handicapped by the weak g-pawns, which White hurries to fix in place.

6...g5

Waiting passively only allows White to improve his position; for example, 6...♜b5 7 g4! ♜a5 8 g5 ♜b5 9 ♖f4! and Black is in trouble. The move played allows Black to free his king.

7 hxg5 ♖e7 8 ♜c6 ♜a1?!

Black should have tried 8...♜a2; after 9 g4 ♖f7 10 ♜b6 ♜a1 11 ♖d4 ♜g1 12 g6+ ♖e7 13 ♖xd5 ♜xg4 14 ♖xc4 e3+ 15 ♖d3 exd2 16 ♖xd2 ♜g3 he has a more favourable version of the ending which arises in the game.

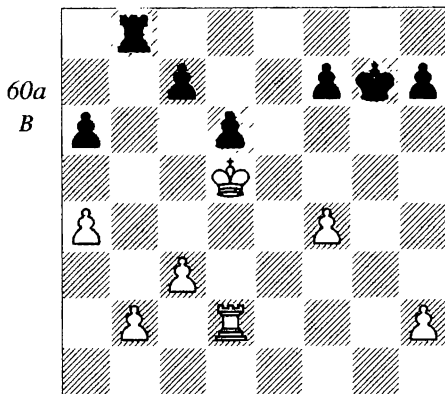
9 ♖d4 ♜d1 10 ♖xd5 e3 11 ♜e6+ ♖d7 12 ♜xe3 ♜xd2+ 13 ♖xc4 ♜xg2 14 ♜e5 ♖d6 15 ♜a5 ♜g4+ 16 ♖b3 ♜g1 17 ♖b4 ♜b1+ 18 ♖c4 ♖e6 19 ♜a6+ ♖f5 20 g6 ♜g1 21 ♖b5 ♖e5 22 c4 ♜b1+ 23 ♖c6 ♜g1

After 23...♜c1 24 ♖c5! Black is in zugzwang; for example, 24...♜c2 (24...♜b1 loses to 25 ♜d6!) 25 ♖b5 ♜b2+ 26 ♖c6 ♖f5 27 ♖d5 ♜d2+ 28 ♖c5 ♜c2 29 ♖b4 ♜b2+ 30 ♖c3 ♜b1 31 ♜d6, followed by c5.

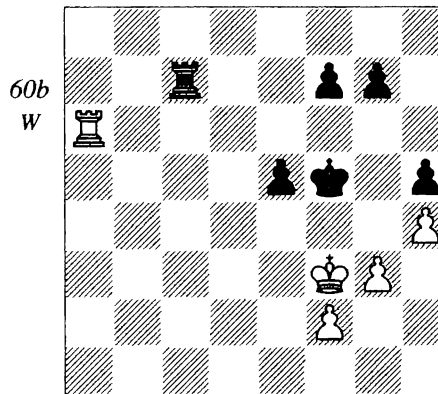
24 ♖d7 ♜d1+ 25 ♖e7 ♜b1 26 ♜a5+ ♖d4 27 ♖f8 ♜b7 28 ♜f5 1-0

60

Active King



Nunn – Ludgate
British Ch, Clacton 1974



Rochev – Nunn
Bunratty 2000

King activity is important in all endgames, and an active king can often decide the game by itself. In the diagram, the two players have roughly similar positions, with the main difference being that White's king occupies a commanding position in the centre of the board. An active king is even more effective if the opponent's pawn-structure offers an avenue through which the king can get among the enemy pawns. Here Black's broken queenside pawn-structure helps White, and indeed Black must already deal with the threat of ♔c6. If Black's pawn were on b7 rather than a6, then White's advantage would be much smaller. In the game White won without the slightest difficulty:

1...♞b6 2 b4

White could not play 2 a5? at once due to 2...♞b5+, but now a5 followed by ♔c6 is a serious threat.

2...a5

Trying to give up a pawn for drawing chances by 2...c5 fails after 3 ♞b2! ♔f6 4 b5 axb5 5 axb5 ♔f5 6 c4 ♔xf4 7 ♞f2+ ♔g4 8 ♞xf7 h5 9 ♞d7 followed by ♞xd6.

3 b5

Not 3 bxa5? ♞a6.

3...♔f6 4 ♞e2

The rook penetrates along the e-file and the game is decided.

4...♔f5 5 ♞e7 f6 6 ♞xh7 ♔xf4 7 ♞xc7 f5 8 ♞c6 ♞b8 9 ♞xd6 ♔e3 10 c4 f4 11 ♞e6+ 1-0

We know from 55b that this ending is generally drawn, and in the diagram White should have simply waited, since Black doesn't yet have a threat. However, White made a mistake allowing Black's king to create havoc amongst White's pawns.

1 ♔e3?

A fatal error, allowing the enemy king to penetrate to g2. White should have kept his king on f3 or, if Black checks it, retreated it to g2. This would have kept Black's king out.

1...♔g4 2 ♞b6

The king cannot be kept away from g2; for example, 2 ♞a3 ♔h3 3 ♔f3 ♞c2 4 ♞b3 f5 followed by ...e4+.

2...♔h3 3 ♞b2 g6 4 ♞a2

Black also wins after 4 ♞b6 f5 5 ♞xg6 ♞c3+ 6 ♔e2 ♔g2 7 ♞g5 ♞c2+ 8 ♔e3 ♞xf2 9 ♞xh5 ♞f3+ 10 ♔e2 ♔xg3 and the connected passed pawns will be decisive.

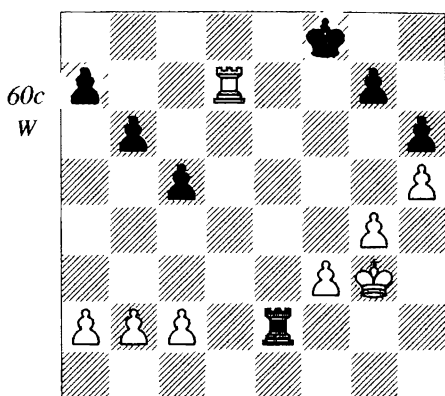
4...♔g2 5 ♔e4 ♞c3 6 f4+

Desperation, but after 6 ♔xe5 ♞f3 7 ♞a4 ♞f5+ 8 ♔d6 ♞xf2 9 g4 hxg4 10 ♞xg4+ ♔h3 11 ♞a4 ♞e2 Black cuts off the white king, after which there is a simple win by ...f5 followed by ...♞e4.

6...♔xg3 7 fxe5 ♞c4+ 8 ♔d5

8 ♔e3 is most simply answered by 8...♞xh4.

8...♞f4 9 ♞a8 ♔xh4 10 ♔d6 ♔g5 11 ♞f8 h4 12 ♞h8 ♔g4 13 ♞h7 h3 14 ♔e7 ♞f5 0-1



Nunn – P.H. Clarke
London 1973

White is a pawn up, but there is a danger that all the queenside pawns will be liquidated, leaving a drawn 3 vs 2 ending on the other side. After 1 ♖xa7 ♜xc2 2 b3 c4 3 bxc4 ♜xc4, for example, both sides have just one queenside pawn remaining and the win is still in doubt.

1 ♔f4!

White is prepared to sacrifice all his queenside pawns to activate his king.

1...♜xc2 2 ♔f5 ♜xb2 3 ♔g6 ♜e2

The greedy 3...♜xa2 also loses after 4 ♜f7+ ♔e8 5 ♜xg7 a5 6 ♜b7 c4 7 g5 ♜g2 8 ♔xh6 and White's pawns are too strong; for example, 8...c3 9 g6 c2 10 ♜c7 ♔d8 11 ♜c3 ♔e7 12 ♔h7 a4 13 g7 ♔f7 14 h6 a3 15 ♜xc2 and White wins.

4 ♜f7+ ♔e8 5 ♜xa7 c4 6 ♜c7 b5 7 ♜c5?

Missing an easy win by 7 ♔xg7! ♜e7+ 8 ♜xe7+ ♔xe7 9 f4 c3 10 f5 c2 11 f6+ ♔e6 (or 11...♔d7 12 f7 c1 ♖ 13 f8 ♖ ♖g5+ 14 ♔h7 ♖xg4 15 ♖g7+ and wins) 12 f7 c1 ♖ 13 f8 ♖ with a winning queen ending, the key point being that 13...♖g5+ 14 ♔h7 ♖xg4? loses to 15 ♖c8+.

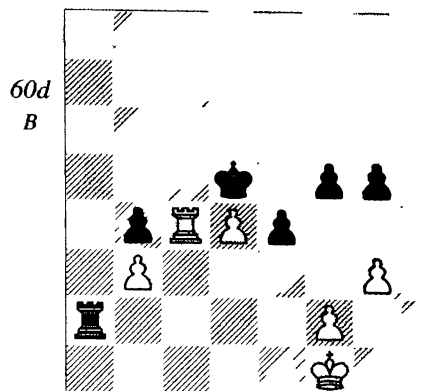
7...♜e7?!

7...♔f8 was a better chance, although White should still win after 8 ♜xb5 ♜e6+ 9 ♔f5 ♜f6+ 10 ♔e4 ♜a6 11 ♜b2 ♜a4 12 ♔d5 ♔f7 13 ♜c2 ♔f6 14 ♔c5 ♔e6 15 ♔b5 ♜a3 16 ♔b4 ♜xf3 17 ♜xc4 and the a-pawn will be too strong.

8 ♜xb5 ♜c7

Or 8...♔d8 9 ♜b2 ♜c7 10 ♜c2 c3 11 ♔h7! ♔e8 12 ♔g8 ♔d8 13 f4 and White wins.

9 ♜b8+ ♔e7 10 ♔xg7 c3 11 ♜b1 c2 12 ♜c1 1-0



Pelletier – Rozentalis
Erevan Olympiad 1996

In this example Black is prepared to sacrifice three pawns to create an avenue for his king to enter the enemy position. This plan gains added strength because White's king is trapped on the back rank, allowing Black to generate mating threats.

1...g4!!

Far stronger than 1...f4 2 gxf4 gxf4 3 ♜xb4, when White should draw after 3...f3 4 ♔e1 ♜a1+ 5 ♔d2 ♜f1 6 ♔e3 ♜e1+ 7 ♔f4 ♜e2 8 ♔g3 or 3...e3 4 fxe3 fxe3 5 ♜a4 ♜b2 6 b4! ♔e4 7 ♜a8 ♔d3 8 ♜a3+ ♔d2 9 ♜a1!.

2 ♜xb4 f4!

This breakthrough secures Black a passed e-pawn and clears a route for his king to penetrate via e4 and f3.

3 ♜a4

Or 3 ♜b5+ ♔xd4 4 gxf4 g3 5 fxg3 ♔e3 6 b4 ♔f3 7 ♜a5 ♜h2 8 ♜a3+ e3 9 ♔g1 ♜g2+ 10 ♔f1 ♜b2 11 ♜a1 ♔xg3 12 b5 ♜f2+ 13 ♔e1 ♔f3 14 b6 ♜h2 and Black wins.

3...♜b2 4 gxf4 g3! 5 fxg3 e3 6 f5 ♔e4 7 f6

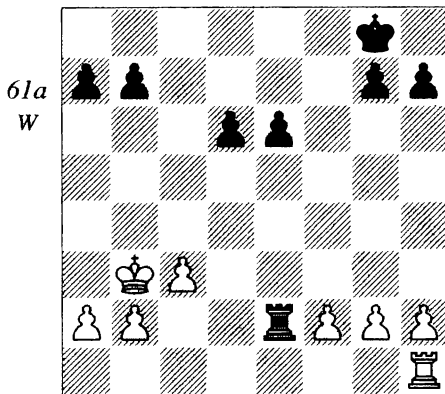
There is no defence; for example, 7 b4 ♔f3 8 ♜a1 ♜f2+ 9 ♔g1 ♜g2+ 10 ♔h1 ♜xg3 11 ♜f1+ (11 f6 ♔f2 and 11 b5 e2 12 b6 ♜g8 13 ♔h2 ♜h8+ 14 ♔g1 ♜e8 15 ♜e1 ♜g8+ 16 ♔h2 ♔f2 17 ♜xe2+ ♔xe2 18 f6 ♔d3 are also decisive) 11...♔e2 12 ♜f4 ♜f3 13 ♜g4 ♔d2 and Black wins.

7...♔f3 8 ♜a1 ♜g2! 0-1

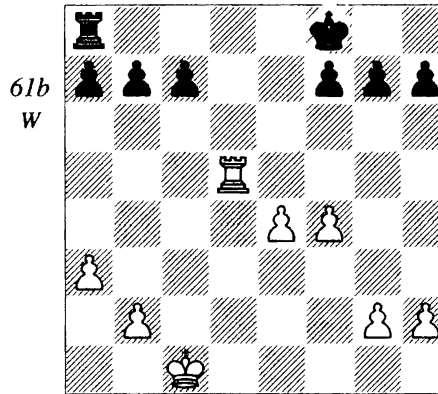
After 9 ♜e1 (9 f7 e2+ 10 ♔e1 ♔e3 wins for Black) 9...e2+ 10 ♜xe2 ♜xe2 11 f7 ♜f2+ 12 ♔e1 ♔e3 White will lose his pawns one by one.

61

Rook on the Seventh



Spassky – Shirov
Paris (rapid) 2000



Rebizzo – J. Patt Rubinstein
Argentine Ch, Buenos Aires 1947

A rook on the seventh rank can be a decisive factor in a rook ending. The rook targets a whole row of enemy pawns, tying the enemy pieces down to their defence. If the rook can't be expelled, the defender may be reduced to total passivity, as in this example.

1 ♖f1

White is more or less forced to defend his pawn, since after 1 ♖d1 d5 2 c4 dxc4+ 3 ♕xc4 ♜xb2 he loses material without compensation.

1...d5

White cannot free himself, so Black has plenty of time to improve his position.

2 a4 ♕f7 3 a5 e5 4 ♕a3

White tries to remove his queenside pawns from the second rank, but it is painfully slow.

4...♕e6 5 b3 g5

It was also good to continue 5...d4 6 cxd4 exd4, followed by ...♕d5.

6 ♕b4 h5 7 h3

Or 7 a6 bxa6 8 ♜a1 ♜xf2 9 ♜xa6+ ♕f5 10 ♜xa7 ♜xg2 and Black will be two pawns up.

7...e4 8 g3 ♕e5 9 ♕c5

After 9 f4+ gxf4 10 gxf4+ ♕f5 11 ♜d1 ♜c2 12 ♜xd5+ ♕xf4 13 ♜xh5 e3 the e-pawn will be too strong.

9...♜d2! 10 ♕b4

10 f4+ gxf4 11 gxf4+ ♕f5 and Black wins as the d-pawn is defended.

10...h4 11 gxh4 gxh4 12 a6 bxa6 13 ♜a1 ♜xf2 14 ♜xa6 ♜f7 15 ♜h6 e3 0-1

1 ♜d7 ♜c8?

Black hopes to expel the rook by ...♕e8, but it is not so easy. He should have tried 1...♜e8 2 e5 ♜e7, since White is only slightly better after 3 ♜d8+ ♜e8 4 ♜xe8+ ♕xe8 5 ♕d2.

2 e5 ♕e8?!

This loses by force. Instead Black should have tried to remove his pawns gradually from the second rank, for example by 2...b6 3 ♕c2! (not 3 ♕d2? ♕e8 4 e6 ♜d8! and Black's problems are solved) 3...h5 4 g3 g6. However, White retains very good winning chances after 5 ♕c3 ♕e8 (5...a6 6 b3 puts Black in zugzwang; for example, after 6...♕g8 7 ♕d4 White's king advances) 6 e6 fxe6 7 ♜g7.

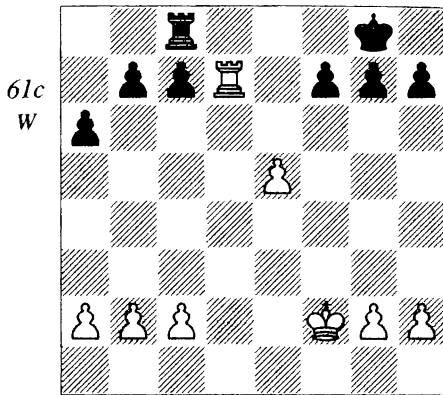
3 e6

Thanks to this move, White can keep his rook on the seventh rank.

3...fxe6 4 ♜xg7 h5 5 ♜h7 ♜d8

Black gives up some pawns to activate his rook, but he never obtains sufficient compensation.

6 ♜xc7 ♜d4 7 g3 h4 8 ♜xb7 a5 9 ♜h7 hxg3 10 hxg3 ♜d3 11 ♜h5 ♜xg3 12 ♜xa5 ♕d7 13 ♜e5 ♕d6 14 ♕b1 ♜f3 15 ♜e4 ♕d5 16 ♜b4 ♕c5 17 ♕a2 ♜f1 18 ♕b3 ♜f3+ 19 ♕a4 ♜d3 20 b3 ♜d7 21 ♜c4+ ♕d5 22 ♕b4 ♜b7+ 23 ♕c3 ♜b8 24 ♜d4+ ♕c6 25 ♕c4 ♜h8 26 b4 ♜h1 27 b5+ ♕c7 28 ♕b4 ♜h4 29 a4 ♜g4 30 ♕c5 ♜g6 31 a5 ♜f6 32 b6+ ♕b7 33 ♕d6 1-0



61c
W

Morosova – Sammul
USSR Team Ch, Leningrad 1962

The situation is somewhat similar to 61b, but here Black puts up more of a fight.

1 ♖e3 ♜f8 2 ♜f4 a5

A typical ploy: Black intends to remove his queenside pawns from the second rank. 2...♜e8? is inferior as 3 e6 fxe6 4 ♝xg7 ♞d8 5 ♝g8+ ♜e7 6 ♞xd8 ♜xd8 7 ♜e5 ♜e7 8 g4 is a winning pawn ending.

3 g4 b6 4 h4 c5 5 h5 ♞c6 6 ♜e4?!

6 ♞d8+! ♜e7 7 ♝g8 g6 8 ♞h8 gxh5 9 g5 was more incisive.

6...♜e8 7 ♞b7 g6 8 hxg6 ♝xg6

White wins after 8...hxg6 9 g5 ♞e6 10 ♜d5 ♜f8 11 ♞b8+ ♜g7 12 b3 ♜h7 13 c4 ♜g7 14 ♞d8 followed by ♞d6.

9 ♜f5 ♜f8 10 ♞d7?!

This gives Black a chance to secure counterplay. 10 c4 was better, since after a later ...♞h6-h2 White's pawns won't all be lined up on the second rank.

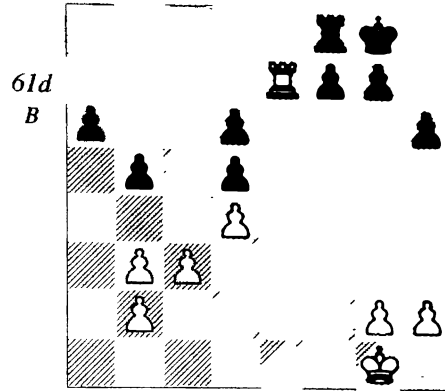
10...♜g7?

10...♞h6! 11 ♞d6 ♞h2 12 ♝xb6 ♝xc2 would have offered drawing chances.

11 ♞d6 ♜f8?!

The only chance was 11...h6, but after 12 ♝xg6+ fxg6+ 13 ♜e6 h5 14 gxh5 gxh5 15 ♜d6 h4 16 e6 h3 17 e7 h2 18 e8 ♖h1 ♗19 ♗e7+ ♜g6 20 ♗e6+ ♜g7 21 ♜c7 ♗h2+ 22 ♜xb6 ♗xc2 23 ♗b3 White wins a pawn and has excellent winning chances in the queen ending.

12 ♝xg6 fxg6+ 13 ♜e6 ♜e8 14 g5 b5 15 ♜f6 ♜f8 16 e6 c4 17 e7+ ♜e8 18 a3 1-0



61d
B

Breyer – Fahrni
Mannheim 1914

White's active rook offers full compensation for Black's extra pawn.

1...♞c8?!

This shouldn't lose, but 1...b4 2 ♞a7 ♞c8 3 ♞xa6 bxc3 4 bxc3 ♞xc3 5 ♞xd6 ♞xb3 6 ♞xd5 was a simple route to a draw.

2 b4

Fixing the queenside pawns in place.

2...g6 3 ♜f2 ♜g7 4 ♞a7 ♞c6 5 h4 ♜f6 6 ♜f3 ♜e6 7 ♜f4 ♜f6 8 ♜g4 ♞b6?!

Perhaps not realizing the danger, Black gradually drifts into a dubious position. 8...h5+ 9 ♜f4 ♜e6 10 g4 hxg4 11 ♜xg4 ♜f6 would still have drawn without difficulty.

9 h5 ♞c6

9...gxh5+ 10 ♜xh5 ♜g7 11 g4 ♞c6 12 g5 hxg5 13 ♜xg5 ♞b6 14 ♞c7 ♞b8 15 ♞c6 is unpleasant for Black.

10 ♞b7 ♜g7?!

Too passive; 10...gxh5+ 11 ♜xh5 ♞c8 12 ♞a7 ♜e6 13 ♞xa6 ♞g8 offered good drawing chances.

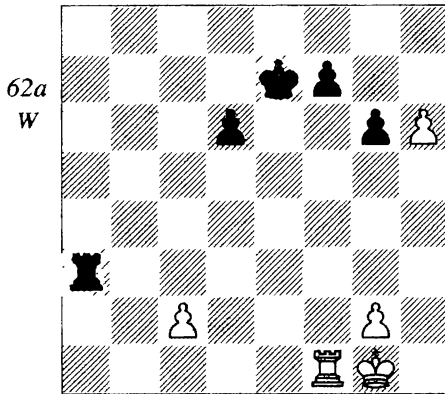
11 hxg6 ♜xg6 12 ♞a7 ♞b6 13 ♞c7 h5+ 14 ♜h4 f6 15 ♞a7 ♜f5 16 ♞h7 ♞b8 17 ♝h5+ ♜e4 18 g4 a5?

Desperation. 18...♞f8 19 ♞h6 ♜d3 20 ♜g3 ♜e4 21 ♞h1 ♞g8 22 ♞e1+ ♜d3 23 ♜f4 ♜c2 was Black's last chance.

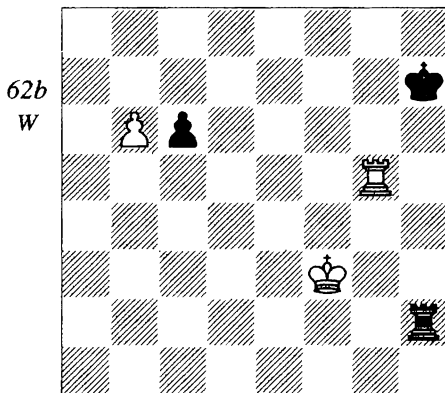
19 bxa5 b4 20 ♞f5 bxc3 21 bxc3 ♞h8+ 22 ♜g3 ♞c8 23 ♞f4+ ♜d3 24 ♝xf6 ♜xc3 25 ♞f4 ♞a8 26 g5 ♞xa5 27 g6 ♞a8 28 ♜g4 ♜d3 29 ♜g5 ♜e3 30 ♞g4 ♞g8 31 ♜f6 ♜f3 32 ♞h4 ♜e3 33 g7 ♜d3 34 ♜f7 1-0

62

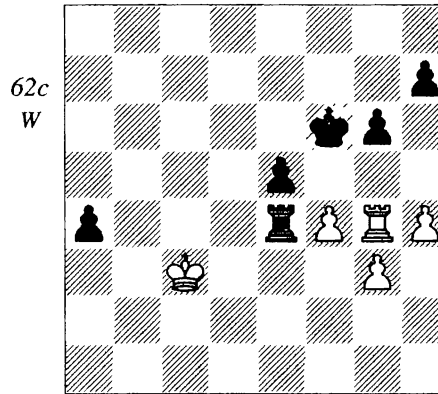
Tactical Tricks (1)



Tactical ideas are commonplace in rook and pawn endings and in this and the following section we cover some of the ideas which often arise in over-the-board play. The two positions in this column involve pawn-promotion combinations. Here the obvious 1 h7 ♖a8 2 ♜f3 ♜h8 3 ♜h3 is unlikely to win; for example, 3...♟f6 4 ♟f2 ♟g7 5 ♟e3 ♜e8+ 6 ♟d4 ♟h8 7 c4 ♜e2 and Black is able to defend. However, White can force the pawn home by 1 ♜e1+! ♟d7 (1...♟f8 loses to 2 ♜e8+! ♟xe8 3 h7) 2 ♜e8! (forcing Black to block the first rank is much clearer than 2 h7 ♖a8 3 ♟f2 ♜h8 4 ♜h1 ♟e6) 2...♟xe8 3 h7, and the pawn promotes.



In this position White wins by 1 ♜b5! (1 ♜g2? ♜h3+! 2 ♜g3 ♜h1 draws) 1...cxb5 2 b7 ♜h5 (2...♜h3+ 3 ♟g4 ♜h1 4 b8♚ is similar) 3 b8♚ and Black loses the b-pawn within a few moves, giving White a winning ♚ vs ♜ position.



Flohr – Geller
USSR Ch, Moscow 1949

Here is a more complex example.

1 ♟d3

Black also wins after 1 fxe5+ ♟e5 2 ♜g5+ ♟f6 3 ♜a5 ♜g4 4 ♟d2 h5, since his kingside is totally secure and he can support the a-pawn with his king.

1...♟g7!

An extraordinary move, which ensures the promotion of the a-pawn. Not 1...a3? 2 fxe5+ ♜xe5 3 ♜a4 with a draw, while 1...♟f7?? 2 ♟xe4 a3 3 fxe5 a2 4 ♜f4+ and 1...♟e7?? 2 ♟xe4 a3 3 ♜g5 a2 4 ♜xe5+ are even winning for White.

2 h5?!

By playing 2 ♟xe4 a3 3 h5 White transposes to the game while cutting out the possibility in the next note.

2...a3?!

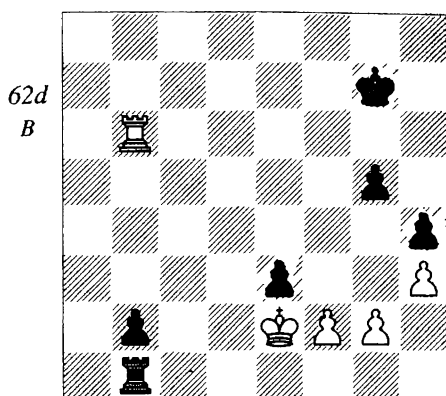
Missing a simple win by 2...♜b4 3 ♜h4 exf4 4 gxf4 a3 5 ♜h1 ♜xf4, with two extra pawns.

3 ♟xe4 a2 4 hxg6 hxg6 5 ♜g5 a1♚ 6 ♜xe5

White has a kind of fortress on the kingside, which makes the win quite lengthy. The basic idea is to stalemate White's king and so force White to dismantle his own fortress.

6...♚c3 7 ♜g5 ♟f6 8 ♟d5 ♚d3+ 9 ♟c5 ♟f7 10 ♟c6 ♚d4 11 ♟b5 ♚c3 12 ♟b6 ♚c4 13 ♟b7 ♚e6 14 ♟c7 ♟f6 15 ♟b7 ♚d6 16 ♟c8 ♚c6+ 17 ♟d8 ♚b7 18 ♜e5 ♚b6+ 19 ♟c8 ♟f7 0-1

Black wins after 20 ♜g5 ♟e7 21 g4 ♚f6 22 ♜e5+ ♚xe5 23 fxe5 g5.



Martinović – Dumpor
Novi Bečej 1986

Sometimes it is possible to promote a pawn with the aid of a breakthrough.

In this position, normal moves are unlikely to achieve anything for Black. It is true that White is not threatening to take on e3 (because fxe3 allows ...♖g1!), but it is not obvious how Black can make progress. Even if he manages to bring his king to c4, White plays his rook to b8 ready to start checking from the eighth rank. However, Black can win the game by means of a breakthrough.

1...g4!

By sacrificing two pawns, Black blasts open the second rank, whereupon the familiar skewer trick nets the white rook.

2 hxg4 h3 3 gxh3

White can delay the inevitable for a few moves by checking, but it makes no difference; after the black king approaches the rook, White runs out of options.

3...exf2 4 ♖b7+ ♔f6 5 ♖b6+ ♔e5 6 ♖b5+ ♔d4 7 ♔xf2 ♖h1 8 ♔g3

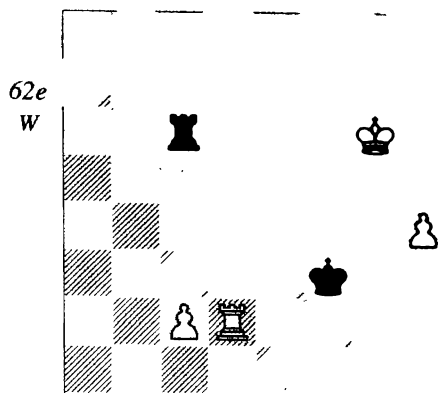
8 ♖xb2 ♖h2+ 9 ♔g3 ♖xb2 is essentially the same; White's pawns are not far enough advanced to trouble Black.

8...b1♚ 9 ♖xb1 ♖xb1 10 ♔f4 ♔d5 11 h4 ♖f1+ 12 ♔g5 ♔e6 13 ♔g6 ♖f6+ 14 ♔g7 ♖f7+

14...♖f4, winning a pawn, was an even faster route to victory.

15 ♔g8 ♖a7 0-1

The white king is cut off and Black can simply take the white pawns with his king.



Gufeld – Bronstein
Kislovodsk 1968

Tactical ideas can arise quite unexpectedly in rook endings. Here White has two pawns more and the win appears certain. However, Black managed to save the game using a stalemate resource, although this did require a small amount of help from his opponent.

1 ♔g7?

Unlikely as it may seem, this move throws away the win. The simplest route to victory involves playing the king over to support the c-pawn, if necessary sacrificing the h-pawn along the way: 1 ♔f5! ♖c5+ 2 ♔e6 ♖c6+ (2...♔f4 3 h5 ♖xh5 4 c4 is similar) 3 ♔d7 ♖c5 4 h5! (the key idea; White deflects the black rook in order to activate his c-pawn) 4...♖xh5 5 c4 ♔e3 6 ♖d5! ♖h7+ 7 ♔c6 ♔e4 8 ♖d1 and there is no stopping the c-pawn.

1...♔g4!

Black seizes his chance to force a draw, using stalemate as his key resource.

2 ♖h2

The critical line is 2 ♖d4+ ♔h5! (the simplest, although in fact 2...♔f5 3 c4 ♖c7+ also draws after 4 ♔f8 ♔e5 or 4 ♔h6 ♖c6+ 5 ♔h5 ♖c8) 3 c4 ♖xc4! 4 ♖xc4 with stalemate.

2...♔g3

White must part with a pawn.

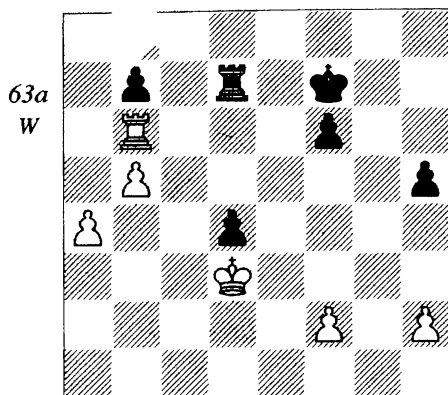
3 ♖h1 ♖xc2 4 h5

White's king has no defence against sideways checks, so Black draws comfortably.

4...♖c7+ 5 ♔f6 ♖c6+ 6 ♔f7 ♖c7+ 7 ♔e6 ♖c6+ 8 ♔d5 ♖h6 9 ♔e4 ♔g2 10 ♖h4 ♔g3 11 ♖h1 ♔g2 1/2-1/2

63

Tactical Tricks (2)



Nunn – Pitt
Bournemouth 1970

It is important to be flexible and to keep an eye open for unlikely possibilities. Two connected passed pawns are very powerful in rook endings, and it may even be worth sacrificing a rook to secure them.

1 a5 ♖g6

If Black remains passive, White wins by confining Black's king and then playing a6: 1...♙e7 2 f3 ♙f7 (2...h4 3 h3 doesn't change anything) 3 f4 ♙e7 (or 3...♙g6 4 ♖xb7! ♖xb7 5 b6, much as in the game) 4 f5 ♙f7 5 a6 bxa6 bxa6.

2 ♖xb7!

A surprising but very effective move. White has a large advantage after 2 a6, but the win is not totally certain; for example, after 2...bxa6 3 bxa6 ♖d5 4 h4 (4 ♙c4 ♖f5 5 ♙xd4 ♖xf2 is drawn) 4...♖f5 (4...♖a5 5 ♙xd4 ♙f5 6 ♙c4 ♙g4 7 ♙b4 ♖a1 8 ♖d6 ♙xh4 9 ♖d4+ should win for White, as a further check allows White to transfer his rook to the a-file) 5 ♙xd4 (after 5 a7 ♖a5 6 ♖b7 ♖a4 Black continues to resist) 5...♖xf2 6 ♙c5 ♖a2 Black is still fighting.

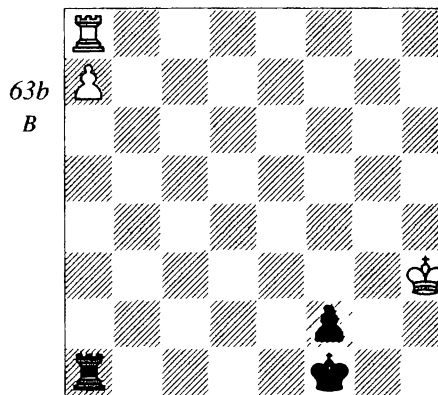
2...♖xb7 3 b6

Black cannot move his rook off the b-file, for then a6 promotes a pawn, so he tries to get his king back.

3...♙f5 4 ♙xd4 ♖d7+

Or 4...♙e6 5 ♙c5 ♙d7 6 a6 ♖b8 7 a7 and White wins.

5 ♙c5 ♖d2 6 b7 ♖b2 7 a6 1-0



V. Kostić – Ankerst
Austrian Team Ch 1997/8

The game ended **1...♖a4? 2 ♙h2 ♖a3 3 ♖b8 1/2-1/2**, since after 3...♖xa7 4 ♖b1+ ♙e2 5 ♖b2+ White's barrage of checks secures the draw.

However, Black could have won using an idea called the *Lasker manoeuvre*, which involves driving the enemy king back, rank by rank, using checks. Here is how it works:

1...♙g1!

The first step is to transfer the king to h1.

2 ♖g8+ ♙h1 3 ♖f8

White's moves are all forced; he must either check or play his rook to f8. If he ever promotes on a8 he will be left with a lost ending of ♙ vs ♖.

3...♖a3+

The first check forces White's king back a rank.

4 ♙h4 ♙g2 5 ♖g8+ ♙h2 6 ♖f8 ♖a4+

Step 2. The white king must stay on the h-file since, for example, 7 ♙g5 loses at once to 7...♙g2 and White has no check.

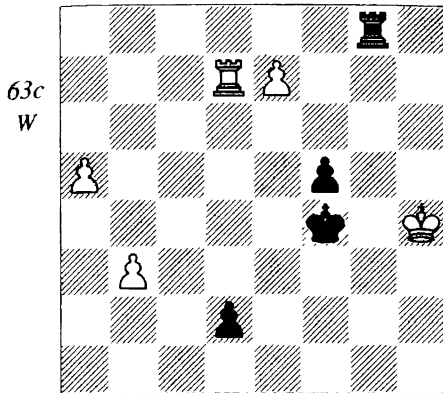
7 ♙h5 ♙g3 8 ♖g8+ ♙h3 9 ♖f8 ♖a5+ 10 ♙h6 ♙g3 11 ♖g8+ ♙h4 12 ♖f8 ♖a6+

The final stage sees the white king forced onto the same rank as the white pawn, enabling Black to take it with check.

13 ♙g7 ♖xa7+ 14 ♙h6 ♙g3

and Black wins.

A similar idea wins when the white rook starts on b7 instead of a8, the only difference being that the final ...♖xa7 pins the white rook rather than giving check.



Hennigan – Arakhamia-Grant
British League (4NCL) 2004/5

This position features a tactical point which is often overlooked.

1 ♖d4+?

White can't play 1 ♖d8? at once as 1... ♗h8+ 2 ♗xh8 d1♚ forces mate, so he gives this preliminary check first. The best move was actually 1 ♕h5!, after which Black must take care to reach the draw by 1... ♖e3 2 a6 ♖e2 3 ♖d8 d1♚ 4 ♗xg8 ♖f2+ 5 ♖g6 ♗g4+ 6 ♖f7 ♗h5+ 7 ♖f6 ♗h4+ 8 ♗g5 ♗h6+ 9 ♗g6 ♗h8+ 10 ♖e6 f4 and White cannot win.

1... ♖e3 2 ♖d8

Now White is threatening to promote with check, and he was probably counting on nothing more than 2... ♖f4? 3 ♕h5 with an easy win.

2... ♗e8!

An unpleasant shock which gives Black a winning position.

3 ♖g5 ♗xe7 4 ♖xf5 ♖e2?

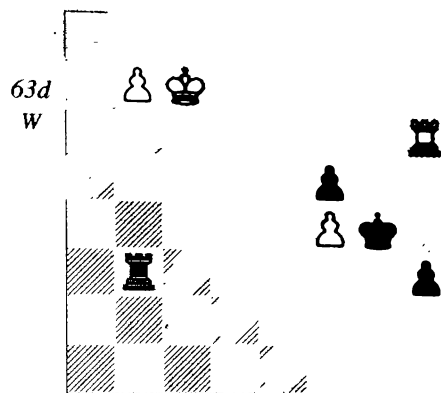
Missing 4... ♗b7! 5 ♗e8+ (or 5 a6 ♗b5+ 6 ♖g4 ♗a5) 5... ♖d3 6 a6 ♗b5+ 7 ♖f4 d1♚, winning.

5 a6?

Handing the half-point back again. White could have saved the game by 5 b4! ♗b7 6 ♗e8+ ♖d1 (6... ♖d3 7 ♗d8+ ♖c2 8 a6 is also drawn) 7 a6 ♗d7 8 ♗g8 ♖c2 9 ♗g1 d1♚ 10 ♗xd1 ♗xd1 11 ♖e6 with a draw.

5... ♗a7 6 ♗e8+ ♖d3 ½-½?

In fact Black is now winning; for example, 7 ♗d8+ ♖c2 8 ♗c8+ ♖xb3 9 ♗d8 ♖c2 10 ♗c8+ ♖d3 (10... ♖d1 11 ♗c6 ♗h7 also wins, but is more complicated) 11 ♗d8+ ♖e2 12 ♗e8+ ♖d1 13 ♗e6 ♗d7, with ... ♖c2 to come.



R. Schöne – Bagirov
Berlin 1996

A common source of errors in rook endings is to overlook the effect of an intermediary check. Often a rook which is travelling from A to B can stop off for a check *en route*. The impact of such a check can be decisive, as in this example. At first sight White cannot win. The straightforward 1 b8♗? ♗xb8 2 ♖xb8 ♖xf4 3 ♗xh3 ♖e4 leaves the white king too far away and results in a draw after 4 ♖c7 f4 5 ♖d6 f3 6 ♗h4+ ♖e3 7 ♖e5 f2 8 ♗f4 ♖e2. Trying to promote the b-pawn by 1 ♗b6?? is even worse: after 1... ♗xb6 2 ♖xb6 h2 3 b8♗ h1♚ Black is obviously better since the f4-pawn is doomed, and the tablebase confirms that Black is winning. However, an intermediary check changes the whole picture.

1 ♗g6+!

Black's king is already on the best square and this check forces it to an inferior position.

1... ♖xf4

The other squares also have defects:

1) 1... ♖h5 2 ♗b6 ♗xb6 3 ♖xb6 h2 4 b8♗ h1♚ 5 ♗h8+ wins the queen with a vertical skewer.

2) 1... ♖f3 2 ♗b6 ♗xb6 3 ♖xb6 h2 4 b8♗ h1♚ 5 ♗b7+ does the same with a diagonal skewer.

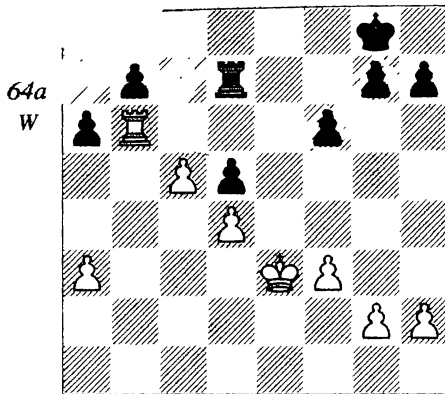
2 ♗b6

The situation is completely different now because White can promote with check.

2... ♗xb6 (2... h2 3 ♗xb3 h1♚ 4 b8♗ is an easy win for White) 3 ♖xb6 ♖g3 4 b8♗+ ♖g2 5 ♗g8+ 1-0. White wins after 5... ♖f2 6 ♗h7 ♖g2 7 ♗g6+ ♖f2 8 ♗xf5+ ♖g2 9 ♗g4+ ♖h2 10 ♖c5.

64

Manoeuvring in Rook Endings



Szabo – Kotov
Zurich Ct 1953

In many cases it is not possible to exploit an advantage directly and some manoeuvring is required to make progress. In this position, White has a clear advantage: his rook is very active, and Black has weak pawns on b7 and d5. Indeed, Black cannot move his rook as he must prevent ♞d6 followed by ♞xd5 . Despite this, White cannot force a win directly; for example, $1 \text{ c6 bxc6 } 2 \text{ ♞xc6 ♞b7 } 3 \text{ ♞xa6 ♞b2}$ gives away most of White's advantage.

1 h4

A good plan. White aims to make progress on the kingside, either creating an avenue to penetrate with his king or forcing Black into zugzwang.

1...♟f7

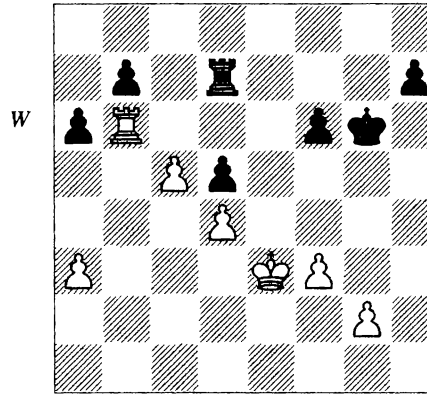
It doesn't help to try to prevent the advance of the h-pawn; for example, $1...h5$ $2 \text{ ♟f4 ♟f7 } 3 \text{ g4 ♟g6}$ (or $3...hxc4$ $4 \text{ fxg4 ♟f8 } 5 \text{ ♟f5 ♟f7 } 6 \text{ h5}$ and Black is in zugzwang) $4 \text{ g5 ♞e7 } 5 \text{ gxf6 gxf6 } 6 \text{ ♞d6}$ and White wins.

2 h5 g5

Active play is the best chance. If Black just waits with $2...♟e7$ 3 ♟f4 ♟f7 , White wins by $4 \text{ g4 ♟e7 } 5 \text{ h6 g6 } 6 \text{ g5 fxg5+ } 7 \text{ ♟e5 ♟f7 } 8 \text{ ♞d6 ♞e7+ } 9 \text{ ♟xd5}$.

3 hxg6+ ♟xg6 (D)

After $3...hxc6$ the advance of the g-pawn will create an entry for White's king: $4 \text{ ♟f4 ♟e7 } 5 \text{ g4 ♟f7 } 6 \text{ g5 fxg5+ } 7 \text{ ♟xg5 ♞e7 } 8 \text{ ♟f4! } 9 \text{ ♞d7 } 9 \text{ ♟e5 ♟g7 } 10 \text{ ♟e6 } 11 \text{ ♟f7 } 11 \text{ f4}$ and Black can resign.



64a (continued)

4 ♟f4 h5 5 g3 ♞h7 6 ♟e3

White repeats moves. It is important not to rush, since $6 \text{ ♞d6 h4 } 7 \text{ gxc4 ♞xc4+ } 8 \text{ ♟e3 ♞h2 } 9 \text{ ♞xd5 ♞a2 } 10 \text{ ♞d7 ♞xa3+ } 11 \text{ ♟e4 ♞b3}$ is not so clear.

6...♞e7+ 7 ♟f4 ♞h7 8 a4!

The right move, removing the a-pawn from the vulnerable a2-square.

8...h4

Waiting is no help: after $8...♞d7$ $9 \text{ a5 ♞h7 } 10 \text{ ♞d6 h4 } 11 \text{ gxc4 ♞xc4+ } 12 \text{ ♟e3 ♞h2 } 13 \text{ ♞xd5 ♞a2 } 14 \text{ ♞d7}$ White is winning easily.

9 gxc4 ♞xc4+ 10 ♟e3 ♞h7

Black returns as $10...♞h2$ $11 \text{ ♞xb7 ♞a2 } 12 \text{ ♞d7}$ is hopeless.

11 ♞d6 ♞e7+ 12 ♟d3 ♟g5 13 ♞xd5+ ♟f4

Black has given up a pawn to activate his king, but White's next few moves nullify Black's counterplay.

14 ♞d6 f5

Or $14...♞f7$ $15 \text{ d5 ♟xf3 } 16 \text{ ♞e6}$, followed by $d6$ and $♞e7$, and White wins.

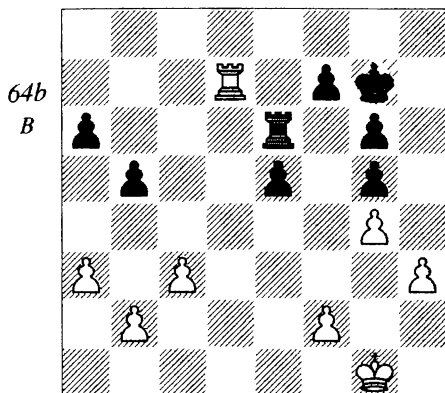
15 ♞f6 ♞e1 16 ♞f7 ♞b1

Black is once again virtually immobilized.

17 a5 ♞b3+ 18 ♟c4 ♞b1 19 ♞f6!

The simplest win. White transfers his rook to b3 with gain of tempo, after which all his pawns are defended and he can win using his passed d-pawn.

$19...♞h1$ $20 \text{ ♞b6 ♞h7 } 21 \text{ ♞b3 ♞d7 } 22 \text{ d5 ♟e5 } 23 \text{ d6 f4 } 24 \text{ ♞b1 ♞h7 } 25 \text{ ♞e1+ ♟f6 } 26 \text{ c6 bxc6 } 27 \text{ ♟c5 ♞h2 } 28 \text{ ♞d1 1-0}$



Anand – Kamsky
Sofia 2006

This position is close to equality, but Black has slightly more prospects than White, since he might eventually gain space by playing his king to e6, followed by ...f5 and ...e4. However, it shouldn't be too hard for White to prevent this.

1...♠f6 2 ♠f1 ♚c6 3 ♠e2

3 f3, preventing the space-gaining ...e4, is simpler.

3...♠e6 4 ♚d8 e4 5 f3?

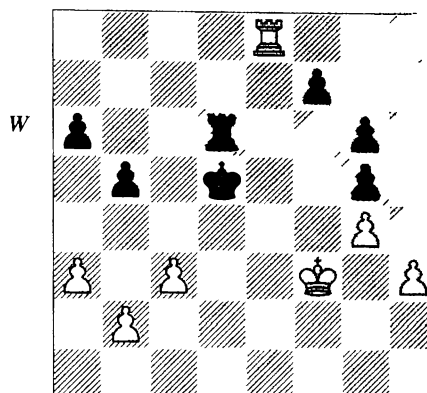
After this mistake White falls into a passive position. In rook endings, it's normally better to defend actively and here White should have played 5 a4 to reduce the number of pawns; after, for example, 5...bxa4 6 ♚d4 ♠e5 (6...a3 7 ♚xe4+ ♠d5 8 ♚d4+ ♠e5 9 bxa3 ♚xc3 10 ♚a4 is a clear draw) 7 ♚xa4 f5 8 f3 ♠f4 9 fxe4 fxe4 10 c4 the position is equal since White has a passed pawn of his own.

5...exf3+ 6 ♠xf3 ♚d6! 7 ♚e8+

Black's offer to exchange rooks is well calculated since after 7 ♚xd6+? ♠xd6 8 ♠e4 ♠e6 9 b4 (otherwise Black plays ...f5-f4, and then secures an entry for his king on the queenside by ...a5-a4) 9...f5+ 10 ♠d4 f4 11 c4 bxc4 12 ♠xc4 ♠e5 13 ♠d3 ♠d5 14 a4 ♠e5! Black wins by zugzwang; for example, 15 ♠e2 ♠d4 16 ♠f3 ♠c4 17 b5 axb5 18 axb5 ♠xb5 and the f-pawn is decisive (19 h4 gxh4 20 ♠xf4 is met by 20...g5+).

7...♠d5 (D)

Now Black threatens to play ...♠c4 penetrating amongst White's queenside pawns, and this is not prevented by 8 ♚c8 due to 8...♚c6.



64b (continued)

8 b3

Preventing ...♠c4, but now White's rook will be tied to the defence of the weak c3-pawn.

8...♚f6+

A useful intermediary check. 9 ♠e3 loses to 9...♚e6+, so the king must retreat.

9 ♠g2 ♚c6 10 ♚e3 f5 11 gxf5

White plans to attack the g5-pawn. Passive play by 11 ♠f3 f4 12 ♚d3+ ♠e5 (White is in zugzwang) 13 b4 loses to 13...♚d6! 14 ♚xd6 ♠xd6 15 ♠e4 ♠e6 16 ♠d4 a5 17 c4 (or 17 bxa5 ♠d6 18 ♠d3 ♠c7 heading for a5) 17...axb4 18 axb4 bxc4 19 ♠xc4 ♠e5! 20 ♠d3 ♠d5 21 ♠c3 ♠e4 and White must surrender the b-pawn.

11...gxf5 12 ♚g3 ♠e4! 13 a4?

This doesn't help White. 13 ♚xg5! ♚xc3 14 h4 ♚xb3 15 h5 was correct, giving up a pawn to secure counterplay with the passed h-pawn.

13...bxa4 14 bxa4 ♠f4?

14...♚g6! was better, when Black has strong pressure.

15 ♚f3+ ♠e5 16 ♚e3+ ♠f6 17 ♚d3 f4 18 ♠f3?

Missing the chance to free himself by 18 c4!, with a near-certain draw.

18...♠e5!

Now Black is winning, thanks to the threat of 19...♚d6.

19 ♠g4 ♚d6 20 ♚xd6

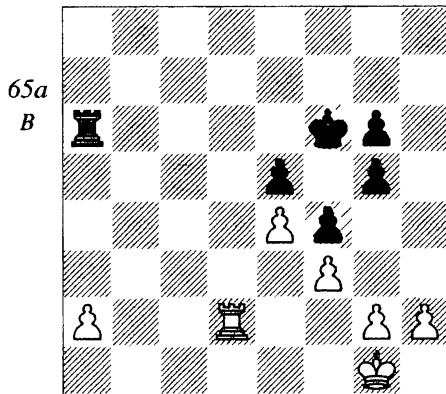
The pawn ending is lost, but 20 ♚f3 ♚d1 21 ♠xg5 ♚g1+ 22 ♠h5 ♠e4 is also hopeless.

20...♠xd6 21 h4 gxh4 22 ♠xh4 ♠d5 23 ♠h3 ♠e4 24 ♠g2 ♠e3! 0-1

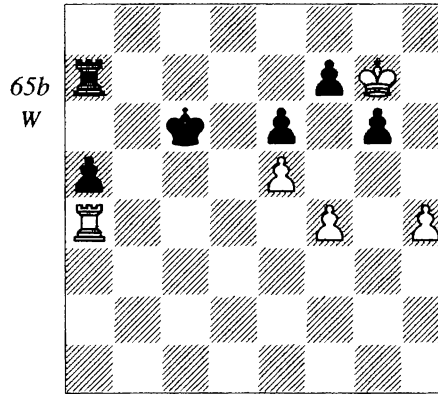
After 25 ♠f1 a5! 26 c4 ♠d4 27 ♠f2 ♠xc4 28 ♠f3 ♠b4 Black wins by one tempo.

65

Defence in Rook Endings



Mephisto 68020 – Nunn
The Hague 1992



Em. Lasker – Levenfish
Moscow 1925

When defending, piece activity is extremely important. It is usually easier to defend a position a pawn down with active pieces than one with level material and passive pieces. Here Black is already one pawn down, but by sacrificing a second pawn he draws comfortably.

1...g4!

Black's rook is already well-placed and this offer enables him to activate his king as well. Passive play would allow White to bring his king to b2 and eventually set his a-pawn in motion; for example, 1...♖a3? 2 h3 (to stop ...g4) 2...♞e3 3 ♔f1 ♕e6 4 ♞b2 (threatening 5 ♞b3) 4...♞a3 5 ♕e2 ♕d6 6 ♞c2, followed by ♕d2-c1-b2.

2 fxg4 ♞a4 3 ♞e2 ♕g5 4 h3 ♕h4 5 ♕f2 ♞a3

White cannot make progress despite his two extra pawns.

6 ♞b2 ♞a4 7 ♞d2 ♞a3

7...♞xe4 was also good, but Black is content to wait.

8 ♞e2 ♞a4 9 ♞b2 ♞xe4

Finally Black decides to force the issue. 9...♞a3 would also have drawn.

10 ♞b5

After 10 ♞e2 ♞xe2+ 11 ♕xe2 ♕g3 12 ♕f1 e4 13 a4 e3 14 a5 e2+ 15 ♕xe2 ♕xg2 the draw is clear.

10...♞a4 11 ♞xe5 ♞xa2+ 12 ♕f3 g5 13 ♞c5 ♞a3+ 14 ♕f2 ♞a2+ 15 ♕f3 ♞a3+ 16 ♕f2 ♞a2+ 17 ♕g1 f3! 18 gxf3 ♕g3 19 ♕f1 ♞f2+ 1/2-1/2

Another useful defensive technique is to generate counterplay by creating a passed pawn, even if this involves sacrificing a pawn.

From the above diagram, the game continued **1 ♕f6? ♕b5 2 ♞a1 a4 3 f5** (the right idea, but too late) **3...exf5 4 e6 fxe6 5 ♕xg6 f4 6 h5 f3 7 h6** (7 ♞f1 a3 wins for Black) **7...e5! 8 ♞e1** (or 8 h7 ♞xh7 9 ♕xh7 e4 10 ♞f1 a3 11 ♕g6 a2 12 ♕f5 e3 and the pawns are too strong) **8...a3 9 ♞xe5+ ♕c4 10 ♞e1 a2 11 h7 ♞a8!** (gaining a vital tempo; 11...♞xh7? 12 ♕xh7 f2 13 ♞f1 ♕d3 14 ♞a1 is only a draw – see 43a) **12 ♕g7** (12 ♞a1 ♕b3 13 ♞f1 f2 14 ♕g7 a1 ♖+ 15 ♞xa1 ♞xa1 16 h8 ♖ ♞g1+ and Black wins) **12...f2 13 ♞a1 ♕b3 14 ♞f1 a1 ♖+ 15 ♞xa1 ♞xa1 0-1.**

White could have drawn by creating the passed pawn straight away:

1 f5! exf5 2 e6 fxe6+ 3 ♕xg6

White is a clear tempo up on the game continuation.

3...♕b5 4 ♞a1 f4 5 h5 e5

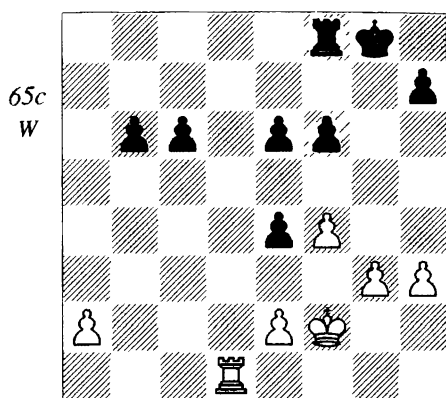
After 5...f3 6 h6 f2 7 h7 ♞a8 8 ♞f1 Black cannot win.

6 ♞e1

The simplest, although 6 h6 also leads to a draw.

6...♕c4 7 ♞xe5 ♕d3 8 h6 f3 9 h7 ♞xh7 10 ♕xh7 f2 11 ♞f5 ♕e3 12 ♞f8 a4 13 ♞e8+ ♕f3 14 ♞f8+ ♕g2 15 ♞g8+ ♕h3 16 ♞f8

and White draws.



Topalov – Navara
Wijk aan Zee 2007

It is often possible to save the game by heading towards a known drawn ending, such as ♖+4△ vs ♗+3△ with all the pawns on the same side (see 55b). In the diagram White is temporarily a pawn down, but it is Black who is struggling to draw. His accurate defence is very instructive.

1 ♖d6

Taking aim at the tempting line of enemy pawns.

1...♔f7!

A good move. Black is aiming for ♖+4△ vs ♗+3△ with all the pawns on the kingside, but it is essential that one of his three pawns is not the exposed e4-pawn.

After 1...♖a8? 2 ♗xe6 ♖xa2 3 ♗xc6 Black is in trouble; for example, 3...♔g7 4 ♗xb6 h5 5 ♗b4 f5 6 g4 fxg4 7 hxg4 hxg4 8 ♗xe4 and the g4-pawn is doomed.

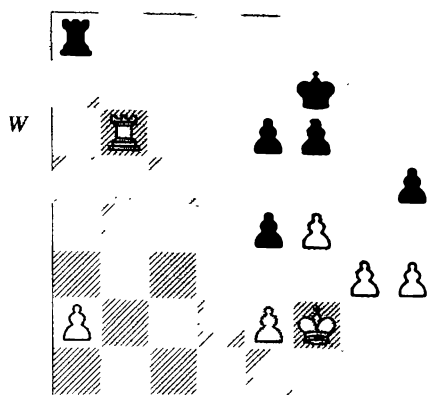
2 ♗xc6 h5!

Removing the h7-pawn from its current vulnerable position. 2...♖a8? is inferior: after 3 ♗c7+ ♔g6 4 ♗e7! ♔f5 (4...♖xa2 5 ♗xe6 ♔f5 6 ♗xb6 ♖a3 7 ♗b5+ again leaves Black with a weak e4-pawn) 5 ♗xh7 ♖xa2 6 ♗h5+ ♔g6 7 ♗b5 ♖a6 8 g4 Black is in an uncomfortably passive position.

3 ♗xb6

Now that the h-pawn is on h5, 3 ♗c7+ ♔g6 4 ♗e7 ♔f5 5 ♗h7 ♔g6 doesn't lead to anything. 3 g4 hxg4 4 ♗c7+ ♔g6 5 hxg4 ♖a8 6 ♗e7 is also ineffective after 6...e5 7 fxe5 f5!, liquidating to an easy draw.

3...♖a8 (D)



65c (continued)

4 ♗b4

After 4 ♗b2 f5 5 e3 ♖a3 6 ♗e2 ♔f6 7 ♔e1 ♗d3! White can't make any progress, since he is unable to switch his king across to b2.

4...♖xa2 5 ♗xe4 ♖a3

Black has reached his target endgame – 4 vs 3 on one flank with all his pawns relatively secure.

6 ♗e3 ♖a4 7 ♔f3 f5!

This prevents White from gaining space on the kingside. The potential defect is that White might transfer his rook to g5, but against correct defence this is impossible.

8 ♗b3 ♔f6 9 ♗b8 ♖a3+ 10 e3 ♔g7

To prevent ♗g8-g5.

11 ♗e8 ♖a6

After 11...♔f7?! 12 ♗h8 ♔g6 13 ♗g8+ ♔h6 14 ♗g5 it might still be a draw, but it is uncomfortable for Black to have his king shut away on h6.

12 ♗c8 ♖a4 13 ♗c6 ♔f6 14 ♗b6 ♔f7 15 ♗b8 ♔g7 16 h4

16 g4 hxg4+ 17 hxg4 fxg4+ 18 ♔xg4 e5 is an easy draw.

16...♖a3 17 ♗e8 ♖a6 18 ♗e7+ ♔g6

Accurate to the end; 18...♔f6?! allows 19 ♗h7 ♔g6 20 ♗h8 followed by ♗g8+ and ♗g5.

19 e4

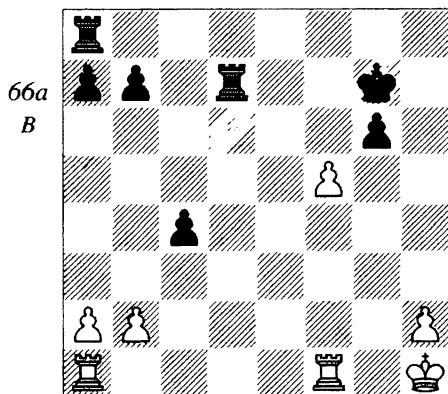
Or 19 ♔e2 ♖a2+ 20 ♔d3 ♔f6 21 ♗h7 ♗g2 22 ♗xh5 ♗xg3 23 ♔d4 ♗h3 24 ♗h6+ ♔e7 25 h5 ♔f7 and White cannot make further progress.

19...♔f6! 20 ♗h7 fxe4+ 21 ♔xe4 ♖a3 22 ♗h6+ ♔f7

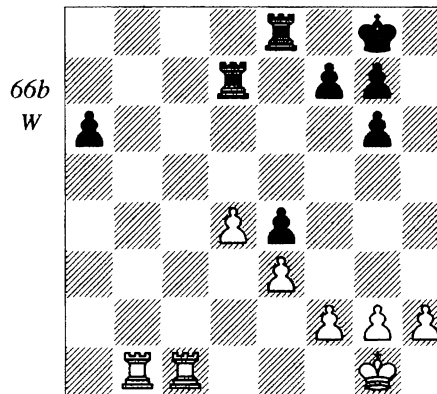
Not 22...♔g7?? 23 ♗xh5 ♗xg3 24 ♗g5+.

23 ♗xh5 ♗xg3 24 ♗h6 ♗h3 25 h5 ♔g7 26 ♗g6+ ♔f7 27 ♗g5 ♔f6 28 ♗g6+ ½-½

66 Double Rook Endings



Davies – Nunn
Islington 1976



Karpov – Ljubojević
Linares 1989

Many of the principles of single-rook endings, such as the benefit of active pieces, also apply in four-rook endings. However, there is a difference of emphasis. The attacking power of two rooks is considerable, and a direct attack on the enemy king is often a possibility. When both rooks are on the seventh rank, their combined firepower can be devastating, as in this example.

1...♖d2

Material is equal, but Black has a clear advantage because one rook can immediately occupy the seventh rank.

2 ♖g1

2 fxg6? ♖h8 is hopeless for White, but 2 ♖f4 ♖h8 3 h4 gxf5 4 ♖xc4 ♖xb2 offers some defensive chances even though White is a pawn down.

2...♖xb2 3 ♖xg6+ ♔f7 4 ♖d1 ♖e8 5 ♖h6?

White intends to activate his f-pawn, but Black's rooks prove too strong. 5 ♖d7+? ♖e7 6 ♖g7+ ♔xg7 7 ♖xe7+ ♔f6 8 ♖c7 b5 is also hopeless, but 5 ♖c1! ♖e4 6 a4 offered slight drawing chances.

5...♖ee2

The power of Black's rooks is irresistible.

6 f6 c3 7 ♖f1 c2 8 ♖h7+ ♔g6 9 ♖g7+

After 9 f7, Black wins with the neat 9...♖f2!

9...♔h6 10 f7 c1 ♖ 11 f8 ♖

Or 11 ♖xc1 ♔xg7 and Black is a rook up.

11...♖xh2+ 0-1

As 12 ♔g1 ♖e3+ 13 ♖f2 ♖xf2+ is an easy win for Black.

With a single pair of rooks, Black would at least not be worse in view of his outside passed a-pawn. However, with two rooks it is different since White can use one rook to blockade the pawn while the other rook exerts pressure along the rank. In fact, Black is lost here, as he is soon driven into a passive position and cannot defend the weak e4-pawn.

1 ♖c5 ♖a7 2 ♖a5 ♔f8 3 ♖b6 ♖ea8

After 3...♖e6 4 ♖xe6 fxe6 one rook is exchanged, but at too high a price; after 5 h4 ♔e7 6 ♔h2 ♔d6 7 ♔g3 ♔c6 8 ♔f4 ♔b6 9 ♖a2 Black's a-pawn is far too slow.

4 h4

Clearing the way for the king to reach f4.

4...♔e7 5 ♔h2!

Better than 5 ♖e5+ ♔d7 6 ♖xe4 a5, when Black's a-pawn provides genuine counterplay.

5...♔d7 6 ♔g3 ♔c7

Black at last expels the rook from b6, but the relief is only temporary.

7 ♖b2 ♖b7 8 ♖c5+

Of course White declines to exchange.

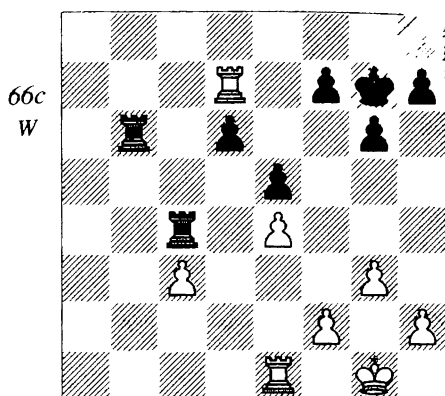
8...♔b8 9 ♖a2 ♖e7 10 ♔f4 ♔b7 11 ♖b2+ ♔a7 12 ♖c6

The threat is 13 ♖bb6.

12...♖h8 13 ♖a2

Black's pawns start to fall.

13...a5 14 ♖xa5+ ♔b7 15 ♖ca6 ♖xh4+ 16 ♔g3 ♖h5 17 ♖a7+ ♔c6 18 ♖5a6+ ♔b5 19 ♖xe7 ♖g5+ 20 ♔h2 ♔xa6 21 ♖xf7 1-0



Shirov – Topalov
Morelia/Linares 2008

With just one pair of rooks, Black would even be slightly better, but with two pairs White can exert pressure against f7 which virtually paralyses Black.

1 ♖e3 ♜c8

The only way to cover f7 is to return to f8.

2 ♜f3 ♜f8 3 ♖f1 g5 4 h4 g4 5 ♜f5 h6

White wins a pawn after 5...♜c6 6 ♖e2 ♜xc3 7 ♜g5+ ♖f6 (or 7...♖h8 8 ♜xd6) 8 ♜xd6+ ♖e7 9 ♜d5.

6 ♖e2 ♜c6 7 ♖d2 ♖g6 8 h5+

Not 8 ♖c2 h5, followed by ...f6, and Black frees himself.

8...♖g7 9 ♖d3 ♜b6

This rook is the only piece Black can move, since ...♖g8 loses a pawn to ♜f6.

10 ♜c7 ♜b1 11 ♖c4 ♜d1 12 ♖b5 ♖g8?

It wasn't necessary to give up a pawn yet; Black should have continued with passive defence by 12...♜c1 13 ♖b6 ♜c2.

13 ♜f6 ♜d2

13...♖g7 is met by 14 ♜g6+ ♖h7 15 ♜xg4 ♜d2 16 ♖c6.

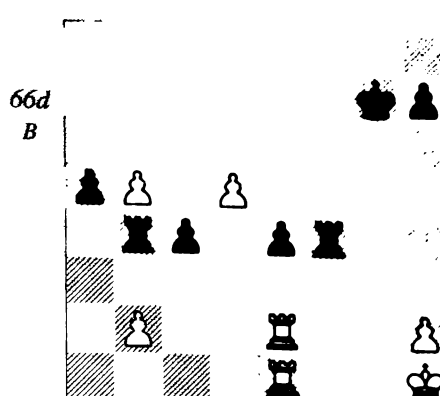
14 ♖c6 ♖g7?!

14...♜d3 offered slightly better chances.

15 ♜g6+ ♖h7 16 ♜xg4 ♜xf2 17 ♖xd6 ♜e8 18 c4 ♜d2+ 19 ♖c6 ♜f8 20 c5 ♜d4 21 ♜b7 ♖h8 22 ♖b5?!

22 ♖c7 was simpler, keeping the rook away from c8, but the move played proves sufficient.

22...♜d1 23 c6 ♜c1 24 ♖b6 ♜c8 25 c7 ♜e8 26 ♜a7 ♜b1+ 27 ♖c5 ♜c1+ 28 ♖d5 ♜c2 29 ♜a6 ♖h7 30 ♜c6 ♜d2+ 31 ♖c5 ♜a8 32 ♜h4 1-0



Topalov – Kasparov
Las Palmas 1996

Black has an advantage due to his active pieces, but it is not clear if it is enough to win.

1...♖f7 2 d6 ♖e6 3 ♜d2 ♖d7 4 ♜g1 ♜f7 5 ♜e1 a4?!

Leaving the b4-rook undefended creates a tactical weakness. Stepping up the pressure by 5...h5! was stronger, since 6 h3 ♜f3 7 ♜xe4 ♜xh3+ 8 ♖g2 ♜d3! wins for Black.

6 ♜e3?!

6 h3!, intending ♖h2, was better, since now 6...♜f3 7 ♜xe4 ♜xh3+ 8 ♖g2 ♜d3 is ineffective because the b4-rook is hanging.

6...♜g7

Once again 6...h5! was stronger.

7 ♜xe4?

After 7 h3! ♜b3 8 ♜xe4 ♜xh3+ 9 ♜h2 ♜hg3 10 ♜h6 White has fair drawing chances.

7...a3! 8 ♜e7+

8 bxa3 ♜b1+ leads to mate, so White is forced to exchange a pair of rooks.

8...♜xe7 9 dxe7+ ♖xe7 10 bxa3 ♜b1+ 11 ♖g2 c3

Black's dangerous c-pawn and active king should prove decisive.

12 ♜e2+ ♖d6 13 ♖f3 ♖d5 14 a4 ♖d4 15 a5 ♜xb5 16 a6 ♜a5 17 ♜e4+ ♖d5?

17...♖d3 18 ♜e3+ ♖c4 19 ♜e4+ ♖b3 was correct, when Black wins.

18 ♜e3?

18 ♜e7! ♜xa6 19 ♖e3 would have drawn.

18...c2 19 ♜c3 ♜c5 0-1

After 20 ♜xc5+ ♖xc5 21 a7 c1♚ 22 a8♚ ♚h1+ White loses his queen.

Rook vs Minor Piece Endings

Winning or losing the exchange occurs quite often, so it is not surprising that many endings involve a battle between a rook and a minor piece. Without pawns, the result is normally a draw, but there are some exceptions. With rook vs bishop, the main danger for the defender is having his king trapped in or near a corner in which the corner square is controlled by the bishop. Such positions are often lost. By contrast, if his king is in a corner where the corner square is not controlled by the bishop, a stalemate defence ensures the draw; see Section 67 for more details.

The winning chances are far greater when a rook faces a knight, as in Section 68. If the knight is cut off from the defender's king, the rook can often win by combining threats to trap the knight with an attack on the enemy king. Thus the defender should keep his king and knight together, and if they are in the centre of the board, the draw presents no special difficulties. However, if the king is at the edge of the board it is necessary to take care, and in 68b we see a leading grandmaster go wrong. Positions with rook vs knight can easily arise from rook vs pawn(s) situations as a result of a forced underpromotion; 68c is an example.

A rook and a pawn usually win against a minor piece, but there are a fair number of exceptions. Section 69 covers the ending of rook and pawn vs bishop. If the attacker's king is in front of the pawn, the win is usually quite easy, but problems start to arise if the pawn is ahead of the king. Even though most positions are still winning, the win can be quite complex, and it is easy to start going round in circles. Another troublesome case is rook + rook's pawn vs bishop, with the bishop not controlling the pawn's promotion square; in this case it is important not to push the pawn too quickly, as many positions with the pawn on the fifth or sixth rank are drawn. There are several other cases in which the attacker is unable to make progress; see 69d and 69e for examples of two common situations.

There are generally fewer difficulties with rook and pawn vs knight (see Section 70). Here the only potential problem arises when the pawn has advanced too far and the rook is tied down to defending it. Most positions are still winning, although the win may not be straightforward, but there are a few drawn cases, as in 70e.

The situation in which a rook and a pawn face a minor piece and a pawn is quite interesting. When the pawns are passed, the long-range rook usually wins, but when there are no passed pawns it is less clear. The case with a bishop is covered in Section 71, and we can see from this that many positions are drawn, and even when there is a win, as in 71d, the win may be very complex; in this example one of the greatest players of all time failed to find the correct path. Section 72 covers rook and pawn vs knight and pawn, and here again there are many drawn positions, especially if the defender can establish his knight on a square which attacks the pawn and thus ties down one of the enemy pieces. Unfortunately, there is no simple rule for determining when a position is a draw.

When there are more pawns, the rook almost always wins if the defender has no pawns for the exchange. However, when a rook faces a bishop with all the pawns on one wing, there are some drawn positions with equal pawns, which are explained in Section 73. With rook vs bishop and pawns on both wings, even having one pawn for the exchange is usually not enough to save the defender (see 74a) since the attacker can usually penetrate with his rook, although he may have to manoeuvre to achieve this. Even two pawns for the exchange may not be enough if the bishop is passive or there are pawn weaknesses (74b and 74c).

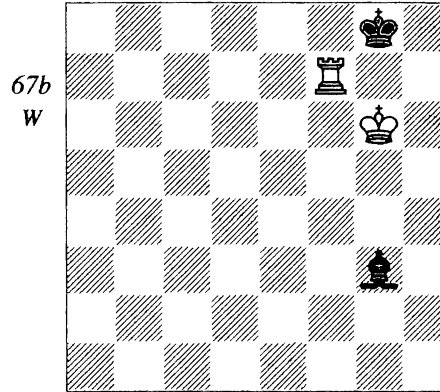
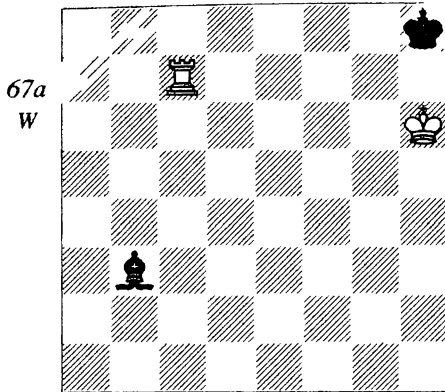
With rook vs knight and all the pawns on one wing, the defender has chances of saving the game only if he has at least one pawn for the exchange, although the task may not be easy (75a and 75b). When there are pawns on both wings, the knight struggles to keep control on both flanks and such situations are usually lost even if the defender has one pawn for the exchange.

The minor piece usually only has chances to win if the rook is fighting against at least one dangerous passed pawn, but such situations can be quite interesting, as in 74d and 75d.

When there are two pawns for the exchange and no weaknesses, the position is usually roughly balanced, while three or more pawns for the exchange generally prove too much for the rook.

67

Rook vs Bishop



In general, the ending rook vs bishop is drawn. If the defending king starts in the centre of the board, then the draw should be easy. The basic rule is that if the defender's king is forced back, then it **should head towards a corner square not controlled by the bishop**. Then, even if the king is eventually driven into the corner, the position will still be a draw. We can see this in the diagram above.

If White plays 1 ♖c8+, then after 1...♗g8 Black is stalemated and White must move his king or rook away to relieve the stalemate. White can be a little more tricky, but against reasonable defence he has no hope of winning. Here is some sample play:

1 ♖g6 ♗a2

It is important that Black retains the option of checking on the b1-h7 diagonal. Thus 1...♗e6? is too close to the white king and loses after 2 ♖h7+ ♖g8 3 ♚e7.

2 ♚c8+

Or 2 ♖h7+ ♖g8 3 ♚a7 ♗b1+ 4 ♖f6 ♖h8 and White has not made progress.

2...♗g8 3 ♖f6 ♖h7 4 ♚c7+ ♖h8

The king must stay in the 'good' corner. After 4...♖h6? White wins by 5 ♚c2 ♖h5 6 ♖h2+ ♖g4 7 ♚g2+ and Black loses his bishop.

5 ♚a7 ♗b3

White is not making progress.

The situation is totally different if the defending king is trapped in a corner which is controlled by the bishop (it is important to emphasize that this cannot be forced from a general initial position). In this case there is no stalemate defence and the position is generally lost. With the kings and rook as in the above diagram, Black loses whichever dark square his bishop occupies. If the black bishop were on an exposed square such as d6, then White would win by 1 ♚d7 ♗a3 2 ♚d8+ ♗f8 3 ♚a8. Thus White's first task is to drive the enemy bishop off the g- and h-files into the open air. The main line is:

1 ♚f1 ♗h2

1...♗h4 2 ♚h1 is similar.

2 ♚h1 ♗g3 3 ♚h3

Now the bishop can no longer stay on the g- or h-file.

3...♗d6

After 3...♗f2 or 3...♗f4 White wins by 4 ♚a3, since if the black king moves to f8, White wins by checking on f3.

4 ♚d3

Now that the bishop is on an exposed square, White wins by skewering the bishop against the check on d8.

4...♗e7

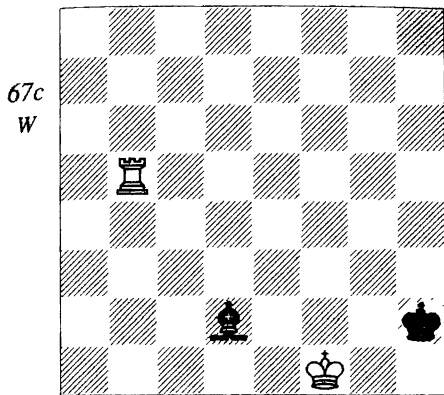
After 4...♗c7 5 ♚c3 Black's bishop is lost.

5 ♚c3 ♖f8

There is nothing better as 5...♗b4 6 ♚c8+ ♗f8 7 ♚a8 mates.

6 ♚c8+

and the bishop falls.



M. Mikhailov
Šachové Umění, 1951

In chess, one should always be aware that most general rules have many exceptions, and that the specific position on the board is what counts.

In the diagram, the black king is near the 'good' corner h1, so one might imagine that the result should be a draw. However, White can win by accurate play which prevents Black from setting up the standard defensive formation with his king on h1 and bishop on the h2-b8 diagonal.

1 ♖f2!

The tempting 1 ♜b2? is a mistake because of 1...♔h1!, playing for stalemate. In this case Black cannot be prevented from setting up the standard draw.

1...♔h3 2 ♖e2!

A very surprising move. It turns out that Black's bishop is short of squares.

2...♙c1

2...♙f4 loses to 3 ♖f3.

3 ♜b1! ♙g5

The only square to avoid immediate disaster, since 3...♙f4 loses to 4 ♖f3 ♙d6 5 ♜h1+ ♙h2 6 ♖f2.

4 ♖f3 ♔h2

The king cannot move to h4 because the bishop blocks g5 and so ♜h1 mates.

5 ♜b2+ ♔h1

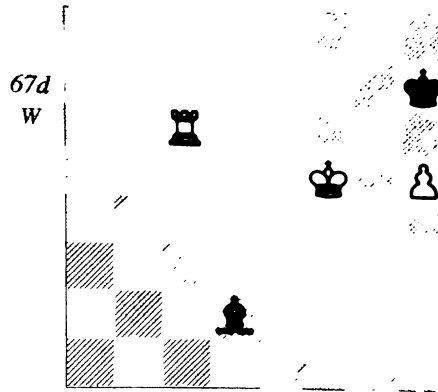
Or 5...♔h3 6 ♜b7.

6 ♖g3 ♙e3

The bishop is too close to the white king.

7 ♜h2+ ♖g1 8 ♜e2

and White wins.



Van de Mortel – Utybin
Leeuwarden 1993

As always, knowledge of fundamental endings is very helpful when dealing with more complex positions. Here White won by forcing a liquidation to 67b.

1 h6!

Offering the pawn is the key to success; now Black must keep his bishop on the c1-h6 diagonal, or else White plays ♖g5 and ♔h5, with an easy win.

1...♙e3

1...♙xh6 2 ♜c7+ ♖g8 3 ♖g6 ♙f8 4 ♜c8 and White wins at once.

2 ♜g6 ♙f4

After 2...♙c1 3 ♜g7+ ♔xh6 4 ♜g6+ ♔h7 (4...♔h5 5 ♜g1) 5 ♖f6 White wins as in the main line, while 2...♙d4 3 ♖g5 followed by ♔h5 is an easy win.

3 ♜g7+!

Forcing Black to take the pawn.

3...♔xh6 4 ♜g6+ ♔h7

The key point is that Black must move towards the 'bad' corner, since 4...♔h5 loses to 5 ♜g8 ♙d2 6 ♜h8+ ♙h6 7 ♜h7.

5 ♖f6

White knows from 67b that if his king reaches f7, then he will win wherever Black's bishop is.

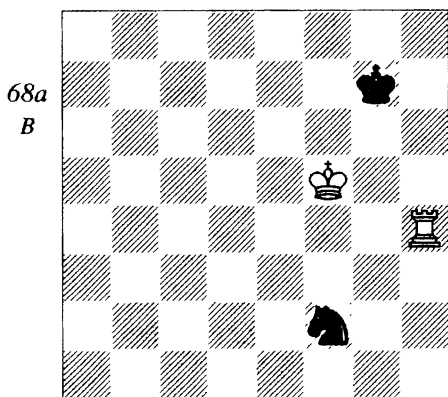
5...♙e5+ 6 ♖f7 ♙c7 7 ♜c6 ♙d8 8 ♜d6 ♙c7 9 ♜d7 ♙f4

The bishop must flee, as 9...♙b8 10 ♖f6+ ♔h6 11 ♜d8 and 9...♙b6 10 ♜d3 lose at once for Black.

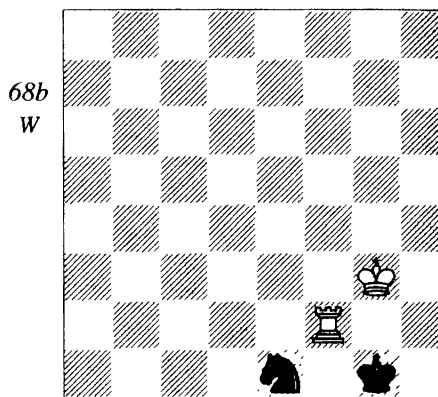
10 ♜d4 ♙g5 11 ♜d3 1-0

68

Rook vs Knight



Hodgson – Lalić
British Ch, Scarborough 1999



Romanishin – Hort
Essen 2000

Rook vs knight is in general a draw, and if the defender starts with his king and knight near each other in the centre of the board then the draw is easy. Problems for the defender can arise in two situations. The first is if the king and knight are initially separated. The above position is lost for Black even if he is to play, as White can keep Black's pieces apart while gradually cornering the knight.

1...♭d3 2 ♖d4 ♗c5 3 ♜c4

Typically using the enemy king position to restrict the knight's movement.

3...♗b3

Or 3...♗d3 4 ♜c3 ♗b4 5 ♖e6 ♗g6 6 ♜b3 ♗c2 7 ♖e5 ♗g5 8 ♖e4 ♗g4 9 ♜b2 ♗a3 10 ♗d3 and the knight is lost.

4 ♜c7+ ♖f8

Another line is 4...♖h6 5 ♜c3 ♗d2 6 ♖d3 ♗c4 7 ♖f6 ♖h7 (7...♖h5 8 ♖d5+ ♖h6 9 ♖d4) 8 ♖d7+ ♗g8 9 ♖d4 ♗e3 10 ♗g6 ♖f8 11 ♖f4+ ♗g8 12 ♖e4. Combining threats against the enemy king with threats to trap the knight is a typical strategy in rook vs knight positions.

5 ♜c3 ♗d4+

5...♗d2 6 ♖f4 and 5...♗a5 6 ♖e6 ♗g7 7 ♗d6 are also hopeless.

6 ♖e5

6 ♖f6 is quicker, but this doesn't affect the result.

6...♗b5 7 ♜c5 ♗a3 8 ♗d4 ♖e7 9 ♗d3 ♗d6 10 ♜a5 1-0

The other awkward situation for the defender arises if his king is trapped near a corner. The above position is drawn, but accurate play is required and the task proved too much even for an experienced grandmaster.

1 ♜f8 ♗g2 2 ♖f3 ♖f1?

Already a losing move. Black could have drawn by 2...♗h4+! 3 ♖e2 ♗g2 4 ♜g8+ ♖h3 5 ♖f2 (a standard drawing position) 5...♗f5 (5...♖h2 also draws) 6 ♖f3 ♗h4+ 7 ♖f4 ♗g2+ and White is not making progress.

3 ♜f7!

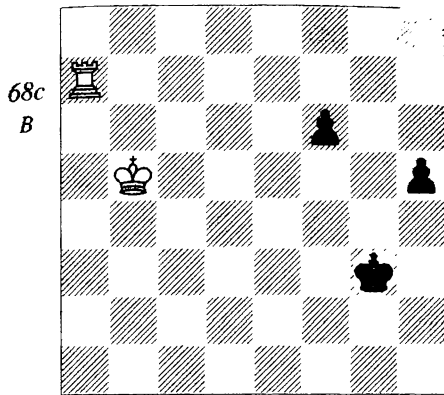
Now 3...♖g1 loses to 4 ♜g7 ♖h1 5 ♖f2, so the knight has to move.

3...♗e1+ 4 ♖e3+ ♖g1 5 ♖e2 ♗g2 6 ♜h7

One of the worst situations for the defender – his knight is on g2 (or a similar square in one of the other corners) and his king is immobilized.

6...♗f4+ 7 ♖f3 1-0

It takes a little time, but White can win by transferring his rook to the fourth rank to immobilize the knight on g2: 7...♗d3 8 ♜h5 ♗e1+ 9 ♖e2 ♗g2 10 ♜h6 ♗f4+ 11 ♖f3 ♗d3 12 ♖d6! ♗e1+ (or 12...♗b4 13 ♖d1+ ♖h2 14 ♖f2 ♖h3 15 ♖d6 ♗c2 16 ♜c6 ♗b4 17 ♜c3+ ♖h2 18 ♜c4) 13 ♖e2 ♗g2 14 ♖d4 ♖h2 15 ♖f1! (keeping the second rank clear for the white rook; 15 ♖f2? ♖h3 is a draw) 15...♖g3 16 ♖d3+ ♖h2 17 ♖d2 ♖h1 (the last trick) 18 ♖f2 ♖h2 19 ♖f3 ♖h1 20 ♖d8 ♖h2 21 ♜h8+ ♖g1 22 ♜g8 ♖h1 23 ♖f2 and White finally wins.



I. Farago – Jacoby
Hamburg 2002

Endings of rook vs knight (possibly with a pawn or two) often arise through underpromotion to a knight and in such cases the defender's king is automatically badly placed. The above position is winning for White, but it requires precise handling.

1...h4 2 ♖g7+!

An important finesse. Not 2 ♔c4? h3 3 ♖g7+ ♔f3 with a draw.

2...♔f3 3 ♖h7 f5

The best chance, as 3...♔g3 4 ♔c4 f5 5 ♔d3 h3 6 ♔e2 is a comfortable win for White.

4 ♔c4!

Bringing the king back is more important than pawn-grabbing. After 4 ♖xh4? f4 5 ♔c4 ♔e3! the poor position of the white rook allows Black to save the game.

4...♔e3 5 ♖e7+! ♔f2 6 ♔d3 h3 7 ♖h7 ♔g2 8 ♔e2 h2 9 ♖g7+ ♔h3

After 9...♔h1 10 ♔f2 White mates in two more moves.

10 ♔f2!

Now 10...h1♖ 11 ♖h7+ is an immediate win for White, so Black must promote to a knight. However, the black king is so badly placed that he has no hope of saving the game.

10...h1♖+ 11 ♔f3 ♔h2 12 ♖g2+ ♔h3 13 ♖g5

First White picks off the enemy pawn.

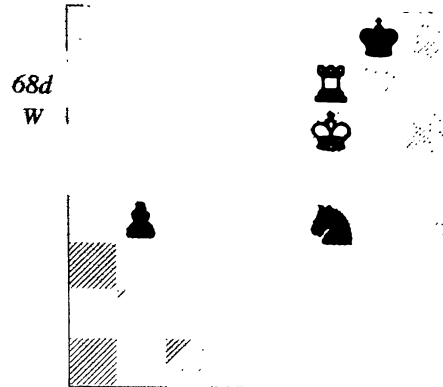
13...♔h2

Or 13...♔h4 14 ♖g1.

14 ♖xf5 ♔g1

After 14...♔g3 White wins by 15 ♖f8 ♔h1 16 ♖d8 ♔g1 17 ♖d2.

15 ♖g5+ ♔f1 16 ♖g2 1-0



Ulybin – Kharitonov
Hoogeveen 2000

Rook vs knight endings can be very complex, but a knowledge of the standard positions is always a great help. The diagram is a draw, but Black must take care.

1 ♖b7 ♔h5+

Not 1...b3? 2 ♖xb3 ♔h5+ 3 ♔g6 ♔f4+ 4 ♔g5 ♔e6+ 5 ♔f6 ♔f4 6 ♖b5 and the knight is cut off.

2 ♔g6 ♔f4+ 3 ♔f5 ♔d3?

This was the moment to give up the pawn: after 3...♔h5! 4 ♖xb4 ♔f7 5 ♖b7+ ♔f8! 6 ♔g5 ♔g7 7 ♔g6 ♔e6 8 ♔f6 ♔d8 Black reaches a typical drawn position.

4 ♖d7

4 ♔f6 was quicker, but the move played is also adequate.

4...♔c1

4...♔c5 was tougher, but still loses after 5 ♖c7 ♔d3 6 ♔f6 b3 7 ♖c3 b2 8 ♖c8+ ♔h7 9 ♖b8! (zugzwang) 9...♔f4 10 ♖xb2 ♔h5+ 11 ♔g5 ♔g7 12 ♖e2 and White wins as in 68b.

5 ♔f6

White employs the typical strategy of combining play against the king with trapping the knight.

5...b3 6 ♖g7+ ♔h8 7 ♖b7 ♔g8 8 ♖b8+ ♔h7 9 ♖b4 ♔d3

After 9...♔g8 10 ♖b7 Black must surrender the pawn in any case, as a king move allows mate.

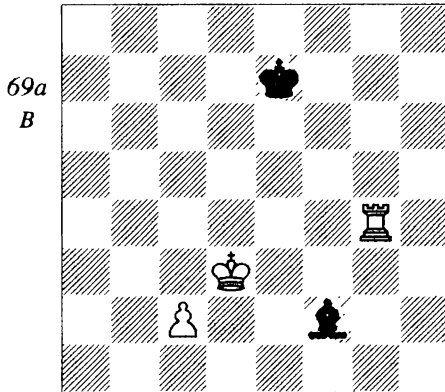
10 ♖xb3 ♔f4 11 ♔f5 ♔e2

The king and knight will never meet again.

12 ♔e4 ♔h6 13 ♖e3 ♔c1 14 ♔d4 ♔g5 15 ♔c4 ♔f4 16 ♖e1 1-0

69

Rook + Pawn vs Bishop



Sigurjonsson – Ivkov
Amsterdam 1976

In general, a rook and a pawn beat a bishop without undue difficulty. The diagram shows a typical example. In order to keep the win simple, White should keep his king in front of the pawn (rather as in an ending of king and pawn against king). Then the pawn will not obstruct the king's manoeuvres.

1...♔d6 2 ♖c4

White is aware of the correct plan and improves his king position before advancing the pawn.

2...♗e3 3 ♔g6+ ♔c7

After 3...♔e5 4 ♔b5 ♔f5 5 ♔d6 ♔e5 6 ♔d7 Black's king is cut off from the pawn.

4 ♔b5 ♗d4 5 ♔h6 ♔b7

Or 5...♗e3 6 ♔h7+ ♔d6 7 c4 ♗f2 8 c5+ and the pawn rushes forwards.

6 ♔h7+ ♔b8 7 c4

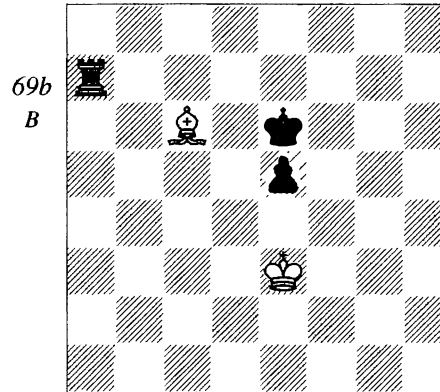
With White's king firmly established on the fifth rank, White can advance his pawn to the fourth.

7...♗e5 8 ♔c6

As an example of what can go wrong if the pawn is pushed too quickly, 8 c5 ♗g3 9 c6?? ♔c8 is a draw because White cannot make progress (see 69d). Instead, White correctly occupies the sixth rank with his king before advancing the c-pawn any further.

8...♗d4 9 ♔b7+ ♔c8 10 ♔d7 ♗c3 11 ♔d3 ♗b4 1-0

After 12 c5 ♗a5 13 ♔a3 it's all over.



Navara – Gagunashvili
Rethymnon ECC 2003

Difficulties can arise when the king is not able to move in front of the pawn. In this case considerable manoeuvring may be required in order to make progress. In the diagram, Black's aim is to get his king to f5 without allowing White to check. Then a rook check on the sixth rank will force White's king back.

1...♗c7 2 ♗f3

2 ♗g2 was the toughest defence but 2...♗c1! puts White in zugzwang; e.g., 3 ♗f3 (3 ♗h3+ ♔d5 4 ♗g2+ ♔c4 5 ♗c6 ♔c3 6 ♗b7 ♔e1+ is also a win) 3...♔e1+ 4 ♔f2 ♔a1 5 ♔e3 ♔a3+ 6 ♔e4 ♔a4+ 7 ♔e3 ♔f5, followed by ...♔a3+, and Black's king can advance.

2...♗c3+ 3 ♔e4 ♗c4+ 4 ♔d3

Or 4 ♔e3 ♔f5 and ...♗c3+.

Here Black played 4...♔d4+?!, went in circles for a time and only won after some further mistakes by White. However, just at this moment Black was quite close to achieving his aim with a couple of accurate moves:

4...♔b4! 5 ♗e4

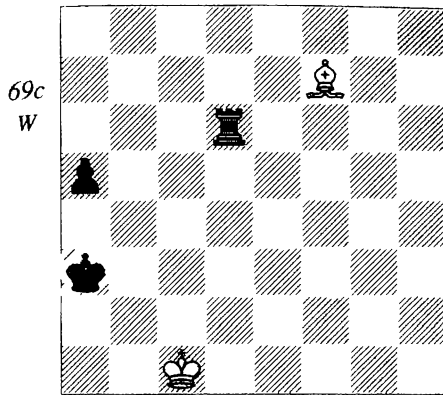
Trying to stop ...♔f5. If 5 ♔e3, then 5...♔f5 wins as there is no check on e4.

5...♔f6 6 ♔e3

Or 6 ♗h7 ♔h4 7 ♗e4 ♔g5 8 ♔e3 ♔h3+ 9 ♗f3 ♔f5.

6...♔b3+ 7 ♔e2 ♔g5

Black's king reaches f4, after which he can win as in 69a.



Korchnoi – Nunn
Amber Rapid, Monaco 1994

One of the most awkward cases to win is when the rook side has a rook's pawn and the bishop does not control the promotion square, so the defender's king is in the 'good' corner (see Section 67). It is important not to push the pawn too soon because there are many drawn positions with the pawn on the fifth and sixth ranks. As we shall see, the pawn must stay back because Black needs a4 for his king.

1 ♖c2

If White plays to keep his king on a1, then Black wins by 1 ♜b1 ♖f6 2 ♙g8 ♜b6+ 3 ♖a1 ♜g6 4 ♙h7 ♜g5 (from here the rook dominates the a2-g8 diagonal) 5 ♙e4 a4 6 ♖b1 ♖b3 7 ♙c2+ ♖b4 8 ♙h7 a3 9 ♙e4 ♜g1+ 10 ♖a2 ♜d1 11 ♙f5 ♜d2+ 12 ♖a1 a2 followed by ...♖a3.

1... ♜b6

1... ♖f6 2 ♙g8 ♜b6 is more accurate.

2 ♙g8

After 2 ♖c1, Black has to go back with 2... ♜c6+ 3 ♖b1 ♜f6, when he wins by 4 ♙d5 ♜b6+ 5 ♖c2 ♖b4 and now White cannot play his king to the b-file due to ...♖c5+, while after 6 ♙g8 ♖c5 the white king is cut off and Black wins by just pushing the a-pawn.

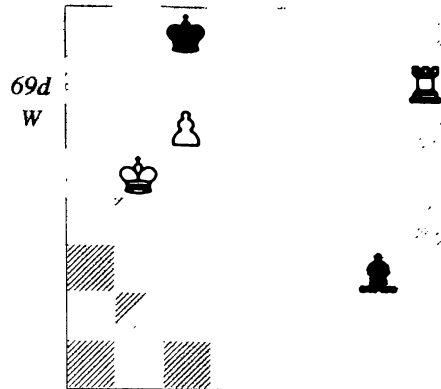
2... ♜b2+ 3 ♖c1 ♜b4! 4 ♖c2

Or 4 ♙e6 ♖a4 5 ♙d7+ ♖b3 and Black wins.

4... ♖a4!

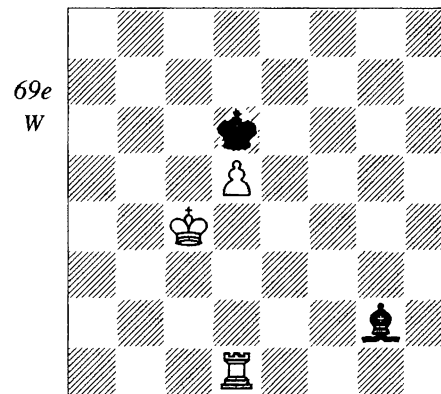
Since White has no check on the a4-e8 diagonal.

5 ♙f7 ♖b5 6 ♖c3 ♖c5 7 ♙e6 a4 8 ♙f7 a3 9 ♙b3 ♜b8 0-1



Draw

Not all positions with ♜+♔ vs ♙ are winning. The above diagram shows a positional draw – White is unable to make progress. 1 ♖b6 is met by 1... ♙f2+, while 1 c7 ♖b7! (but not 1... ♙xc7?, losing to 2 ♖c6) followed by 2... ♙xc7 saves the day for Black. Note that if the whole position is shifted one square to the left White wins because the black king is near the 'bad' corner. The quickest method is 1 b7 ♖a7 2 ♜c7 followed by 3 b8♖++ and 4 ♖b6, winning as in 67b.

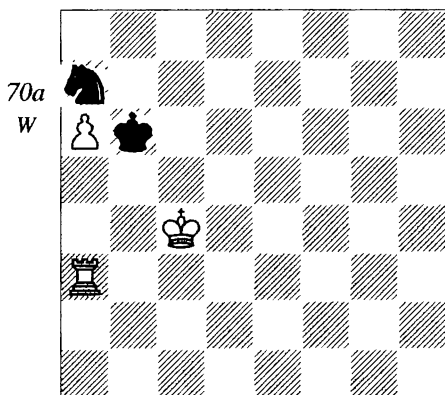


Draw

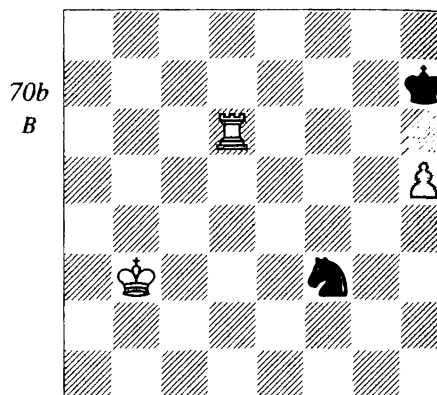
This diagram shows another type of draw. White cannot achieve anything because he is tied down to the defence of his pawn. The position is still a draw if Black's bishop is on g8 or a8.

Positions 69d and 69e again emphasize the point that the pawn should not be advanced ahead of the king.

70 Rook + Pawn vs Knight



Labourdonnais – McDonnell
London (55) 1834



Malakhatko – Kosikov
Kiev Ch 2003

This ending is generally such an easy win that it is not necessary to give an example of the normal winning procedure, which consists of advancing the king and pawn in step, using rook checks to force the enemy king back.

Problems arise when the pawn has advanced too far and cannot be defended by the king. This means that the rook must be used to defend the pawn, tying it down to a passive role.

The above position is a case in point, and the game concluded **1 ♔d5? ♚b5** (threatening the rook and **2...♚c7+**) **2 ♜b3 ♜xa6 3 ♔c5 ♚a7 4 ♜b8 ♔a5 ½-½**.

However, White could have won by playing his king to the eighth rank:

1 ♜a4! ♚c6 2 ♔d5

Thanks to White's accurate first move, there is no knight check on b4.

2...♚a7 3 ♔d6 ♚b5+ 4 ♔d7 ♚a7 5 ♜a1

A pass move to force the king through to c8.

5...♚b5 6 ♔c8 ♔a7

Or **6...♚a7+ 7 ♔b8 ♚c6+ 8 ♔a8 ♚d4 9 a7 ♚c6 10 ♜a2** and White wins.

7 ♜a5

Dislodging the knight so that the white king can come back to b5.

7...♚d6+ 8 ♔c7 ♚c4 9 ♜a1 ♚b6 10 ♔c6

followed by **♔b5**, freeing the rook to give a decisive check on the seventh rank.

The problem for White here is slightly different – his king is far away from the pawn and he must try to prevent Black from manoeuvring his knight to simply win the pawn. In the game White did not find the right plan.

1...♚g1!

This unlikely-looking move is the best defence, heading for e2 and then g3. Now the game continued **2 ♔c4? ♚e2 3 ♜f6 ♚g3 4 h6 ♚e4! 5 ♜f4 ♚g5 6 ♜f6 ♚e4 7 ♜a6 ♚g3 8 ♔d5 ♚f5 9 ♜f6 ♚xh6 10 ♔e6 ♔g7** with an eventual draw after some long-winded but fruitless winning attempts by White.

The correct path was:

2 ♜e6!

Preventing **...♚e2** and forcing the knight to try another route.

2...♚h3 3 ♜e4!

Switching the rook to the rear of the pawn.

3...♔h6 4 ♜h4 ♚g5

Or **4...♚g1 5 ♔c4 ♚f3 6 ♜h1 ♚e5+ 7 ♔d5 ♚g4 8 ♔e6** and White wins.

5 ♔c4 ♚h7 6 ♔d4

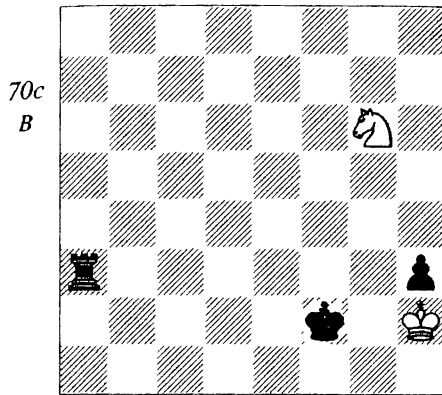
Not **6 ♔d5? ♔g5** followed by **7...♚f6+**.

6...♚f6

6...♔g5 7 ♜h1 ♚f6 8 h6 ♔g6 9 ♔c5 ♚h7 10 ♔d6 wins for White as in 70a.

7 ♔e5 ♔g5 8 h6 ♚h7 9 ♜h1 ♔g6

Again White wins as in 70a. One line might be **10 ♔e6 ♚g5+ 11 ♔e7 ♚h7 12 ♜h2 ♚g5 13 ♔f8 ♚h7+ 14 ♔g8 ♚f6+ 15 ♔h8**, etc.



Nisipeanu – Kengis
Bundesliga 1999/00

Here the awkward point is that Black's rook is tied to the defence of the h3-pawn. Black would like to play his king to g4, which would ensure a simple win, but this involves crossing the third rank and interrupting the rook's defence of the pawn.

1...♖b3

Black waits for the knight to go to h4 before making the critical move.

2 ♖h4

After 2 ♖e5 ♖e3 3 ♖xh3 ♖e4+ White loses his knight, while 2 ♖f4 ♖f3 3 ♖xh3 ♖b2+ followed by ...♖g3 is an easy win.

2...♖e3!

The key idea: Black sacrifices his pawn to reach a winning ♖ vs ♖ ending.

3 ♖xh3 ♖f4+ 4 ♖h2 ♖b2+

Indecision. 4...♖g4 is the way forward.

5 ♖h3 ♖b3+ 6 ♖h2 ♖g4

Back on the right path.

7 ♖g2 ♖b2

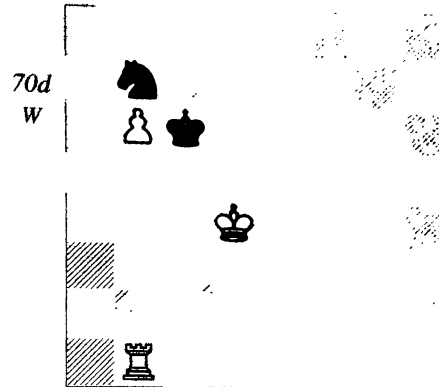
7...♖b4 8 ♖e3+ ♖f3 9 ♖f5 ♖f4 is quicker, permanently separating knight and king.

8 ♖g1 ♖g3?

Throwing away the rewards of his earlier good work. 8...♖f3! 9 ♖h4+ ♖g3 10 ♖f5+ ♖g4 11 ♖d4 ♖d2 12 ♖b3 ♖d3 13 ♖a5 ♖f3 is an easy win as White's knight and king are stuck on opposite sides of the board.

9 ♖e1 ♖e2 10 ♖f1 1/2-1/2

White has reached a standard drawing position.



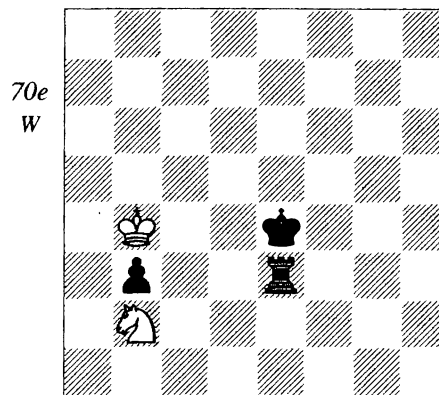
Tan – Alterman
Formia 1994

A few positions with ♖+♗ vs ♖ are drawn. Here is an example:

1 ♖b4 ♖a5! 2 ♖e5?!

A mistake losing the pawn. However, even the better try 2 ♖e4 leads to a draw; e.g., 2...♖b7 3 ♖e5 ♖c5 4 ♖f5 ♖d7 5 ♖b7 ♖c7 6 ♖b5 ♖b8 7 ♖e4 ♖c6 8 ♖b1 ♖c7 9 ♖d5 ♖d7 10 ♖c4 ♖b8 11 ♖b5 ♖d7 12 ♖b4 ♖b8 13 ♖a5 ♖c6 14 ♖b1 ♖c7.

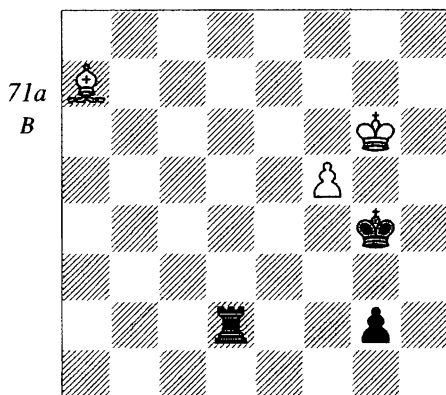
2...♖c5 3 ♖h4 ♖xb6 4 ♖d5 ♖b5 5 ♖h1 ♖b4 6 ♖h8 ♖b3 1/2-1/2



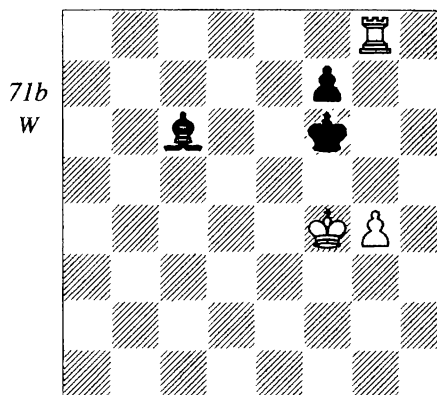
Em. Lasker – Ed. Lasker
New York 1924

The game ended 1 ♖a4 ♖f3 (trying to cross the third rank behind the rook) 2 ♖a3 ♖e4 (2...♖e2 3 ♖c5 ♖d2 4 ♖b2! picks up the pawn) 3 ♖b4 ♖d4 4 ♖b2 ♖h3 5 ♖a4 ♖d3 (Black cannot make progress) 6 ♖xb3 ♖d4+ 1/2-1/2.

71 Rook + Pawn vs Bishop + Pawn



Sashikiran – Stefanova
Zafra 2007



Bologan – Bouchet
French Team Ch 2007

When both sides have passed pawns, the rook very often wins. But in marginal cases such as the above, it is important to be aware that it is often better for the attacker to concentrate on neutralizing the enemy pawn rather than pushing his own pawn. Even grandmasters can be unaware of this point, as the current example demonstrates:

1...♞d7

The simplest win is 1...♔f4! 2 f6 ♔e5 3 f7 ♞d6+ 4 ♔g7 (4 ♔g5 ♞f6 and Black wins the pawn) 4...♞d7! (threatening 5...♔e6) 5 ♔g8 ♞xa7, as Black promotes with check.

2 ♔e3 ♔f3?

Black's king is badly placed on the f-file. 2...♞d3 would still have won as in the previous note.

3 ♔c5?

Missing 3 ♔g1! ♞d1 (or 3...♔e4 4 f6 ♞xg1 5 f7 and the white pawn promotes with check.

3...♞d5?

Once again, chasing the white pawn was the correct route: 3...♔e4! 4 f6 ♔d5 5 ♔f2 ♔e6 6 ♔g1 ♞f7 and wins.

The game concluded 4 ♔a7? (4 ♔g1! is again a draw) 4...♞a5? (4...♔e4 still wins) 5 ♔g1 ♞a1 6 ♔c5? (6 f6 draws) 6...g1♚+? (6...♔e4 would still have won) 7 ♔xg1 ♞xg1+ 8 ♔h7 ♔g4 9 f6 ♞f1 10 ♔g7 1/2-1/2.

When the two pawns are on adjacent files and are not passed, there are some winning chances, but many positions are drawn. The above diagram is a win, but if Black were able to move his king to g7 then the position would be a draw.

1 g5+

At the moment White's rook is tied down to preventing ...♔g7, but this check drives the king to the e-file and frees White's rook.

1...♔e6 2 ♞h8 ♔a4

The toughest defence is 2...♞d7, but White wins in any case by 3 ♞h2 ♔d5 4 ♞f2 ♔c8 5 ♔g3 ♔e6 (5...♔e6 6 ♔h4 ♔d6 7 ♔h5 is similar) 6 ♔h4 (Black's king is too far away and cannot prevent White's king from marching to g7) 6...♔e7 7 ♔h5 ♔e6 (7...♔f8 loses to 8 g6 ♔e6 9 ♔h6) 8 ♔h6 ♔g4 9 ♔g7 ♔h5 10 ♞f6! (zugzwang; now White forces his king to f6) 10...♔e8 11 ♞h6 ♔e2 12 ♞h3 ♔c4 13 ♞c3 ♔e6 14 ♞c7 ♔a2 15 ♔f6 ♔d5 16 ♞e7+ ♔d8 17 ♞xf7 and White wins.

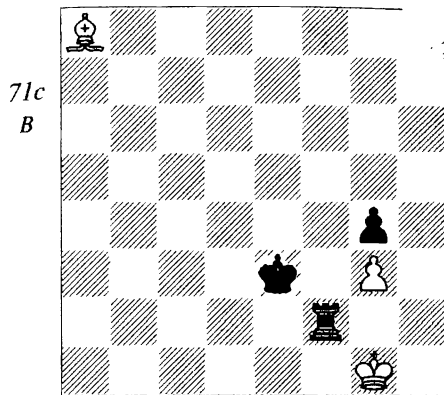
3 ♞h6+ ♔e7 4 ♔e5 ♔b3

After 4...♔f8 5 ♔f6 ♔g8 6 ♞h1 White wins the same way, by playing his rook round to f8.

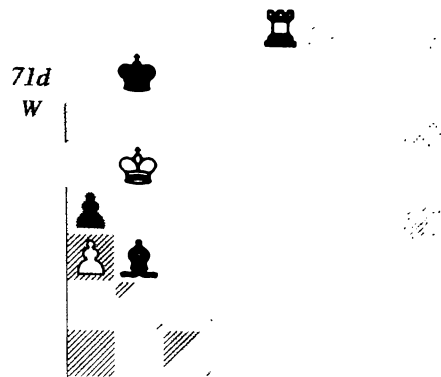
5 ♞b6 ♔a2 6 ♞b7+ ♔f8 7 ♔f6 ♔g8 8 ♞b8+ ♔h7 9 ♞f8

Now White takes on f7 to reach a winning ending of ♔+♔ vs ♔ (see 2b).

9...♔b3 10 ♞xf7+ ♔xf7 11 ♔xf7 ♔h8 12 ♔g6 ♔g8 13 ♔h6 1-0



Anand – Van Wely
Amber Rapid, Monaco 2005



Kasparov – Yusupov
Linares 1993

When the pawns face each other on the same file, most positions with the pawns on the c-, d-, e- or f-files are winning. However, with knight's pawns the majority of positions are drawn. Even in the relatively favourable position given above, Black cannot win.

1...♞a2

1...♞f3 is another try, because 2 ♔xf3? loses to 2...♚xf3. However, after 2 ♖g2! the rook must move away and Black has achieved nothing.

2 ♗b7 ♞a4 3 ♖g2 ♔d4

Black is trying to dominate the bishop on the long diagonal, but it turns out that the diagonal is just long enough and White always has one safe square for the bishop. This is the main reason why Black wins with f-pawns instead of g-pawns. The corresponding diagonal a7-g1 is one square shorter and the bishop runs out of squares.

4 ♗c6 ♞b4 5 ♖g1 ♔c5 6 ♗a8 ♞b8 7 ♗e4!

The only square. 7 ♗g2? loses after 7...♞b1+ 8 ♔f2 ♞b2+ 9 ♔f1 ♞xg2 10 ♔xg2 ♔d4 11 ♔f2 ♔d3 and the g3-pawn will fall.

7...♔d6 8 ♖g2 ♞b4 9 ♗a8 ♞a4 10 ♗b7 ♔c7 11 ♗d5 ♞d4 12 ♗a8 ♞a4 13 ♗d5 ♔d6 14 ♗b7

Black tries everything but White always has a safe square for the bishop.

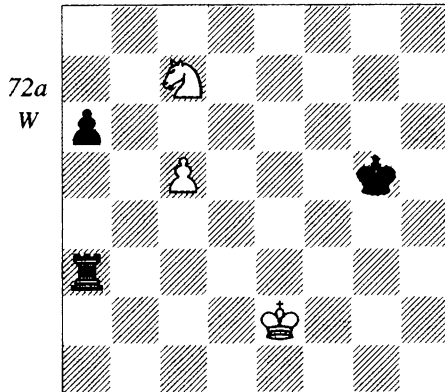
14...♞a7 15 ♗e4 ♔e5 16 ♗c6 ♞a6 17 ♗b7 ♞b6 18 ♗a8 ♞b8 19 ♗c6 ♔d6 20 ♗e4 ♞e8 21 ♗f5 ♞g8 22 ♗e4 ♞e8 23 ♗f5 ♞e2+ 24 ♔f1 ♞a2 25 ♗xg4 ♔e5 26 ♗f3 ♔d4 27 ♖g1 ♔e3 28 ♗d5 ♞d2 29 ♗c6 1/2-1/2

The situation in which the two pawns face each other on a rook's file is one of the most complicated cases in the whole theory of this ending; indeed, it is so complicated that it even confused a world champion in the above position.

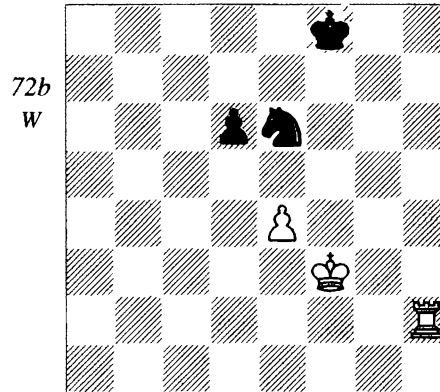
This position is winning if the black king is trapped in the top-left corner (as here) or cut off far away from the pawn on the h-file. In between these two extremes, most positions are drawn. The game continued 1 ♞e7+? (now the black king can reach d8, when he is no longer in the losing zone) 1...♔c8 2 ♔c6 ♔d8 3 ♞d7+ ♔e8 4 ♔c7 ♗c2 5 ♞d2 ♗b3 6 ♞e2+ ♔f7 7 ♔d6 ♗c4 8 ♞e7+ ♔f8 9 ♞e4 ♗b3 10 ♔d7 ♔f7 11 ♞f4+ ♔g6 12 ♔d6 ♔g5 13 ♔e5 ♔g6! (not 13...♗c2? 14 ♞f2 ♗b3 15 ♞g2+ and the king must move to the losing h-file) 14 ♞f3 ♔g7 15 ♞f6 ♗c4 16 ♔f5 ♗b3 17 ♔g5 ♗c2 1/2-1/2.

White could have won by 1 ♞d8! (making sure that the black king cannot reach the d-file) 1...♗c2 2 ♞d7+ ♔c8 3 ♔c6 ♗b3 4 ♔d6 ♗d5 5 ♞a7 ♗b3 6 ♞h7 ♗a2 (or 6...♗d1 7 ♔c6 ♗f3+ 8 ♔b6 ♗d1 9 ♞h4 ♗b3 10 ♞d4, reaching the key zugzwang position) 7 ♞c7+ ♔b8 (or 7...♔d8 8 ♞a7 and the a-pawn falls) 8 ♔c6 ♗d5+ 9 ♔b6 ♗a2 10 ♞a7 ♗b3 11 ♞d7 ♔c8 12 ♞d4 and Black is in zugzwang. 12...♗c2 loses the bishop to 13 ♞c4+, so Black must give up the a-pawn, after which White wins comfortably.

72 Rook + Pawn vs Knight + Pawn



Shirov – de Firmian
Tilburg 1993



Ilinčić – Abramović
Novi Sad (team event) 2002

When both sides have passed pawns, the rook almost always wins because the short-range knight cannot simultaneously support its own pawn and restrain the opposing one. Even in the relatively favourable case above (pawns close together, distant black king and white pawn well advanced) Black can still win with accurate play.

1 ♔d2 ♕f5 2 ♖c2 ♗e5 3 ♜b2 ♚a5?!

The correct line was 3...♚a4! 4 ♜b3 ♚a5 5 ♜b4 ♚a1, putting White in zugzwang. If the knight or pawn moves, the black king can approach, while after 6 ♖c4 the black pawn can advance and Black wins by 6...a5 7 ♔d5 ♚c1+ 8 ♕c3 ♗e6 9 ♜b3 ♖d7 10 ♜b2 ♚h1 11 ♜b3 ♖c6, etc.

4 ♜b3 ♖d4?

Black could still return to the correct path by 4...♚a1 5 ♜b2 ♚a4. The king move is wrong because Black loses contact with the d6-square and so White can push his pawn.

5 ♜b4 ♚a1 6 c6

Now it's a draw.

6...♚b1+

6...♗e5 7 ♖c5 is also a draw.

7 ♖a5 ♖c5 8 ♕xa6+ ♖xc6

Reaching the standard ♚ vs ♔ draw.

9 ♔b4+ ♖c5 10 ♔a6+ ♖c4 11 ♕c7 ♚b7 12 ♔a6 ♚b5+ 13 ♖a4 ♚e5 14 ♕c7 ♚c5 15 ♔a6 ♚b5 16 ♕c7 ♚b7 17 ♔a6 ♚a7 18 ♖a5 ♚xa6+ 1/2-1/2

When the pawns are on adjacent files, there is no general rule for determining whether the position is a win. If there is only one rank between the pawns and the pawns are near the centre of the board, most positions are drawn.

In the above position, Black must keep the enemy king at bay by being ready to give a check if it should venture to squares such as f5 or d5.

1 ♚h6 ♗e7 2 ♗e3

Heading for the queenside since White cannot penetrate on the kingside: 2 ♖g4 ♕d4 3 ♖f4 ♕e6+ 4 ♖f5 ♕d4+ and the king must go back.

2...♖f7 3 ♖d3 ♗e7 4 ♖c4 ♖d7 5 ♖d5

After 5 ♖b5 ♕d4+ 6 ♖b6 the king is too far away from the pawn and 6...♔b3 followed by ...♕c5 draws.

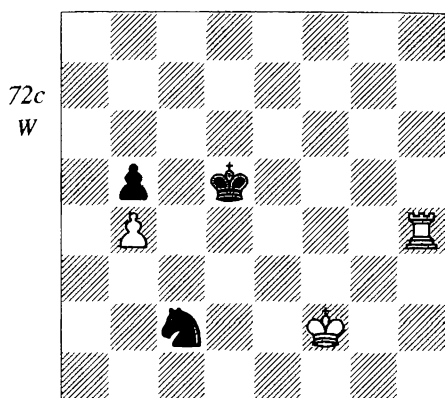
5...♕f4+ 6 ♖d4 ♕e6+ 7 ♖c4 ♗e7?

A fatal error allowing the king in. 7...♕f4! 8 ♚h7+ ♗e6 was the simplest draw, but 7...♕c7 is also adequate: 8 ♚h7+ ♖c6 9 ♖d4 ♕e6+ 10 ♗e3 ♕c7 11 ♖f4 ♕e6+ 12 ♖f5 ♕d4+ 13 ♖f6 ♕b3! (the only drawing move) followed by ...♕c5 and Black saves the game.

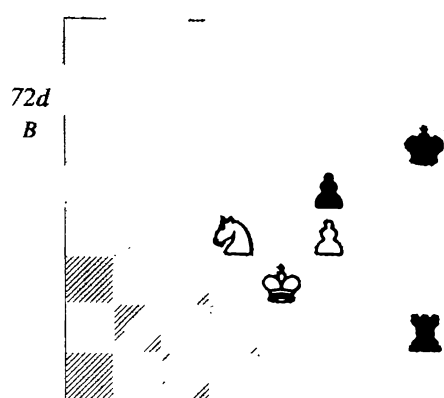
8 ♖d5

8 ♚h7+ ♖f6 9 ♖d5 would have been even faster.

8...♕f4+ 9 ♖c6 ♕e6 10 ♚h7+ ♖f6 11 ♖xd6 ♕g5 12 e5+ ♖g6 13 ♚h1 ♕e4+ 14 ♖d7 ♕g5 15 e6 1-0



Stefansson – Shirov
Reykjavik 1992



Shirov – Fishbein
Kerteminde 1991

When the two pawns are on the same file and on adjacent ranks, the position is usually drawn. The reason is that Black can keep his knight next to his king on a square where it attacks the enemy pawn. This ties down one of the enemy pieces to defending the pawn and makes progress impossible.

1 ♖e2

Black has a dilemma to solve. If he could get his king to b6 and knight to c6 then he would have the type of draw mentioned above, but he has no time to set up this formation. Shirov hits on the correct plan – he plays his knight to a6, where it again attacks the pawn and also keeps the white king out of c5. This ‘second-best’ formation is nevertheless sufficient to draw.

1... ♖d4+ 2 ♕d3 ♗e6

Not 2... ♗c6? 3 ♜h5+ ♗e5+ 4 ♕e3 ♕d6 5 ♕e4 and White wins.

3 ♜h5+ ♕c6 4 ♕e4 ♗c7 5 ♕e5 ♗a6 6 ♜h4

Black has set up his intended defensive formation and now the white rook must stay to defend the b4-pawn. White tries to get in with his king, but Black’s king and knight control all the entry squares.

6... ♕c7 7 ♕d5 ♕b6 8 ♕d6 ♕b7 9 ♜g4 ♕b6 10 ♕d7 ♕b7 11 ♕d8 ♕b6 12 ♕c8

Black is almost in zugzwang, but he still has one move to draw.

12... ♕a7 ½-½

White cannot make further progress.

If the defender can’t set up one of the ideal defensive formations, then the position is often lost.

1... ♜h3+?

Fishbein’s notes in *Informator* fail to mention this and the following mistake.

1... ♕g6! was the winning move. After 2 ♕f3 (2 ♕d3 ♜h3+ 3 ♕d2 ♜a3 4 ♕e2 ♜c3 transposes) 2... ♜h3+ 3 ♕e2 ♜c3! (preventing ♗c2-e3, reaching the drawing formation) 4 ♕f2 ♜d3 5 ♗f3 ♕h5 6 ♕g2 ♜a3 7 ♗e5 ♕h4 8 ♗c4 ♜c3 9 ♗e5 ♜b3 10 ♕f2 ♕h3 the black king penetrates.

2 ♕f2 ♕g6 3 ♕e2?

Missing a draw based on a neat tactical point: 3 ♗f3! ♕h5 (3... ♜h1 4 ♕g3 ♜b1 5 ♗h4+ ♕f6 6 ♗g2 ♜b3+ 7 ♕f2, followed by ♗e3, reaches the standard drawing position) 4 ♕g2! ♕g4 5 ♗e5+ ♕h4 6 ♗g6+ with perpetual check.

3... ♜a3

Now Black is winning again.

4 ♗c2

Hoping to reach e3, but Black frustrates this plan.

4... ♜a2 5 ♕d3 ♜a4 6 ♕e3 ♜c4

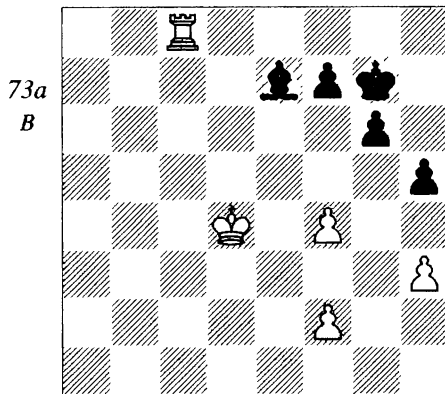
This accurate sequence of moves definitely prevents the knight from reaching e3.

7 ♗d4 ♜c3+ 8 ♕e2 ♜c5

Now Black’s king can advance and the game is decided.

9 ♗f3 ♕h5 10 ♗e5 ♜c3 11 ♕f2 ♕h4 12 ♕g2 ♜b3 0-1

73 Rook vs Bishop: Pawns on One Wing



Leko – Kramnik
World Ch (5), Brissago 2004

Having all the pawns on one side increases the bishop's chances of saving the game, and there are many drawing positions, even with an equal number of pawns. A position with 3 vs 3 on one side would normally be a win, but here White's broken pawns allow Black to set up a blockade.

1...♙h4?!

1...f5! was simplest. Then White cannot make progress; e.g., 2 ♖c7 (once Black's bishop arrives on the long diagonal, the position is a clear draw, so 2 ♗e5 ♙f6+ is easy for Black) 2...♗f6! 3 ♖c6+ ♗f7 4 ♗e5 ♙d8! (4...♙f8?? loses to 5 ♙f6+ ♗g7 6 ♙xf8!) 5 f3 (5 ♙d6 ♙c7! 6 ♗d5 ♙xd6 7 ♗xd6 h4! is drawn) 5...h4 6 ♗d6 ♙e7+ 7 ♗d7 (7 ♗e5 ♙d8) 7...♙f6 and Black is safe.

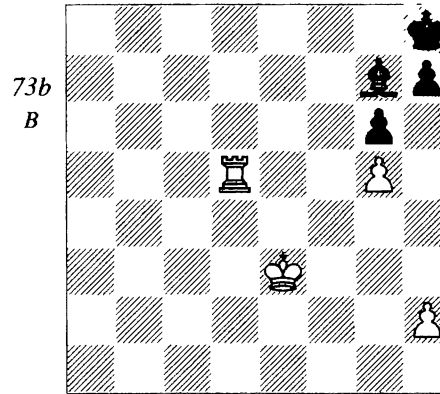
2 f3 f5!

Not 2...♙f6+? 3 ♗d5 ♙b2 4 ♖c2 ♙a1 5 f5! gxf5 6 f4! and White will eventually win the f5-pawn and the game.

3 ♖c7+ ♗f6 4 ♗d5 ♙g3?

The losing move. 4...♙e1! would still have drawn, because from e1 the bishop can reach the long diagonal; for example, 5 ♖c6+ ♗f7 6 ♗e5 ♙a5! 7 ♙f6+ ♗g7 8 ♗e6 ♙c3! 9 ♙f7+ ♗g8 10 ♙d7 ♙b2 and Black defends.

5 ♖c6+ ♗g7 6 ♗e5 (defending the f4-pawn and freeing the rook) 6...h4 7 ♖c7+ ♗h6 8 ♖c4! ♗g7 9 ♗e6 ♙h2 10 ♖c7+ ♗h6 11 ♗f7 1-0. White wins after 11...♙xf4 12 ♖c6 ♗h5 13 ♙xg6 ♙c1 14 ♗f6 f4 15 ♗f5.



Khalifman – Leko
Budapest (3) 2000

This 2 vs 2 position is a win, but White must not allow Black to play ...h5 under favourable circumstances.

1...♗g8 2 ♙d8+ ♗f7 3 ♙d7+ ♗g8 4 h4 ♙b2 5 ♗f3 ♙g7 6 ♗f4

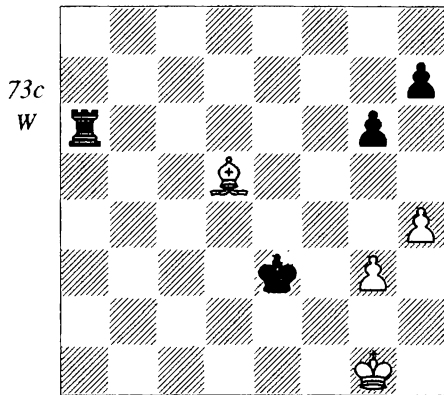
Not 6 ♗g4? h5+! 7 ♗f4 (7 gxf6 ♙xf6 is also a draw) 7...♙c3 8 ♗e4 ♙e1 9 ♗e5 ♙c3+ 10 ♗e6 ♙b2 and White cannot make progress. However, playing the king to e6 wins; for example, 6 ♗e4 ♙b2 (now 6...h5? loses to 7 ♙xg7+ ♗xg7 8 ♗e5) 7 ♗d5 ♙c3 8 ♗e6 ♙b2 9 ♙d2 ♙c3 10 ♙d3 ♙b2 11 ♙b3 ♙d4 12 h5! gxf5 13 ♙h3 ♗g7 14 ♗f5 ♙b2 15 ♙xh5 ♗g8 16 ♙h2 ♙c3 17 ♙h3 ♙b2 18 ♙b3 ♙d4 19 ♙d3 ♙b2 20 ♗g4 ♙c1 21 ♗h5 ♙b2 22 ♙d8+ ♗g7 23 ♙d7+ followed by ♗h6 and Black loses.

6...♙f8

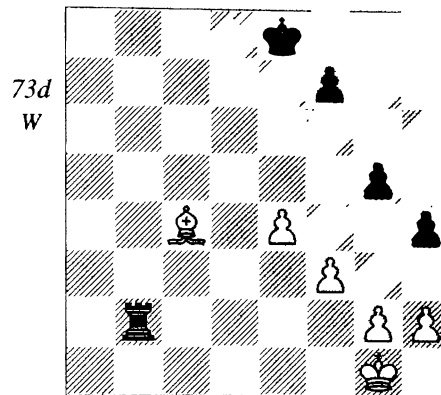
6...h5?! 7 ♙xg7+ and 8 ♗e5 wins for White.

7 h5?

Missing 7 ♗e5! ♙g7+ 8 ♗e6, winning as before. Now the game is a draw and the finish was 7...gxf5 8 ♗g3 h6! 9 g6 ♙a3 10 ♗h4 ♙c1 11 ♗xh5 ♙g5 12 ♗g4 (12 g7 ♗h7 is also drawn) 12...♙c1 13 ♗f5 ♙g5 14 ♗e6 ♙h4?! (14...♙c1 15 ♙h7 ♙d2 16 g7 ♙g5 is simpler) 15 ♙h7 ♙g5 16 g7 h5! 17 ♙xh5 ♙f6!! (now the only way to save the game) 18 ♙h3 ♙xg7 19 ♗e7 ♙b2 20 ♙b3 ♙d4 21 ♙d3 ♙b2 22 ♙g3+ ♗h7 23 ♗e6 ♗h6 24 ♗f5 ♗h7 25 ♙g6 ♙c3 26 ♗g5 ♙b2 27 ♗h5 ♙c3 28 ♙g2 ♙d4 29 ♙d2 ♙c3 30 ♖c2 ♙a1 31 ♖c7+ ♗g8 32 ♙d7 1/2-1/2.



Sundararajan – Sashikiran
Kolkata 2008



Carlsen – Anand
Morelia/Linares 2008

This is similar to the previous position except that the defender has already managed to get his pawn to the fourth rank. This means that the position is drawn, but the task is far from simple, as we shall see.

1 ♖g2 ♜d6 2 ♙b7 ♜d1 3 ♙c6 ♜d2+ 4 ♖g1 ♜c2 5 ♙d5 ♜c5 6 ♙b7 g5

The only way to make progress.

7 hxg5 ♜xg5 8 ♖g2 ♜c5 9 ♖g1 ♜c2 10 ♙d5 h6 11 ♙b7

Not 11 ♙g2? ♜c1+ 12 ♖h2 ♖f2 13 g4 ♜c4 14 ♖h3 ♜c3+ 15 ♖h2 ♜g3 and the g-pawn falls.

11...h5 12 ♖f1?

The losing move. White could have drawn by the remarkable defence 12 ♙d5! ♜c5 13 ♙e6! (not 13 ♙b7? ♜g5 14 ♖h2 ♖f2 15 ♖h3 ♜xg3+ 16 ♖h4 ♜g7 17 ♙c6 ♜h7 18 ♙e8 ♖f3 19 ♙g6 ♜h8 20 ♙f7 ♖f4 and Black keeps his pawn and eventually wins) 13...♖f3 14 ♖h2 ♜g5 (a key point is that 14...♜c2+ 15 ♖h3 ♜g2?? is impossible) 15 ♖h3 ♜xg3+ 16 ♖h4 ♜g6 17 ♙b3! ♜h6 18 ♖g5 ♜h8 19 ♙d1+, picking up the h5-pawn. A second drawing line is 12 ♙g2 ♜c1+ 13 ♖h2 ♖f2 14 ♙d5! ♜g1 (after 14...♜d1 the only drawing move is 15 ♙c6!) 15 ♖h3 ♜xg3+ 16 ♖h4 ♜e3 17 ♙f7!, but this is also quite hard to find.

12...♜c7!

Now Black wins as he picks up the g3-pawn under favourable circumstances.

13 ♙a6

Or 13 ♙d5 ♜c5 14 ♙b7 ♜g5 15 ♖g2 h4 and Black wins.

13...♜c6 14 ♙b5 ♜c5 15 ♙a6 ♖f3 0-1

In the three previous positions, the defender had a 'good' bishop; in other words his pawns were on squares of the opposite colour to his bishop. When the reverse is the case, the enemy king can more easily penetrate and the defender often loses even if he has an extra pawn.

1 g3

1 ♖f1? loses at once to 1...h3 2 gxh3 ♜xh2.

1...f6 2 ♙e6 ♖e7 3 ♙g4

Black also wins after 3 ♙f5 ♖d6 4 gxh4 gxh4 5 f4 ♜e2! or 3 ♙h3 ♖d6 4 gxh4 gxh4 5 f4 ♜e2 6 ♙g2 ♖c5 7 ♖f1 (7 ♙f3 ♜b2 8 e5 f5 9 ♙g2 ♖d4 is no better) 7...♜b2 8 e5 ♜b4 9 exf6 ♜xf4+ 10 ♖e2 ♜xf6 with a win much as in the game.

3...♜e2!

The simplest win: Black just prevents f4 and leaves White totally tied up.

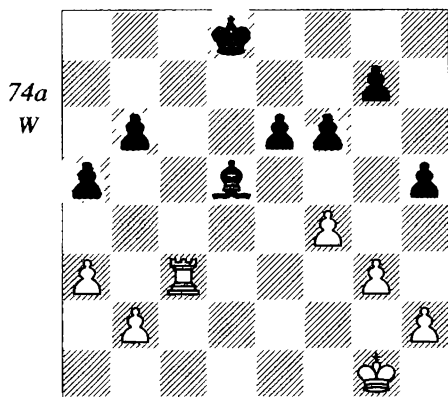
4 gxh4 gxh4 5 h3

Freeing the king to expel the rook by ♖f1, but White soon loses a pawn in any case.

5...♖d6 6 ♖f1 ♜b2 7 f4 ♖c5 8 e5 ♜b4 9 exf6 ♜xf4+ 10 ♖e2 ♖d4 11 ♙f3 ♜xf6

Black has reached a technically won position. The plan is to drive White's king to the queenside and then take the h3-pawn with the rook. The end was 12 ♙b7 ♜b6 13 ♙c8 ♖e4 14 ♙g4 ♜b2+ 15 ♖e1 ♖e3 16 ♖f1 ♖f4 17 ♖e1 ♖g3 18 ♖f1 ♜f2+ 19 ♖e1 (19 ♖g1 ♜f7! puts White in zugzwang) 19...♜f4 20 ♙c8 ♜f8 21 ♙g4 ♖g2 22 ♖e2 ♜e8+ 23 ♖d3 ♖f2 24 ♙f5 ♜e3+ 25 ♖d4 ♖f3 26 ♙g4+ ♖f4 27 ♖d5 ♜e5+ 28 ♖d4 ♜g5 0-1 as Black wins after 29 ♙e6 ♜g6 30 ♙c8 ♜d6+ 31 ♖c5 ♜d2 32 ♙g4 ♖g3 33 ♙f5 ♜h2 34 ♖d4 ♜xh3.

74 Rook vs Bishop: Pawns on Both Wings



Kramnik – Topalov
Dortmund 2005

Here Black has one pawn for the exchange. The key factor deciding the game is whether White can penetrate with his rook. In order to achieve this, White will have to advance pawns to open files.

1 ♖f2 ♗d7 2 ♖e3 e5

2...♗d6 3 ♜c8 allows the rook in at once, but 2...♗b7 puts up more of a fight. Then White needs to open files on both wings to win: 3 b4 axb4 4 axb4 ♗d6 5 ♜a3 ♗c7 6 h3 ♗c6 7 g4 hxg4 (or 7...h4 8 g5 ♗b7 9 ♜a1 ♗g2 10 ♖f2 ♗xh3 11 ♜a7+ ♗d6 12 g6 ♗f5 13 ♜xg7 ♗e4 14 ♖e3 ♗f5 15 b5 and White wins) 8 hxg4 ♗d6 9 g5 (threatening 10 ♜a7 ♗d7 11 ♜a6 ♗c6 12 ♜a8 and ♜g8) 9...b5 10 ♜a7 ♗d7 11 ♜a8 ♖e7 12 ♗d4 and the king penetrates.

3 fxe5 fxe5 4 ♜c1 a4?!

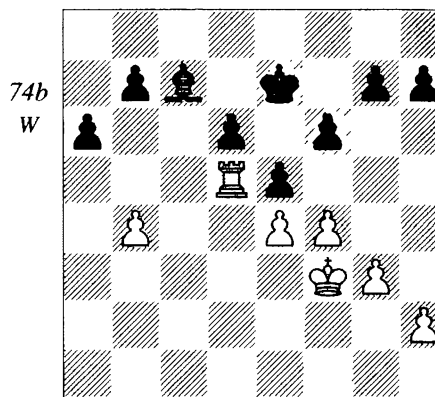
This loses at once. 4...g6 was better, but White wins in any case by 5 b4 (opening the a-file) 5...axb4 6 axb4 ♗c6 7 ♜a1 ♗d6 (or 7...b5 8 ♜a7+ ♖e6 9 ♜c7 ♗d7 10 ♖e4 followed by ♜c5) 8 ♜a6 b5 (8...♗c7 9 ♜a7+ ♗b7 10 b5 ♗c8 11 ♜xb7 leads to a won king and pawn ending) 9 h3 ♗d5 10 ♜a7 ♖e6 11 g4 (opening the h-file) 11...hxg4 12 hxg4 ♗e8 13 ♜a8 ♗c6 14 ♜b8 g5 15 ♜f8, followed by ♜f5 winning the g-pawn.

5 ♜f1 ♖e6

Black cannot prevent the rook from penetrating, as 5...♖e7 allows 6 ♜f5 forking two pawns.

6 ♜f8 b5 7 ♜g8 ♖f6 8 ♜b8 1-0

In view of 8...♗c4 9 ♖e4 and 10 ♜b6+.



Leko – Shirov
Moscow (Tal Memorial) 2008

Here Black has two pawns for the exchange, but his d-pawn is backward and his bishop is impeded by his own pawns.

1 ♜d1 ♗b6

1...exf4!? 2 gxf4 g6 doesn't solve Black's problems as White can attack the g- and h-pawns with his rook.

2 ♖e2 ♗d4?!

2...g6 is better, so that f5 by White can be met by ...gxf5 and ...d5, gaining counterplay.

3 ♖d3 ♗d7 4 f5!

A good decision: this gives White the option of an eventual g4-g5, opening a file on the kingside.

4...♗b6 5 ♜c1 ♗d4 6 ♜c2 ♗b6 7 g4 h6 8 h4 ♗d8

Black must prevent g5, but now his bishop is badly placed. White wins after 8...♗d4 9 g5! hxg5 10 hxg5 fxg5 11 ♜g2 ♖e7 12 ♜xg5 ♖f7 13 ♜g6.

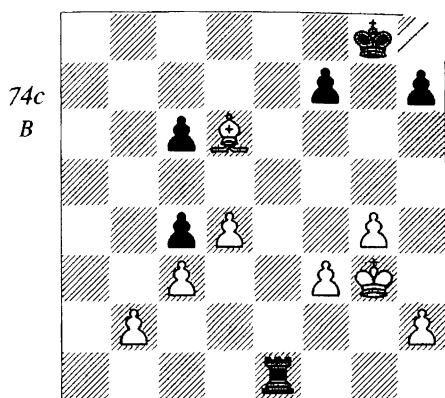
9 ♖c4 ♖c6

To prevent ♖d5.

10 ♖b3+ ♗d7 11 ♖c4 ♖c6 12 b5+!

After repeating moves, White undertakes drastic measures to open lines on the queenside.

12...axb5+ (a king move allows bxa6 followed by ♖d5) **13 ♖b4+ ♗d7** (or 13...♖b6 14 ♜c8 ♗c7 15 ♜e8! ♖c6 16 ♜e7 and wins) **14 ♖xb5 ♗e7 15 ♜d2 ♖c7 16 ♜d1 1-0**. 16...♗d8 17 ♜a1 ♗e7 18 ♜a8 ♗d8 19 ♖c4 followed by ♖d5 wins comfortably for White.



Shirov – Aronian
Moscow (Tal Memorial) 2006

Here, too, White has two pawns for the exchange, but his queenside majority is blocked and his b2-pawn is weak. This gives Black some winning chances.

1...♠g1+ 2 ♖f2 ♜b1 3 ♙a3 ♖g7 4 ♖g3 ♖g6 5 h3 h5 6 ♖h4?

6 h4 offers good drawing chances.

6...♠g1!

Giving up the h5-pawn, but trapping White's king on the edge of the board.

7 ♙c5 ♠g2 8 ♙a3 f6 9 gxf5+ ♖f5 10 f4 ♠g8! 11 ♙d6 ♖e6 12 h6?!

Giving up the bishop fails to a surprising resource, but even 12 ♙a3 loses in the long run: 12...♖f7 13 ♙d6 ♠g2 14 ♙a3 ♖g7 (zugzwang) 15 ♙b4 ♜xb2 16 ♙a5 ♜b5 17 ♙d8 ♜b8 18 ♙c7 (18 ♙a5 ♖h6 19 ♙c7 ♜b3 20 ♙a5 f5 doesn't save White either as 21 ♙b4? loses to 21...♜xb4) 18...♜b3 19 ♙a5 ♖h6 20 ♖g4 f5+ 21 ♖h4 ♜b2 22 ♙c7 ♜f2 23 ♙d6 ♜f3 24 ♙f8+ ♖h7 25 ♙b4 ♜xf4+ and Black wins.

12...♖xd6 13 ♖h5 f5 14 h7 ♜h8 15 ♖g6 ♖e7 16 ♖g7 ♖e8!

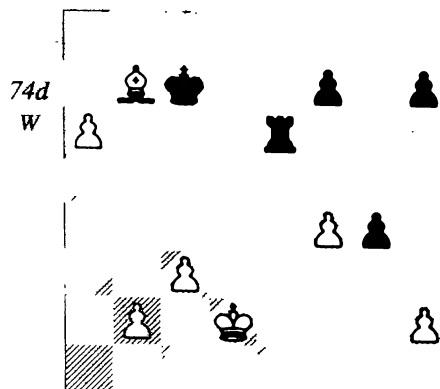
A spectacular idea. Sooner or later White must take on h8, when ...♖f7 will force him to commit suicide on the queenside.

17 ♖g6 ♖f8 18 h4 ♖e7 19 ♖g7 ♖e8 20 ♖g6 ♖f8 21 h5 ♖e7 22 ♖g7 ♖e8 23 ♖g6 ♖f8 24 h6 ♖e8 25 ♖f6

25 ♖g7 ♖e7 26 ♖xh8 ♖f7 27 d5 cxd5 28 b3 cxb3 29 c4 b2 mates quickly.

25...♜xh7 26 ♖g6 ♜f7 0-1

Black wins after 27 h7 ♜f8 28 ♖g7 ♜h8 29 ♖xh8 (or 29 ♖g6 ♖f8) 29...♖f8.



Nunn – Dlugy
Wijk aan Zee 1990

Cases in which the bishop defeats the rook are rare. If the side with the bishop has three or more pawns for the exchange, then the bishop usually wins, but otherwise the bishop's winning chances are usually based on dangerous passed pawns. In this position, Black is winning, but White's menacing queenside pawn-mass means that even a small misstep will be fatal.

1 b4 ♜h6 2 c4 ♜xh2+ 3 ♖e3 ♜a2

Perhaps 3...♜b2 4 ♙d5 ♖b6 5 b5 ♖a7 6 ♙xf7 g3 7 ♙d5 g2 is a simpler win, but Black has done nothing wrong yet.

4 c5 ♜b2??

This error throws away a whole point. Black could have won by 4...g3 5 b5 g2 6 b6+ ♖b8 7 ♙xg2 ♜xg2 8 c6 ♜a2 9 a7+ ♖a8 10 c7 ♖b7 11 ♖f3 ♜a1 12 ♖g2 (or 12 ♖g4 ♜g1+ 13 ♖h5 ♜g8, followed by ...♖xb6) 12...♜a3 13 ♖h2 h5 14 ♖g2 h4 15 ♖h2 f5 and Black will be able to transfer his rook to g8, after which ...♖xb6 wins.

5 ♙d5! ♖b8

There is no way back, as the rook cannot return to a2. If 5...♜xb4, then 6 a7 wins.

6 c6 ♜c2

Or 6...♜xb4 7 a7+ ♖xa7 8 c7 ♜c4 9 ♙xc4 ♖b7 10 ♙xf7 ♖xc7 11 ♙h5 and White wins.

7 ♖d3

Not 7 b5? ♖a7 and Black escapes.

7...♜c1 8 a7+!

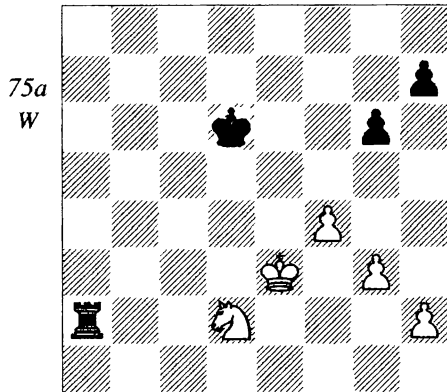
Accuracy is required. 8 ♖d2? doesn't work due to 8...♜a1.

8...♖xa7 9 ♖d2!

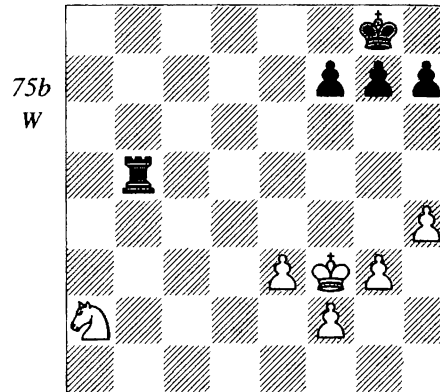
Black's rook is completely dominated.

9...♜xc6 10 ♙xc6 h5 11 ♖e2 h4 12 ♖f2 1-0

75 Rook vs Knight: More Pawns



Timman – Topalov
Wijk aan Zee 1996



Hulak – Beliavsky
Slovenian Team Ch, Bled 1998

The short-range knight operates best when all the pawns are on one side, and in this situation the defender often has drawing chances provided he has at least one pawn for the exchange. Here the result should be a draw, but accurate defence is necessary.

1 ♖e4+ ♗e7 2 h3 ♜a3+ 3 ♜f2 h6 4 ♜g2 ♗e6

Or 4...♞e3 5 ♗f2 h5 6 ♗d1 ♜a3 7 ♗f2 ♗e6 8 ♗e4 and White has a secure position.

5 g4! h5

5...♗d5 6 ♗f6+ ♗d4 7 ♗g8 h5 8 ♗e7 hxg4 9 hxg4 ♜a6 10 f5 g5 11 ♗g6 ♗e4 12 ♜g3 offers Black no winning chances.

6 ♗g5+ ♗d5 7 ♜f2 ♗d4

7...h4 is well met by 8 ♗f3.

8 ♜g2?

White slips up. He should have played 8 ♗e2, keeping Black's king out of e3.

8...♗e3 9 ♜g3 ♜a6?

Missing a win by 9...h4+! 10 ♜xh4 ♜xf4 11 ♗e6+ ♗e5 12 ♗f8 (12 ♗c5 ♜c3 is no better) 12...♜f6 13 ♗d7+ ♗e6 14 ♗f8+ ♜f7 15 ♗d7 ♜a5 and the knight is cut off; the finish might be 16 ♗b6 ♗e6 17 ♗c4 ♜d5 18 ♗b2 g5+ 19 ♜g3 ♜d2 20 ♗a4 ♜d4 21 ♗b2 ♗d5 and the knight is soon lost.

10 gxf4 gxf4 11 ♜h4

Now White is safe.

11...♜xf4 12 ♜xh5 ♜f5 13 h4 ♜a8 14 ♜h6 ♜g4 15 ♜g6 ♜xh4 16 ♗e6 ♜g4 17 ♜f6 ♜a5 18 ♗d4 ½-½

Even with four pawns against three, there are drawing chances. The defender should try to exchange as many pawns as possible, while the attacker must avoid exchanges.

1 ♗c3 ♜a5 2 ♗e2 g6 3 ♗f4 ♜g7 4 g4 ♜f6 5 ♗e2 ♜a1 6 ♗g3 ♗e5 7 ♜g2 ♜a4 8 f4+!

The best defence; 8 ♜h3 ♜a2 9 ♜g2 f5 10 gxf5 gxf5 is more awkward for White.

8...♗d5 9 ♜f3

White has established a solid defensive position.

9...f6 10 g5?

This allows Black to bypass the g-pawn; 10 e4+ ♗e6 (or 10...♗d4 11 ♗e2+ ♗d3 12 f5) 11 g5 was correct, since now Black cannot avoid pawn exchanges.

10...f5! 11 h5 ♜a3 12 h6?!

It would have been better to reduce the number of pawns by exchanging on g6, although the position may be beyond saving in any case.

12...♜c4! 13 ♗e2 ♜b3

Putting White in zugzwang. The immediate 13...♜a2+ 14 ♜f3 ♗d3? is bad due to 15 e4.

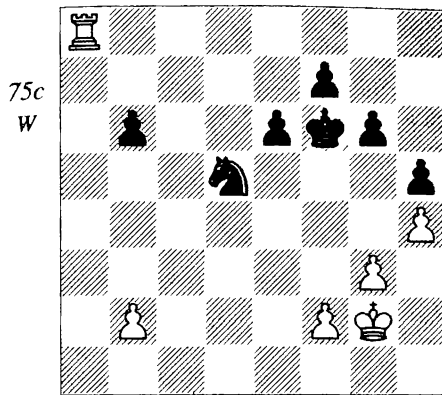
14 ♗h1 ♜b2+ 15 ♜f3 ♗d3 16 ♗f2+ ♗d2

Threatening ...♜b3.

17 e4 ♜b3+ 18 ♜g2 fxe4 19 ♗xe4+ ♗e3 20 ♗c5 ♜b4 21 ♜g3

Or 21 ♗e6 ♜e4 22 ♗f8 ♜xf4 23 ♗xh7 ♜e8 24 ♗f6 ♜h8 and White's pawns fall.

21...♜xf4 22 ♗d7 ♜f3+ 23 ♜g4 ♜f1 24 ♜h3 ♜f3 0-1



Aronian – Postny
Moscow 2005

The short-range knight struggles when there are pawns on both sides of the board. Even in this relatively favourable situation, with a pawn for the exchange and a stable central post for the knight, it proves impossible to save the game.

1 ♖f3 ♜f5 2 ♚e2 ♜f6 3 ♜d3 g5

Black cannot avoid this for long; for example, after 3...♜e5 4 ♜b8 ♜f5 5 ♜d4 Black is in zugzwang and must play 5...g5 in any case (5...♜g4 is met by 6 ♜e4!).

4 ♜a4?!

Missing 4 ♜h8! ♜g4 5 hxg5 fxg5 6 ♜h6 ♜c7 7 ♜e4 and Black is in zugzwang; White wins easily after 7...h4 8 gxh4 gxh4 9 ♜g6+ ♜h3 10 f4 ♜h2 11 ♜f3.

4...♜e5?!

4...b5 5 ♜e4 e5 puts up more of a fight, although White should still win after 6 f3 ♜e6 7 hxg5 fxg5 8 ♜d2 ♜f5 9 ♜e1 ♜f6 10 ♜f2.

5 ♜e4+ ♜f5 6 f3 e5

Black hardly has another move, but this leaves the d5-knight insecure.

7 ♜c4 ♜e6 8 hxg5 fxg5 9 ♜c6+ ♜f5 10 ♜d6! ♜e7 11 ♜xb6 h4

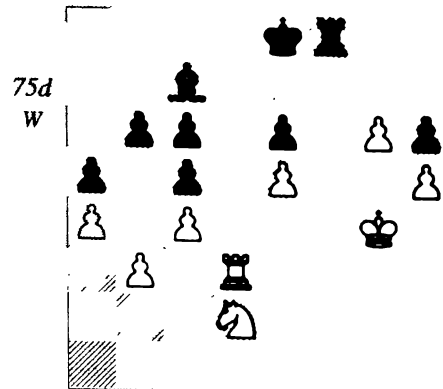
Or 11...g4 12 fxg4+ ♜xg4 13 ♜e4 ♜xg3 14 ♜xe5 h4 15 ♜e6 ♜c8 16 ♜g6+ ♜f3 17 ♜c6 ♜e7 18 ♜c7 ♜g6+ 19 ♜f5 and White wins.

12 gxh4 gxh4 13 ♜e2 ♜d5 14 ♜h6 ♜f4+

Black also loses after 14...♜g5 15 ♜h8 ♜f4+ 16 ♜e3 h3 17 b4.

15 ♜e3 h3 16 b3 ♜g5 17 ♜h8 ♜f5 18 ♜f2 ♜e6 19 ♜d8 ♜e7 20 ♜d1 1-0

White wins easily after 20...♜e6 21 ♜g3 ♜f5 22 b4.



Yakovenko – Cheparinov
FIDE Grand Prix, Sochi 2008

The knight only has winning chances if there are several pawns for the exchange or the side with the knight possesses a dangerous passed pawn. This position provides an example of the latter situation. White has an advanced protected passed g-pawn, but at the moment the e5-pawn is under attack. If White gets tied down to the defence of e5, then it may not be easy to exploit the g6-pawn.

1 ♜d6!

White finds a dynamic solution, offering the exchange to secure a second passed pawn.

1...♜xd6?!

Accepting the offer is hopeless, as the two passed pawns prove too much for the rook. 1...♜e7 is the best defence, but White should still win after 2 ♜e4! (2 ♜xc6 ♜xe5 3 ♜xb6 ♜f4+ 4 ♜h3 ♜d4 is much less clear) 2...♜b8 3 ♜h3 ♜f3+ 4 ♜g2 ♜f4 5 ♜f6 ♜xd6 6 g7 ♜xe5 7 g8 ♜xf6 8 ♜c8 ♜f5 9 ♜b7+ ♜d6 10 ♜xb6 ♜f6 11 ♜xa5 and the a-pawn will decide the game.

2 exd6 e5 3 ♜e4 ♜f4+ 4 ♜g3 ♜f1

4...♜xe4 loses to 5 d7+ ♜xd7 6 g7 ♜e1 7 ♜f2.

5 ♜g2 ♜f4

Or 5...♜d1 6 ♜f6+ ♜f8 7 d7 (threatening 8 ♜d5) 7...♜d6 8 g7+ ♜xg7 9 ♜e8+ and White wins.

6 ♜f6+! (an attractive finish) **6...♜xf6** (after 6...♜f8 7 d7 ♜d4, White has the decisive 8 ♜d5) **7 d7+ 1-0**. The key line is 7...♜xd7 8 g7 ♜f5 9 g8 ♜g5+ 10 ♜xg5 hxg5 11 h6 and the h-pawn promotes.

Queen Endings

Queen endings are important not only for their own sake, but because they can arise from pawn endings if one or both sides promote. The most basic ending in this category is that of queen vs pawn. Apart from a handful of exceptional positions, the queen (to move) always wins except if the pawn is on the seventh rank. In this case, however, the pawn generally draws provided it is on the a-, c-, f- or h-files. There are two provisos here: the first is that the defender's king must be supporting the pawn and the second is that the attacker's king mustn't be too close. How close is too close? This slightly tricky question is answered in Sections 76 (for the rook's pawn) and 77 (for the bishop's pawn).

The next important material balance is that of queen and pawn vs queen. This ending is notoriously tricky and there is no doubt that to go into it in any depth would take a book by itself. However, as so often in endgame theory, while the concrete details are rather messy and complicated, the general principles are far less so. The first point is that if the defender can get his king in front of the pawn, the result is almost always a draw (78a). If the defender cannot get his king in front of the pawn, the attacker has good winning chances with a bishop's pawn or a central pawn. The defender's only chance is if his king is fairly close to the pawn, and in particular if White, for example, has an e-pawn, a good place for the defender's king is h8 (78c).

The winning chances are best of all with a bishop's pawn. In this case, the situation is rather similar to a central pawn, except that the h8 bolt-hole mentioned above no longer exists. Thus if the defender's king has no chance to get in front of the pawn, then the position is usually lost (79a).

For some mysterious reason, the case of a knight's pawn occurs rather often in practice. Here the defender has a new possibility: if White, for example, has a b-pawn, there are still drawing chances if Black's king has a chance of moving in front of the pawn, but he can also often draw if his king is in the h1-corner. The h1-refuge sometimes draws even if the pawn reaches the seventh rank. Obviously, with a black b-pawn, the white king should head for h8 (79b). The defender's drawing chances are much better if his opponent has a rook's pawn. Once again, the best place for defender's king (assuming it cannot move in front of the pawn) is to head for the corner diagonally opposite the pawn's promotion square. Unless the pawn is far advanced or the defender's king is badly placed, most positions with a rook's pawn are drawn (79c).

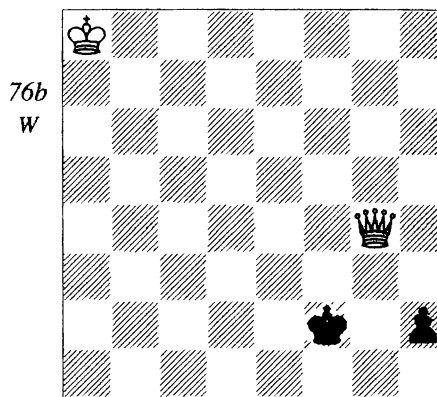
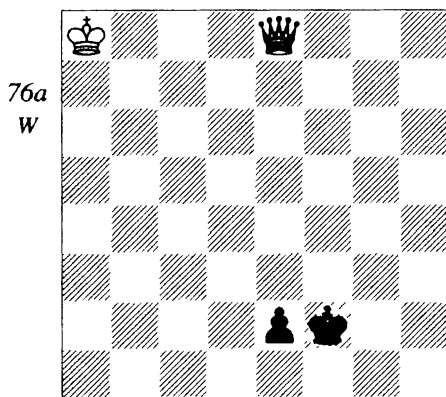
Moving on to queen endings with more pawns, the queen is a powerful attacking piece, and while it is unlikely to mate all by itself, perpetual check is a real possibility and is often the defender's main chance of saving the game. Thus the safety of the attacker's king is an important consideration. Even a relatively small change in the pawns around the king can alter the result of the game (compare 80a and 80b). Perpetual check can strike out of the blue, as in the missed opportunity which arose in 80c. It is worth bearing in mind that a queen can give mate with the help of the king or a pawn. 80d is an amusing example of the unfortunate situations which can sometimes arise in queen endings.

Passed pawns are very important in queen endings because a queen can usher a pawn to the promotion square all by itself. Thus if White has a queen on a1 and a pawn on a4, blockaded by an enemy queen on a5, White can continue ♖a3-b3-b5, dislodging Black's queen and forcing the pawn's advance. Passed pawns are also useful for the defender: a strong passed pawn can help a defender save the game no matter how many pawns down he is (81c). Passed pawns are much more dangerous when they are supported by the king; hence, as in so many types of ending, king activity is an

important factor. This is explored in Section 82. I have already mentioned how important the possibility of perpetual check is and the attacker often has to calculate whether he can escape from a series of checks. It is surprising how often this is possible, especially if the attacker has a centralized queen. This subject is covered in Section 83.

Finally, Section 84 deals with the familiar case of an extra pawn with all the pawns on one side. The winning chances with queens are not especially great, particularly if the defender can arrange his pawns in the optimal formation (from Black's point of view, g6 and h5 with two pawns, or f7, g6 and h5 with three pawns). In 84d the attacker was unable to make progress even in a relatively favourable situation.

76 Queen vs Pawn (1)



In general, a queen beats a pawn without difficulty. Problems can only arise when the pawn is on the seventh rank, threatening to promote (there are a handful of exceptional drawn positions with the pawn on the sixth rank, but these are so rare that we can safely ignore them). We shall assume that White has the queen, that White is to play and that Black's king is supporting the pawn. In this case the general rule is that White always wins when the pawn is on the b-, d-, e- or g-file.

Starting from the above diagram, the winning plan is to force Black's king to e1, blocking the pawn. This gives White a tempo to bring his own king closer. The same procedure is repeated over and over again, until the king is close enough to secure the win.

1 ♖f7+ ♔g2 2 ♜e6

The first step is to zigzag closer with the queen.

2...♔f2 3 ♜f5+ ♔g2 4 ♜e4+ ♔f2 5 ♜f4+ ♔g2 6 ♜e3 ♔f1 7 ♜f3+

Now the enemy king must move to e1, and White has a free tempo to move his king.

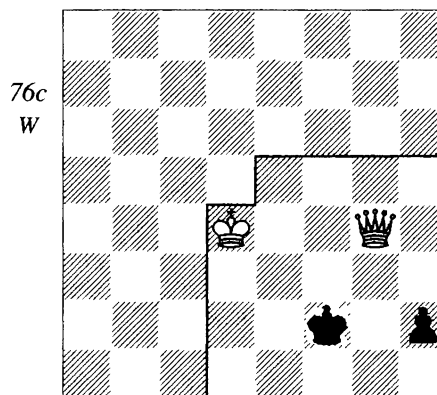
7...♔e1 8 ♔b7 ♔d2 9 ♜f2 ♔d1 10 ♜d4+ ♔c2 11 ♜e3 ♔d1 12 ♜d3+ ♔e1

Now White has another free tempo.

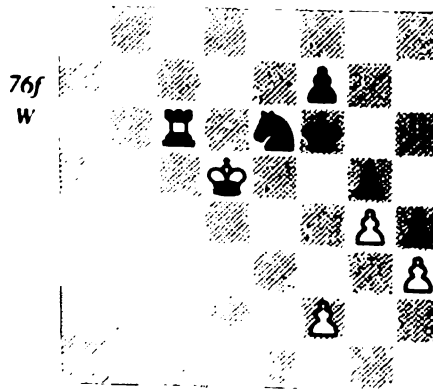
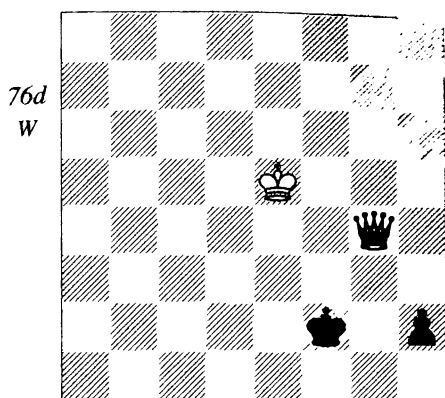
13 ♔c6 ♔f2 14 ♜d2 ♔f1 15 ♜f4+ ♔g2 16 ♜e3 ♔f1 17 ♜f3+ ♔e1 18 ♔d5 ♔d2 19 ♜f2 ♔d1 20 ♜d4+ ♔c2 21 ♜e3 ♔d1 22 ♜d3+ ♔e1 23 ♔e4 ♔f2 24 ♜f3+ ♔e1 25 ♔d3

White's king is now so close that he can force mate in a few moves.

Now we move on to the case of an a- or h-pawn. Here, the result depends on the position of the white king. If the king is far away, then the position is drawn. The above diagram shows why. Even when the white queen has zigzagged close to the pawn, White cannot make progress. After 1 ♜h3 ♔g1 2 ♜g3+ ♔h1, Black's king has been forced in front of the pawn, but this doesn't give White a free move with his king because Black would then be stalemated.



White can win if his king is within the zone marked in the above diagram. Taking d4 as an example, White wins by 1 ♜h4+ ♔g2 (or 1...♔g1 2 ♔e3) 2 ♔e3! h1♜ (Black promotes, but White's king is close enough for a mating attack) 3 ♜g4+ ♔h2 (or 3...♔f1 4 ♜e2+ ♔g1 5 ♜f2#) 4 ♔f2 and Black will be mated in a few moves.



If the white king is on e5, then a similar method works: 1 ♖e4 ♔g1 2 ♖e1+ ♔g2 3 ♕f4! h1 ♖ 4 ♖e2+ ♔g1 (or 4...♔h3 5 ♖g4+ ♔h2 6 ♖g3#) 5 ♔g3 and again it's mate in a few moves. This method wins if White's king is within one square of f4 or g4, while the method of 76c wins if White's king is within one square of e3 or e2. This explains the winning zone given in 76c.

G. Shahade – Salman
US Masters, Waikiki 1998

Endings of queen vs pawn frequently arise from more complex endings, especially pawn endings. In the above diagram, White could probably win by other methods, but returning the exchange enables him to force a won ending similar to 76d.

1 ♖xe6+!

A precisely calculated move which leads to a clear-cut win.

1...fxe6+ 2 ♔d6 ♕f7 3 ♔d7 ♕f6 4 ♕e8 ♕e5

After 4...e5 5 ♔d7! followed by ♔d6 Black will inevitably lose all his pawns, so he decides to play for a counterattack.

5 ♕f7 ♕f4 6 ♕xe6 ♕f3 7 ♕f5 ♕xf2 8 ♔xg5 ♕g3 9 ♕f5

9 ♕h5 also wins, as the king again ends up in the winning zone given in 76c.

9...♔xh3 10 g5 ♔g2

Moving the king to the g-file allows White to promote with check, but after 10...♔h2 White wins by 11 g6 h3 12 g7 ♔h1 13 g8 ♖h2 14 ♔g4 ♕g2 15 ♖a2+ ♔g1 16 ♕g3, followed by mate.

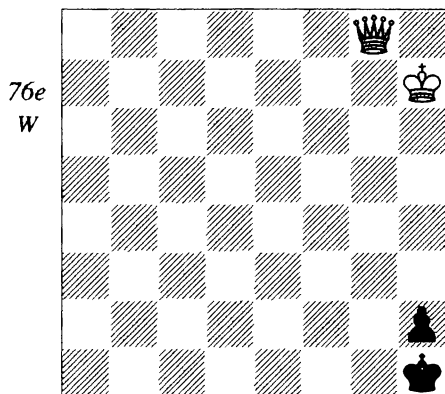
11 g6 h3 12 g7 h2 13 g8 ♖+ ♕f2

White wins as in 76d.

14 ♖d5 ♔g1 15 ♖d1+ ♔g2 16 ♕g4 h1 ♖ 17 ♖e2+ ♔g1 18 ♕g3 ♖f3+

A final desperate try: taking with the queen delivers stalemate, but White is alert to the danger.

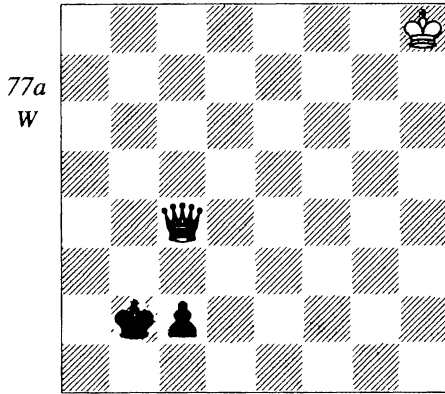
19 ♕xf3 1-0



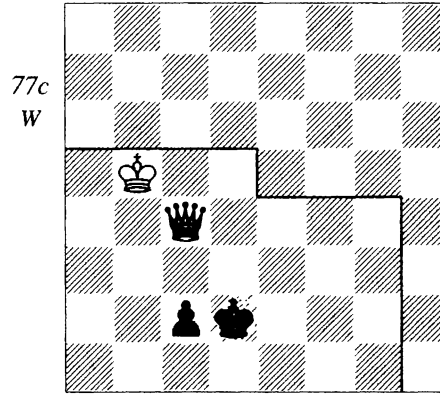
There are always some exceptional positions, and the diagram provides an interesting example. White to play wins even though his king is outside the winning zone of 76c, because Black's king starts on the inferior square h1: 1 ♔g6! (lifting the stalemate with gain of tempo, and so bringing the king inside the winning zone) 1...♔g1 2 ♕f5+ ♔f2 (now that the king is inside the zone, White wins as in 76d) 3 ♖d5 ♔g1 4 ♖d1+ ♔g2 5 ♕g4 h1 ♖ 6 ♖e2+ ♔g1 7 ♕g3 and White mates quickly.

77

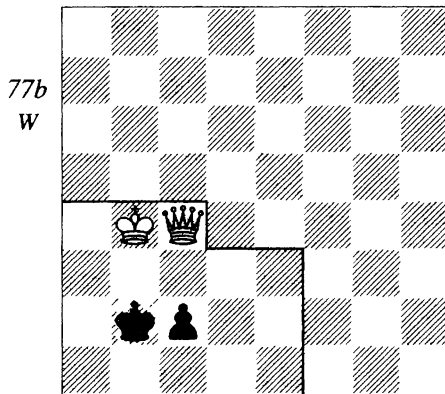
Queen vs Pawn (2)



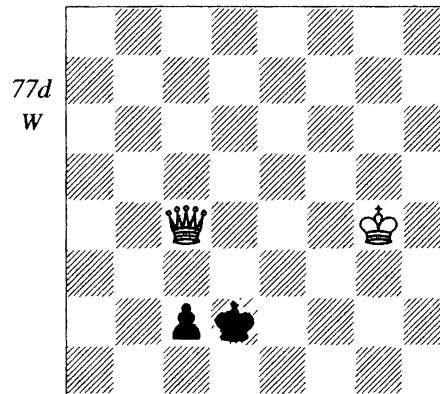
The situation in which a queen faces a c- or f-pawn on the seventh rank is more complicated. If the white king is far away, the position is a draw. We can see the reason in the above diagram. White to play cannot force the enemy king in front of the pawn because after **1 ♖b4+ ♜a2 2 ♜c3 ♜b1 3 ♜b3+** Black has the defence **3...♜a1!**, after which capturing the pawn stalemates Black.



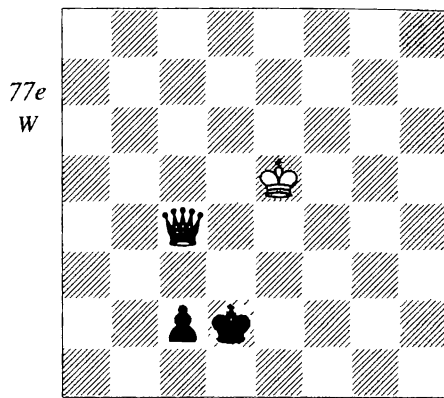
The situation is different when the black king is on the side of the pawn away from the corner. In this case the black king must cross to the other side of the pawn to exploit the stalemate possibility and this costs time. White wins in the above diagram by **1 ♜d4+ ♜e2 2 ♜c3 ♜d1 3 ♜d3+ ♜c1** (now White has a tempo to approach with his king) **4 ♜c4 ♜b2 5 ♜d2 ♜b1 6 ♜b3**.



When Black's king is on b2 then in order to win, White's king must be very close to the enemy pawn (the exact winning zone is shown in the above diagram). For example, with the king on b4 White wins by **1 ♜c3+ ♜b1 2 ♜b3 c1 ♜3 ♜d3+ ♜a1 4 ♜a6+** followed by mate. If the white king is within one square of d2, then **1 ♜d2** wins at once, which explains the rest of the winning zone.

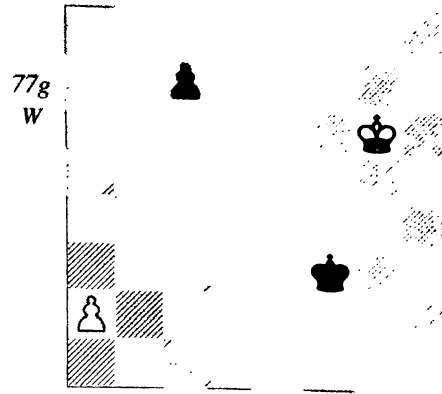


Here White wins even though his king is relatively far away from the pawn: **1 ♜a2 ♜c3** (1...♜d1 also loses quickly after **2 ♜f3**; for example, **2...♜d2 3 ♜b2 ♜d1 4 ♜f2 ♜d2 5 ♜d4+ ♜c1 6 ♜b4 ♜d1 7 ♜e1#**) **2 ♜a1+ ♜d2 3 ♜b2** (now Black has to go to d1) **3...♜d1 4 ♜f3! ♜d2** (4...c1 ♜5 ♜e2#) **5 ♜e4 ♜d1 6 ♜d3** and White mates quickly.



77e
W

It's surprising that White can't win if his king starts on e5, especially in view of the line 1 ♖a2 ♖d1? 2 ♜e4! c1 ♖3 ♖d3, which at first looks like a convincing route to victory. However, Black meets 1 ♖a2 by 1...♜c3! and White cannot win; for example, 2 ♖a1+ ♖d2 3 ♖b2 ♖d1 and now 4 ♜e4 c1 ♖ attacks the white queen and saves the game.



77g
W

N. Grigoriev
Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1932

As we saw in 76f, knowledge of queen vs pawn endings helps in a wide range of situations. Here White can win, but he must play accurately.

1 ♜f5! ♜e3

1...c5 loses to 2 ♜e5 ♜e3 3 ♖d5 ♖d3 4 ♜xc5.

2 ♜e5 c6

The best chance, since after 2...♖d3 3 ♖d5 c6+ 4 ♜c5 ♜c3 5 a4 the a-pawn cannot be stopped.

3 a4 ♖d3 4 a5 c5 5 a6 c4 6 a7 c3 7 a8 ♖ c2

This ♖ vs ♜ ending is a win, but surprisingly there is only one move which leads to success.

8 ♖d5+!

Not 8 ♖e4+? ♖d2 9 ♖d4+ (9 ♖d5+ is also a draw after 9...♜e1! 10 ♖c4 ♖d2 11 ♖a2 ♜c3!, as in 77e) 9...♜e2 10 ♖c3 ♖d1 11 ♖d3+ ♜c1 12 ♖d4 ♖b2 13 ♖e2 (13 ♖d2 is met by 13...♜b1) 13...♜a1! (13...♜b1? loses to 14 ♜c3 c1 ♖+ 15 ♖b3).

8...♜e3

Or 8...♜e2 (8...♜c3 9 ♖d4+ ♖b3 10 ♖a1 is an easy win) 9 ♖a2! (this wins here as Black cannot reply ...♜c3) 9...♖d1 10 ♖d4 c1 ♖ 11 ♖d3 with a quick mate.

9 ♖g2!

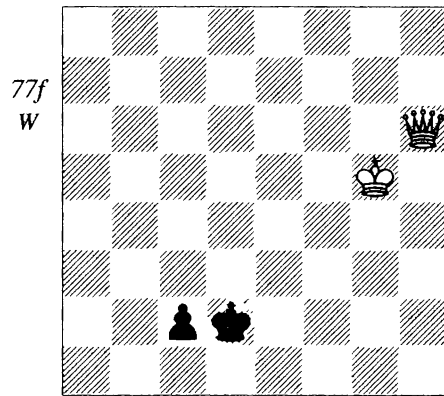
The last tough move. 9 ♖c4? ♖d2 10 ♖a2 ♜c3! is a draw as before.

9...c1 ♖

9...♖d3 10 ♖g5 followed by ♖c1 is a simple win.

10 ♖g5+

and White wins the queen.

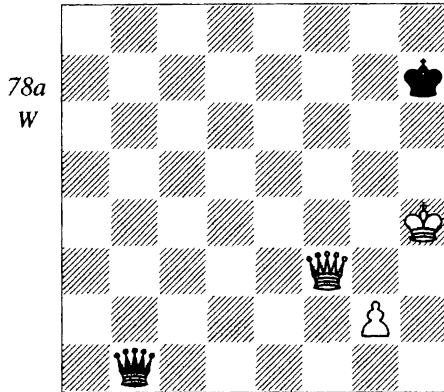


77f
W

O. Frink
The Chess Amateur, 1927

Here knowledge of the winning zone helps to find the correct first move: 1 ♜g4+! (not 1 ♜f5+? ♖d1 and Black draws much as in 77e: 2 ♖h1+ ♖d2 3 ♖d5+ ♜e1! 4 ♖a5+ ♖d1 5 ♖a4 ♖d2 6 ♖a2 ♜c3!) 1...♖d1 2 ♖h1+ ♖d2 3 ♖d5+ ♜c3 (White also wins after 3...♜c1 4 ♖b3 and 3...♜e1 4 ♖e5+ ♖d2 5 ♖b2 ♖d1 6 ♖f3) 4 ♖e5+ ♖d2 5 ♖b2 ♖d1 6 ♖f3! and White wins after 6...♖d2 7 ♖f2 ♖d1 8 ♖d4+ ♜c1 9 ♖b4 ♖d1 10 ♖e1#.

78 Queen and Pawn vs Queen (1)



Carlsen – Aronian
Elista Ct (10) 2007

The ending of queen and pawn against queen arises very frequently in practice, either from a queen ending with more pawns or from a pawn ending in which both sides promote. Unfortunately, it is one of the most mind-twisting endings in chess.

The first key point is that if the defender gets his king in front of the pawn, the result is almost always a draw. However, care is still needed, as the above position shows.

1 ♖f7+ ♜h8 2 ♜h5+ ♚g7 3 ♜g4+ ♚h7 4 ♜h5+ ♚g7 5 ♜e5+ ♚h7 6 ♜d5 ♚g7 7 ♜d4+ ♚h7 8 ♜d7+ ♚h8?!

White's check could have been safely met by 8...♚g6, making it harder for White to advance his king.

9 ♚g4 ♜h1+?!

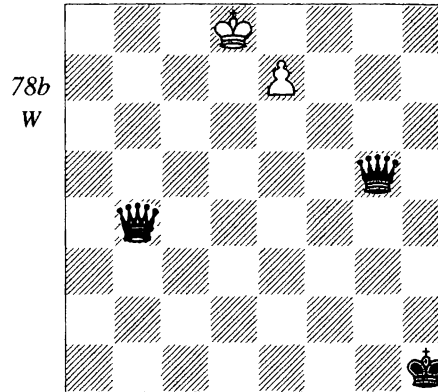
Checking the white king up the board is risky. Not 9...♜h7+? 10 ♜xh7+ ♚xh7 11 ♚h5 and White wins, but 9...♜g6 10 ♜d8+ ♚h7 was better, when the white king cannot advance further.

10 ♚g5 ♜c1+?

Finally throwing away the draw, which could have been secured by 10...♜e4 11 ♚f6 (11 ♚h6 ♜e6+! forces stalemate) 11...♜f3+ 12 ♜f5 ♜c6+ 13 ♚f7 ♜c7+ and White cannot make progress.

11 ♚g6 ♜b1+ 12 ♜f5 1-0

As 12...♜b6+ 13 ♜f6+ ♜xf6+ 14 ♚xf6 ♚g8 15 ♚g6 ♚h8 16 ♚g5 wins for White.



When the defender's king cannot get in front of the pawn, there are good winning chances if the attacker has a c-, d-, e- or f-pawn. We take a simple case with the pawn already on the seventh rank.

1 ♜d4

Centralizing the queen is usually a good strategy. Now White is threatening to win by 2 ♚d7 ♜b5+ 3 ♚c7 ♜a5+ 4 ♚d6 ♜a6+ 5 ♚e5 and Black's checks run out due to the possibility of interposing with check on e4 or d5. Once Black's checks stop, White wins easily; for example, 5...♜c8 6 ♜h4+ ♚g2 7 ♜g5+ with a check on f5 or h5 to come. The idea of exploiting the position of Black's king to interpose with check is one of the key ideas in the whole ending of ♜+♔ vs ♜. It also means that even a slight change in the position of Black's king can force White to change his whole strategy.

1...♚h2

After 1...♚g2 the checks on e4 and d5 remain unchanged, so White can win by executing his threat with 2 ♚d7, etc.

2 ♚d7 ♜b5+ 3 ♚c7 ♜a5+ 4 ♜b6!

White adopts a different plan to take advantage of the new position of Black's king.

4...♜c3+

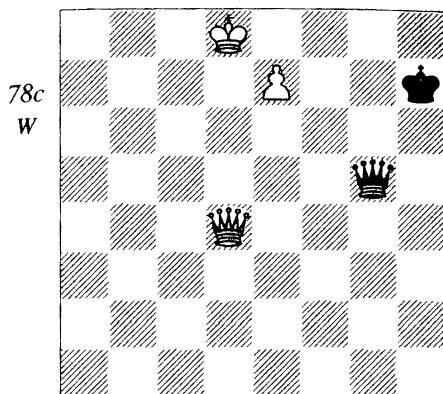
Forced, as 4...♜e5+ is met by 5 ♜d6.

5 ♚b8 ♜h8+

Black cannot check on the h2-b8 diagonal.

6 ♜d8 ♜b2+ 7 ♚c8

and White wins, as a check on the c-file is met by ♜c7+.



78c
W

However, not all positions are won, even with the pawn on the seventh rank. With the pawn on e7, Black may be able to defend with a diagonal pin provided his king is in the h8-corner. Here the black king not only restricts White's manoeuvres with his own king, but it also denies White any convenient possibility to interpose his own queen with check.

1 ♔d7

1 ♕d6 ♔g7 doesn't help White.

1... ♖b5+ 2 ♔e6

Or 2 ♔c7 ♖a5+ 3 ♖b6 ♖e5+ 4 ♕d6 ♖a5+ and Black draws because no interposition by the white queen can be check when Black's king is hidden away on h7.

2... ♗e2+ 3 ♔d6

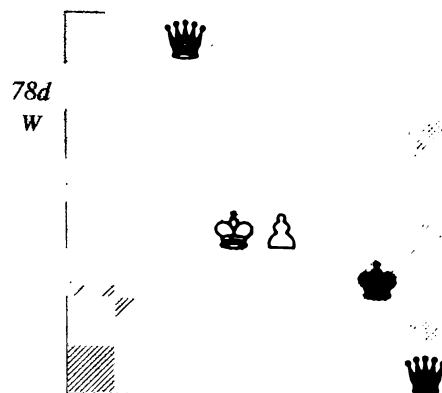
Or 3 ♗e5 ♖a6+ 4 ♕d6 ♖c4+ 5 ♔d7 ♖g4+ 6 ♔d8 ♖g5 and White is not making progress.

3... ♖a6+ 4 ♔e5 ♖b5+ 5 ♕d5 ♖b2+ 6 ♔e6 ♖b6+ 7 ♕d6 ♖e3+ 8 ♔f7 ♖f3+ 9 ♖f6 ♖b3+

There is no escape from the check bombardment and so the position is a draw.

The fact that the above position is a draw has a profound impact on positions with an e-pawn in which the pawn is further back. Such positions tend to be a draw if the black king can reach the h8-corner in time, but are otherwise lost.

While the general principles of ♖+♔ vs ♖ may not be too complicated, the difficulties involved in handling this ending over-the-board can hardly be overstated, and even very strong players often make quite major mistakes.



78d
W

Burmakin – Hernandez Carmenates
Albacete 2(X)7

This position is a win as Black is unable to reach the drawing h8-corner with his king.

1 ♖c7+ ♔f3 2 ♖f7+ ♔g4?!

This makes life much easier for White, since he can advance the pawn straight away. 2... ♔e2! was a better defence, as 3 e5? ♖a1+ 4 ♔e4 ♖b1+ draws at once. Thus White has to manoeuvre before advancing the pawn; e.g., 3 ♖f5 ♖h4 4 ♔d5 ♖d8+ 5 ♔e6 ♖e8+ 6 ♔f6 ♖f8+ 7 ♔g5 ♖g7+ 8 ♔f4 ♖d4 9 ♖b5+ ♔e1 10 ♔f5 ♖f2+ 11 ♔e6 ♖a2+ 12 ♕d5 ♖a6+ 13 ♔f5 ♖f1+ 14 ♔g6 ♖g2+ 15 ♔f7 ♖f3+ 16 ♖f5 ♖b3+ 17 ♖e6 ♖f3+ 18 ♔e7 ♖a3+ 19 ♔f6 ♖f8+ 20 ♔g6 and now the pawn's advance cannot be prevented.

3 ♖f5+

Not only advancing the pawn, but also cutting Black's king off from the h8-corner.

3... ♔g3 4 e5 ♖a1+ 5 ♔d5?!

White is trying to get his king to g6 without allowing ... ♖g8+ in reply, and this could have been achieved more easily by 5 ♔c5! ♖a5+ 6 ♔c6 ♖a4+ 7 ♔c7 ♖a7+ 8 ♔d8 ♖a5+ 9 ♔e8 ♖a8+ 10 ♔e7 ♖b7+ 11 ♔f6.

5... ♖a8+ 6 ♔d6 ♖b8+?!

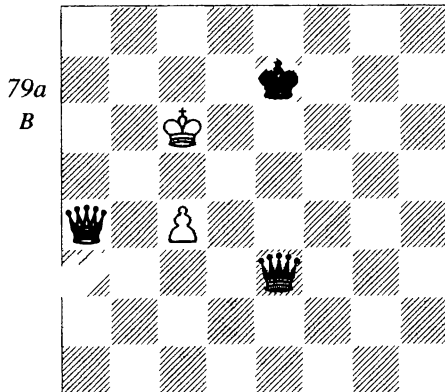
6... ♖d8+! would have forced White to try another plan, as 7 ♔e6? ♖c8+ 8 ♔f6 ♖f8+ 9 ♔g5 ♖g7+ leads to a draw.

7 ♔e7 ♖c7+ 8 ♔f8 ♖c5+ 9 ♔f7 ♖d5+ 10 ♔g7 ♖c5

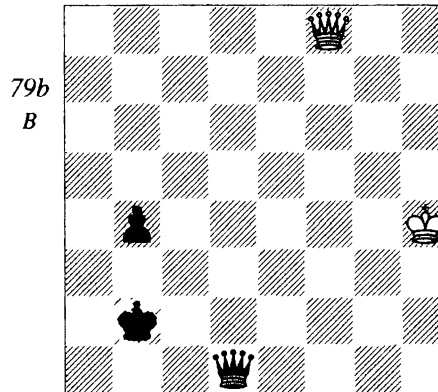
Or 10... ♖b7+ 11 ♔g6, followed by e6. The rest is easy.

11 ♔g6 ♖c7 12 e6 ♖c6 13 ♖f6 ♔g4 14 e7 ♖e8+ 15 ♔g7 ♖c8 16 ♖g6+ 1-0

79 Queen and Pawn vs Queen (2)



Ponomarev – Novikov
Donetsk Zonal 1998



Onishchuk – Zagorskis
Kemer ECC 2007

The situation with a c-pawn or f-pawn is even more favourable than with a central pawn. If the defender's king has no chance to move in front of the pawn, then the position is usually lost. In this position Black's king is fairly close to the pawn, and he can draw with accurate play.

1... ♖e4+ 2 ♔c7 ♜f4+ 3 ♚b7 ♜f3+?

3... ♜f7! is the only drawing move, setting up a discovered check that allows the black king to approach the pawn. After 4 ♜c6 (or 4 c5 ♚d8+!) 4... ♚d8+! 5 ♚b8 ♜f4+ 6 ♚b7 ♜f7+ 7 ♚a6 ♜f1 White cannot make progress.

4 ♜c6!

Now White is winning and the game ended 4... ♜b3+ 5 ♚c8 ♜h3+ 6 ♚b8 ♜h8+ 7 ♚b7 ♜b2+ 8 ♜b5 ♚g2+ 9 ♚a7 ♜d2?! (9... ♜f2+ is better) 10 c5 ♚a2+ 11 ♚a6 ♜f2 12 ♜d6+ ♚e8 13 ♚b8 ♜g1 14 ♜e6+ ♚d8 15 ♜c8+ ♚e7 16 ♜b7+ (16 c6! is quicker) 16... ♚d8?! (16... ♚f6 17 c6 ♜g8+ would have slowed White down) 17 c6 ♜h2+ 18 c7+ ♚d7 19 ♜b5+ ♚e7 20 ♜b4+ (after 20 ♜c5+ ♚f7 21 ♜d4 White occupies the key square d4 and wins quickly) 20... ♚d7 21 ♜a4+ ♚e7 22 ♜a3+?! (22 ♜d4!) 22... ♚f7 23 ♜b3+ ♚e7 24 ♜e3+ ♚f7 25 ♜e4?! ♜b2+ 26 ♚a7 ♜a2+ 27 ♚b6 ♜b2+ 28 ♚c5 ♜a3+ 29 ♚b5 ♜b2+ 30 ♜b4 ♜e5+ 31 ♚c6 ♜f6+ 32 ♜d6 ♜c3+ 33 ♚b7 ♜f3+ 34 ♚b8 ♜b3+ 35 ♚c8 ♜f3? (a blunder; after 35... ♜b2 White would still have to find the winning plan) 36 ♚d8 1-0.

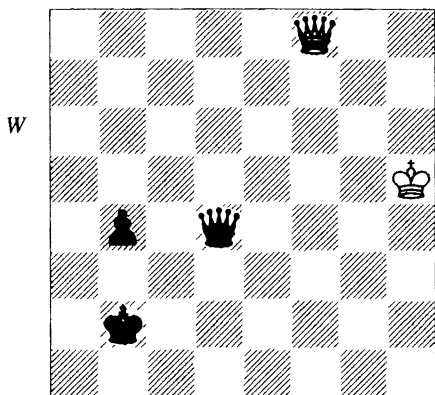
With a b-pawn or g-pawn, the situation is different as there is a new drawing zone. Assuming the defender cannot get his king in front of the pawn, he should move his king towards the corner diagonally opposite the pawn's promotion square. If the defender's king can reach this corner, the position may still be drawn even if the pawn is on the seventh rank.

1... ♜d4+?

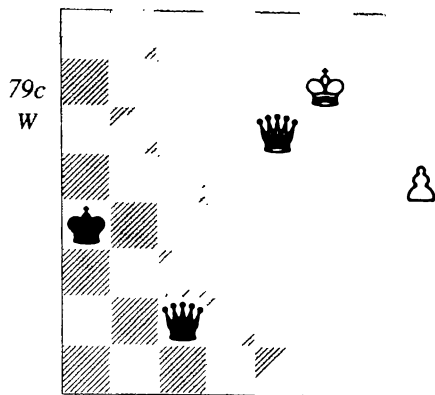
An unnecessary check, giving the defender's king an extra tempo to head towards the safe corner at h8. The winning line runs 1...b3! 2 ♜f2+ ♜c2 3 ♜f6+ ♜c3 4 ♜f2+ ♚c1 5 ♜f1+ ♚c2 6 ♜g2+ ♜d2 7 ♜c6+ ♚b1 8 ♜g6+ ♚c1 9 ♜c6+ ♜c2 10 ♜h1+ ♚b2 11 ♜d5 ♜e2 12 ♚g5 ♚c2 13 ♜c5+ ♚d1 14 ♜g1+ ♚d2 15 ♜d4+ ♜d3 16 ♜b2+ ♜c2 17 ♜d4+ ♚e2 18 ♜g4+ ♚f2 19 ♜d4+ ♚f1 20 ♜f4+ ♚g2 (a typical idea in the ending of ♜+♔ vs ♜: the attacker plays his king to the same rank or file as the defender's king) 21 ♜g4+ ♚h1 22 ♜h3+ ♚g1 (now there is no check on g3) 23 ♜e3+ ♚g2 and the checks run out, after which the pawn can advance decisively.

2 ♚h5? (D)

White could have drawn by 2 ♚g5! b3 (2... ♜b6 doesn't work here as the h-file is not blocked and so 3 ♜h8+ ♚c2 4 ♜h2+ gives White enough checks to draw) 3 ♚h6!, heading for h8 as fast as possible.



79b (continued)



Smejkal - Browne
Wijk aan Zee 1975

2...b3?

It is more important to prevent White's king from reaching h8 than to push the b-pawn. 2...♞b6! would have won; e.g., 3 ♞g7+ ♔b1 4 ♞h7+ ♔c1 and the pawn can advance.

3 ♞f3?

Missing the chance to draw by 3 ♔h6!. Not, however, 3 ♔g6? ♔c2 4 ♞c8+ ♔d2 and there are no more checks.

3...♔c2

Black is now winning, but the rest of the game featured several twists and turns: 4 ♞g2+ ♞d2? (4...♔c3! 5 ♞c6+ ♔d3 6 ♞g6+ ♞e4 7 ♞g3+ ♞e3 8 ♞d6+ ♔e4 9 ♞e6+ ♔f4 10 ♞f6+ ♔g3 is correct, since after 11 ♞h4+ ♔g2 12 ♞g4+ ♔h2 the checks run out) 5 ♞g6+? (5 ♞c6+! ♞c3 6 ♞g2+ draws) 5...♔c1 6 ♞c6+ ♞c2 7 ♞h6+ ♔b1? (7...♔d1! 8 ♞d6+ ♞d2 is the right way to stop the checks) 8 ♞e3! (the only drawing move) 8...♞d1+ (8...b2 9 ♞e1+ is perpetual check) 9 ♔h4? (the wrong way; 9 ♔h6?? loses to 9...♞c1, but 9 ♔g6! would have drawn) 9...b2 10 ♞e4+ ♔c1? (10...♔a2! 11 ♞a8+ ♔b3 is correct, since after 12 ♞b8+ ♔c2 13 ♞c7+ ♔b1 or 12 ♞b7+ ♔a3! 13 ♞e7+ ♔a2 14 ♞a7+ ♔b1 the king returns to b1, but with White's queen misplaced) 11 ♞c4+? (11 ♞c6+ draws after 11...♞c2 12 ♞h1+ or 11...♔b1 12 ♞g6+) 11...♞c2 (Black could still return by 11...♔b1 12 ♞e4+ ♔a2) 12 ♞f1+ ♔d2? (finally throwing away the win; 12...♞d1, retracing his steps, would still have won) 13 ♞f2+ ♔c3 14 ♞c5+ ♔b3 15 ♞b6+ ♔a3 16 ♞d6+ ♔b3 17 ♞b6+ ♔c3 18 ♞c5+ ♔d2 19 ♞g5+ 1/2-1/2.

The situation with an a-pawn or h-pawn is similar to that with a knight's pawn, except that there are far more drawn positions. Again, if the defender cannot get his king in front of the pawn, he should play it to the corner diagonally opposite the pawn's promotion square.

1 h6 ♞h7+?

The check throws away the draw. Black should have immediately headed for the safety zone by 1...♔a3 with a draw after, for example, 2 ♞h3+ ♔a2 3 h7 ♞f2+.

2 ♔e8 ♞h8+?!

It's too late to head for a1, since 2...♔a3? loses to 3 ♞e7+.

3 ♔e7 ♞h7+

Black could have put up more resistance by 3...♔a3!.

4 ♔d8 ♔a5 5 ♞e5+ ♔a4 6 ♞g7 ♞e4 7 ♞d7+ ♔b3 8 h7 ♞h4+ 9 ♔c8 ♞c4+ 10 ♔b7 ♞e4+ 11 ♔a7 ♞e3+ 12 ♔a8 ♞c3 13 ♞f7+?!

White starts to lose the thread; 13 ♞b7+ ♔a4 14 ♞a7+ ♔b5 15 ♞b8+ ♔a6 16 ♞d6+ ♔b5 17 ♔b7 is correct, as the checks run out after 17...♞f3+ 18 ♔b8 or 17...♞g7+ 18 ♞c7 ♞g2+? 19 ♔c8.

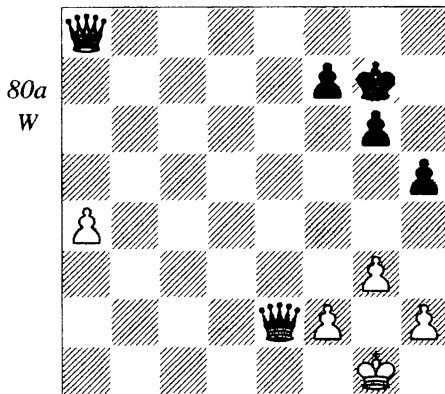
13...♔c2 14 ♞g6+ ♔b2 15 ♞b6+ ♔c2 16 ♔b7 ♞h8 17 ♞g6+ ♔d2 18 ♞f5 ♞g7+?!

18...♔d1 is a tougher defence. Now White wins more or less smoothly.

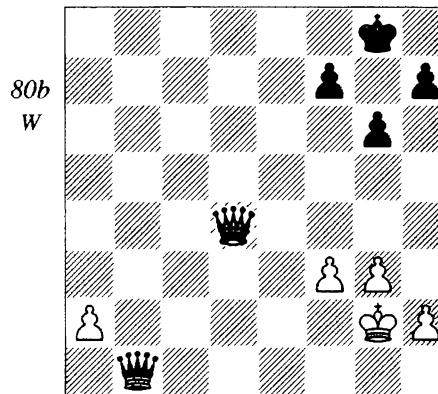
19 ♔c6 ♞h8 20 ♔d7 ♔c1 21 ♔e7 ♞g7+ 22 ♔e6 ♞h8 23 ♞g5+ ♔c2 24 ♞g6+ ♔d2 25 ♔f7 ♞d4 26 ♞h6+ ♔c2 27 h8 ♞ ♞d7+ 28 ♔g8 ♞d5+ 29 ♔h7 1-0

80

King Safety



Romanishin – Mnatsakanian
Erevan 1980



Andersson – Lau
Bundesliga 1999/00

A queen is fully capable of delivering perpetual check on its own, so king safety is an important consideration for the attacker. In this position, White's queen already occupies the long diagonal, so on g2 the king is relatively safe from checks. Black's only hope lies in opening some more lines on the kingside.

1 h4

1 ♖d5 is also not totally clear, as after 1...h4 2 ♖d4+ f6 3 ♖xh4 ♖d1+ 4 ♔g2 ♖d5+ 5 f3 ♖d2+ 6 ♔h3 g5 7 ♖e4 ♖d7+ 8 g4 ♖d1 Black has counterplay against White's king.

1...f5?

1...g5! was Black's only chance; after 2 ♖d5 (2 hxg5 h4 gives Black good drawing chances after 3 gxh4 ♖g4+ 4 ♖g2 ♖xh4 5 a5 ♖d4 or 3 ♔g2 hxg3 4 ♖f3 ♖c2 5 a5 gxf2) 2...gxh4 3 gxh4 f6 4 a5 ♔h6 White's king is more exposed than in the game and it is hard to advance the a-pawn without allowing a barrage of checks.

2 ♔g2 ♖c4

2...f4 3 ♖b7+ ♔h6 4 ♖f3 also wins.

3 ♖a7+ ♔h6 4 ♖e3+ ♔h7 5 ♖e7+ ♔h6 6 ♖e5 ♔h7 7 a5

White's king is totally secure and the a-pawn can safely advance.

7...♖a4

Or 7...♖c6+ 8 ♔h2 ♖c2 9 ♖e7+ ♔g8 10 ♖e3 ♖a2 11 ♖b6 followed by a6 and a7.

8 ♖c7+ ♔g8 9 ♖b8+ ♔h7 10 ♖b7+ ♔h6 11 a6 f4 12 a7 f3+ 13 ♔xf3 1-0

This position is drawn, as White's f-pawn is on f3, which leaves his king more exposed. His only winning chance is to play his king to the queenside to support the a-pawn.

1 ♖d2 h5 2 a4 ♖a1 3 a5 ♔h7 4 f4

It isn't so easy to transfer the king to the queenside; for example, after 4 ♖d5 ♔g8 5 h4 ♖b2+ 6 ♔f1 ♖c1+ 7 ♔e2 ♖c2+ 8 ♔e3 ♖c3+ White's route is blocked.

4...♖a3 5 ♖d5 ♔g8 6 f5 ♖e3 7 ♖b5

7 fxg6 allows immediate perpetual check by 7...♖e2+ 8 ♔h3 (or 8 ♔g1 ♖e1+) 8...♖g4+.

7...g5 8 a6 g4 9 ♔f1 ♔h7?

Simply 9...♖f3+! 10 ♔e1 (10 ♔g1 ♖e3+) 10...♖e3+ 11 ♖e2 (11 ♔d1 ♖g1+) 11...♖c1+ would have drawn comfortably.

10 f6 ♔g6 11 ♖c4 ♖f3+ 12 ♔e1 ♖xf6?!

12...♖e3+ 13 ♔d1 ♖g1+ 14 ♔d2 ♖xh2+ 15 ♔c3 ♖g1 was a better idea. The text-move allows the white king to reach the queenside.

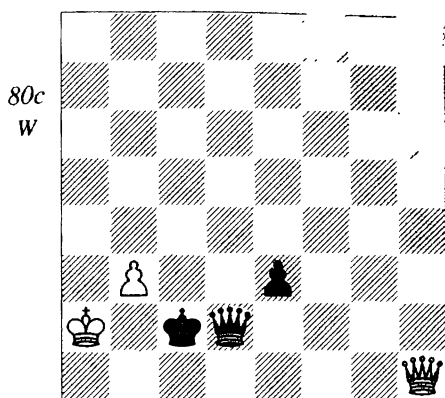
13 ♔d2 ♖b6 14 ♔d3 ♖d6+ 15 ♔c2 ♖b6 16 ♔c3 ♖a5+ 17 ♔b3 f6 18 ♖e4+ ♔g5 19 ♖e3+?

White should have tried 19 ♖b7! ♖e1 20 ♖d7 ♖e3+ 21 ♔a4 ♖e4+ 22 ♔a5 ♖e1+ 23 ♔b6 ♖e3+ 24 ♔b7, with fair winning chances.

19...♔g6 20 a7 ♖b5+

Now Black has perpetual check.

21 ♔c3 ♖a5+ 22 ♔c4 ♖a4+ 23 ♔d3 ♖a3+ 24 ♔e2 ♖a2+ 25 ♔f1 ♖a1+ 26 ♔g2 ♖a2+ 27 ♖f2 ♖d5+ 28 ♔f1 ♖d3+ 29 ♖e2 ♖b1+ 30 ♔f2 ♖f5+ 31 ♔g2 ♖d5+ 32 ♔f1 ♖f5+ 1/2-1/2



Smirin – Tukmakov
Solin 1999

Perpetual check can strike out of the blue, as in this example. Note also the persistent problems White suffers because his own king is stuck on the edge of the board and in constant danger.

1 ♖c6+ ♔d1+?!

Here Black could have won more easily by 1...♔d3+ 2 ♔b1 ♖c3 3 ♖d6+ ♔e2 4 ♖h2+ ♔e1 5 ♖h1+ ♔d2 6 ♖g2+ e2.

2 ♔b1 ♖d3+ 3 ♔b2 ♖d2+?!

Not 3...e2?? at once due to 4 ♖c1#. However, the text-move heads in the wrong direction; Black should have continued 3...♖d4+ 4 ♔b1 ♖f4!, although this is quite hard to spot.

4 ♔b1 e2?

Black should have backtracked by 4...♖d3+.

5 ♖f3?

Missing an immediate draw by 5 ♖h1+ e1 ♖6 ♖f3+ ♖de2 7 ♖d5+ ♖1d2 8 ♖h1+, etc.

5...♖d4

5...♖c1+ 6 ♔a2 ♖g5! is more incisive.

6 ♔a2

6 ♖f5 puts up more of a fight, but should still lose in the long run.

6...♔d2 7 ♖g2 ♖a7+ 8 ♔b2 ♖d4+ 9 ♔a2 ♖e5 10 b4 ♔d3 11 ♖f3+

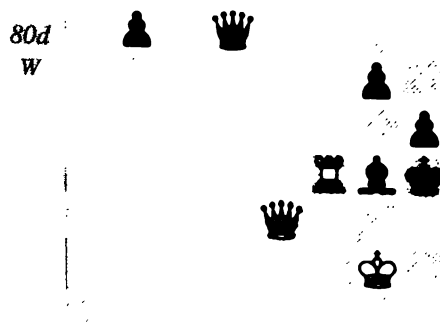
Or 11 ♖g6+ ♖e4 12 ♖g3+ ♖e3 13 ♖g6+ ♔d2 14 ♖g2 ♔c2 and Black wins.

11...♖e3

11...♔c2 is quicker.

12 ♖d5+ ♖d4 13 ♖f3+ ♔d2 14 ♖g2 ♖xb4 15 ♖f2 ♖c4+ 16 ♔b2 ♖c3+ 0-1

Black wins after 17 ♔a2 ♔d1.



M. Matouš (end of study)
3rd Special Honourable Mention.
Československý Šach. 1999

A queen is so powerful that it can deliver mate with only a little help from other pieces. There are countless examples of players quietly manoeuvring in a queen ending only to allow a snap mate. The reasons are partly psychological: when you are in 'endgame mode', it is easy to overlook typical middlegame possibilities such as mating attacks. In the diagram, Black has three pawns for the exchange, and many players would be happy to draw as White. However, he has a surprising forced win.

1 ♖xg4+! ♖xg4+

The only move, as 1...hxg4 2 ♖h6# and 1...♔xg4 2 ♖h3+ lose at once.

2 ♔h2 b6

Black's queen must cover the mate on g3, and 2...♖g5 runs into 3 ♖h3#. Since 2...g5 3 ♖f2+ also leads to immediate mate, moving the b-pawn is the only viable possibility.

3 ♖e7+! ♖g5 4 ♖e4+ ♖g4 5 ♖e3

This little manoeuvre passes the move to Black, who is again forced to push his b-pawn. White simply repeats the same manoeuvre until the b-pawn reaches b4, when White can take it with gain of tempo.

5...b5 6 ♖e7+ ♖g5 7 ♖c4+ ♖g4 8 ♖e3 b4 9 ♖e7+ ♖g5 10 ♖xb4+ ♖g4

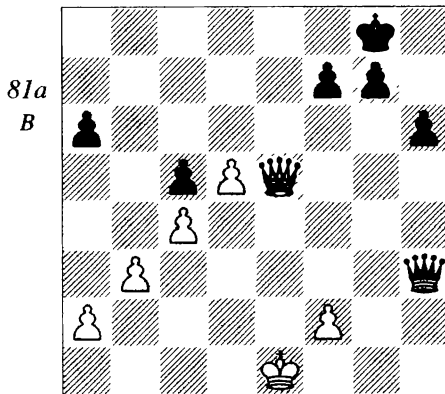
One final shuffle with the queen finishes Black off.

11 ♖e7+ ♖g5 12 ♖e4+ ♖g4 13 ♖e3

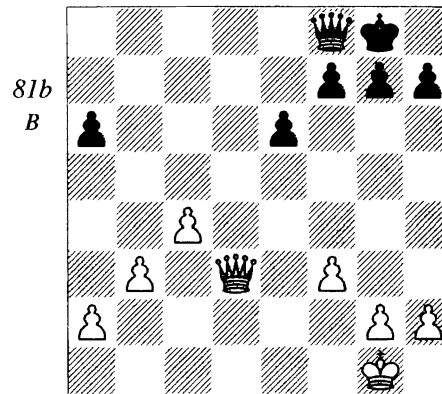
and White wins.

81

Passed Pawns



Seirawan – Lutz
Lugano 1987



Nunn – Ljubojević
Belgrade 1991

Passed pawns are especially dangerous in queen endings because it is often possible for a queen to force a pawn through to the eighth rank all on its own. Therefore a strong passed pawn can be worth several pawns.

1... ♖h1+ 2 ♕e2 ♜b1 3 d6!

White pushes his pawn, even at the cost of two queenside pawns.

3... ♜xa2+ 4 ♕f1 ♜xb3 5 ♖d5?!

Missing the finesse 5 ♜e8+! ♕h7 6 ♜e4+, when after 6...g6 7 ♖d5 ♜h3+ 8 ♕e2 ♖d7 9 ♜xc5 or 6...♔g8 7 ♖a8+ ♕h7 8 ♖d5 ♜h3+ 9 ♕e2 ♖d7 10 ♜xc5 Black's king is too far away to help fight against White's passed pawns.

5... ♜h3+!

5... ♜b1+? 6 ♕g2 ♜g6+ 7 ♕h3 transposes to the game at move 10.

6 ♕e1 ♜c3+?

The only chance was 6... ♖d7! 7 ♜xc5 ♕f8, using the king to help against White's pawns. After 8 ♕d2 ♕e8 9 ♖d5 ♜e6 it isn't easy for White to make progress due to the danger of perpetual check.

7 ♕e2 ♜b2+ 8 ♕f1 ♜b1+ 9 ♕g2

Black's queen cannot now reach d7, and so White wins without difficulty.

9... ♜g6+ 10 ♕h3 h5 11 d7 ♜g4+ 12 ♕h2 ♜h4+ 13 ♕g2 ♖d8 14 ♕f1 g6 15 ♜c6 ♕h7 16 ♜c8 ♜h4 17 d8 ♜h1+ 18 ♕e2 ♜e4+ 19 ♕d2 ♜f4+ 20 ♕d1 ♜f3+ 21 ♕c2 ♜e2+ 22 ♖d2 ♜xc4+ 23 ♖c3 ♜e2+ 24 ♕b3 ♜b5+ 25 ♕a3 1-0

If the passed pawn is blockaded by the enemy queen, the blockade can often be removed by driving the queen away with another pawn, or by offering the exchange of queens.

1... ♜c5+ 2 ♕f1 h5

White is a pawn ahead, but for the moment his queenside pawns are blockaded.

3 ♜c3

Seeking to set the pawns in motion by playing b4.

3...h4

Aiming for counterplay by attacking White's kingside pawns. After 3...a5 4 h4 ♕f8 5 ♕e2, followed by ♜e3, White lifts the blockade by offering the exchange of queens.

4 b4 ♖d6 5 c5!

As in 81a, White is willing to surrender material in order to press ahead with his passed pawn.

5... ♜xh2 6 c6 ♜c7

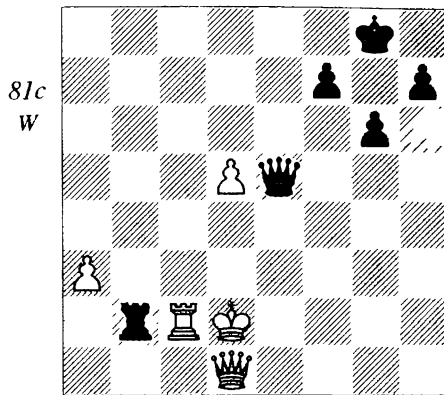
After 6...h3 7 gxf3 ♜xh3+ 8 ♕e2 ♜h2+ 9 ♕d3 ♖d6+ 10 ♕c2 White's king escapes the checks.

7 a4

White will dislodge Black's queen by pushing his pawn to b6.

7... ♕f8 8 b5 axb5 9 axb5 g5 10 b6 ♜xb6 11 c7 ♜b1+ 12 ♕e2 ♜b5+ 13 ♕e1 ♜b1+ 14 ♕d2 1-0

After 14... ♖a2+ 15 ♕c1 the checks are at an end and the pawn promotes.



81c
W

Prié – Mercier
French Team Ch 1991

A passed pawn can also help the defender and is sometimes sufficient to save the game despite a deficit of one or more pawns.

1 ♖xb2

White correctly exchanges rooks even at the cost of his a-pawn.

1... ♜xb2+ 2 ♜c2 ♜xa3

Black is two pawns ahead, but the dangerous d-pawn gives White good drawing chances.

3 ♜c6 ♜f3 4 ♜d7?

A mistake, which slows White down by blocking the pawn. After **4 ♜c5! ♜f5 5 ♜d4** White has good drawing chances; for example, **5... ♔f8 6 d6 ♔e8 7 ♜e3+ ♜e6 8 ♜b6** and Black cannot make progress.

4... ♔g7 5 d6 h5 6 ♜c7 ♜f4+ 7 ♔c2 h4

Black sets his own pawns in motion.

8 ♜c3+ ♔h7 9 ♜d3 ♜a4+ 10 ♔d2 ♜d7 11 ♔e2 h3?

The h-pawn advances too quickly and becomes weak. Black should have tried to advance his pawns in a mass by **11...f5! 12 ♔f2 g5**, followed by **...♔g6**, when he has good winning chances.

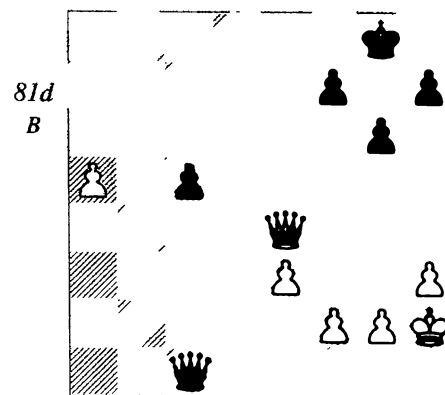
12 ♔f2

Intending **♔g3**, when Black's pawns are blockaded.

12... ♜g4

Or **12... ♔h6 13 ♔g3 g5 14 ♜d4 ♔g6 15 ♜d3+** and draws.

13 ♜d5! h2 14 ♜xf7+ ♔h6 15 ♜f8+ ♔h7 16 ♜f7+ ♔h6 17 ♜f8+ ♔h7 18 ♜f7+ 1/2-1/2



81d
B

L'Ami – Humpy Koneru
Wijk aan Zee 2008

When both sides have passed pawns, accurate calculation is necessary. It may even happen that both sides promote; then, with four queens on the board, whoever gets the first check or sets up the first major threat often wins.

1... ♜a1 2 ♜a8+

Black is hoping to exchange the two passed pawns. Then, despite being a pawn down Black would have good drawing chances as all the remaining pawns would be on the same side of the board. Thus **2 ♜e8+ ♔g7 3 ♜b5 c4** makes life easy for Black, as the exchange of pawns would then be forced.

2... ♔g7 3 a6 c4 4 ♜a7 ♜e5+?

Missing the defence **4...c3! 5 ♜d4+ ♔g8 6 a7 ♜a5!**, when White cannot do better than reach an ending of ♜+4Δ vs ♜+3Δ, as mentioned above.

5 f4 ♜f6?!

After **5... ♜a1 6 ♜d4+ ♜xd4 7 exd4 c3 8 a7 c2 9 a8 ♜c1 ♜ 10 ♜b8** White enjoys excellent winning chances as he now has a passed pawn, but this would have been better than the forced loss which now ensues.

6 ♜b7!

Accurately calculating the following line.

6...c3 7 a7 c2 8 a8 ♜c1 ♜ 9 ♜bb8!

White makes the first serious threat and now has a decisive attack.

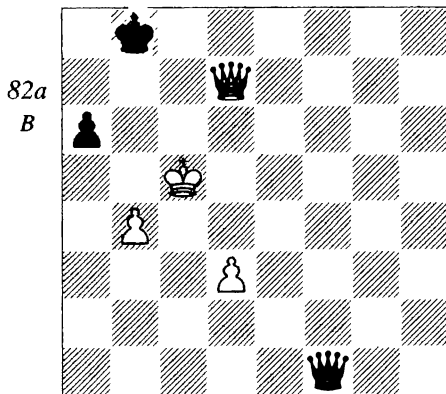
9... ♔h6 10 ♜f8+ ♜g7 11 ♜ad8 f6

Or **11... ♜xf8 12 ♜xf8+ ♔h5 13 g4+ mating.**

12 ♜dxf6 1-0

82

Active King



Spassky – Ribli
Manila Interzonal 1976

In most endings, an active king is a benefit, and queen endings are no exception. Although one must be aware of the danger of perpetual check, favourable positions are more likely to be converted into a win if they are accompanied by an active king. In the diagram, White has an extra pawn which might or might not be enough to win by itself, but thanks to his active king the route to victory is relatively straightforward.

1... ♖a1

Setting a trap: if 2 ♜b6? then 2... ♜f6+ 3 ♜c6 ♜d4+ leads to a draw.

2 ♜d4

White's queen moves to a commanding central square and now White's king can safely advance to b6.

2... ♜c1+ 3 ♜b6 ♜h6+

Or else the a6-pawn falls at once.

4 ♜a5 ♜b7 5 ♜d7+ ♜b8 6 d4

The simplest; with all White's pieces in active positions, the d-pawn starts to advance.

6... ♜f6 7 d5 ♜a1+ 8 ♜a4 ♜h8

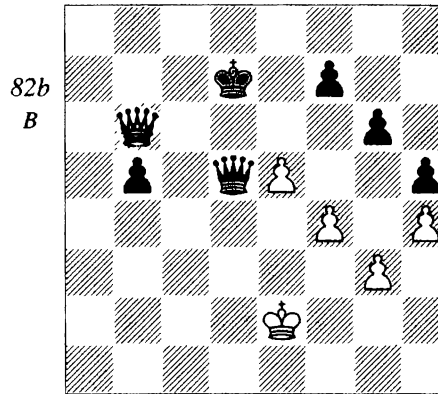
8... ♜e5 is also met by 9 ♜c6.

9 ♜c6 ♜b2

Or 9... ♜a1+ 10 ♜b6 ♜d4+ 11 ♜c5 and White wins.

10 ♜e8+ ♜b7 11 ♜e7+ 1-0

After 11... ♜b8 12 ♜xa6 ♜a1+ 13 ♜b6 ♜d4+ 14 ♜c5 ♜f6+ 15 d6 it's all over for Black.



Kempinski – Rustemov
Bundesliga 2005/6

If the king isn't in an active position initially, it may be possible to advance it, although such a procedure demands considerable care. In this position, Black's passed b-pawn gives him the advantage, but this is unlikely to be enough to win by itself. Black therefore evolves the plan of penetrating with his king to g4.

1... ♜g2+ 2 ♜d1 ♜c6 3 ♜a7+?!

3 ♜e3 is better, although 3... ♜d5+ 4 ♜c2 ♜c4+ 5 ♜d2 ♜e6 maintains Black's advantage.

3... ♜e6 4 ♜e1 ♜d5?!

Consistent, but just at this moment 4...b4! would have been very awkward.

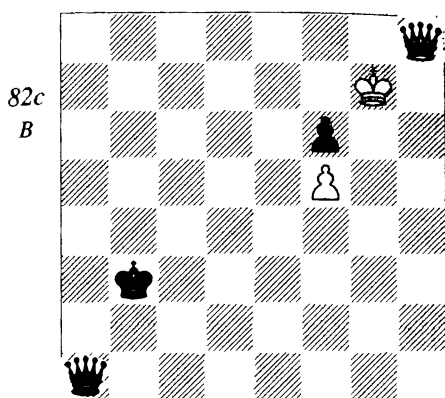
5 ♜f2 ♜f5 6 ♜c7 ♜g4

The king has reached its destination and White is in a critical situation.

7 ♜c8+ ♜e6 8 ♜c2?

8 ♜a8! was the only chance, stopping the check on a2 and preparing White's own check on f3. However, White remains under pressure after 8... ♜c4 9 ♜f3+ ♜f5 10 ♜b7 b4.

After 8 ♜c2?, the logical conclusion to Black's plan would have been 8... ♜h3! 9 ♜d3 ♜c4 10 ♜d7+ ♜h2, with a winning position. Instead Black played 8... ♜b6+?, and the game ended 9 ♜g2 ♜b7+ 10 ♜h2 ♜d5 11 ♜e2+? (11 e6! fxe6 12 ♜xg6+ ♜f3 13 ♜c2 still puts up a fight) 11... ♜f3 12 ♜e1 ♜d3 13 e6 ♜c2+ 14 ♜g1 fxe6 15 ♜xe6+ ♜xg3 16 ♜e3+ ♜xh4 17 ♜e5 ♜f5 18 ♜d4 ♜g4 19 ♜b4 h4 20 ♜d6 ♜e4 21 ♜h2 ♜xf4+ 0-1.



Antunes – Miles
Andorra 1995

The situation in which one king is much nearer the remaining pawn(s) than the other is common in practice, especially if both sides have just promoted. This can confer a large or even decisive advantage.

1...♞e5?

A serious error, missing the chance to force an immediate perpetual check by 1...♞g1+ 2 ♠f7 ♞a7+ 3 ♠g8 (White can never take on f6 due to the skewer) 3...♞b8+ 4 ♠h7 ♞h2+, etc.

2 ♞h3+ ♠c4 3 ♠g6?

We already know from Section 79 that in ♞+♠ vs ♞, the best pawn to have is the f-pawn (or the c-pawn, or course), and indeed White could have won here by 3 ♞h4+ ♠d3 4 ♞xf6.

3...♠c5?

The last chance to draw lay in 3...♞e8+! 4 ♠xf6 ♞f8+ 5 ♠g5 ♞g7+ 6 ♠f4 ♞d4+ and the white king is chased far away.

4 ♞a3+ ♠c6 5 ♞a6+ ♠d7 6 ♞xf6 ♞g3+ 7 ♞g5 ♞d3 8 ♠g7 ♠e8 9 ♞g6+ ♠d7 10 f6 ♞c3 11 ♞e4?!

The quickest win for White is 11 ♞f5+! ♠e8 (or 11...♠c7 12 ♠h7) 12 ♠h8 ♞c6 13 ♞g6+ ♠d8 14 ♞g8+ ♠c7 15 ♞g7+ ♠b8 16 f7.

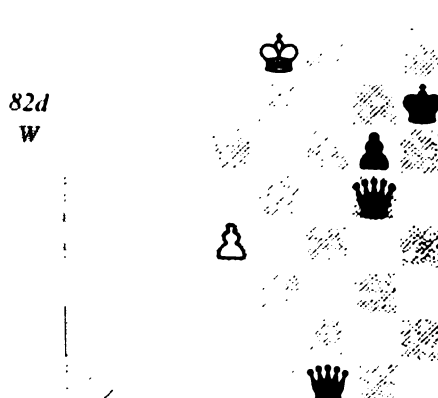
11...♠d8?!

11...♞g3+ would have forced White to retrace his steps by 12 ♞g6.

12 ♞d5+ ♠c8 13 ♠f7 ♞h3?

A blunder, but 13...♠c7 14 ♠g6 ♞g3+ 15 ♞g5 ♞d3+ 16 ♠h6 ♞h3+ 17 ♠g7 ♞c3 18 ♠g8 is also hopeless.

14 ♞e6+ ♞xe6+ 15 ♠xe6 ♠d8 16 f7 1-0



Z. Modlitba (correction by J. Nunn)
Šachová Skladba, 1986

Finally, an active king position can be the springboard for a direct attack on the enemy king. Here White's only route to victory lies in the unexpected sacrifice of his only pawn.

1 d5 ♞b5+

A check on the e-file can be met by ♞c7+, so this is the only viable check. After other moves, White wins with his d-pawn.

2 ♠f7!

After 2 ♠e7? ♞b7+ 3 ♠e6 ♞c8+ 4 ♠e5 (for 4 ♠f7 ♞c7+! see 3 ♠f8? below) 4...♞c3+ there is no reasonable way to escape the checks.

2...♞d7+

Black must check in view of White's mating threats. After 2...♞b7+ 3 ♞e7! ♞xd5+ play transposes to the main line.

3 ♞e7!

After 3 ♠f8? ♞c8+! 4 ♠f7 Black need not repeat moves, but can draw by 4...♞c7+ 5 ♞e7 ♞f4+ 6 ♠e8+ ♠g8 7 d6 ♞a4+ 8 d7 ♞a8+! 9 d8 ♞c6+ with perpetual check.

3...♞xd5+

Or 3...♞f5+ 4 ♠e8+ and White wins after 4...♠h6 5 ♞f8+ or 4...♠g8 5 ♞e6+.

4 ♠f6+

White has a winning attack. First of all, he forces Black's queen to the passive square h5.

4...♠h6 5 ♞e3+ ♠h7 6 ♞h3+ ♠g8 7 ♞c8+ ♠h7 8 ♞c7+ ♠h6 9 ♞h2+ ♞h5

The finish involves a quiet move.

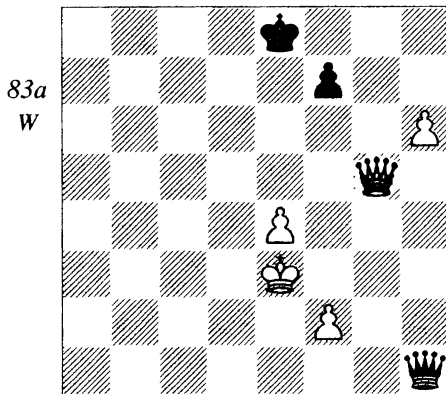
10 ♞f4+ g5 11 ♞f5!

11 ♞e4! is equally good.

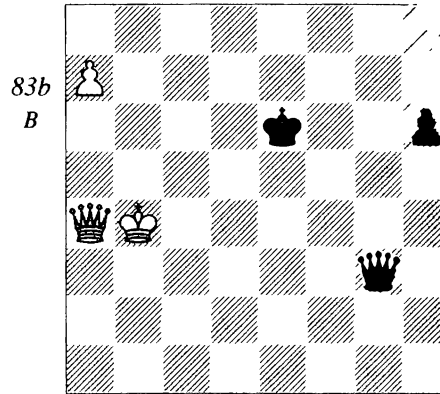
11...g4 12 ♞f4+ ♠h7 13 ♞c7+
and White mates.

83

Escaping the Checks



Morozovich – Gelfand

Russian Team Ch, Dagomys 2008

Aronian – Bu Xiangzhi

Stepanakert 2005

We have already seen that the possibility of perpetual check is a key resource for the defender in queen endings. The attacker must often calculate accurately whether he can escape from a barrage of checks. In the diagram, playing ♖g8+ followed by h7 decides the game at once provided Black cannot give perpetual check. Moving the white queen away from the centre increases the chances of a perpetual, so it is necessary to take care with such manoeuvres. In this case the checks do indeed come to an end.

1 ♖g8+! ♜e7 2 h7 ♜e1+ 3 ♜f3 ♜h1+ 4 ♜f4 ♜h2+

Or 4... ♜h4+ 5 ♜e3 ♜h3+ 6 f3 ♜h6+ 7 f4, transposing to the game at move 14.

5 ♜e3 ♜h6+ 6 ♜e2

6 f4 would have been quicker (see move 14), but White risks nothing by manoeuvring with his king first.

6... ♜a6+ 7 ♜f3 ♜d3+ 8 ♜f4 ♜d6+ 9 ♜g4 ♜d1+ 10 ♜g3 ♜g1+ 11 ♜f3 ♜h1+ 12 ♜f4 ♜h2+ 13 ♜e3 ♜h6+ 14 f4! ♜b6+

White also wins after 14... ♜h3+ 15 ♜d2 ♜h2+ (15... ♜d7+ 16 ♜e1) 16 ♜c3 ♜h3+ 17 ♜b4 and there are no more checks.

15 ♜f3 ♜b3+ 16 ♜g4 ♜e6+

16... ♜d1+ 17 ♜f5 ♜d7+ (or 17... ♜h5+ 18 ♜g5+) 18 ♜g5 ♜b5+ 19 ♜h4 wins for White.

17 ♜g3 ♜xe4 18 ♜g5+

White activates his queen before promoting.

18...f6 19 ♜c5+ ♜f7 20 h8♚ 1-0

Black can draw, but he must start with the correct check. The key point is that when the white king is on b6, Black cannot check on d6 due to ♜c6, while after a check on the b-file White plays ♜b5 and soon escapes the checks. Likewise, a check on e3, f2 or g1 is met by ♜b7, with again an early end to the checks as Black cannot check on e7. Thus the only good check is on d8.

1... ♜f4+?

1... ♜d6+! was the only drawing move; after 2 ♜c3 (2 ♜b5 ♜d7+ 3 ♜b4 ♜d4+ is an immediate draw, while 2 ♜a5 ♜c7+ 3 ♜a6 ♜c8+ 4 ♜b6 ♜d8+! 5 ♜b7 ♜e7+ keeps the checks going) 2... ♜g3+ 3 ♜b2 ♜f2+ 4 ♜a1 ♜g1+ White cannot stop Black's checks.

2 ♜b5! ♜e5+

Black is doomed because he cannot arrange to meet ♜b6 by ... ♜d8+ (if 2... ♜g5+, then 3 ♜a6). White also wins after 2... ♜f5+ 3 ♜a6 ♜f1+ 4 ♜b5 ♜a1+ 5 ♜b6 ♜d4+ 6 ♜c5 ♜b2+ 7 ♜a6 ♜a2+ 8 ♜b7 ♜d7 9 ♜c7+ (but not 9 a8♚? ♜g2+, drawing) 9... ♜e6 10 a8♚.

3 ♜b6!

Not 3 ♜a6? ♜d6+ and Black escapes.

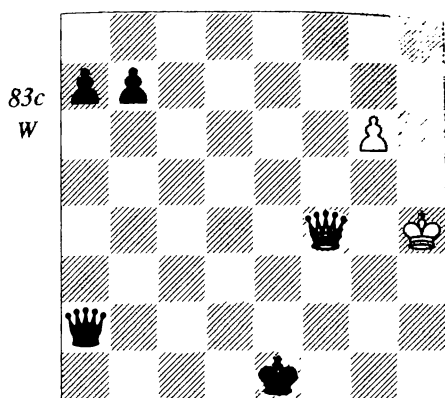
3... ♜b2+ 4 ♜a6 ♜g2

Black also loses after 4... ♜e2+ 5 ♜b5 ♜a2+ 6 ♜b7.

5 ♜e8+ ♜d6 6 ♜d8+

6 a8♚ also wins, but White plays safe by activating his queen before promoting.

6... ♜c5 7 ♜f8+ 1-0



Ponomariov – Turov
Kharkov 2001

It is quite common for the attacker to make use of enemy pawns to help shield him from checks. In this relatively simple case, the black pawns provide an excellent hiding place on a8. Although Black can give plenty of checks, he cannot prevent the king from reaching its destination.

1 g7 ♖g8 2 ♜f8!

It is worth repeating the point that decentralizing the queen increases the chances of the defender giving perpetual check, so it is necessary to take care before playing moves such as this one.

2... ♜c4+ 3 ♔g5 ♜d5+ 4 ♔f6

This position would be a draw without the two black pawns, but as it is Black cannot prevent White's king from reaching a8.

4... ♜c6+ 5 ♔e7 ♜c7+ 6 ♔e6 ♜c6+

Black does his best to prevent the king's passage to a8, but he cannot hold out forever.

7 ♜d6 ♜c4+

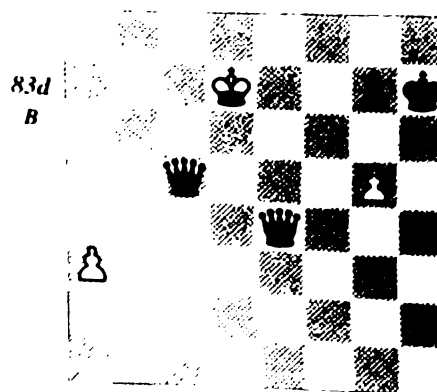
White also wins after **7... ♜c8+ 8 ♔f7 ♜f5+ 9 ♜f6 ♜h5+ 10 ♔f8** or **7... ♜e8+ 8 ♔f6**.

8 ♔d7 ♜a4+ 9 ♔d8 ♜b3

If Black keeps checking, then White wins by **9... ♜a5+ 10 ♔c8 ♜c3+ 11 ♜c7 ♜h3+ 12 ♔b8 ♜g4 13 ♜f7 ♜g3+ 14 ♔a8**.

10 ♜f8 1-0

The finish might be **10... ♜d5+ 11 ♔c8 ♜e6+ 12 ♔b8 ♜e5+ 13 ♔a8**.



Van Wely – Papaloannou
Bled Olympiad 2002

This position should be a draw. White's extra pawn is a rook's pawn, and his queen has limited mobility as it must defend the g5-pawn. However, White can cause Black some problems by playing his king to b2, to take advantage of a possible interposition by ♜c2+. Spotting such squares is a key idea when fighting to prevent perpetual check.

1... ♜b7+ 2 ♔d6 ♜b8+ 3 ♔c6 ♜c8+

3... ♜b3, preventing a4 and keeping the white king in the upper part of the board, was simpler.

4 ♔b6 ♜b8+ 5 ♔a5 ♜d8+ 6 ♔b4 ♜d2+

The checks run out once the king reaches b2; for example, **6... ♜b8+ 7 ♔c3 ♜g3+ 8 ♔b2 ♜b8+ 9 ♔a1**. However, it is still not easy to advance the a-pawn.

7 ♔b3 ♜d3+ 8 ♔b2 ♜d7

Black has no check, so he prevents a4.

9 ♔c3 ♜g4 10 ♜b5

Covering a4 ready to push the a-pawn, and setting up a possible interposition on d3.

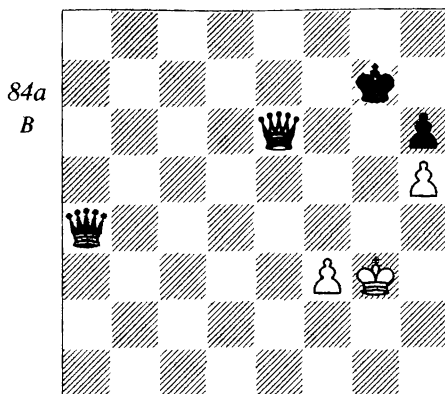
10... ♜c8+ 11 ♔d2 ♔h8?

Black seeks to prevent the check on d3, but this is a blunder. He should have continued **11... ♜g4**, since after **12 a4 ♜f4+ 13 ♔c2 ♜f2+ 14 ♔c3 ♜e1+** Black's checks are hard to stop.

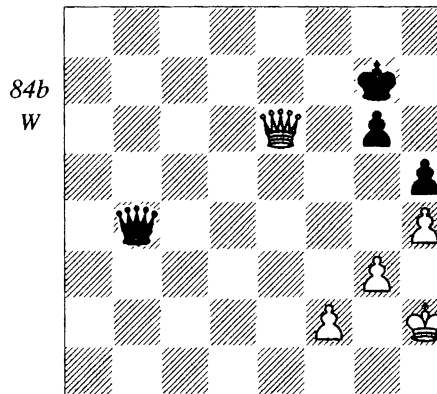
After the move played, White could have won quickly by **12 g6!**, setting up deadly mating threats; for example, **12... ♜d8+ 13 ♔c2 ♜c7+ 14 ♔b1** is an easy win. In the game White played **12 a4?** and won after some further mistakes by Black.

84

Extra Pawn on One Side



I. Sokolov – Short
Wijk aan Zee 1995



Karpov – Topalov
Las Palmas 1996

A common situation arises when all the pawns are on one side and one player has an extra pawn. The winning chances in this type of queen ending are generally rather small, except if the extra pawn is accompanied by a second advantage, such as an active king or enemy pawn weaknesses. The diagram shows a 2 vs 1 situation. Although this is a relatively favourable case for White (he has a passed pawn and a space advantage), he was unable to win in the face of Short's accurate defence.

1...♖c2

The only move, stopping the deadly check on g6.

2 ♖e7+

After 2 ♜f4 ♖h2+ Black draws at once.

2...♜g8 3 ♖d8+ ♜g7 4 ♖d4+ ♜g8 5 ♖d5+

After 5 ♖e4 Black must play precisely: 5...♖c1! (not 5...♖d2? 6 f4 ♖c3+ 7 ♜g4 and White wins) 6 f4 ♖g1+ 7 ♜h3 ♜h8! and White cannot make progress.

5...♜g7 6 ♖e5+ ♜g8 7 ♖d5+ ♜g7 8 f4

White can only try advancing his passed pawn, but this exposes his king to more checks.

8...♖c3+ 9 ♜g4 ♖c8+ 10 f5

Or 10 ♜h4 ♖c2, covering g6 and threatening further checks.

10...♖c1 11 ♖e5+ ♜f7 12 ♖e6+ ♜f8 13 ♖f6+ 1/2-1/2

The winning chances increase slightly when there are more pawns. Here we have a 3 vs 2 situation, but Black already has his pawns arranged in the best defensive structure g6-h5, which means that White cannot advance his pawns far without allowing exchanges. Black need only take care to prevent White from penetrating with his king to g5 and h6. Even such a skilful endgame player as Karpov was unable to generate any winning chances.

1 ♖d7+ ♜f6 2 ♖c6+ ♜g7 3 ♖d5 ♖c3 4 ♜g2 ♖f6 5 ♖d7+ ♜g8 6 ♖c7 ♖e6 7 ♖f4

White can never get his king to f4 and g5; for example, 7 ♜f3 ♖d5+ 8 ♜f4 is met by 8...♖d2+ or 8...♖f5+.

7...♖c6+ 8 ♜f1 ♖e6 9 ♖e3 ♖c4+ 10 ♜e1 ♖c2 11 ♜f1

White tries various methods to activate his king, but it isn't difficult for Black to foil them.

11...♖d1+ 12 ♜g2 ♖d5+ 13 f3

Unable to make any progress with his king alone, White tries advancing his pawns, but as usual this exposes his king to checks.

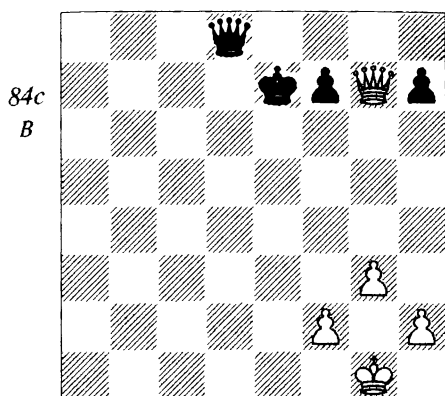
13...♖a2+ 14 ♜h3 ♖b1

Even threatening to mate White.

15 g4 hxg4+

Exchanging pawns eases Black's task.

16 fxg4 ♖f1+ 17 ♜g3 ♖f6 18 ♖c5 ♖e6 19 ♖c3 ♖e4 1/2-1/2



Zhang Pengxiang – Gopal
Asian Ch, Cebu City 2007

There are greater winning chances when the extra pawn is coupled with other advantages. Here Black's pawns are broken and the active position of White's queen makes it hard for Black's king to reach a good defensive position where it can defend both pawns.

1...♙d1+ 2 ♖g2 ♜d5+ 3 f3 h5?

Advancing this pawn only weakens it and makes it a target for attack by White's king. Black should have tried 3...♜f5, although White retains good winning chances after, for example, 4 g4 ♜c2+ 5 ♖g3 ♜c5 6 h4 ♜d6+ 7 ♖g2 ♜d2+ 8 ♖h3, and White slowly gains space on the kingside.

4 ♜h6 ♜f5 5 ♜e3+ ♖f8 6 ♜e4 ♜f6

Also after 6...♜b5 7 ♖h3, the king advances towards the vulnerable h-pawn.

7 ♜d5 ♜g6

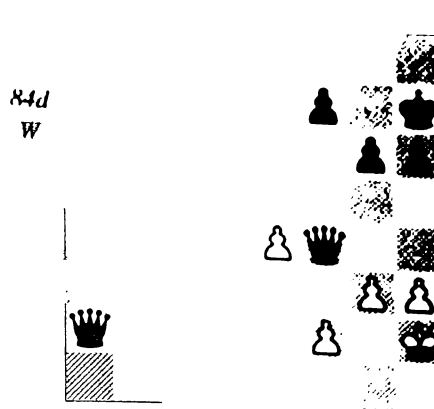
There is no way to save the h-pawn. After 7...h4 8 ♜c5+ ♖g7 9 g4 ♜f4 10 ♜f2! ♜f6 11 ♖h3 ♖g8 12 f4, followed by g5, White again wins the pawn.

8 ♖h3 ♜h6 9 ♜c5+ ♖g7 10 ♖h4 f6 11 ♜xh5

White could have won more quickly by 11 ♜e7+ ♖g8 12 ♜e8+ ♖g7 13 f4, sealing Black's pieces in, but the route White chooses is also sufficient.

11...♜d2 12 h3 ♜d8 13 ♜f5 ♜e8 14 ♜g4+ ♖h6 15 f4 ♜d8 16 f5 ♖h7 17 ♖h5 ♖h8 18 ♜g6 ♜d1+ 19 g4 ♜d4 20 ♜e8+ ♖g7 21 ♜e7+ ♖g8 22 ♖g6 1-0

It is mate in two more moves.



Zviagintsev – Ni Hua
Russia-China match, Moscow 2004

Even with 4 vs 3, the winning chances are slight unless there are additional advantages. As with the ending of ♜+4♟ vs ♜+3♟, the best defensive formation is to have the pawns on f7, g6 and h5.

1 ♜f6 ♖g8

Black could have continued 1...h5, but even allowing White to play g4 doesn't compromise his position significantly.

2 g4 ♜e2 3 ♜f4 h5!

A good move. Black must not play totally passively, allowing White to gradually gain space.

4 g5

White avoids a pawn exchange, but the resulting blocked pawn-structure makes it hard to achieve anything. However, even after 4 e5 hxg4 5 hxg4 ♜d3 White has few prospects of victory.

4...♜d3 5 ♖g2 ♜e2 6 ♜b8+ ♖g7 7 ♜e5+ ♖g8 8 ♜d5 ♜c2 9 e5 ♜f5 10 ♜d8+ ♖h7 11 ♜f6 ♜e4+ 12 ♖g3 ♖g8 13 ♖h2 ♜d4

White cannot get anywhere without pushing his f-pawn, but then his king would be exposed to too many checks.

14 ♖g2 ♜e4+ 15 ♖g3 ♜d3+

15...h4+ 16 ♖h2 ♜d4 is even simpler, since then White cannot do anything, but the move played also leads to a comfortable draw.

16 ♜f3 ♜d4 17 ♜e3 ♜d5 18 f3 ♜c4 19 ♜d2 ♖g7 20 ♜f4 ♜c5 21 ♜f6+ ♖g8 22 e6 ♜g1+ 23 ♖f4 ♜c1+ 24 ♖e4 ♜c2+ 25 ♖d5 ♜b3+ 26 ♖c5 ♜a3+ 1/2-1/2

Other Material Combinations

This part of the book deals with some miscellaneous combinations of material which, while important, do not fit within the earlier categories.

Sometimes mates with queen vs king, rook vs king, two bishops vs king and bishop and knight vs king are referred to as 'elementary mates'. However, while the first three are indeed straightforward (and are not covered in this book), mating with bishop and knight isn't elementary at all. The mating method proceeds by a series of steps, so in Section 85, instead of taking a group of different positions, one example is followed through all the stages needed to execute the mating plan. Even when you have understood the method, care still needs to be taken when playing this ending over the board.

Sections 86 and 87 deal with the ending of queen vs rook, with and without pawns. Queen vs rook without pawns is a win, but it requires some care against accurate defence (see 86a). Queen vs rook and pawn arises frequently in practice, but this is quite a complex ending because some positions are won while others are drawn, and many of the wins are quite long and complicated. The crucial factor is the location of the pawn; 86b and 86c cover the case of the pawn on the second rank, while in 86d, 87a and 87b the pawn is on the third rank. In each case we have to consider the rook's pawn separately, as this differs significantly from the situation with the pawn on one of the other files. The second- and third-rank cases are the most important for over-the-board play, but in 87c we examine one case with the pawn further up the board. 87d and 87e review the situation in which the side with the queen also has a pawn.

Section 88 explains how to play with rook and minor piece vs rook (without pawns). If the minor piece is a knight, almost all positions are drawn and the defender should not experience too many difficulties. In the case of a bishop, most positions are again drawn, but defending this ending is not at all easy. 88b and 88c explain how to achieve a draw, while 88d takes the attacker's side and covers one of the standard winning positions, which can easily arise if your opponent makes a mistake.

Two minor pieces are worth more than a rook, but in an endgame the difference is often less significant than in the middlegame. If there are no other pieces on the board, a rook and a pawn are almost always worth less than two bishops, but they roughly balance a bishop and a knight. When two knights fight against a rook, much depends on the exact position. In some positions two knights will be worth more than a rook and a pawn, but in others the rook may be superior. In all these cases, the precise structure of the position is crucial. Open files favour the rook, while with a bishop and a knight or two knights, the availability of stable outposts for the knight(s) is an important factor. If the side with the rook has weak pawns, the minor pieces may be able to gang up on them one by one. Section 89 explores the various permutations.

A queen is worth more than a rook and a minor piece, but this does not guarantee a win. In Section 90 we see how the rook and minor piece may be able to set up a fortress which prevents the queen from making any progress. Whether the minor piece has a stable square is often crucial in this type of ending. If the side with the queen has fewer pawns, then the rook and minor piece may have winning chances (see 90c).

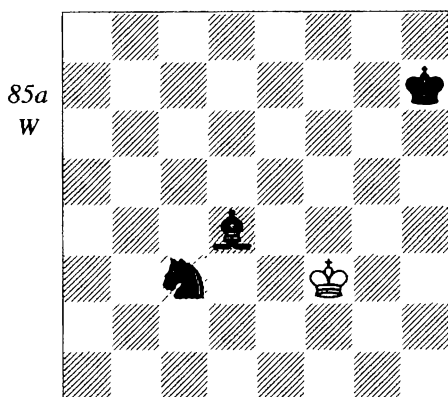
Two rooks are worth roughly the same as a queen and a pawn, but much depends on the position. In particular, the side with the rooks benefits greatly from having a safe king, which prevents the queen from giving awkward checks. Section 91 explains the issues involved.

Endgames in which both sides have a rook and a minor piece are quite common. There are several possible permutations, which form the subject of Sections 92 and 93, but perhaps the most interesting is rook and bishop vs rook and knight. Many of the bishop vs knight issues from Section 37 apply here too, but the presence of rooks adds another dimension. Positions 92d, 93a, 93b and 93c deal with this material balance.

Similar permutations arise in endings where both sides have a queen and a minor piece, and we briefly discuss them in Section 94.

When both sides have a queen and a rook, the positions have a character somewhere between an endgame and a middlegame. King safety is important, as is control of open files. See Section 95 for more details.

85 Mating with Bishop and Knight



Smirin – Atalik
Sarajevo 2001

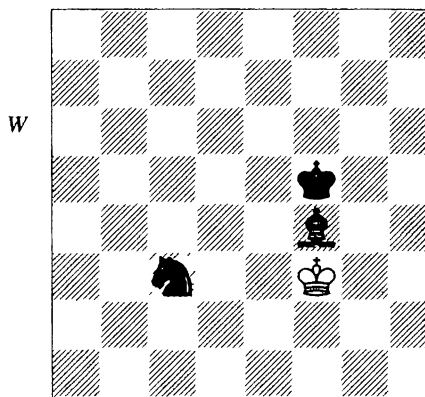
In this book we do not cover the mates with ♔+♚ vs ♔, ♔+♞ vs ♔ and ♔+2♙ vs ♔. These elementary mates involve little more than driving the defender's king to the edge of the board. In the case of the queen this leads to mate straight away, while with the rook and the two bishops the enemy king must be forced into a corner to execute the mate. The main danger is accidentally stalemating the enemy king.

However, mating with ♔+♙+♞ vs ♔, while possible, is not elementary; indeed, I have seen grandmasters fail to manage it in rapidplay finishes with five minutes left on the clock.

The first important point to note is that it is only possible to force mate in a corner where the corner square can be controlled by the bishop (in this position, the a1- and h8-corners). The first stage is to drive the defender's king to the edge of the board. The defender will make life as difficult as possible by retreating his king to one of the two corners (h1 and a8 in the above position) in which it is impossible to force mate.

1 ♔g4 ♔g6 2 ♔f3 ♔f5 3 ♔g3 ♙e3 4 ♔f3 ♙f4 (D)

The computer tells us that Black could have saved a little time here and there, but such minor tempo-saving finesses are not important. The most difficult win with this material takes 33 moves, so even a few small time-losing inaccuracies won't risk exceeding the 50-move limit. It is major mistakes that must be avoided.



85a (continued)

5 ♔g2 ♔g4 6 ♔f2 ♙d2 7 ♔g2 ♙e1

White's king is steadily restricted and forced into the corner.

8 ♔f1 ♙h4 9 ♔g2 ♙g3 10 ♔g1 ♔f3

The king is boxed into the h1-corner, but mate is impossible to force here, so the next step is to drive the king out of this corner and towards a1.

11 ♔h1 ♞e4

This is the key position to start the driving manoeuvre. Black's king is on f3, his knight on e4 and his bishop on the h2-b8 diagonal.

12 ♔g1 ♞f2

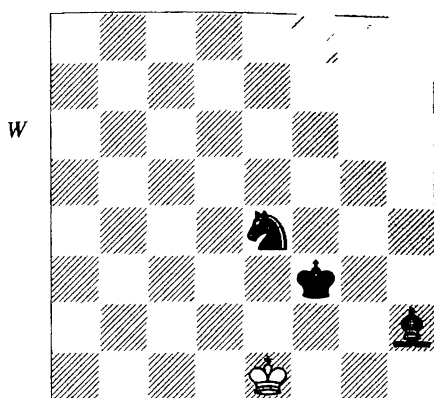
The first step. By controlling h1 with the knight, the king is forced away from the corner.

13 ♔f1 ♙h2

This is why the bishop has to be on the h2-b8 diagonal. The king is forced further out.

14 ♔e1 ♞e4 (D)

This is where things sometimes go wrong if the attacker plays carelessly. An inaccurate move could easily allow the white king to escape towards the a8-corner, which would result in a serious loss of time since Black would have to start this stage of the winning process again. The key formation has the knight on d2, the bishop on d6 and the king on e3. Since a3, b3, b4, c4, d4, d3 and d2 are all covered, Black's pieces create a barrier which prevents the white king from moving up the board. Black must be ready to set up this formation, and so he moves his knight to e4, ready to move to d2.



85a (continued)

15 ♖d1

If the king goes the other way, Black can force it towards a1 without any special subtlety: 15 ♖f1 ♜d2+ 16 ♖e1 ♖e3 17 ♖d1 ♖d3 18 ♖e1 ♜g3+ 19 ♖d1 ♜c4 20 ♖c1 ♜f4+ 21 ♖d1 ♜e3+ 22 ♖c1 (22 ♖e1 ♜g3#) 22...♖c3 23 ♖b1 ♜c4 and White's king is firmly trapped near a1.

15...♖e3 16 ♖c2

16 ♖e1 ♜d2 transposes to the previous note.

16...♜d2 0-1

The finish could be:

17 ♖c3 ♜d6

The key move, setting up the barrier.

18 ♖c2

Now White tries to backtrack and slip out via e1, but this is impossible.

18...♜b4 19 ♖d1 ♜f3

The knight transfer to d4 maintains a barrier on the queenside (since a3, b3 and c3 are covered) while making it easier to force the king into the corner.

20 ♖c2 ♜d4+ 21 ♖d1 ♖d3 22 ♖c1 ♖e2 23 ♖b1

23 ♖b2 ♖d2 24 ♖b1 ♜a3 comes to the same thing.

23...♜a3

Further restriction.

24 ♖a2 ♜c1 25 ♖b1 ♖d2 26 ♖a2 ♖c2

Now White can only oscillate between a1 and a2. Black's king and bishop can prevent White's king from escaping all on their own, so the knight is free to move round for the finale.

27 ♖a1 ♜b5 28 ♖a2 ♜c3+ 29 ♖a1 ♜b2#



85b
Cheparinov – Navara
Wijk aan Zee 2006

It's worth looking at a second example of this win, this time with reversed colours and in a different corner. When you actually have to execute this win over the board, it's important not be confused by a rotation or reflection of the position, so it's a good idea to see it carried out in a changed setting.

Here White is aiming ultimately to drive Black's king to h1 or a8, while Black will resist by heading for h8.

1 ♜c4 ♖e5 2 ♖c5

The first step is to drive Black's king to the right.

2...♖e4 3 ♜b3 ♖e5 4 ♜d5 ♖f4 5 ♖d4 ♖f5 6 ♜c5 ♖f6 7 ♖e4 ♖g5 8 ♖e5 ♖g6

Black is now near the edge of the board and heads for h8.

9 ♜e4 ♖g7 10 ♖f5 ♖h6 11 ♜g5 ♖g7 12 ♜f7 ♖g8 13 ♖f6 ♖h7 14 ♜e4+ ♖g8

The first stage has been completed and White is ready to force Black's king out of the corner. His knight is already on f7, so he only has to make a pass move to force the king to f8, after which ♜h7 will exactly transpose to the previous example.

15 ♜d3 ♖f8 16 ♜h7 ♖e8 17 ♜e5

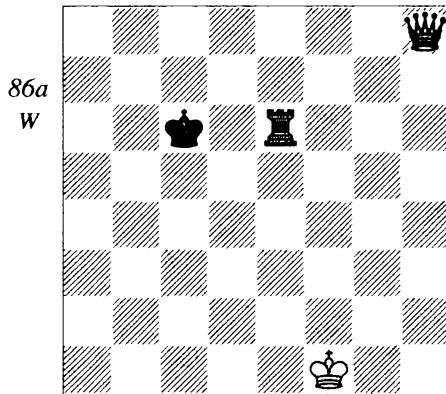
The transfer to d7 is White's key idea.

17...♖d8 18 ♖e6 ♖c7 19 ♜d7 1-0

The finish might be 19...♖c6 20 ♜d3 ♖c7 21 ♜b5 ♖d8 22 ♜f6 ♖c7 23 ♜d5+ ♖d8 24 ♖d6 ♖c8 25 ♖e7 ♖b7 26 ♖d7 ♖b8 27 ♜a6 ♖a7 28 ♜c8 ♖b8 29 ♖d8 ♖a7 30 ♖c7 ♖a8 31 ♜b4 ♖a7 32 ♜c6+ ♖a8 33 ♜b7#.

86

Queen vs Rook (1)



B. Socko – Graf
Bundesliga 2006/7

Queen vs rook is another ending which is theoretically winning, but which is quite tricky to play in practice. It is easy to go round in circles without making any progress at all, and against perfect computer defence even grandmasters struggle. In practice the queen almost always wins, because it is also quite hard to defend accurately and a mistake from the defender is likely to be more costly than a mistake from the attacker.

This position requires some work by White. At the moment his king is cut off by the enemy rook, so the first step must be to force Black's rook off the e-file.

1 ♖f2 ♔d5 2 ♖f3 ♜c6

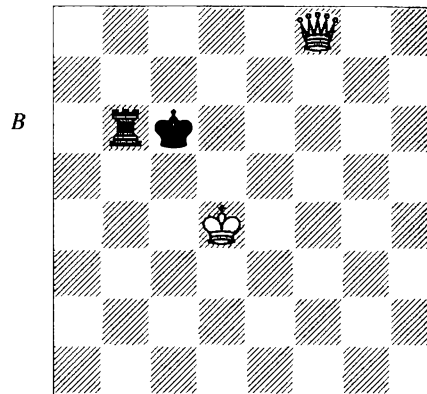
Black can't stay on the e-file for ever; for example, after 2...♜e5 3 ♖f4 ♜e6 4 ♖g8 ♔d6 5 ♜c8 ♔d5 6 ♖d7+ ♜d6 7 ♖b5+ ♔e6 the blockade is broken and White can drive Black back further by 8 ♖b3+ ♔f6 9 ♜c4 ♜e6 10 ♜c7 ♔g6 11 ♜c8 ♔f7 12 ♔f5.

3 ♜a8 ♔d6 4 ♔e4 ♜b6

Black's new plan is to defend with his rook along his third rank. Playing more actively by 4...♜c4+ 5 ♔d3 ♜g4 doesn't make any real difference, since after 6 ♜c8 Black's rook is exposed and must retreat.

5 ♜f8+ ♔c6 6 ♔d4 (D)

White's king is now centralized and well placed to start driving Black to the edge of the board.



86a (continued)

6...♔b7

In general, the defender should avoid retreating his king into a corner except if this is absolutely forced. Black could have put up slightly more resistance by 6...♔d7, but White can still make progress by 7 ♜f7+ ♔c6 8 ♜e6+ ♔c7 9 ♜e7+ ♔c6 10 ♔c4 ♜b7 11 ♜e6+ ♔c7 12 ♔c5.

7 ♔c5

Cutting out the check on c6 by 7 ♜e8 is more efficient.

7...♜c6+ 8 ♔d5 ♜c7 9 ♜e8 ♔a7 10 ♜b5

Now Black's king is trapped on the edge of the board, but there is still some way to go.

10...♜h7

Or 10...♜c1 11 ♜a4+ ♔b7 12 ♜b4+ ♔c8 13 ♔d6 ♜d1+ 14 ♔c6 and White wins.

11 ♜b2 ♜b7

11...♜c7 12 ♔d6 ♜b7 13 ♜d4+ ♔b8 14 ♔c6 transposes to the game.

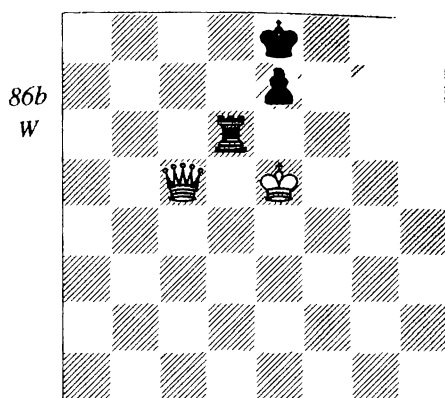
12 ♜d4+ ♔b8 13 ♔c6 ♔a8 14 ♜a1+

The greatest danger lies when the win is close, because then stalemate possibilities appear. 14 ♜d6?? ♜b6+ throws away half a point, while 14 ♜d8+ ♔a7 15 ♜c8?! ♜b6+ 16 ♔c5 (not 16 ♔c7?? ♜c6+ with a draw) 16...♜b5+! forces White back.

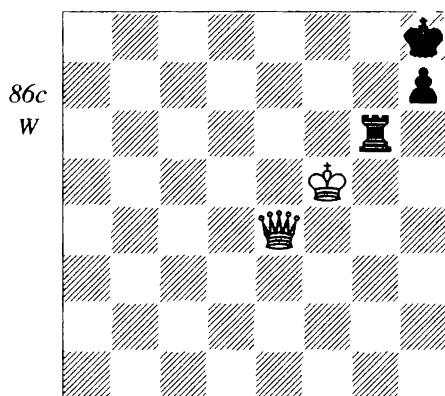
14...♔b8 15 ♜a5

In order to win ♜ vs ♜ you need to know this zugzwang position. Wherever Black moves his rook, it is lost after a few checks.

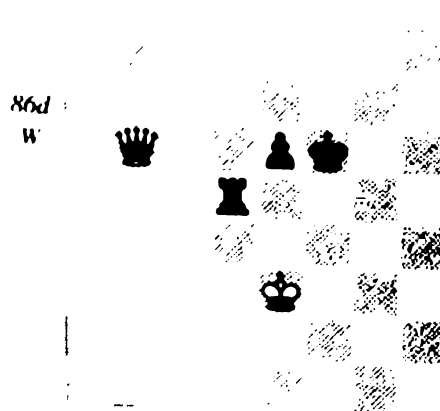
15...♜b3 16 ♜d8+ ♔a7 17 ♜d4+ ♔b8 18 ♜f4+ 1-0



The ending of ♔ vs ♚+♙ is very complex, but there are a few simple positions. The above diagram is a dead draw because Black's rook can stay on the third rank, preventing the white king's advance. White cannot achieve anything with checks, and there is also no hope of zugzwang as the black rook can move from d6 to f6 and back. The same draw arises when the pawn is on any file apart from a rook's file.



With a rook's pawn, the black rook only has one supported square on the third rank and as a result White can win by zugzwang: 1 ♖e8+ ♜g7 (White wins more quickly after 1... ♜g8 2 ♖e5+ ♜g7 3 ♖f6 ♜g8 4 ♖d8+ ♜f7 5 ♖h8 and the pawn falls) 2 ♖d7+ ♜g8 3 ♖e7 (the first zugzwang position, which allows White's king to cross to h5) 3... ♜h6 4 ♜g5 ♜g6+ 5 ♜h5 (now Black no longer has the h6-square for his rook) 5... ♜a6 6 ♖e8+ ♜g7 7 ♖d7+ and Black must give up the pawn, or else ♖c8+ wins the rook.



Berezovsky – Nijboer
Bundesliga 2001/2

When the pawn is on the third rank, the position is won with a bishop's pawn or a centre pawn as the queen has more space to manoeuvre behind the pawn.

1 ♖c7 ♜e5+ 2 ♜f4 ♜f5+ 3 ♜e4 ♜d5 4 ♖h7 ♜e5+ 5 ♜d4 ♜d5+ 6 ♜c4 ♜e5

Or 6... ♜f5 7 ♖d7 ♜d5 8 ♖e8 ♜f5 9 ♖f8+ (this is why White needs the extra space behind the pawn) 9... ♜e5 10 ♖e7 ♜f4+ 11 ♜c5 ♜f5 12 ♖f7+ ♜e5 13 ♖g7+ ♜f5 14 ♜d6 ♜c4 15 ♖f7+ ♜g4 16 ♖f2 ♜g5 17 ♖f3 and White wins the pawn.

7 ♖h8+

7 ♖e7 is two moves quicker.

7... ♜d6 8 ♖d8+ ♜e5 9 ♖e7 ♜f5

After 9... ♜d4+ 10 ♜c5 ♜d5+ 11 ♜c6 ♜d4 12 ♖g5+ ♜e4 13 ♖f6 e5 Black's defence is disrupted and White wins by 14 ♖g6+ ♜f4 15 ♜c5 ♜e4 16 ♜d5 ♜d4+ 17 ♜e6 e4 18 ♖h6+ ♜f3 19 ♜e5 ♜c4 20 ♖f6+ ♜e3 21 ♖d6 ♜f2 22 ♖d2+.

10 ♖g7 ♜e5

10... ♜e4 11 ♖f6 ♜e5 12 ♖f7 ♜e3 13 ♖f1 ♜e4+ 14 ♜c3 ♜e5 15 ♖f6 ♜e4 16 ♖g5+ ♜f3 17 ♜d3 and White wins the pawn in a few moves.

11 ♖f7+ ♜g5 12 ♜d4 ♜e2 13 ♖f3

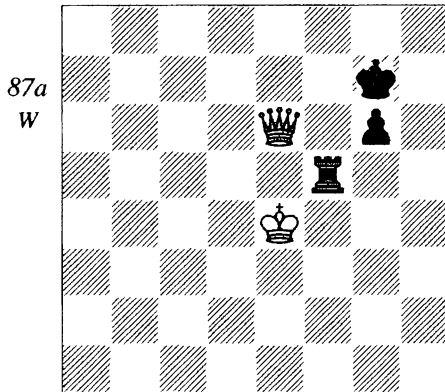
13 ♖f1! ♜a2 14 ♜e5 is quicker.

13... ♜a2 14 ♜e5 ♜a5+ 15 ♜xe6

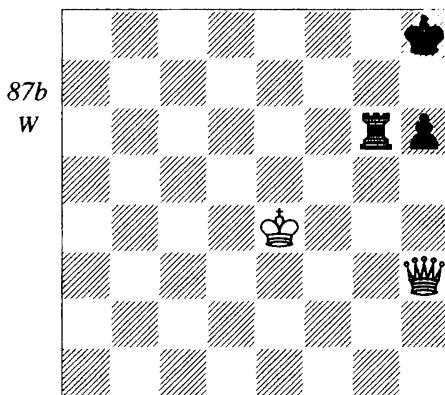
White went on to win, although the end was not especially accurate: 15... ♜a6+ 16 ♜f7 ♜a7+ 17 ♜f8 ♜a4 18 ♖d5+ ♜f4? 19 ♖f7+ ♜g5 20 ♖e7+ ♜h6 21 ♖d6+? (21 ♖e3+ wins at once) 21... ♜g5? 22 ♖d5+? (22 ♖d8+) 22... ♜h4? (22... ♜f4) 23 ♜f7 ♜f4+ 24 ♜e6 ♜g3 25 ♜e5 ♜b4 26 ♖d3+ ♜h4 27 ♜f5 ♜a4 28 ♖c3 1-0.

87

Queen vs Rook (2)

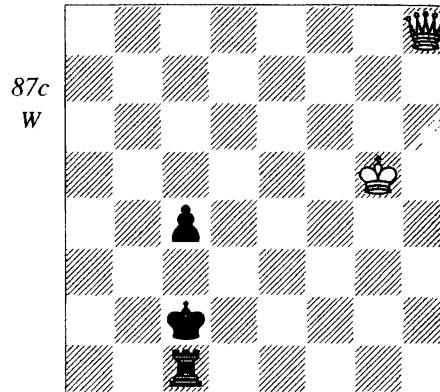


Continuing the discussion of Section 86, if the pawn is on g6, the result is a draw because the queen cannot penetrate to the right of the pawn. After 1 ♖e7+ ♔g8 2 ♕d4 ♔h8 3 ♗h4+ ♔g7 (not 3...♔g8? 4 ♗h6 and wins) 4 ♕e4 ♜f8 5 ♕e5 ♜f5+ 6 ♕e6 ♜f8 7 ♗g5 ♜f5 8 ♗e7+ ♔g8 White cannot make further progress.



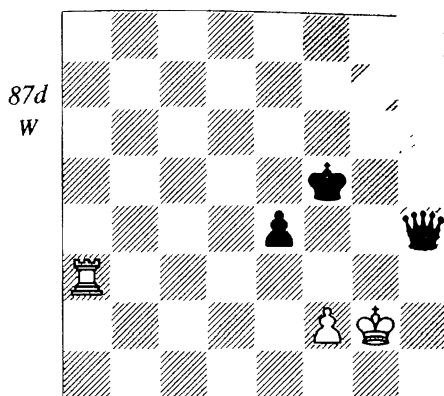
Karpov – Istratescu
Bucharest (4) 2005

It's also a draw with a rook's pawn on the third, but accurate defence is necessary: 1 ♔f5 ♔h7 2 ♗d3 ♜g5+ 3 ♔f6+ ♔h8 4 ♗e4 ♔g8? (a typical mistake; Black must not let the white king settle on f7 or f8, and so 4...♜g7! was the simplest draw) 5 ♗e6+ ♔h7 6 ♔f7 ♜g8 7 ♗f5+ ♔h8 8 ♗e5+ ♔h7 9 ♗e6 1-0 as 9...♜g5 (or 9...♜g7+ 10 ♔f8 ♜g5 11 ♗e7+ ♔h8 12 ♗f7 and White wins) 10 ♔f8 h5 11 ♗f6 ♜g6 12 ♗e5 ♔h6 13 ♔f7 h4 14 ♗e4 wins for White.



Vaganian – Bologan
FIDE Knockout, Groningen 1997

When the pawn is further advanced, the situation is more complicated and we can only summarize the results here. The worst ranks for the pawn are the fourth and fifth, because then only a knight's pawn draws in general. However, even if the position is winning, the win may be very long and complicated. If the pawn is beyond the fifth rank, then the drawing chances increase again, but much depends on the specific arrangement of pieces. We have focused on the most common case in which the pawn defends the rook, but there are other possibilities. In this position, the rook is in front of the pawn; this can lead to a draw if the pawn is sufficiently far advanced and the pawn is a knight's pawn or a bishop's pawn. The game continued 1 ♗h7+ ♔b2 2 ♗b7+ ♔c2? (2...♔a2 3 ♔f4 ♜c2! sets up a fortress; e.g., 4 ♔e3 ♔a1 5 ♔d4 ♔a2 6 ♔c5 ♔a1 7 ♗h1+ ♔a2 8 ♔b4 ♔b2 and White cannot make progress) 3 ♗e4+? (3 ♔f4! ♔c3 4 ♔e4 leads to a lengthy win) 3...♔b2 4 ♗b7+ ♔c2? 5 ♗g2+? ♔b3 6 ♗d5 ♔b2 7 ♗b5+ ♔a3 8 ♔f4 c3? (8...♜c2! leads to the fortress mentioned above) 9 ♔e3 ♜d1 10 ♗c4 ♔b2 (or 10...♜b1 11 ♗a6+ ♔b2 12 ♗b5+ ♔c1 13 ♗a4 ♜b7 14 ♔d3 and White wins) 11 ♗b4+ ♔c2 12 ♗a4+ ♔c1 13 ♗b3?! (13 ♗a2 ♜d2 14 ♗b3 c2 15 ♗c3 is simpler) 13...c2?! (13...♜e1+ is better, although White still wins after 14 ♔d3 ♜d1+ 15 ♔c4! ♜d2 16 ♗b7! ♜b2 17 ♗h1+ ♔d2 18 ♗d5+ ♔c2 19 ♗d4) 14 ♗a2 1-0.



87d
W
Kudrin – Belorusov
Philadelphia 2003

If the side with the queen also has a pawn, then the win is usually easy. However, there are a few awkward situations where the defender can set up a fortress. In this position White aims to keep his rook on the third rank, cutting off the enemy king. If White's king could reach e2, then this fortress would be impenetrable; however, with the king on g2 Black can eventually sacrifice his queen on d3 or e3 and win.

1 ♖g3?

1 ♔f1! is the only drawing move, heading for e2 straight away.

1...♔f4?

The priority should have been to stop ♔f1 and ♔e2, so the best line is 1...♔d8! 2 ♔f1 ♔d1+, winning as in the game.

2 ♜c3?

White misses his last chance to draw by 2 ♔f1!. From now on Black handles the endgame well.

2...♔g4+ 3 ♜g3

Or 3 ♔f1 ♔d1+ 4 ♔g2 ♔e5, followed by ...♔d4, much as in the game.

3...♔d1 4 ♜a3 ♔e5 5 ♜h3 ♔d4 6 ♜e3 ♔d3!

Black aims to force the rook off the third rank.

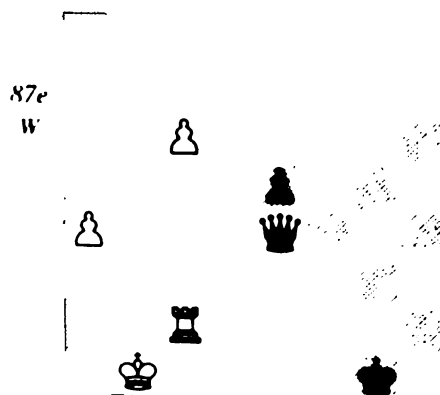
7 ♜e1

Black also wins after 7 ♜g3 ♔c3 8 ♔h2 ♔d2 9 ♔g2 ♔e2 10 ♔g1 ♔xg3+.

7...♔d2 8 ♔f1 ♔d3 9 ♜a1 ♔b2 10 ♜d1+ ♔c2 11 ♜e1 ♔b5+ 12 ♔g2 ♔d3 13 ♜e3

13 ♜h1 ♔f3+ 14 ♔g1 e3 15 fx3 ♔g3+ 16 ♔f1 ♔d1 is an easy win.

13...♔xe3 14 fx3 ♔d3 15 ♔f2 ♔d2 0-1



87e
W
Short – Naiditsch
Baku 2007

In queen vs rook endings with more pawns, the defender's only real hopes lie in setting up a fortress or in exploiting a strong passed pawn. This position is an example of the latter: White can save the game despite his material disadvantage.

1 c7?

White could have drawn with 1 a5!. The point is that Black's queen is temporarily blocking the e-pawn, so he has to move his king instead, which is less useful. After 1...♔f1 2 c7 ♔b7+ 3 ♔c1 ♔c8 4 a6 e4 5 ♔d2 ♔d7+ 6 ♔c1 ♔d4 7 ♜f2+ followed by 8 c8♔ the position is a draw.

1...♔b7+ 2 ♔c1 ♔c8 3 ♜c4?!

Now 3 a5 is too slow: Black wins by 3...e4 4 ♔d2 (or 4 a6 e3 5 a7 e2) 4...♔f2 5 ♔d1+ ♔f1 6 ♔d2 ♔d7+ 7 ♔c1 ♔d4 8 ♔b1 ♔b4+ 9 ♔c1 ♔xa5 and the threat of mate by ...♔a1+ and ...♔e1# decides the game.

3 ♔d2 would have made Black work harder, although he can still win by 3...♔f2 4 ♔d1+ ♔e3 5 a5 e4 6 a6 ♔h8! 7 ♜e2+ ♔f3 8 a7 ♔a1+ 9 ♔c2 ♔a6 10 ♜h2 ♔c6+ 11 ♔d1 e3 12 ♜c2 ♔d5+ 13 ♔c1 ♔a5 14 ♔b1 ♔b6+ 15 ♜b2 (or 15 ♔c1 ♔xa7) 15...♔a6.

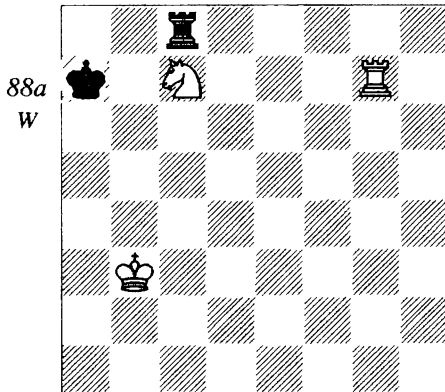
3...♔f2 4 ♔d2 e4 5 ♜xe4

There isn't much choice, but in the resulting ending of ♔ vs ♜+♔ White's pawn is on the fourth rank (one of the worst) and his king is cut off from the pawn.

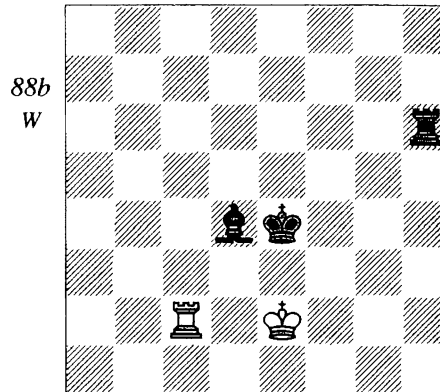
5...♔xc7 6 ♔d3 ♔f3 7 ♜c4 ♔d6+ 8 ♔c2 ♔b6 9 ♔c3 ♔e3 10 ♜b4 ♔a5 11 ♔c4 ♔d2 12 ♔b3 ♔d3 13 ♜h4 ♔b6+ 0-1

Black wins after 14 ♜b4 ♔c5.

88 Rook and Minor Piece vs Rook



Kramnik – Kasparov
World Ch (4), London 2000



Carlsen – Van Wely
Wijk aan Zee 2007

The ending rook and minor piece vs rook is generally drawn. If the minor piece is a knight, then the draw usually doesn't present much difficulty. In this position White starts in a relatively favourable situation, with his pieces active and Black's king near the corner, but even here it requires only moderate care for Black to hold the game.

1 ♖b4 ♖b6 2 ♜d5+ ♗a6 3 ♜g6+ ♖b7 4 ♖b5 ♜c1!

This is the simplest. Black keeps an escape-route clear for his king via c8 and d8, while keeping White's king cut off. As an example of what can go wrong, 4...♜d8? loses to 5 ♜g7+ ♖b8 (or 5...♖c8 6 ♜b6+ ♖b8 7 ♗a6) 6 ♖c6 ♜c8+ 7 ♜c7! (after 7 ♖b6? ♜c1! Black draws, but not 7...♜c2? 8 ♜b4, when White wins since Black's rook is attacked and so he has no time for ...♖c8) 7...♜h8 8 ♜b5 ♜h6+ 9 ♜d6 ♗a8 10 ♜d7 (defending the knight ready for ♖b6) 10...♜g6 11 ♖b6 ♜g8 12 ♜a7+ ♖b8 13 ♜e7 ♗a8 14 ♜e6! (White wants to play ♜b5 without allowing ...♜g6+) 14...♖b8 15 ♜b5 ♖c8 16 ♜d6 ♜h8 17 ♜a7+ ♖b8 18 ♜d7 and wins.

5 ♜g2

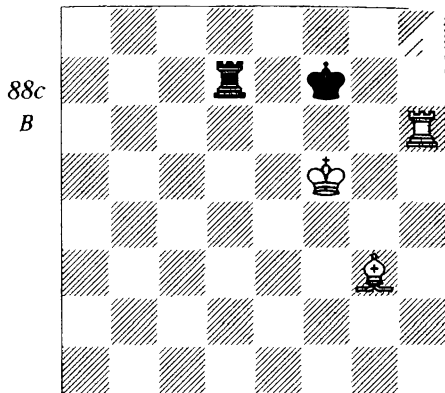
Or 5 ♜g7+ ♖c8 and the king slips away.

5...♖c8 6 ♜g7 ♖d8 7 ♜f6 ♜c7 8 ♜g5

8 ♜g8+ ♖e7 9 ♜d5+ can be safely answered by 9...♖f7.

8...♜f7 9 ♜d5 ♖d7 10 ♜g6 ♜f1 11 ♖c5 ♜c1+ 12 ♖d4 ♜d1+ 13 ♖e5 1/2-1/2

Rook and bishop vs rook presents more problems for the defender. The simplest defensive plan is the 'second-rank defence' in which the defender's king and rook are both kept on the second rank as far as possible. Here is an example of this technique in action: 1 ♜d2 ♜h3 2 ♜c2 ♖c3 (the first main point of the second-rank defence is that it is hard to drive the king back to the first rank; after 2...♜h2+ 3 ♖d1 Black's rook must move and then White plays ♖e2 again) 3 ♖d1 (White was in zugzwang and had to abandon the second rank, but this is purely temporary) 3...♖d4 (the second key point is that 3...♖d3 can be met by 4 ♜d2+) 4 ♜f2 ♖d3 5 ♜d2+ ♖c4 6 ♜f2 ♜e3 7 ♜e2 ♜d3+ 8 ♖c2 (back to the second rank again) 8...♖d4 9 ♜d2 ♜a3 10 ♜e2 ♖e3 11 ♖d1 (a reflection of the situation at move 3) 11...♜a1+ 12 ♖c2 ♖d4 13 ♖b2 ♜a8 14 ♖b1 ♜h8 15 ♖c2 ♜c8+ 16 ♖b3 ♖d3 17 ♜b2 (White sets up the same defence, with the b-file taking the place of the second rank) 17...♖d2 18 ♜b1 ♜a8 19 ♜b2 ♜a1 20 ♜a2 ♜d1 21 ♜c2 ♜a1 22 ♜c3+ ♖d4 23 ♜c4+ ♖d5 (the rest of the game is similar; Black makes no real progress) 24 ♜g4 ♖e3 25 ♖c2 ♖d4 26 ♖d3 ♜a3+ 27 ♖e2 ♖c4 28 ♜g2 ♜h3 29 ♖d2 ♜e3 30 ♜e2 ♜a3 31 ♖c2 ♖e3 32 ♖b2 ♖b4 33 ♖b1 ♖d4 34 ♖c2 ♖c4 35 ♜d2 ♖e3 36 ♜e2 ♜b3 37 ♖d1 ♖d3 38 ♜d2+ ♖e4 39 ♖c2 ♜b8 40 ♜d3 ♖d4 41 ♜d2 ♜c8+ 42 ♖d1 ♖e3 43 ♜c2 ♜f8 44 ♖e2 ♖d4 45 ♖d1 ♖d3 46 ♜d2+ ♖xd2 1/2-1/2.



Malakhov – Krylov
Moscow 2008

Even though the second-rank defence is a reliable strategy, it's still possible to go wrong. This applies particularly when the defender's king is near a corner.

1...♔g7 2 ♖g6+ ♕f7 3 ♜e5 ♞e7 4 ♜d6 ♞d7

So far as in 88b, but now White tries a different tack.

5 ♞f6+ ♕g7 6 ♜f8+ ♕g8

It is simpler to play 6...♕h7 7 ♕e6 ♞d1, keeping the rook in an active position.

7 ♕e6 ♞a7 8 ♞f1 ♞a2 9 ♜d6 ♞g2 10 ♜e5 ♕h7

Now only the most accurate defence will save the game for Black. In such a situation it is very easy to make a slip and lose.

11 ♕f5 ♕g8 12 ♕f6 ♞g6+!

The only move.

13 ♕e7 ♕h7 14 ♕f7 ♞g7+ 15 ♕f6 ♞g6+ 16 ♕f5 ♕g8 17 ♞a1 ♞b6

17...♞h6 18 ♞a7 ♞h7 was safer, heading for the second-rank defence.

18 ♞a7 ♕f8 19 ♜f6 ♞b3 20 ♕g6 ♞g3+?

This is the losing move. Black could still have saved the game by 20...♞e3!

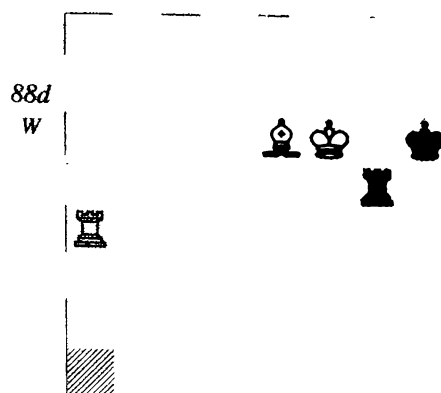
21 ♜g5 ♕e8 22 ♞e7+ ♕f8 23 ♞e1

23 ♞d7! wins at once.

23...♞b3

This loses immediately, but even 23...♞g2 doesn't help after 24 ♞e5 ♞g1 25 ♞e2 (Black is in zugzwang and must move his rook to one of the inferior squares g3 or g4) 25...♞g4 (25...♞g3 loses to 26 ♞d2) 26 ♞f2+ followed by 27 ♞d2.

24 ♜h6+ 1-0



Ljubojević – Kurajica
Titovo Užice 1978

This is one of the standard winning positions in ♞+♜ vs ♞. It's important because it often arises in practice and is frequently misplayed, since the winning idea isn't especially obvious.

1 ♞h4+ ♞h5 2 ♞g4

The first step is to transfer the rook to the g-file, where it cuts off the enemy king.

2...♞a5

The most resilient defence is 2...♞b5, after which White must reveal the full depth of the winning idea: 3 ♞g1 (this puts Black in zugzwang; the ultimate aim is to force Black's rook to the inferior c-file and this is a necessary preliminary step) 3...♞a5 (holding out for as long as possible) 4 ♞g8 ♞a7 (4...♕h7 loses to 5 ♞d8 ♞a6 6 ♞d1) 5 ♜c8! (this is the tricky but important point; using the bishop puts Black in zugzwang and forces the rook to the c-file) 5...♞c7 6 ♜f5 (mission accomplished; now White transfers his bishop back to e6 with gain of tempo) 6...♞c6+ 7 ♜e6 ♞c7 8 ♞g6+ ♕h5 9 ♞g3 and White wins since c4 is covered, so Black can't play his rook to the fourth rank.

3 ♜c4

3 ♞g8 ♞a7 4 ♜c8 is quicker, as in the previous note.

3...♞c5?!

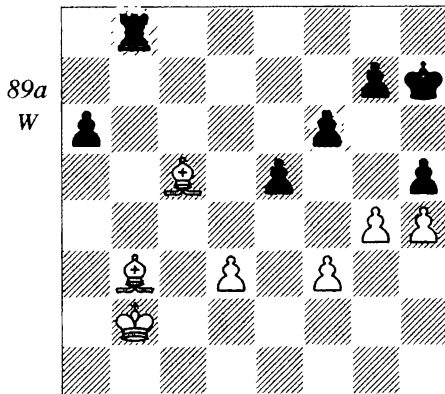
3...♞h5 would have put up more resistance, but at any rate White can repeat with 4 ♜e6.

4 ♜f7 ♞c6+ 5 ♜e6 ♞c5 6 ♞g8 ♞c7 7 ♞g6+ ♕h7

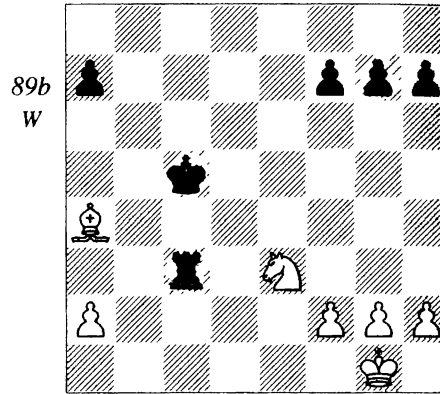
Or 7...♕h5 8 ♞g3 and White wins.

8 ♞g1 ♕h8 9 ♞d1 1-0

89 Rook vs Two Minor Pieces



Shirov – Kramnik
Wijk aan Zee 1998



Shirov – Bacrot
Reykjavik 2003

Two minor pieces are worth more than a rook, but the difference is smaller in the endgame than earlier on. For example, in the middlegame a bishop and a knight are usually worth more than a rook and a pawn, while in the endgame they are more or less balanced. However, in any part of the game two bishops are a formidable force and generally outweigh a rook and a pawn. Here White must try to stabilize the kingside pawn-structure in order to gain time to take the a-pawn with his king.

1 ♖c3 ♜c8

1...hxg4 2 fxg4 g6 3 ♙e7 ♜b6 4 g5 f5 5 ♙f6 should also win for White.

2 ♜b4 ♜b8+ 3 ♚a4 ♚g6 4 ♙e6

Threatening 5 ♙f5+ followed by 6 gxh5.

4...♜h8 5 ♙f2 ♚h6 6 ♚a5 hxg4?

The last chance was 6...g5, since after 7 ♙e3 ♚g7! 8 hxg5 h4 Black gets genuine counterplay. Therefore 7 hxg5+ ♚xg5 8 ♙e3+ ♚g6 9 gxh5+ ♜xh5 10 ♚xa6 is better, but Black retains drawing chances.

7 fxg4 g6 8 g5+! ♚g7

8...fxg5 9 ♙e3 is winning for White.

9 ♚xa6 ♜d8 10 ♙c4 f5 11 ♚b7 e4 12 d4 f4

Black's pawns are too slow.

13 d5 e3 14 ♙e1 f3 15 ♚c7 ♜f8 16 d6 ♜f4

White also wins after 16...f2 17 ♙c3+ and 16...e2 17 d7 f2 18 ♙xf2 ♜xf2 19 d8 ♚e1 ♚20 ♚g8#.

17 ♙c3+ ♚h7 18 ♙d3 1-0

A bishop and knight normally beat a rook if pawns are equal, but considerable work may be required. The attacking side must aim to fix the enemy pawns, so that the two pieces can simultaneously target them.

1 ♚f1 g6 2 ♚e2 ♚d4 3 ♚c2+ ♚e4 4 ♙b3 f5 5 h4?!

5 ♚e3! is more accurate, activating the knight as soon as possible.

5...f4 6 ♚e1 ♚f5 7 ♚f3 ♜c7 8 ♚d3 h6 9 ♚d4 g5 10 ♙c4 ♜d7+

After 10...g4 11 ♚e5 h5 12 f3 gxg3 13 gxg3 Black's f-pawn is fixed and will soon be lost.

11 ♙d5 ♜c7 12 hxg5 hxg5 13 ♙e4+ ♚f6 14 ♚e5 ♜c1 15 ♚d3 ♜c2 16 a4 ♜a2 17 ♙c6 ♜c2 18 ♚d5 g4

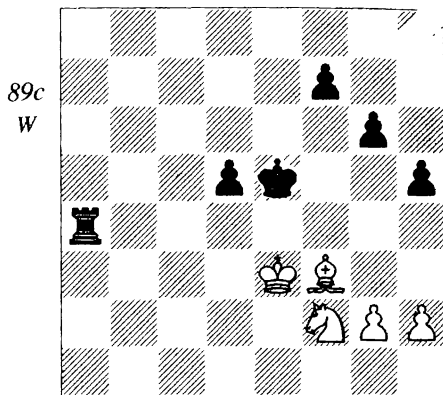
Or 18...a6 19 g3 fxg3 (19...f3 20 g4) 20 fxg3 ♜d2 with play similar to the game.

19 ♚xf4 ♜xf2 20 g3 ♚f5 21 ♙d7+ ♚g5 22 ♚e6+ ♚h5 23 ♚c5! ♜f3 24 ♚e4 ♜d3+ 25 ♚e5 ♜a3?

This loses at once. After the best defence, 25...♜f3, White still has work to do; for example, 26 ♙e8+ ♚h6 27 ♙b5 ♚h5 28 a5 ♜b3 29 ♙c4 ♜f3 30 a6 ♜a3 (30...♚g6 31 ♙e2 ♜a3 32 ♚f4) 31 ♚d6 ♜e3+ 32 ♚d4 ♜f3 33 ♙f7+! ♚g5 34 ♙d5 ♜a3 35 ♙b7, followed by ♚c8 rounding up the a-pawn.

26 ♙e8+ 1-0

After 26...♚h6 27 ♚f4 White picks up the g-pawn.



Adams – Khalifman
Dos Hermanas 1993

On the other hand, a rook and two pawns are worth more than a bishop and knight in the ending. This is a relatively favourable case for the pieces, as the pawns are pretty much on one side of the board and the d-pawn is weak. However, accurate defence is necessary.

1 ♖d3+ ♜d6 2 ♜f4 ♞a3+ 3 ♜d4 ♞a4+ 4 ♜e3 d4+ 5 ♜e4 f5+ 6 ♜d3 g5!

The best chance, giving up a pawn to sideline the white knight.

7 ♜xh5 ♜e5 8 ♜g3?

Now White is in difficulties. 8 ♙e2 ♞a3+ 9 ♜d2 was better, when Black cannot make progress since 9...♜e4 can be met by 10 ♜f6+.

8...♞a3+ 9 ♜d2 ♞a2+ 10 ♜d3 ♞a3+ 11 ♜d2 d3! 12 ♜xf5?!

Giving up the knight doesn't save the game. However, even after 12 h3 ♞b3 13 ♜e1 (or 13 ♜f1 ♜d4) 13...♞b2 14 ♜f1 ♜d4 15 ♜g3 ♞b5 16 ♜d2 ♞a5 17 ♜e1 ♜c3 18 ♜f1 ♞e5+ 19 ♜d1 ♞e7 White is in trouble.

12...♜xf5 13 ♜e3 ♜e5 14 h3

Or 14 ♙d1 ♞a2 15 ♙f3 d2 16 ♙d1 ♜f5 17 ♜f3 (17 g3 g4) 17...♞a8 18 ♜e3 ♞d8 19 h3 ♜e5 and Black wins by zugzwang.

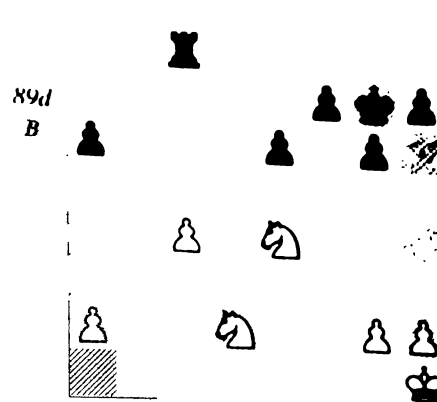
14...♞b3

14...d2+! 15 ♜xd2 ♜f4 is quicker.

15 ♙d1 ♞a3 16 ♙f3 d2+!

Black hits on the correct idea: it is worth giving up the d-pawn to penetrate with the king.

17 ♜xd2 ♜f4 18 ♜e2 ♜g3 19 ♜e1 ♞a1+ 20 ♜e2 ♞g1 21 ♜e3 ♞xg2 0-1



Ni Hua – Timofeev
Russia-China, Nizhny Novgorod 2007

Two knights are the worst combination of minor pieces when fighting against a rook. Here Black has only one extra pawn, but White's chances are bleak. There are pawns on both sides of the board, stretching the knights to the limit, and White is handicapped by the weak c-pawn and lack of strong squares for the knights.

1...f5 2 ♜c3 ♞d8?

2...♞b8! 3 ♜b3 ♞b4 4 c5 ♞c4 5 ♜e2 c5 is much better, as the rook is already very active.

3 ♜cb1 e5 4 ♜g1 e4 5 ♜f2 ♜f6 6 ♜e2 ♜e5

To make progress, Black must advance his kingside pawn-mass.

7 ♜b3 g5 8 ♜c3 h5 9 ♜d5 f4?!

It is too early to weaken the e4-pawn. The cautious 9...♞b8 was more accurate.

10 ♜b6?

10 ♜d2! was much better; then it is not so easy for Black, as the obvious 10...♞d6 11 ♜c3 ♞d3 12 ♜dxe4 ♞e3+ 13 ♜f2 ♞xe4 14 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 is only a draw after 15 c5 ♜d5 16 c6 ♜xc6 17 ♜f3, followed by 18 h4.

10...h4 11 h3 ♞d3 12 c5 ♞e3+?

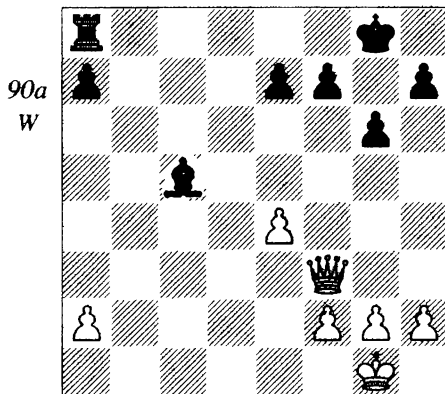
Missing 12...g4! 13 hxg4 f3+ 14 ♜f2 (14 gxf3 h3 15 fxe4 ♞xb3 also wins for Black) 14...h3 15 gxh3 ♜f4 and White is defenceless.

13 ♜f2?

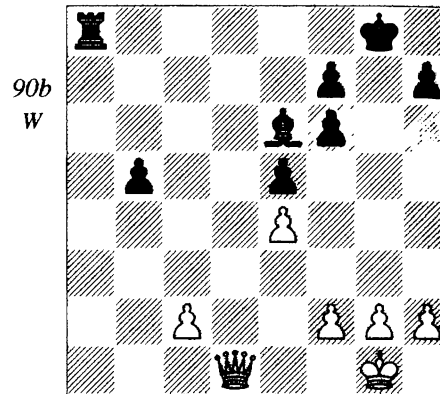
13 ♜f1! gave good drawing chances, as after 13...♞c3 14 ♜d7+ ♜e6 15 ♜b6 there is no check on c2.

13...♞c3 14 ♜a5 ♞c2+ 15 ♜f1 f3! 16 gxf3 exf3 17 c6 g4! 18 c7 ♞xc7 19 ♜ac4+ ♜d4 20 hxg4 h3 21 ♜d2 ♞c1+ 22 ♜f2 ♞c2 0-1

90 Queen vs Rook and Minor Piece



Kramnik – Shirov
Wijk aan Zee 1999



Nunn – Khurtsidze
World Team Ch, Lucerne 1997

A queen is worth more than a rook and a minor piece, but whether this material balance offers winning chances depends very much on the position. The above diagram may look drawish due to the symmetrical pawn-structure, but in fact White has good winning chances because Black lacks a stable square for his bishop. On b6 it can be dislodged by an eventual a5, while Black never has time for ... ♙d4 and ...e5.

1 ♖c3 ♜c8

1... ♞d8 2 ♕f1 ♙b6 3 a4 e6 4 a5 ♞d4 5 ♚c7 ♞f8 6 e5 (White must prevent ...e5) 6...h5 7 ♕e2 ♜g7 8 f4 also led to a win for White in the blitz game Kramnik-Kasparov, Moscow 1998.

2 ♕f1 ♜c7 3 a4

White is ready for a5, denying the bishop the b6-square.

3...♙b6 4 ♚e5 ♜c2 5 a5 ♙c5

5... ♞xf2+ 6 ♕e1 ♙e3 7 ♚xe7 ♜c2 8 e5 is also unpleasant for Black.

6 f4 e6 7 g4

Black is unable to undertake much because he must always defend his loose bishop. This gives White time to advance his pawns and launch an attack on Black's king.

7... ♞c4 8 ♚c7 h6 9 f5 gxf5 10 gxf5 exf5 11 exf5 f6 12 ♚g3+ ♕f8 13 ♚g6 ♙d4 14 ♚xh6+ ♕e7 15 ♚f4 ♕d7 16 h4 ♞a4 17 ♚e4 ♕d6

The h-pawn will decide the game.

18 h5 ♞a1+ 19 ♕e2 ♙e5 20 ♚b4+ ♕d5 21 ♚b7+ ♕c4 22 h6 ♞a2+ 23 ♕f3 1-0

The queen doesn't always win. In this position Black has an excellent stable square for her bishop on c4. Even though Black's kingside pawn-structure is slightly damaged, White is unable to penetrate Black's fortress.

1 g4

The other plan is g3 followed by f4, which may offer slightly better chances of success.

1...h6 2 ♕g2 ♕g7 3 ♕g3 ♞a4 4 f3 ♞a8 5 ♚d2 ♞e8 6 h4

Trying to attack the h-pawn with ♕h4-h5 leads nowhere after 6 ♕h4 ♕g6 .

6...♙c4 7 ♚d7

Or 7 f4 exf4+ 8 ♕xf4 ♞e5 and Black has a fortress.

7...♞e6

A good plan: the bishop stays on c4 and Black uses the rook along the third rank, which is especially useful if White tries to play g5.

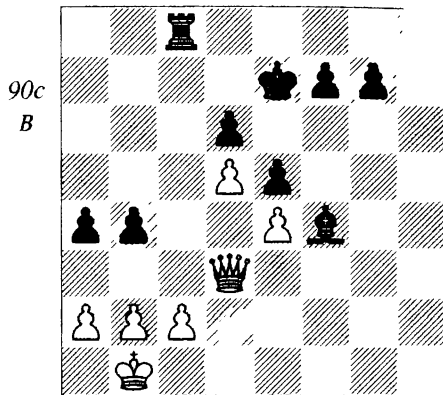
8 ♕f2 ♞a6 9 ♚e7 ♞e6 10 ♚d8 ♙a2 11 ♕e3 ♙c4 12 ♕d2 ♙a2 13 ♕c3

The king heads to c5 before White undertakes any kingside activity.

13... ♙c4 14 ♚d2 ♙a2 15 ♕b4 ♙c4 16 ♚f2 ♞a6 17 ♚g3 ♞e6 18 ♕c5 ♕g6 19 ♚g2 ♕g7 20 ♚d2 ♕g6 21 ♚g2 ♕g7 22 g5

Finally some action, but Black defends comfortably.

22...fxg5 23 hxg5 hxg5 24 ♚xg5+ ♕f8 25 ♚g2 ♞g6 26 ♚h2 ♞e6 27 ♚h8+ ♕e7 28 ♚g8 ♞g6 29 ♚b8 ♞e6 30 ♚h8 ♙f1 31 ♚h1 1/2-1/2



Shirov – Kasparov
Tilburg 1997

Material is roughly balanced but Black has a slight advantage thanks to his passed g-pawn. The crucial points here are that some squares on the g-file are already covered, which makes it easier to advance the pawn, and Black's king is relatively safe from checks.

1...g5 2 a3

Relieving the back rank. White could also try 2 ♖a6 ♜h8 3 a3 g4 4 axb4 (not 4 ♖b7+? ♜f6 5 ♖xb4 g3 6 ♖xd6+ ♜g7 and Black wins) 4...♜h1+ 5 ♜a2, with good drawing chances.

2...bxa3 3 ♖a6

Just grabbing pawns isn't the answer; for example, 3 ♖xa3? g4 4 ♖xa4 g3 5 ♖a7+ ♜f6 6 ♖d7 ♜h8! 7 ♜a2 g2 8 ♖g4 ♜h2 9 c4 ♜e7! 10 c5 ♜e3 and Black wins.

3...♜d8 4 ♖b6

The key defensive idea is to check on the seventh rank and so force either ...♜d7 or ...♜e8, both of which prevent Black from switching his rook behind the pawn. 4 ♖b7+ ♜d7 5 ♖b6 g4 6 c4 is one way to do it, but the text-move doesn't yet spoil anything.

4...g4 5 c4?

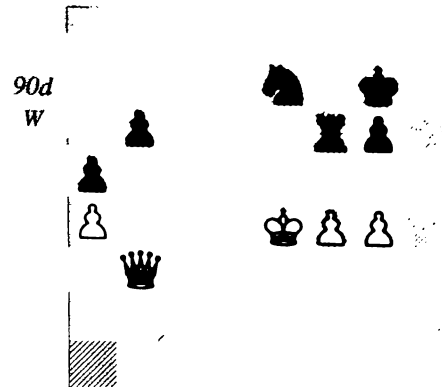
Now Black wins. 5 bxa3 g3 6 ♖c7+! was correct; after 6...♜d7 (or 6...♜e8 7 ♖b6) 7 ♖c8 Black has no more than an edge.

5...g3 6 c5

Now 6 ♖c7+ ♜d7 7 ♖b8 g2 8 ♖g8 ♜b7 wins for Black due to the fork on b2.

6...g2 7 cxd6+ ♜xd6 8 ♖c7+ ♜f6! 9 ♖xd6+ ♜g7 0-1

Black wins after 10 ♖c5 ♜h2 11 d6 g1 ♖+ 12 ♖xg1+ ♜g1 13 d7 ♜b6.



Grishchuk – Babula
Fügen ECC 2006

The situation with a knight is similar in that the defender's main strategy is to set up a fortress. In this position it isn't obvious whether a fortress is possible as White can create a passed pawn on the kingside. In the game Black held on by accurate defence.

1 ♖b2 ♜f7 2 ♖d4 ♜e6+ 3 ♜d3 ♜c6!

Black must prevent the white king from penetrating via a6 to d7.

4 ♖h8 ♜f6 5 ♖h7+ ♜e8 6 ♖h6

If White aims to push his f-pawn with his king in the centre, Black defends by 6 ♜e4 ♜e6+ (not 6...♜c6?, when 7 f5! gxf5+ 8 gxf5 ♜f6 9 ♜e5 is very strong) 7 ♜d4 ♜c6 8 ♜e4 (8 f5 gxf5 9 gxf5 ♜h6!) and now Black can either repeat by 8...♜e6+ or play 8...♜c4+ 9 ♜e5 ♜c6 10 f5 gxf5 11 gxf5 ♜d7! (threatening 12...♜c5+) 12 ♜d4 ♜f6.

6...♜c6 7 ♖g7 ♜c5 8 ♜e2

Or 8 ♜e4 ♜c4+! 9 ♜e5 ♜c6 10 f5 gxf5 11 gxf5 ♜c5+ 12 ♜f6 ♜c6+ (12...♜xf5+? 13 ♜e6) 13 ♜g5 ♜c5 and the attack on the f-pawn draws.

8...♜c6 9 ♜f3 ♜e6 10 ♜g3 ♜c6 11 ♜h4 ♜d6 12 ♜g5 ♜c6 13 ♜h6 ♜e6 14 ♜h7 ♜c6 15 ♖h8+

15 ♖e5 ♜f7 16 f5 gxf5 17 gxf5 ♜f6 is also safe for Black.

15...♜f7 16 ♖d4 ♜f8 17 f5?!

A tactical miscalculation, but White was not making progress in any case.

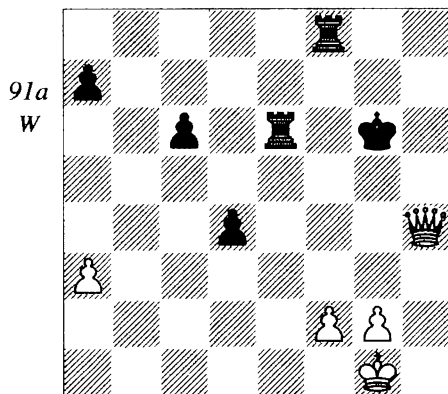
17...gxf5 18 ♖h8+

18 gxf5?? even loses due to 18...♜h6+!

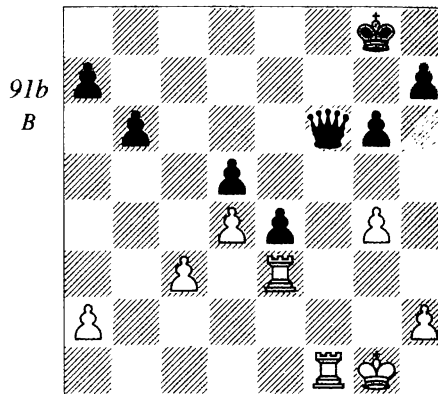
18...♜f7 19 ♖g7+ ♜e8 20 ♖h8+ ♜f7 21 ♖g7+ 1/2-1/2

91

Queen vs Two Rooks



Shirov – Radjabov
Linares 2004



Svidler – Ponomarev
FIDE Knockout, Moscow 2001

Two rooks are worth roughly the same as a queen and a pawn, but much depends on the position. Here there are two major factors favouring White: Black's exposed king and White's connected passed pawns. An exposed king is a serious problem for the rooks because the queen's forking power is such that the rooks often have to defend each other, which severely limits their manoeuvrability.

1 ♖g4+!

Forcing the king back to the f-file and much stronger than 1 ♖xd4 ♜f5, which allows Black to activate his rook.

1...♙f7 2 ♜xd4 a6 3 g4 ♜g8 4 f3 ♜f6 5 ♙f2 ♜e8 6 ♜c4+ ♙g7 7 ♜xa6 ♜ef8 8 ♜d3 c5 9 a4 ♜a8

Black would like to get a rook behind his own passed pawn, but owing to his exposed king this proves impossible; for example, 9...♜c8 10 ♜d7+ just loses the rook.

10 ♜c3 ♙g6 11 ♜xc5 ♜fa6 12 ♙g3 ♜xa4

The liquidation leaves White with an easy win as Black cannot stop the gradual advance of White's king and pawns. The end was **13 ♜d6+ ♙f7 14 g5 ♜8a6 15 ♜d7+ ♙g6 16 f4 ♜a1 17 ♜d3+ ♙g7 18 ♜d4+ ♙g8 19 ♙g4 ♜a2 20 ♜d8+ ♙g7 21 ♜c7+ ♙g8 22 f5 ♜a7 23 ♜d8+ ♙g7 24 f6+ ♙h7 25 ♜d3+ ♙h8 26 ♙f5 ♜a8 27 ♜h3+ ♙g8 28 ♙g6 ♜2a7 29 ♜e6+ ♙f8 30 ♜d6+ ♙g8 31 ♜d5+ ♙h8 (31...♙f8 loses to 32 ♙h6) 32 ♜h1+ 1-0** due to 32...♙g8 33 f7+.

Material is again roughly equal, but White's rooks are poorly coordinated and his king position has been weakened by the advance of the g-pawn. Black is able to keep White tied up while he gradually improves his position.

1...♜g5 2 ♜g3 b5 3 ♜f2

3 ♜b1 ♜d2 doesn't help as 4 ♜xb5? loses the rook after 4...♜e1+ 5 ♙g2 ♜e2+.

3...♙g7

The immediate 3...b4 4 cxb4 ♜c1+ 5 ♙g2 (or 5 ♜f1 ♜d2) 5...♜d1 is also good, as after the d4-pawn falls Black will have two connected passed pawns. However, there is no need to rush as White has no counterplay.

4 ♙g2 a5 5 ♜b2 b4 6 cxb4 axb4

6...♜c1 7 ♜f2 axb4 8 g5 ♜d1 is more accurate, but it makes no real difference.

7 h3 ♜c1 8 ♜gb3 ♙h6 9 ♜xb4 ♜d1

Threatening 10...e3.

10 ♙f2 ♙g5 11 ♜e2

Or 11 a4 ♙f4 12 ♜4b3 ♜xd4+ and ...♜xa4.

11...♙f4 12 ♜b3

12 a4 loses to 12...e3+ 13 ♜xe3 ♜d2+.

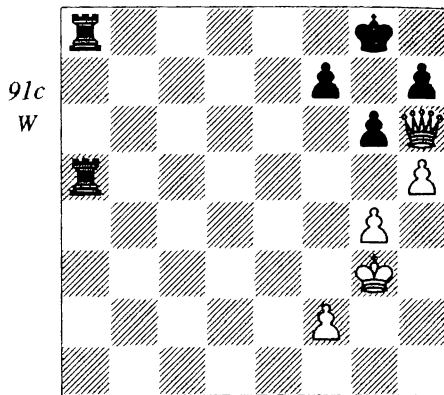
12...♜xd4+ 13 ♙g2 ♜c4 14 ♜f2+ ♙g5

The connected passed pawns are decisive.

15 ♜f7

Or 15 ♜e3 ♜c1 16 ♜fe2 ♙f4 17 ♙f2 ♜h1 18 a3 h6 and White is in zugzwang (after 19 a4 ♜a1 he just loses the a-pawn).

15...d4 16 h4+ ♙xh4 17 ♜xh7+ ♙xg4 18 ♜g3+ ♙f5 0-1



Leko – Kramnik
World Ch (1), Brissago 2004

The rooks prefer quiet situations in which they can target weak pawns one by one. King safety is also important to avoid forks and possible perpetual check.

1 ♖f4?

After this White is definitely lost. 1 hxg6 ♗d2 was the best chance, but not 2 g5?! ♜f5 3 f4 (White's fortress is less secure than it appears) 3...♞a4 4 ♖h4 ♞a3+ (4...♜xf4? 5 ♖xf4 ♜xf4 6 ♗xf4 ♗f8 7 ♗e4 ♗e8 8 ♗d4! ♗d8 9 ♗e4! is a draw) 5 ♗g2 (5 ♗g4? loses to 5...♜xf4+ 6 ♗xf4 ♞a4+ 7 ♗g3 ♜xh4 8 ♗xh4 ♗f8 9 ♗g4 ♗e7 10 ♗f4 ♗d6!) 5...♞b5 6 ♖f2 ♞bb3 7 ♖e2 ♞e3 8 ♖d1 ♞a2+ 9 ♗f1 ♞e8 and White is in trouble due to his bad king position.

1...g5! 2 ♖f6 h6!

A neat defence to the threat of 3 h6; if 3 ♖xh6, then 3...♞8a6 traps the queen. Now Black has fixed the pawn-structure, and eventually he will arrange his rooks on f6 and f4, when the f3-pawn will fall.

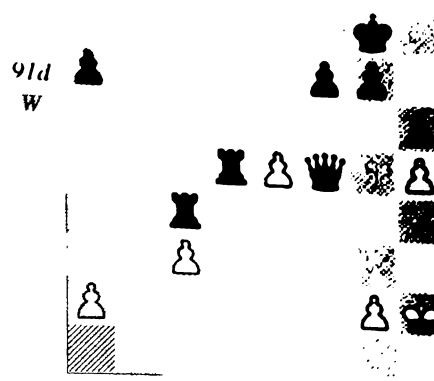
3 f3

Or 3 f4 ♞a3+! 4 ♗f2 ♞a2+ 5 ♗f3 (5 ♗f1 ♞c8 also wins for Black) 5...♞8a3+ 6 ♗e4 ♞a4+ and f4 falls.

3...♞5a6 4 ♖c3 ♞a4 5 ♖c6

White does his best to prevent the rook transfer to the f-file, but he cannot stop it forever.

5...♞8a6 6 ♖e8+ ♗g7 7 ♖b5 ♞4a5 8 ♖b4 ♞d5 9 ♖b3 ♞ad6 10 ♖c4 ♞d3 11 ♗f2 ♞a3 12 ♖c5 ♞a2+ 13 ♗g3 ♞f6! 14 ♖b4 ♞aa6 15 ♗g2 ♞f4 16 ♖b2+ ♞af6 17 ♖e5 ♞xf3 18 ♖a1 ♞f1 19 ♖c3 ♞1f2+ 20 ♗g3 ♞2f3+ 21 ♖xf3 ♞xf3+ 22 ♗xf3 ♗f6 0-1



Shirov – Anand
Linares 1998

Here White is in difficulties due to his several weak pawns, although the advanced h5-pawn gives him chances of perpetual check. It follows that Black must take care to keep his back rank covered.

1 ♖b1 ♞d8 2 ♖b7 ♞xc3 3 ♖xa7 ♞cc8 4 a4 ♞a8 5 ♖c7

White's only real hope is to force through e6 while Black is winning the a-pawn. That would liquidate one of his weak pawns and slightly expose Black's king.

5...♞dc8

5...♞d4?! is inferior due to 6 ♖c6 ♞dx4 7 e6 and White reaches his objective.

6 ♖b7 ♞e8 7 ♖c6 ♞ac8

For the moment Black keeps one rook on e8 to stop e6 while he manoeuvres with the other rook.

8 ♖d7 ♞cd8 9 ♖c7?

White should have played 9 ♖b5!, when it is not so easy for Black to win the a-pawn without allowing e6; for example, 9...♞e6 10 a5 ♞a8 11 g4 ♞ea6 12 ♖d7 ♞xa5 13 e6 with drawing chances.

9...♞d5

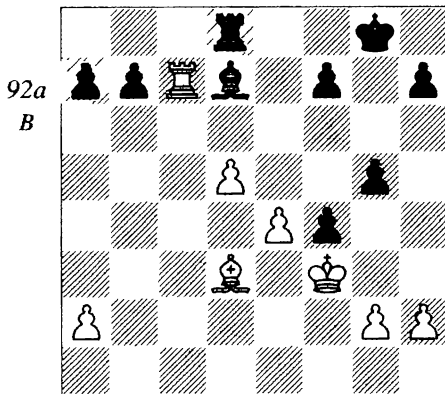
Now White is lost since Black can take the e-pawn and come back for the a-pawn.

10 a5 ♞dxe5 11 a6 ♞5e7 12 ♖c6

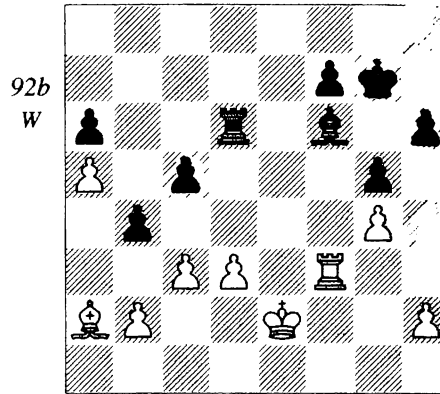
Or 12 ♖c5 ♞d7 13 ♖b5 ♞ed8, followed by either ...♞a8 or ...♞a7.

12...♞f8 13 ♗h3 ♞a7 14 g4 ♞fa8 15 ♗h4 ♞xa6 16 ♖b7 ♞a5 17 ♖c6 ♞f8 18 ♖b6 ♞g5 19 ♖b3 ♗h8 20 ♖b4 ♞e8 21 ♖a4 ♞d8 22 ♖e4 f5 23 gxf5 ♞f8 0-1

92 Rook and Minor Piece Endings (1)



Kramnik – Leko
Budapest rapid (1) 2001



Kasparov – Babula
Prague simul 2001

Endings with rooks and minor pieces are often more than simply a combination of the two different types of ending. The heavier material emphasizes the value of the initiative, and direct threats against the enemy king are not uncommon. Here Black is a pawn up, but White's active pieces and passed d-pawn mean that Black is in dire trouble.

1...♙a4

After 1...♙c8 2 e5 the centre pawns advance.

2 ♖g4!

Before taking on b7, White activates his king. 2 ♜xb7 ♙d1+ 3 ♔f2 a5 gives Black more chances.

2...h6 3 ♜xb7 ♞d7

Now 3...♙d1+ may be met by 4 ♔f5.

4 ♞b4 ♙d1+ 5 ♔f5 ♖g7 6 h4

The simple 6 ♙b5 ♞d8 7 ♞d4, preparing to push the pawns, is simpler, but Kramnik's move also suffices for victory.

6...f6 7 hxc5 hxc5

Or 7...fxg5 8 e5 ♞xd5 9 ♞b7+ ♔f8 10 ♔f6 ♞d8 11 ♙c4 and White wins.

8 e5! fxe5

After 8...♞xd5 9 ♞b7+ ♔h6 10 ♙b1! both 10...fxe5 11 ♔e6 and 10...♞xe5+ 11 ♔xf6 win for White due to the mating threats.

9 ♔xe5 f3 10 gxf3 ♙xf3 11 d6 ♞d8 12 ♙f5 ♙c6 13 d7 ♞f8

13...♙xd7 14 ♞b7 and White wins.

14 ♞d4 1-0

Positions with rooks and opposite-coloured bishops are far less drawish than pure opposite-coloured bishop positions. Pressure against a weak point may be hard to nullify as it is impossible to oppose bishops. Here, for example, the f6-bishop is awkwardly pinned against the weak f7-pawn. In addition, the pawns on c5 and a6 are weak, so White has good winning chances.

1 ♔d2 ♞d7

To unpin the bishop. White retains a large advantage after 1...bxc3+ 2 bxc3 ♙d8 3 ♞xf7+ ♔g6 4 ♞a7 ♙xa5 5 ♙f7+ ♔f6 6 ♙c4 or 1...h5 2 gxh5 ♙d8 3 ♞xf7+ ♔h6 4 ♞a7 ♙xa5 5 ♙f7.

2 ♞f5 ♞b7

2...♙c7 3 ♙c4 ♞c6 4 ♞d5, intending ♞d7, is also very awkward for Black.

3 ♔c2 bxc3 4 bxc3 ♞b5

After 4...♞e7 5 ♙c4 ♞e5 both 6 ♞f1 and 6 ♞xe5 ♙xe5 7 ♔b3 ♙xh2 8 ♙xa6 are very promising for White.

5 ♙c4 ♞xa5 6 d4 ♔g6?

The king is badly placed here. 6...♞a1 7 ♞xc5 ♞g1 was a better chance.

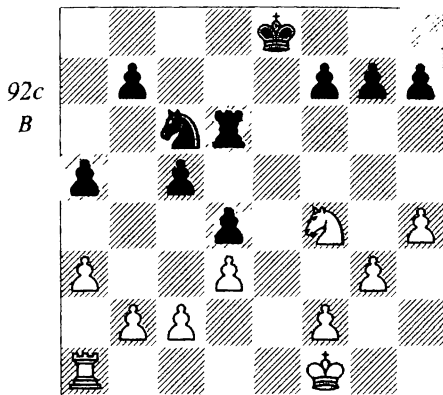
7 dxc5 ♙e7

After 7...♞a3 8 ♔b2 ♞xc3 9 ♞xf6+ White wins at once.

8 c6! ♙d8

8...♞xf5? loses on the spot to 9 gxf5+ ♔xf5 10 c7.

9 ♙xf7+ ♔g7 10 ♙d5 ♞c5 11 c4 ♙f6 12 ♔d3 ♙b2 13 ♞f2 ♙a1 14 ♔e4 ♔g6 15 ♞a2 1-0



Lepelletier – Nunn
French Team Ch 1999

In some cases the attacker's pieces can combine to create pressure which would be impossible for one piece acting alone. In this position Black has an edge as he controls more space and White's kingside pawns are slightly weakened.

1...♔d7 2 ♖e2 a4

Fixing the b2-pawn so that it can be attacked by ...♞b6 later.

3 ♞h1?!

3 ♞e1 ♕e5 4 ♔d1 is more natural.

3...♕e5 4 ♔d2 ♞b6 5 ♖c1 ♕f3?!

5...♕g4! is better as it is hard to expel the knight from g4 without creating a new weakness on e3.

6 ♕h3?

This passive move leaves White in serious trouble. 6 g4! was essential, to expel the knight by ♞h3.

6...h6 7 ♕f4

After 7 ♕g1 Black continues 7...♕e5. Without rooks, White could play his king to e2 to drive the knight back, but as it is White is paralysed by the knight on f3.

7...g6 8 ♕d5 ♞d6 9 c4

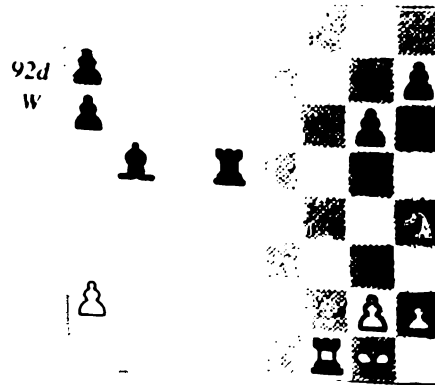
A desperate move which leaves White with a weak d-pawn.

9...dxc3 10 ♕xc3 ♞d4!

The plan is ...♖c6 and ...b5, freeing the rook to cause trouble elsewhere. White is lost.

11 ♖c2 ♖c6 12 ♞d1 b5 13 ♕e2 ♞d5 14 ♖c3 ♞e5 15 ♕c1 ♔d5 16 d4 ♕xd4 17 ♕d3 ♞e4! 18 ♕c1 ♖c6 19 ♞d2 0-1

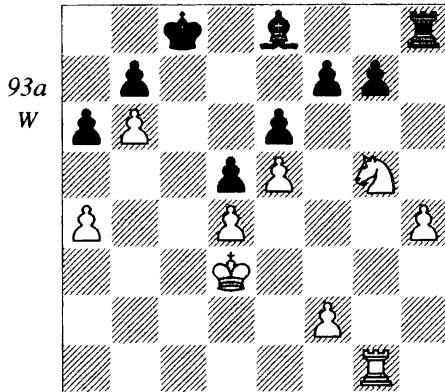
After 19...f5 20 ♞d1 f4 White will soon lose more material.



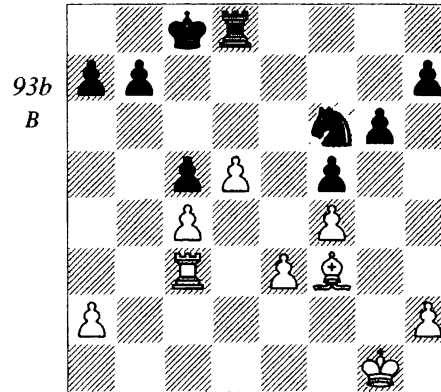
Timman – Kasparov
Sarajevo 1999

Perhaps the most interesting case is rook and bishop vs rook and knight. Wide-open positions tend to favour the bishop, but the presence of rooks makes matters less clear than in pure bishop vs knight positions. Here Black is a (doubled) pawn up, and in addition White's knight is offside, but Black must still work hard to win. The game continued 1 ♞c1 g5! 2 ♕f3 g4 3 ♕h4 (this knight never moves again, but nevertheless White puts up quite a bit of resistance) 3...♖f6 4 ♞c7 h5 5 ♞xa7 ♞d1+ 6 ♖f2 ♞d2+ 7 ♖e3 ♞xa2 8 ♞b7 ♞e2+ (8...♖g5?! 9 g3 ♞e2+ 10 ♔d4 ♞xh2 11 ♞g7+ ♖f6 12 ♞g6+ ♖f7 13 ♞h6 only gives White counterplay) 9 ♖f4 ♞e4+! 10 ♖g3 (or 10 ♖xe4 ♖c6+ 11 ♔d4 ♖xb7 12 ♖c5 a5! 13 ♖b5 g3! 14 hxg3 ♖g5 15 ♕f3+ ♖g4 16 ♕d4 ♖e4 17 ♖xa5 ♖xg3 and Black wins) 10...♞e3+ 11 ♖f4 ♞e4+ 12 ♖g3 ♞e7?! (Black loses his way slightly; 12...♖e8! was stronger) 13 ♞b6+ ♞e6 14 ♞b7 ♖d3 15 ♞d7 ♖b5 16 ♞h7 ♖e8 17 ♞a7? (17 ♖f4! ♖f7 18 ♞h8 offers more resistance) 17...♞e3+ 18 ♖f4 ♞a3 19 ♞b7 ♞a4+ 20 ♖e3 ♞e4+ 21 ♔d3 ♞e7 (now Black is back on track) 22 ♞b2 ♖b5+ 23 ♔d4 ♞e2 24 ♞b3 (or 24 ♞xe2 ♖xe2 25 ♖e3 ♖b5 26 ♔d4 a5 27 ♖c5 ♖c6! and wins) 24...♖g5 25 g3 ♞d2+ 26 ♖e4 ♞c2 27 ♖e5 (27 ♕f5 ♞e2+ 28 ♞e3 ♞xh2 and Black wins) 27...♞xh2 28 ♞c3 ♞e2+ 29 ♔d4 ♞d2+ 30 ♖e4 ♞e2+ 31 ♔d4 ♞d2+ 32 ♖e4 ♖f6 33 ♞c5 ♞e2+ 34 ♖f4 ♖d3 0-1 since after 35 ♖c6+ (35 ♞xh5? ♞e4# is another example of a mating idea) 35...♞e6 36 ♞xe6+ ♖xe6 37 ♖g5 ♖e4 38 ♖xh5 a5 39 ♖xg4 a4 the a-pawn is decisive.

93 Rook and Minor Piece Endings (2)



Kramnik – Leko
World Ch (14), Brissago 2004



Yermolinsky – Kasparov
Wijk aan Zee 1999

Continuing on from Section 92, positions with rook and bishop vs rook and knight are affected by many of the same factors that influence pure bishop vs knight positions, but the emphasis may be different. In this position, Black suffers from a bad bishop which poses particular problems since there are rooks on the board. The presence of rooks gives White the opportunity to execute a breakthrough leading to a direct attack on Black's king.

1 ♖c1+ ♜c6

Forced, or else White plays ♜c7, but now the knight reaches d6.

2 ♜xf7 ♜xh4 3 ♜d6+ ♜d8 4 ♜g1 ♜h3+ 5 ♜e2 ♜a3 6 ♜xg7 ♜xa4 7 f4! ♜a2+

White wins after 7...♜xd4 8 f5! exf5 9 e6 ♜e4+ 10 ♜xe4 fxe4 11 ♜c7! followed by ♜xc6.

8 ♜f3 ♜a3+

After 8...♜a1 9 f5 exf5 10 ♜h7! ♜e1 11 ♜f4 a5 12 ♜g5 the king reaches f6, with a crushing attack.

9 ♜g4 ♜d3

Or 9...♜a1 10 ♜h7 ♜g1+ 11 ♜f3 ♜f1+ 12 ♜e3 and White will again break through by f5.

10 f5!

White is prepared to offer a pawn or two for the sake of his attack.

10...♜xd4+ 11 ♜g5 exf5 12 ♜f6

Threatening 13 e6.

12...♜g4 13 ♜c7 ♜h4 14 ♜f7+ 1-0

In view of 14...♜e8 15 ♜c8+ ♜d7 16 ♜d8#.

Here again the pawn-structure favours the knight. White's pawns are in three islands, his bishop is obstructed by the d5-pawn and his e-pawn is backward. Yet it is the presence of rooks which makes White's life especially uncomfortable, since Black's rook can probe White's weak queenside pawns.

1...♜d6 2 ♜a3 ♜b8 3 ♜b3

Or 3 ♜a5 ♜d7 and now 4 e4? fxe4 5 ♜xe4 costs a pawn after 5...♜f6.

3...♜a6 4 a3 ♜e8?!

The direct 4...♜a4 is simpler since both 5 ♜c3 ♜c7 6 ♜d1 ♜e4 and 5 ♜e2 ♜c7 6 ♜g2 b6 are very good for Black. After the text-move White can advance his backward pawn, although he remains with an inferior pawn-structure.

5 e4 fxe4 6 ♜xe4 ♜d6 7 ♜d3 ♜a4 8 ♜c3 ♜c7 9 ♜f2 b5! 10 cxb5 ♜b6 11 ♜e3 c4 12 ♜c2

12 ♜d2 is a tricky move which is well met by 12...♜a5.

12...♜xb5 13 ♜xa4 ♜xc3 14 ♜e8?!

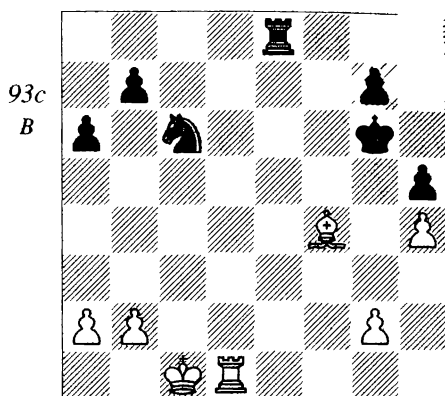
14 ♜c2 is a better chance, although 14...♜c5 15 d6 ♜xd6 16 f5 g5 17 f6 h5 is still very good for Black.

14...♜c5 15 d6 ♜d5+ 16 ♜e4 ♜f6+ 17 ♜e3

Or 17 ♜e5 ♜xe8 18 d7 ♜d6! and Black wins.

17...♜xd6 18 ♜f7 ♜c5 19 h4 ♜g4+ 20 ♜d2 ♜d4 21 h5 gxh5 22 ♜xb5 ♜f6 0-1

After 23 ♜f3 c3+ 24 ♜c2 ♜d5 25 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 26 ♜xc3 ♜e4! the king and pawn ending is a win.



Shirov – Anand
Leon (Man + Machine) 2001

The position looks very drawish and there is no doubt that with correct play it should be a draw. However, despite the open position it is White who must take care. Black's king is more active and has a way into White's position via the weak squares f5 and g4, while it is hard for White to generate any real counterplay.

1...♞e4 2 g3 ♞c4+ 3 ♔b1

3 ♔d2 ♞d4+ 4 ♔e2 ♞xd1 5 ♔xd1 ♔f5 6 ♔e2 ♔e4 is a little uncomfortable for White due to Black's active king.

3...♞d4 4 ♞c1 ♞d5

Necessary as the immediate 4...♔f5 loses a pawn after 5 ♞c5+.

5 a3 ♔f5 6 ♔a2 g6 7 ♞c4 ♔g4!

All Black's pieces are on light squares, so he need not fear the discovered check.

8 ♞e4 ♞d7 9 ♞c4?

9 ♞e6 ♞g7 10 ♞f6 is much better, when Black can hardly make progress.

9...♔h3 10 ♞e4 ♞e7 11 ♞c4 ♞e6

Intending ...b5 followed by ...♔e7-f5.

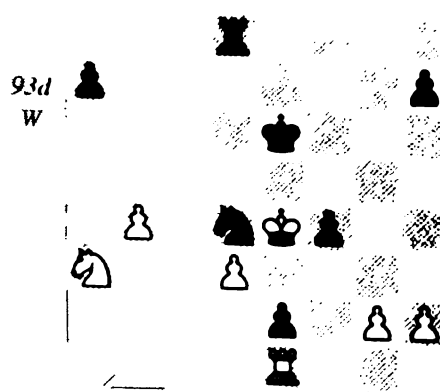
12 ♞c5 ♔d4! 13 a4 ♔e2 14 ♔b8 ♞e4!

Not 14...♔xg3?? 15 ♞c3, but now the g3-pawn is doomed.

15 ♔a3 ♞e3+ 16 ♔b4 ♔xg3 17 ♞c7 ♔xh4 18 ♞xb7 g5 19 ♔a5 ♞e6 20 ♞b6?

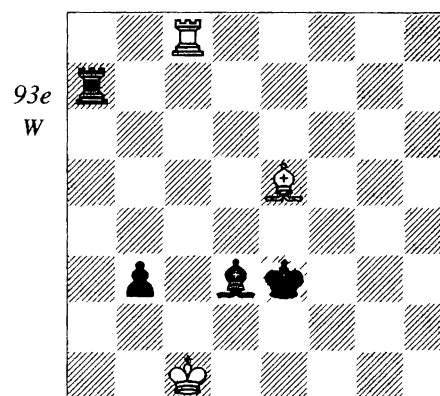
The last chance was 20 b4 ♔g4 21 ♞h7 ♔e4 22 b5 axb5 23 axb5 ♞e8 24 ♔c7 and White still has some drawing chances.

20...♞xb6 21 ♔xb6 ♔g4 22 b4 h4 23 b5 axb5 0-1



K. Rasmussen – Nunn
Lugano 1985

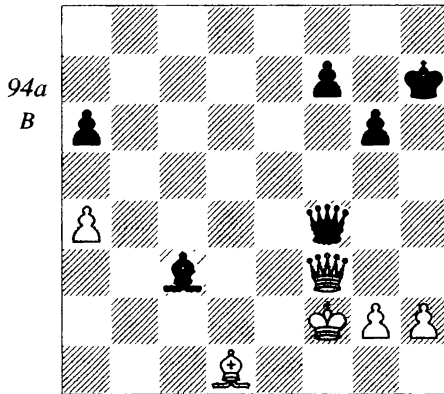
We have already seen in 93a how a rook and minor piece can cooperate in a direct attack on the king. Sometimes a mating possibility strikes unexpectedly and the sudden appearance of a mate is easy to overlook in the endgame. Here are a couple of examples. The game ended 1 ♔b1? (a mistake, but Black is clearly better even after 1 ♔xf4 ♔d5 2 ♔e3 ♞b8 3 b5 ♞g8 4 ♔f2 ♞f8+ 5 ♔e3 ♞f1 6 ♔d2 ♔c5 or 1 ♞b1 ♞d7) 1...f3! 0-1 in view of 2 gxf3 ♔c2 3 ♞xe2 ♞d4#.



Zhang Zhong – Bologan
Poikovsky 2004

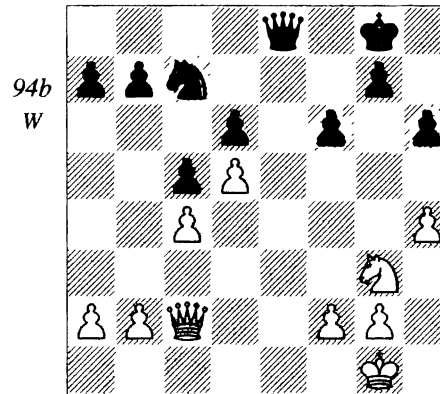
Here the conclusion was 1 ♔f6?! (1 ♔b2 is a simple draw) 1...♞f7 2 ♔c3?? (2 ♔g5+ ♔d4 3 ♔b2 is correct) 2...♞f2! (now it's a forced win) 3 ♔e5? (overlooking the threat, but even the best defence 3 ♞e8+ ♔e4 4 ♞xe4+ ♔xe4 5 ♔b1 is hopeless) 3...b2+! 0-1 as Black mates next move.

94 Queen and Minor Piece Endings



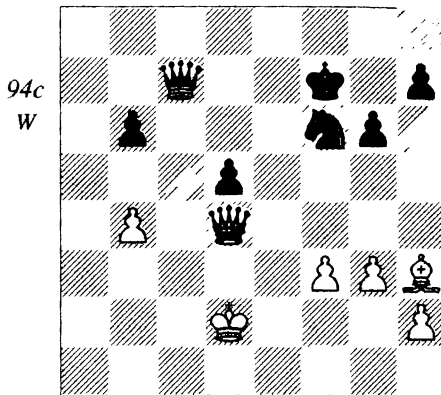
Toth – Nunn
Reggio Emilia 1983/4

With queens on the board, king safety becomes a higher priority, especially when the minor pieces are opposite-coloured bishops. In this position, Black is able to conduct a prolonged attack against White's exposed king, chasing it all the way up the board. The game continued 1... ♖h4+ 2 ♔e2 ♖e1+ 3 ♔d3 ♖d2+ 4 ♔c4 (not 4 ♔e4? ♖d4#) 4... ♖d4+ 5 ♔b3 ♖b4+ 6 ♔c2 ♖b2+ 7 ♔d3 ♔g7 8 ♖d5 ♖d2+ 9 ♔c4 ♖c1 (threatening to win the bishop by 10... ♗d2+) 10 ♔b3 ♗f6 (now the threat is mate in two) 11 ♖f3 ♖b2+ 12 ♔c4 ♖d4+ 13 ♔b3 a5 (threatening to win the a-pawn with check by 14... ♖b4+) 14 ♖e2 ♖d5+ (14... ♖c3+ was quicker, but a couple of preliminary checks do no harm) 15 ♔c2 ♖c6+ 16 ♔b3 ♖c3+ 17 ♔a2 ♖a1+ 18 ♔b3 ♖b1+ 19 ♔c4 ♖b4+ 20 ♔d5 (after 20 ♔d3 ♖d4+ 21 ♔c2 ♖xa4+ Black wins a pawn and continues the attack) 20... ♖d4+ 21 ♔c6 ♗e5 22 h3? (now Black wins by force; 22 ♖c2 ♗xh2 23 ♗f3 was better, giving up White's h-pawn to activate his pieces, when he still has drawing chances) 22... ♖d6+ 23 ♔b5 (23 ♔b7 ♖c7+ 24 ♔a6 ♗d4 mates) 23... ♖d5+ 24 ♔b6 ♗d4+ 25 ♔c7 ♖c5+ 26 ♔d7 (or 26 ♔b7 ♖b6+ 27 ♔c8 ♖c6+ 28 ♔b8 ♖d6+ 29 ♔b7 ♖d7+ 30 ♔b8 f6 31 ♖c2 ♖d8+ 32 ♔b7 ♖b6+ 33 ♔c8 ♗e5 and Black wins) 26... ♗e5 27 ♖c2 ♖d5+ 28 ♔c8 ♖a8+ 29 ♔d7 ♖b7+ 30 ♔e8 ♗d6 31 ♖c3+ (31 ♔d8 ♔f8 forces mate) 31... ♔g8 32 ♔d8 ♗e7+ 33 ♔e8 ♗b4 0-1 as White loses his queen.



Nunn – V. Kovačević
Thessaloniki Olympiad 1984

With a knight, much depends on whether there are outposts which can be occupied by the knight. In this position the squares f5 and e6 are potential outposts for White's knight while, by contrast, Black's knight is passive and is restricted to a purely defensive role. White's advantage is probably already decisive: 1 ♖f5 b5 2 ♗e4 ♖e7 3 b3 (keeping a pawn on c4 prevents ... ♗b5-d4) 3... bxc4 4 bxc4 ♔f7 5 h5 (creating another tempting outpost on g6; 5 ♖f4 attacks d6 but can be met by 5... ♗e8) 5... ♗e8 6 f4 (preventing 6... ♖e5) 6... ♔f8 7 ♔h2 ♖b7 8 ♖e6 ♖f7 9 ♖f5 ♖b7 10 ♗g3 (White hits upon the correct plan: the queen must quit f5 to make room for the knight) 10... ♖b2 11 ♖e4 ♖b7 12 ♗f5 (threatening 13 ♖xe8+) 12... ♖f7 13 ♖e2 ♖d7 14 ♗h4?! (White should have secured the kingside by 14 g4 ♔f7 15 ♔g3, after which his queen is free to penetrate along the b-file; e.g., 15... ♔f8 16 ♖b2 ♔g8 17 ♖b8 ♔f8 18 a4 followed by a5-a6 and ♖b7) 14... ♗c7?! (14... f5 followed by ... ♗f6 was a last chance for some freedom, even if this means giving up the f5-pawn) 15 ♗g6+ ♔f7 16 f5?! (this is premature; 16 a4! first would have improved White's position) 16... ♗a8?! (16... ♖e8 17 ♖b2 ♖c8 would have offered more resistance) 17 ♖e6+ (a decisive liquidation) 17... ♖xe6 18 fxe6+ ♔e8 19 ♗h4 ♗b6 20 ♗f5 ♗xc4 21 ♗xg7+ ♔f8 22 ♗f5 ♗d2 23 ♔g3 c4 24 ♔f2 ♗e4+ 25 ♔e3 1-0 as 25...c3 26 ♔d3 a6 27 g4 wins easily.



Ivanchuk – Harikrishna
Merida 2007

In cases of queen + bishop vs queen + knight, the type of position is crucial. The bishop is at its best in open positions such as the above, where in addition Black is handicapped by his isolated pawn.

1 ♖f1

Heading for b3 (via d3 and c2 or b5 and a4) to exert pressure against the weak d5-pawn.

1... ♜d6 2 ♗b5 ♜c7 3 ♗a4 ♜d6 4 ♗b3 ♖e7

White's long-term aim is to push his g-pawn to g5 to dislodge the knight, but first he toys with his king, trying to find the best spot.

5 ♖e3 ♜e6+ 6 ♖f2 ♜d6 7 ♖g2 ♜e6 8 ♖f1 ♜d6 9 ♖f2 ♖f7 10 ♗a4 ♜c7 11 ♗b3 ♜d6 12 ♖e3 ♜e6+ 13 ♖d2 ♜d6 14 ♖d3 ♖e7 15 ♖c3 ♜c7+ 16 ♖b2 ♜d6 17 ♖a3 ♜c6?

Finally Black makes a real mistake. 17... ♜e6 was better, to meet by 18 g4 by 18...g5.

18 g4! ♜c1+

Now 18...g5 loses to 19 ♜e5+, so Black must make a concession.

19 ♖a2 ♜e1

Or 19... ♜c7 20 h4 ♜h2+ 21 ♖a3 ♜xh4 22 ♜e5+ ♖d8 23 ♗a4 ♖d7 24 ♜h8+ and White wins.

20 ♜xb6 ♜d2+ 21 ♖a3 ♜c1+

White has won a pawn; the finish was 22 ♖a4 ♜a1+ 23 ♖b5 ♜f1+ 24 ♖c6 ♖d7 25 ♜e3+ ♖d8 26 b5 ♜a1 27 b6?! (27 ♖xd5! is simpler) 27... ♜a5? (27...h6 offers more resistance) 28 ♜g5+ ♖e8 29 ♜e3+ ♖d8 30 ♜d4 ♜a8+ 31 ♖b5 ♜a3 32 ♗xd5 ♜d6 33 g5 ♜xh2 34 f4 ♖e7 35 ♜b4+ ♖d8 36 ♜d4 ♖e7 37 b7 ♜e2+ 38 ♗c4 ♜e1 39 ♖c6 ♜h1+ 40 ♖c7 ♜h3 1-0.



Mamedyarov – Kamsky
Kemer ECC 2007

Although the position is relatively open, White stands better because the weak squares e6 and c5 can be occupied by the knight. Queen and knight often work well together when the knight has outposts, or when they are cooperating in an attack on the king.

1 ♖d4

1 ♜e6 is also very good, as 1... ♜xf3 2 ♜xd6+ ♖g7 3 ♜c7+ ♖h6 4 ♜xa7 wins a pawn.

1... ♗e5 2 ♖e6+ ♖e7 3 ♖c5 ♜c8 4 ♜d5 a6 5 h5!

Creating further weaknesses on the kingside.

5...gxh5

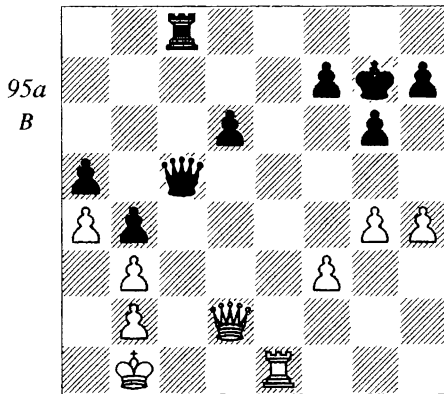
An unpleasant necessity. After 5... ♗a1 6 ♜d2 ♗e5 7 ♜h6 White wins a pawn.

6 ♜e4 ♜g4 7 ♜xh7+ ♖e8

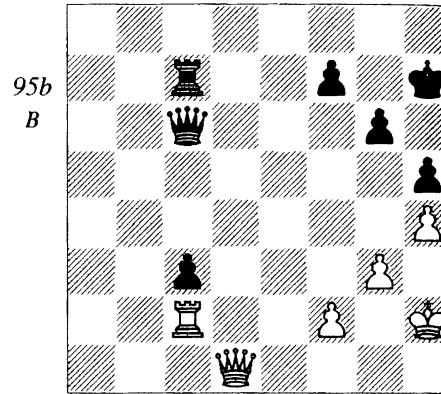
Black's pawn-structure is a total mess and it won't be long before White wins a pawn. The game concluded 8 ♜h8+ ♖f7 9 ♜h7+ ♖e8 10 ♖g2 ♗d6 11 ♖e4 ♗e7 12 f3 ♜e6 13 ♜xh5+ ♖d7 14 ♖f2 ♜b3 15 ♜f5+ ♖c7 16 ♜f4+ ♗d6 17 ♜c1+ ♖d7 18 ♖e4 ♜a2+ 19 ♖h3 ♜e6+ 20 ♖g2? (too passive; 20 g4! is much better: after 20...f5 21 ♖xd6 fxg4+ 22 fxg4 ♜xd6 23 ♜e3 the queen ending is winning) 20... ♜a2+ 21 ♖f1 ♗e5 22 ♖c5+ ♖e7 23 ♜d1 ♜c4+?! (23... ♗d6 offers some drawing chances) 24 ♖g2 ♗d4 25 ♖xa6 ♜a2+? (25... ♗e3 26 ♖c5 ♗xc5 27 bxc5 ♜xc5 is better because, although Black is a pawn down, White has no passed pawn) 26 ♖h3 ♜e6+ 27 g4 ♜e3 28 ♖c7 ♜h6+ 29 ♖g2 ♗e5 30 ♖xb5 ♜h2+ 31 ♖f1 ♖f8 32 ♜e2 ♜h1+ 33 ♖f2 ♜c1 34 ♜d3 ♖g7 35 ♖d4 ♜b2+ 36 ♖e2 1-0.

95

Heavy-Piece Endings



Anand – Tiviakov
Wijk aan Zee 2001



Anand – Adams
Linares 2005

When there are both queens and rooks on the board, the position has some middlegame characteristics and direct attacks on the king are feasible. Therefore king safety is especially important. In this position, White's advantage lies in the fact that his king will be perfectly safe on a2, while Black's will be far less secure.

1...h5

Black decides to play actively. Just waiting allows White to improve his position, for example by ♖a2 and ♕f4, with ♜e7 or h5 to come.

2 ♖a2 hxg4 3 fxg4 ♜h8 4 ♕f4! ♜xh4

Or 4...♕d5 5 g5 ♖f8 6 ♕f6 ♜xh4 7 ♜c1 ♕e6 8 ♕d8+ ♕e8 9 ♕xd6+ ♖g8 10 ♕d5 and the a-pawn falls.

5 ♜f1 ♕e5

Black surrenders the f-pawn, since 5...f5 6 ♕g5 ♜xg4 7 ♕e7+ ♖g8 8 ♜d1 ♜e4 9 ♕f6 wins for White.

6 ♕xf7+ ♖h6 7 ♜f6

Black's king is hopelessly exposed and White could have won at once by 7 ♜g1! ♖g5 8 ♜d1 ♖h6 9 ♜d5. Anand's method is also sufficient.

7...♜xg4 8 ♜e6 ♕g7 9 ♕f3 ♕d4 10 ♕f8+ ♖h5 11 ♜xd6 ♕e5 12 ♕d8 ♜g5 13 ♜d7 ♖g4 14 ♜d1 ♕e3 15 ♜d4+ ♕xd4

15...♖f5 16 ♕f8+ ♖e5 17 ♕c5+ ♖f6 18 ♜d6+ and 15...♖h5 16 ♕h8# are even worse.

16 ♕xd4+ ♖h5 17 ♕h8+ ♖g4 18 ♕g7 ♖h5 19 ♕h7+ ♖g4 20 ♖b1 ♖f5 21 ♕f7+ ♖e4 22 ♕f6 1-0

Exploiting an extra pawn often involves combining the advance of the pawn with attacking ideas against the king.

1...♕e4

Black's plan is to transfer his rook to d3 or f3, where it both defends the pawn and helps create threats against the white king, for example by penetrating to d1 or by supporting a breakthrough with ...g5 and ...h4.

2 ♜c1

After 2 ♕c1 ♕d3 3 ♖g2 ♜c5 4 ♖g1 Black can execute the breakthrough at once: 4...g5! 5 hxg5 h4! 6 gxh4 ♜c4 7 f4 ♖g6 8 ♖h2 ♕f3 with a decisive attack.

2...♖g7 3 ♜c2 ♜c8 4 ♜c1 ♜c5

It's possible to play ...c2, but this doesn't necessarily make the win easier as it is harder to defend the pawn from the side when it is on c2.

5 ♖g1

Or 5 ♜c2 ♜d5 6 ♕c1 ♕f5 7 ♜e2 ♜d3 and Black has reached his target position.

5...♖h7

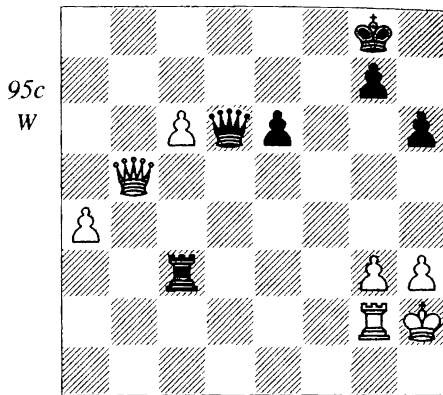
Missing an immediate win by 5...♜d5! 6 ♕c2 ♜d3 7 ♖h2 ♕d4.

6 ♕d6

Or 6 ♕c2 ♕f3 7 ♕d1 ♕xd1+ 8 ♜xd1 c2 9 ♜c1 ♖g7 with a winning rook ending.

6...♜f5! 7 ♕d7 ♜f3 8 ♕a7 ♕d5! 0-1

Intending the deadly 9...♕d2, while at the same time preventing 9 ♖g2 due to 9...c2!



Fischer – Spassky
Sveti Stefan/Belgrade (21) 1992

Liquidation to a rook ending is often a powerful weapon, especially if one is in possession of an outside passed pawn. Here White's winning chances don't look especially promising since his c-pawn is about to fall and his king is not especially safe. It is instructive to see how Fischer makes the most of his chances.

1 c7! ♖xc7

Or 1...♗xc7 2 ♖e8+ ♔h7 3 ♗xe6 ♖a3 4 ♖e4+ ♔h8 5 h4 and White is a pawn up, although this would not be easy to win.

2 ♗b8+ ♔h7 3 a5

Thanks to White's first move, Black's rook is temporarily pinned and this gives White time to push his pawn to the sixth rank.

3...h5 4 h4 ♗c5 5 a6 ♖f7 6 ♗b1+ ♔h6

Black is also in trouble after 6...♔h8 7 ♖b2, 6...♖f5 7 ♖e2 or 6...g6 7 ♖b2 ♔h6 8 ♗g1.

7 ♗a2 ♖e7 8 ♗d2+ ♔g6 9 ♖e2

9 ♗c2+ ♗xc2 10 ♖xc2 ♖a7 11 ♖a2 ♔f5 12 ♖a4! is good enough, but White hopes to swap queens under even better circumstances.

9...♔h7

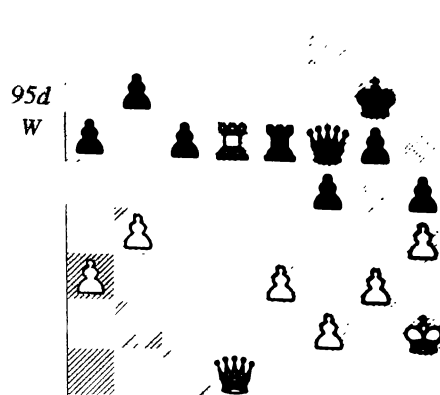
Now that Black's king is one square further away, the queen exchange is totally clear-cut.

10 ♗c2+! ♗xc2 11 ♖xc2 ♔g6 12 ♖a2 ♖a7 13 ♖a5 e5 14 ♔g2 ♔f5 15 ♔f2 ♔e6

15...♔g4 also loses: 16 ♖a4+ ♔h3 17 ♔f3 e4+ 18 ♔xe4 ♔xg3 19 ♔f5.

16 ♔e3 ♔f5 17 ♔f3 g6 18 ♖a3 g5 19 hxg5 ♔xg5 20 ♔e4 1-0

After 20...♔f6 21 ♖a5 or 20...♔g4 21 ♔xe5 ♖xa6 22 ♖xa6 ♔xg3 23 ♔f5 White wins easily.



B. Socko – G. Wall
Cork 2005

Control of the only open file is a major asset in major-piece positions. Even if there is no immediately decisive penetration, such control often ties the defender down and allows the attacker gradually to improve his position.

In this case, White aims to fix Black's queenside pawns by a4-a5 and activate his king before exchanging queens into a winning rook ending. Thanks to White's d-file control, there isn't much Black can do to stop this. The game continued 1 ♖d8 ♖e7 2 ♖b8 ♖f7 3 ♗d3 (the immediate 3 ♗d8 ♗xd8 4 ♖xd8 leads to nothing after 4...♖f8) 3...♗b2 4 ♔g2 ♗f6 5 ♔h3 ♖c7 6 ♔g2 ♖f7 7 a4 ♖c7 8 ♔f3 ♖f7 9 ♔e2 ♗b2+ 10 ♗d2 ♗f6 11 ♗d8! ♗xd8 12 ♖xd8 ♖e7 (White wins after 12...♖f8 13 ♖xf8 ♔xf8 14 a5!, since Black's extra queenside pawn is useless) 13 ♔d3 ♔f7 14 a5 ♔f6 15 ♔d4?! (the immediate 15 ♖d6+! is better, as occurs at move 17) 15...♖e4+ 16 ♔c3 ♖e7?! (16...g5 17 hxg5+ ♔xg5 was the last chance, as after 18 ♖d7 ♔g4 19 ♖xb7 ♔f3 Black has counterplay) 17 ♖d6+! ♔f7 18 ♔d3 ♔g7 19 ♔f3 ♔f7 20 ♔d4 ♔g7 21 f4 (21 e4! fxe4 22 fxe4 ♔f7 23 e5 ♔g7 24 e6 ♔f6 25 ♔c5 is simpler) 21...♖e4+ 22 ♔c5 ♖xe3 23 ♖d7+ ♔f6 24 ♖xb7 ♖xg3 25 ♖c7?! (25 ♔xc6! ♖g4 26 b5 axb5 27 a6 ♖xf4 28 a7 ♖a4 29 ♔xb5 ♖a1 30 ♖b6+ and 31 ♖a6 was more direct) 25...♖g4 (or 25...♖c3+ 26 ♔b6 ♔e6 27 b5 axb5 28 a6 and White will win Black's rook in a few moves) 26 ♖xc6+ ♔f7 27 ♖xa6 ♖xf4 28 b5 ♖xh4 29 b6 ♖h1 30 b7 ♖c1+ 31 ♔d6 1-0.

Tactical Ideas

The last part of the book takes a different tack, focusing on tactical themes rather than specific material balances. It is easy to imagine that endgames are almost free of tactics, but nothing could be further from the truth; indeed, the very concrete nature of endgame play often leads to tactical situations in which precise calculation is necessary.

First of all, Section 96 includes a number of practical examples in which the game was decided by mate or mating threats. In some cases the mate was a natural consequence of the position, and even had the defender noticed it, the result would not have been changed. However, in other cases the defender could have saved the game had he been alert to the possibility of mate. In several of these positions the mate is unexpected, but in only one is the queen involved, which shows that whatever the material on the board, you can't afford to ignore possible mating ideas.

In Section 97 we move on to stalemate. This is very important in endgame theory; for example, the ending of king and pawn vs king often ends in stalemate (as in 1a). Stalemate is more of a surprise when there are several pieces on the board, and perhaps for this reason stalemating ideas are often overlooked in over-the-board play (see 97d and 97e).

Promoting a pawn results in a large gain of material, so ensuring promotion may be worth a considerable sacrifice. In 98a the material offered is just a pawn, but in 98b and 98c larger investments reap their reward. Position 98b features a typical pawn-promotion motif: cutting off the line of guard of an enemy piece which is preventing the pawn's advance. If you haven't already done so, take a look at 62a and 62b, which feature promotion combinations in the specific context of rook endings. Pawn promotion may be combined with mating ideas, as in 98d and 98e; the latter trick is especially worth noting.

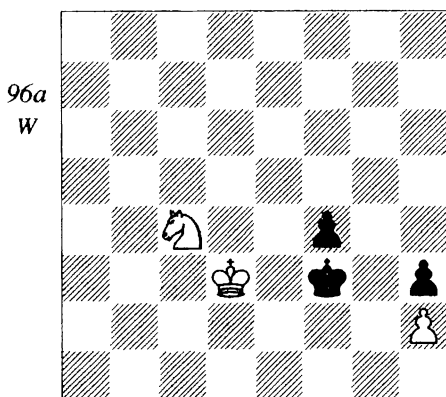
Section 99 deals with underpromotion. Promotion to a knight is not all that unusual in endgames, especially in situations of rook vs pawn(s). The motivation is usually to gain a tempo by giving check, but there are other possibilities. Promotion to a rook or bishop is very unusual in over-the-board play, since the motivation can only be to avoid stalemate (in theory, underpromotion can also be necessary to *create* stalemate by imprisoning your own pieces, but I know of no cases of this from over-the-board play). The composed positions 99e and 99f look quite natural and one could easily imagine them arising in a game; they feature a bishop and rook promotion respectively.

Finally, Section 100 is to remind you that chess cannot be played entirely according to theories or recipes. However much you know (and if you have read the whole way through this book, your knowledge should be considerable) there will always be situations in which imagination is necessary to find the correct move. Indeed, the occasional appearance of the totally unexpected is one of the things that makes chess such an attractive game. Such unexpected moves don't have to be spectacular sacrifices; sometimes they are relatively modest moves which are hard to see because, for example, a piece returns to a square it only recently left. Psychological factors often play a part here; for example, if your opponent makes a capture, simply recapturing is practically a reflex action that is performed almost without thought. 99% of the time the reflex action is correct, but just occasionally it is not; when this happens it is often a stunning surprise, as in 100b. The other positions in this section also feature something out of the ordinary. In 100a Black moves his bishop to an empty square where it can just be taken; surprising, certainly, but also the only move to win. In 100c White also sacrifices his bishop, but here there is an additional twist; in order to set up the

sacrifice White has to play his bishop back to a square it occupied just two moves previously. Finally, 100d is a classic example of a **sacrificial breakthrough** in which Black gives up a whole rook to activate his passed pawns.

96

Mate



Gavrikov – Giordanengo
Switzerland 1992

Even though mate is the ultimate objective in chess, one doesn't normally associate endgames with mating ideas. However, they arise surprisingly often even in quite simplified positions. Here White cannot save his last pawn, but he can still win by playing for mate.

1 ♖e5+! ♜g2

After 1...♜f2 2 ♜e4 ♜g2 3 ♜f3 White rescues the h2-pawn and wins.

2 ♜e2 ♜xh2

Black decides to take the pawn immediately. 2...f3+ 3 ♜xf3 ♜h1 4 ♜d2 ♜g2 5 ♜e3 ♜xh2 6 ♜f2 ♜h1 7 ♜f1 also leads to mate, while 2...♜g1 3 ♜f3! ♜xh2 4 ♜f2 transposes to the game.

3 ♜f2

Trapping the enemy king in the h1-corner. The next step is to pick off the f-pawn, before forcing the fatal advance of the h-pawn.

3...f3

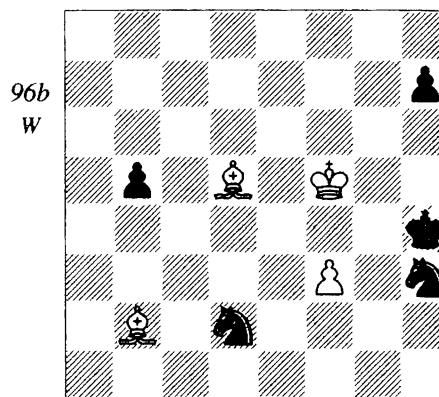
3...♜h1 4 ♜g4 f3 5 ♜f1 is another transposition.

4 ♜g4+! ♜h1 5 ♜f1 f2 6 ♜xf2+ ♜h2

The f-pawn is gone, and White need only manoeuvre his knight round to f1 without allowing Black's king to slip away.

7 ♜e4 ♜h1 8 ♜f2 ♜h2 9 ♜d2 ♜h1 10 ♜f1 h2 11 ♜g3# (1-0)

This corner mate by a knight is important in many types of knight ending, such as ♜+♙ vs ♙ or 2♜ vs ♙.



Rustemov – I. Sokolov
Internet (Dos Hermanas) 2001

Even a couple of minor pieces can be sufficient to generate serious mating threats if the enemy king is badly placed. Here Black is a pawn up, but far more important is the enormous activity of White's bishops and the fact that Black's king is confined at the edge of the board. Another problem for Black is that 2 ♜ vs ♜ is generally won, albeit with considerable difficulty.

1 ♜c3

By attacking the d2-knight, White transfers his bishop to e1 with gain of tempo and prevents Black's king from escaping via g3.

1...♜c4?

Now White is winning. Black should have played 1...♜f1!; after 2 ♜e1+ ♜h5 3 ♜c6 b4 4 ♜e8+ ♜h6 5 ♜f6 ♜f4 Black should draw, although this still requires some care.

2 ♜e1+ ♜h5 3 ♜f7+ ♜h6 4 ♜f6

Black is almost paralysed. Only the h3-knight can move.

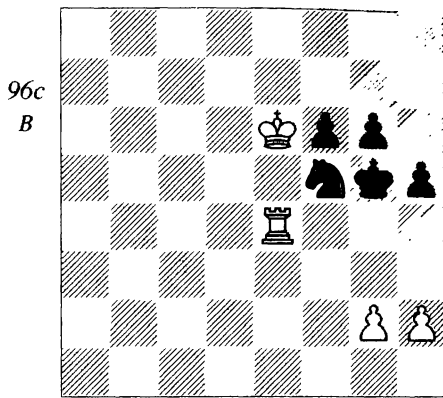
4...♜g5

White also wins after 4...♜f4 5 ♜xc4 bxc4 6 ♜d2 ♜h5 7 ♜xf4 ♜h4 8 ♜g7 h5 9 ♜g6! c3 10 ♜h6 c2 11 ♜g6 and Black must give away a vital pawn.

5 ♜e8 ♜xf3?!

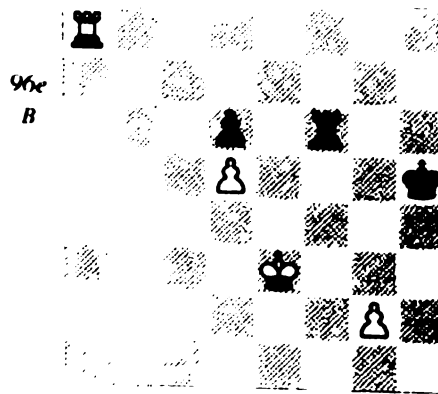
5...♜d6 is better; after 6 ♜c6 ♜h5 7 ♜b4 ♜df7 8 ♜xb5 ♜xf3 9 ♜xf7 ♜g5 White is winning, but assuming perfect play by both sides it takes a massive 77 moves to force mate.

6 ♜b4 ♜ce5 7 ♜f8# (1-0)



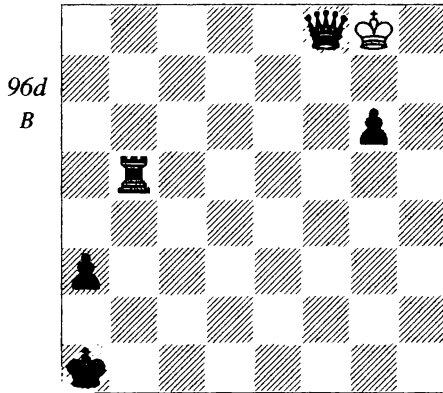
Narciso Dublan – Medvegy
Andorra 2001

Mate is an effective weapon in the endgame because it often comes as a complete surprise, with the victim only realizing the danger when it is too late. Here Black could have retained drawing chances by playing 1...h4!, but instead he continued 1...♖h4?, only to be shocked by 2 ♜xh4! ♜xh4 3 ♜xf6 g5 (3...♜g4 4 ♜xg6 h4 5 h3+ ♜f4 6 ♜h5 ♜g3 7 ♜g5 wins easily) 4 ♜f5 g4 5 ♜f4 1-0. It is mate next move.



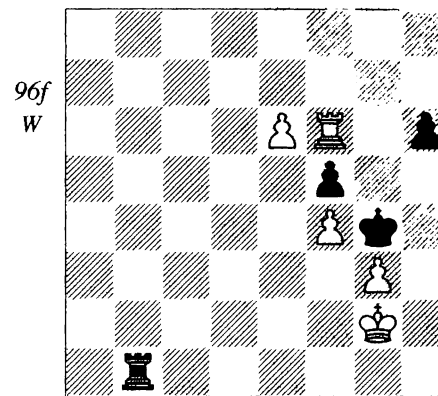
Cabrera – Ruan
Seville 2003

All the previous examples featured the king being mated on the edge or in the corner. It is unusual for the king to be mated in the middle of the board, but it sometimes happens in rook endings and queen endings. Here even the best defence 1...♜g6 loses in the long run after 2 g4 ♜f1 3 ♜d8 ♜f6 4 ♜e4, but Black went under more quickly: 1...♜g5? 2 ♜g8+ ♜f5 (2...♜h5 3 g4+ ♜h4 4 g5 and 2...♜h4 3 ♜e4 are also hopeless) 3 g4+ 1-0 as 3...♜e5 4 ♜g5+ mates next move.



Hector – Carstensen
Politiken Cup, Copenhagen 2003

After 1...♜b3! Black should draw, but instead he played 1...a2?. The finish was 2 ♜f1+ ♜b1 (or 2...♜b2 3 ♜xb5+ ♜c2 4 ♜c4+ ♜b2 5 ♜b4+ ♜c2 6 ♜a3 ♜b1 7 ♜b3+ ♜a1 8 ♜c2 and ♜c1#) 3 ♜f6+ ♜b2 4 ♜d4 g5 (4...♜b1 allows mate on d1, so Black can only move his g-pawn) 5 ♜h8 g4 6 ♜g8 g3 7 ♜h8 g2 8 ♜g8 g1 ♜+ 9 ♜xg1+ ♜b1 10 ♜d4+ ♜b2 11 ♜h8 ♜b1 12 ♜d1# (1-0).

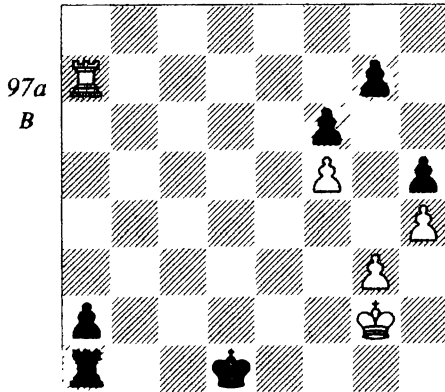


Salinnikov – Chistiakova
Russia Cup, Nizhny Novgorod 1999

The game ended 1 e7! ♜e1 2 ♜xh6? (2 ♜f2! ♜xe7 3 ♜xh6 is correct, transposing to the game) 2...♜e2+ 3 ♜f1 ♜xe7? (missing a draw by 3...♜f3! 4 ♜h7 ♜e6 5 ♜g7 ♜e3 6 g4 ♜xf4 7 g5 ♜e6 8 g6 ♜g5) 4 ♜f2 ♜a7 (4...♜h7 lasts longer, but after 5 ♜g6+ followed by ♜g5, White wins the f-pawn and the game) 5 ♜h4# (1-0).

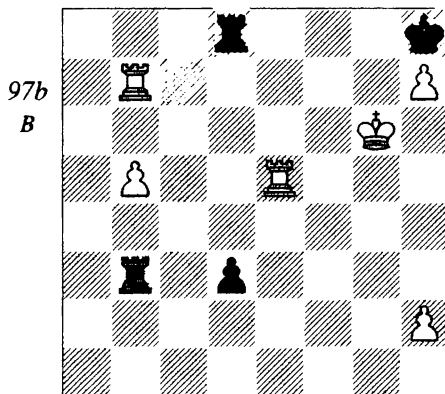
97

Stalemate



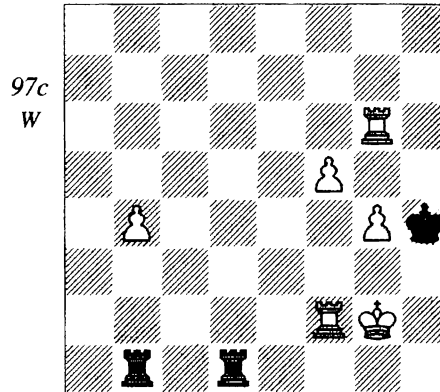
Anand – Kramnik
World Ch, Mexico City 2007

Stalemate is another tactical idea which occurs unexpectedly often in over-the-board play. Here Black made a final winning attempt by 1...♖c1 2 ♜xa2 ♜c2+ 3 ♜xc2 ♔xc2, but after 4 ♔f3 ♔d3 5 g4 hxg4+ 6 ♔xg4 ♔e4 7 ♔h5! there was nothing better than 7...♔xf5 with stalemate (1/2-1/2).



Kramnik – Leko
Tilburg 1997

Black, two pawns down, used his d-pawn to force a spectacular draw by 1...♜xb5! 2 ♜bxb5 (2 ♜xb5 d2 3 ♜d5 d1 ♚ 4 ♜xd1 ♜d6+! is similar) 2...d2 3 ♜bd5 d1 ♚! (3...♜xd5?? is impossible due to 4 ♜e8#) 4 ♜xd1 ♜d6+! (the key finesse; if White takes the rook it is stalemate, while if the king retreats Black can safely take on d1) 5 ♜xd6 1/2-1/2.



Henley – Bonin
New York (Marshall) 1983

It is hard to imagine that White, with three extra pawns, will not win this position.

1 f6

The most natural move, but White must take care as Black's king is confined.

1...♜g1+ 2 ♔f3 ♜g3+ 3 ♔f4 ♜xb4+ 4 ♔f5?

This move unexpectedly throws away half a point. If White had played more cautiously by 4 ♔e5 then his pawns would have been irresistible in the long run; for example, 4...♜e3+ (4...♜f3 no longer works because White can play 5 ♜h6+ before taking the rook) 5 ♔d6 ♜d3+ 6 ♔c5 ♜b8 7 f7 ♜c8+ 8 ♔b4 ♜d4+ 9 ♔b5 ♜dd8 10 g5 and the pawns are rolling forwards.

After the move played, there appears to be no stalemate, because the squares g3 and h3 are available for the black king. However, by means of a preliminary sacrifice Black forces White to cover these squares, and then Black can offer his other rook.

4...♜f3+! 5 ♜xf3 ♜b5+

White's rooks are poorly placed and he cannot escape the perpetual.

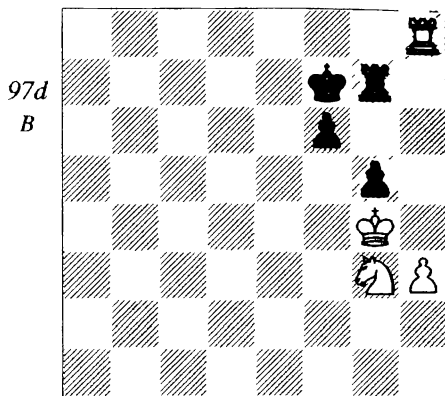
6 ♔e6

6 ♔f4 ♜b4+ 7 ♔e3 ♜b3+ 8 ♔f2 ♜b2+ 9 ♔g1 ♜g2+ 10 ♔f1 ♜g1+ 11 ♔e2 ♜e1+ 12 ♔d3 ♜e3+ 13 ♔d4 ♜e4+ is also a draw.

6...♜e5+ 7 ♔f7 ♜e7+ 8 ♔g8 ♜g7+

White can take the rook three different ways, but all maintain the stalemate.

9 ♔h8 ♜g8+ 10 ♔h7 ♜g7+ 11 fxg7 1/2-1/2



Paoli – Gy. Kluger
Debrecen 1969

Sometimes the chance for a stalemate exists, but is overlooked. In this position the general structure indicates a likely draw, since it is very hard for White to make progress without allowing his pawn to be exchanged. However, Black has problems due to the initially passive position of his pieces and the knight outpost on f5. Nevertheless, had Black found the correct defence he would have had good drawing chances.

1...♙e6?

A mistake allowing White to advance his king. 1...♙g6! was the only chance, keeping White's king at bay. This is based on the tactical point 2 ♖f5 (after 2 ♜f8 ♜a7 3 ♗e4 ♜a6 it isn't clear how White can make progress) 2...♜a7 3 ♜h6+ (White can play on by 3 ♜d8 but after 3...♜a4+ 4 ♜d4 ♜a5 it is unlikely that his advantage is sufficient to win) 3...♙f7 4 ♜h7+ ♙g6! 5 ♜xa7 stalemate.

2 ♙h5! ♙e5

Black plays for a counterattack. After 2...f5 3 ♙h6 White wins the g5-pawn, while after 2...♜a7 3 ♜e8+ ♙f7 4 ♜e3 ♜a5 5 ♜f3 (threatening ♗e4) 5...♜e5 6 ♙h6 ♜e1 7 ♙h7 ♜e5 8 ♗f5, followed by ♗h6+ and ♙g6, Black's pawns will fall.

3 ♜e8+ ♙f4 4 ♗e2+ ♙f3 5 ♗d4+ ♙f2

5...♙g2 6 ♙g4 is also decisive.

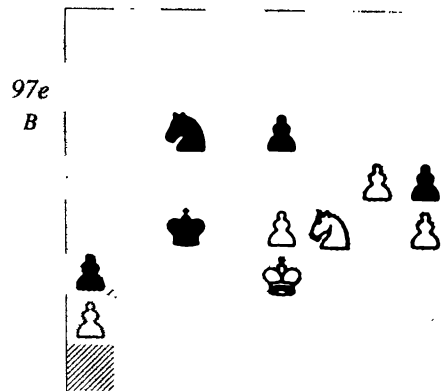
6 ♙g4!

Now White's pieces converge for a direct attack against Black's king.

6...♜h7 7 ♜e2+ ♙f1 8 ♙g3 ♜f7 9 ♜d2!

Forcing mate.

9...♙e1 10 ♗f3+ 1-0



Muranyi – Huschenbeth
German Ch. Osterburg 2006

This position features another missed opportunity. White should win, as he is a pawn up with a dangerous passed g-pawn. His one problem is Black's counterplay against the a-pawn.

1...♙c3 2 ♗d3?

2 g6 is simplest; after 2...♗e7 3 g7 ♙b2 4 ♗g6 ♗g8 5 ♙d2 ♙xa2 6 ♙c2 ♗f6 7 e5 ♗g8 White wins easily as his knight is free to pick up Black's pawns. The move played aims to prevent ...♙b2, but it is an error throwing away the win.

2...♗e7

Threatening ...♗g6, so the reply is forced.

3 ♗e5 ♙b2

White's plan has clearly gone wrong. Black is able to move his king to b2 after all, and White has wasted time with his knight.

4 ♙d2 ♙xa2 5 ♙c2

Again Black's king is trapped but, compared to the 2 g6 line, White's g-pawn is two squares further back and this makes all the difference.

5...♙a1 6 g6

White has little choice. 6 ♙c1 is the only other reasonable move, but then 6...♙a2 7 g6 ♗xg6 8 ♗xg6 ♙a1 followed by ...a2 draws.

6...♗xg6! 7 ♗xg6 e5?

7...a2 draws, as White cannot do anything to prevent Black from stalemating himself by ...e5.

8 ♗xe5 a2

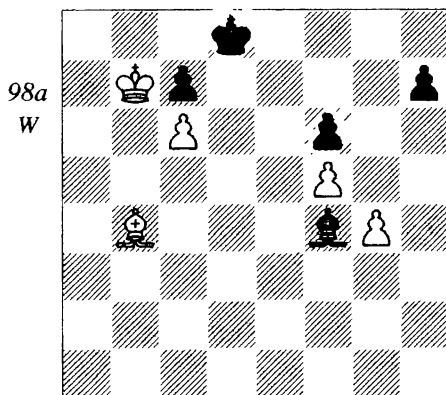
Black has played his moves in the wrong order, and now White can lift the stalemate.

9 ♗g4! 1-0

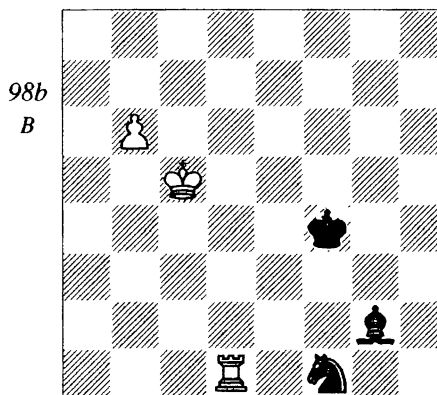
It's mate after 9...hxg4 10 h5 g3 11 h6 g2 12 h7 g1 ♖ 13 h8 ♗+.

98

Pawn Promotion



Bragin – Gavrilov
Russia 1993



Terzić – Jakovljević
Bosnian Team Ch, Neum 2004

Considerable efforts are justified if the result is that a pawn reaches the eighth rank. A typical idea is that of a breakthrough, which we have already seen in, for example, Section 11 and 62d. In this further example, White clearly has strong pressure, since his pieces are very active and Black has two pawns stuck on dark squares, but for the moment everything is defended. White found a way to break through Black's defence by means of a pawn sacrifice.

1 g5! fxg5

1...♙xg5 2 ♙d6! and 1...♙e5 2 gxf6 ♙xf6 3 ♙d6 are instantly fatal.

2 f6 ♗e8

Forced, but now White can target the poorly defended c7-pawn.

3 ♙a5 g4

Hoping for some counterplay with the passed g-pawn.

4 ♙xc7 ♙d2

Or 4...♙xc7 5 ♗xc7 g3 6 ♗d6 g2 7 c7 g1 ♖8 c8 ♗+ ♗f7 9 ♗e6+ ♗g6 10 ♗g8+ and White wins the queen.

5 ♗a6!

The simplest: White prevents Black's bishop from reaching the a5-d8 diagonal, which forces Black to stop the c-pawn with his king.

5...♙b4 (Black cannot hope to stop both white pawns; **5...♙c3** also loses: **6 ♙d6 ♙xf6 7 c7 ♗d7 8 ♗b7 6 ♙g3 ♗d8 7 ♗b7 ♙a5 8 ♙e1! ♙c7 9 ♙h4 1-0**

Cutting off a defensive piece is a common technique for helping pawns advance. Here the material balance indicates a draw, but White's pawn is close to promotion and Black's pieces are far away. However, if Black can bring his pieces to the queenside, or give up a piece for the pawn, then the draw will be clear.

1...♗g3?

The only drawing move is **1...♗e3!**, which controls d5 and so prevents White from cutting off Black's bishop by playing to that square.

2 ♙d7?

The simplest way is **2 ♙d5! ♗e4+** (**2...♙xd5 3 ♗xd5 ♗f5 4 b7** wins for White) **3 ♗d4 ♗g5 4 b7 ♗e6+ 5 ♗c3! ♙xd5 6 b8 ♗+** and White will win, because there is only one fortress with this material (with king on h2, bishop on g2 and knight on e4, or one of the corresponding positions) and Black is miles away from reaching it.

2...♗f5?

Black could have drawn in various ways, such as **2...♗e4+ 3 ♗d4 ♗g5 4 ♙e7 ♗f5**.

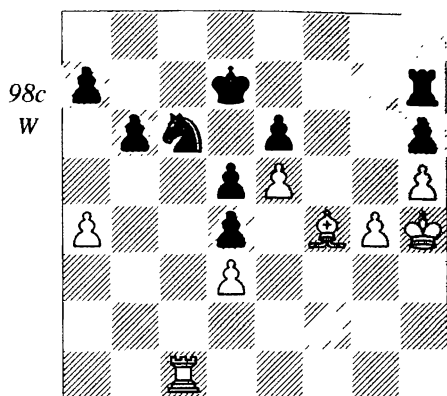
3 ♙c7?

3 ♙d5! still wins; e.g., **3...♙xd5 (3...♗e3 4 b7 ♗xd5 5 b8 ♗+ is also a win) 4 ♗xd5 ♗e7+ 5 ♗c5!** and the pawn cannot be stopped.

3...♗e5 4 b7 ♙xb7 5 ♙xb7 ♗f6 6 ♙b1 ♗e5 7 ♙e1+ ♗f4 8 ♗d5 ♗e3+ 9 ♗d4

It's nice to have a position where the result remains the same even if you blunder away a rook.

9...♗c2+ 10 ♗c5 ♗xe1 ½-½



Naiditsch – Stellwagen
Wijk aan Zee 2006

If one passed pawn is dangerous, then two connected passed pawns are much more so. In this position, White is a pawn down, but his kingside majority is a major asset. Naiditsch spots the possibility to exploit the kingside pawns with a powerful tactical stroke.

1 ♖xc6! ♜xc6 2 ♗xh6!

These two blows shatter Black's position. White's connected pawns will march forward, while Black doesn't even have a single passed pawn to show for his efforts. Note that 1 ♗xh6?! first lets Black off rather lightly after 1... ♜xe5.

2... ♜d7

Or 2... ♖xh6 3 g5 ♖h8 4 g6 ♖g8 5 ♜g5 followed by h6 and White wins.

3 ♜g5 ♜e8?!

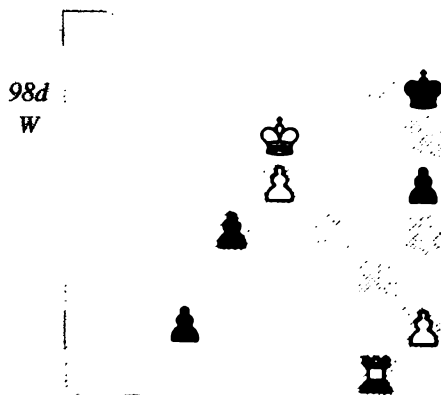
This allows White to win easily. However, the alternatives, although offering more resistance, would not have saved the game:

1) 3... ♖f7 4 ♜g6 ♖f3 5 ♗c1 ♖xd3 6 h6 ♖h3 7 h7 d3 8 g5 a5 9 ♜g7 b5 10 g6 bxa4 11 ♗h6 ♖xh6 12 ♜xh6 d2 13 g7 d1 ♜ 14 g8 ♜ ♜h1+ 15 ♜g7 ♜g1+ 16 ♜h8 ♜f1 17 ♜g7+.

2) 3... a5 aims for counterplay by ...b5. White can still win, but he has to take a little care: 4 ♜g6 ♖h8 5 ♜g7 ♖c8 6 ♗d2! (the only move to win) 6... ♖c2 (after 6... b5 7 ♗xa5 bxa4 8 h6 a3 9 ♗b6 White stops the a-pawn) 7 ♗f4 b5 8 h6 bxa4 9 h7 ♖c8 10 h8 ♜ ♖xh8 11 ♜xh8 a3 12 ♗c1 and White wins.

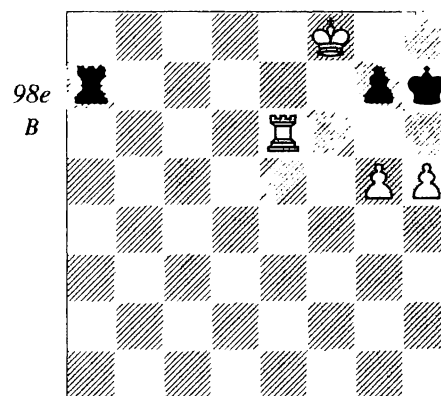
4 ♜g6 ♖f7 5 ♗g7 ♖f4 6 g5 1-0

There is no stopping the advance of the h-pawn.



Inkiov – Donchev
Varna 1979

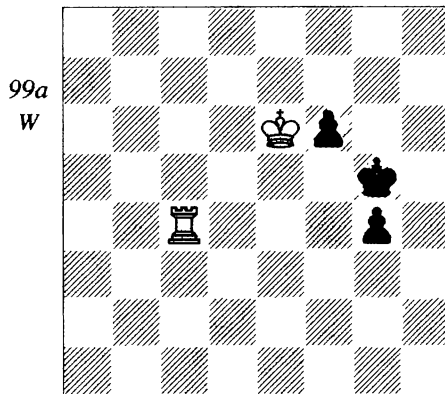
It isn't unusual for pawn promotion to be combined with mating ideas. Here both sides have passed pawns, but with accurate play White was able to launch a mating attack: **1 ♜f6!** (not 1 ♜f7? d3 2 e6 d2 3 ♖g7+ ♜h6 and White has no more than a draw) **1... d3 2 e6 d2 3 ♖g7+ ♜h6** (after 3... ♜h8 4 e7 White promotes with mate) **4 ♖g8 ♜h7 5 e7 d1 ♜ 6 ♖h8+! 1-0**. White's rook sacrifice gains a tempo to force mate after **6... ♜xh8 7 e8 ♜+ ♜h7 8 ♜g6+ ♜h8 9 ♜g7#**.



Manik – Gallagher
Mitropa Cup, Pula 2003

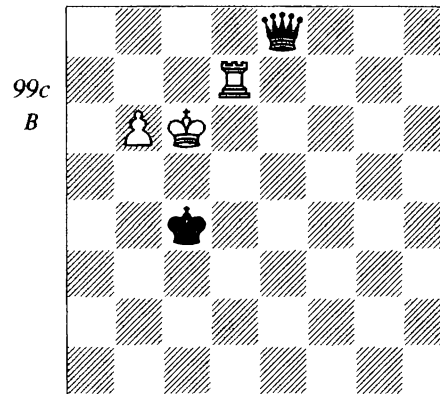
Here is an example of how such ideas can crop up in even innocent-seeming situations. The position is a draw and Black had only to harass White's king by 1... ♖a8+ to save the game. However, he instead chose **1... ♖a5?!**, which allowed a forced mate after **2 ♖h6+! gxf6 3 g6+ 1-0** (3... ♜h8 4 g7+ ♜h7 5 g8 ♜#).

99 Underpromotion



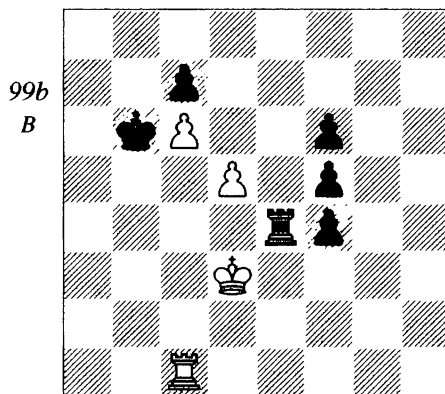
Smirnov – Yandemirov
Izmir ECC 2004

Underpromotion to a knight occurs from time to time in endings. The motive is often to gain a tempo by giving check, as in these two examples. In the first, Black secured the draw by accurate defence: 1 ♔d5 g3 (not 1... $\text{♕f5? 2 ♕d4 ♕f4 3 ♕d3+ ♕f3 4 ♕d2 g3 5 ♕e1 g2 6 ♕c3+}$ and White wins) 2 $\text{♕e4 g2 3 ♕c8 f5+ 4 ♕f3 g1♔+}$ (not 4... g1♗?? 5 ♕g8+) 5 ♕e3 ♔h3 and Black held the game without trouble.



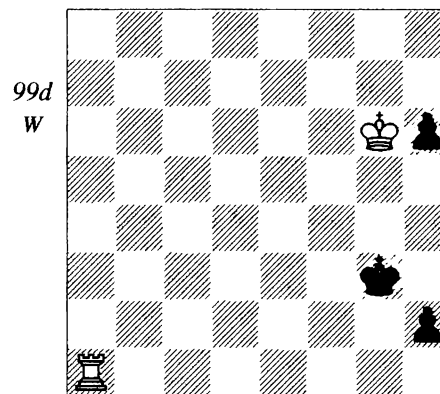
Pikula – Damljanović
Topola 2004

Black could have won by 1... $\text{♗f8! 2 ♕c7 (2 ♕c7 ♗c5+ 3 ♕b7 ♕b5}$ also wins the pawn) 2... $\text{♗f6+ 3 ♕d7+ ♕d5 4 b7 ♗d6+ 5 ♕c8 ♗f8+ 6 ♕d7 ♗b8}$ and the pawn falls. However, he played 1... ♗e6+? and White saved the day by 2 $\text{♕c7 ♗e5+ 3 ♕c8! ♗e8+ 4 ♕c7 ♗e5+ 5 ♕e8 ♕b5 6 b7 ♗c5+ (6...♕c6 7 b8♔+!) 7 ♕d8 ♗f8+ 8 ♕c7 ♗f4+ 9 ♕c8 ♕c6 10 b8♔+! ♕b6 11 ♕b7+ ♕c5 12 ♕c7+ ♗xc7+ 1/2-1/2}$.



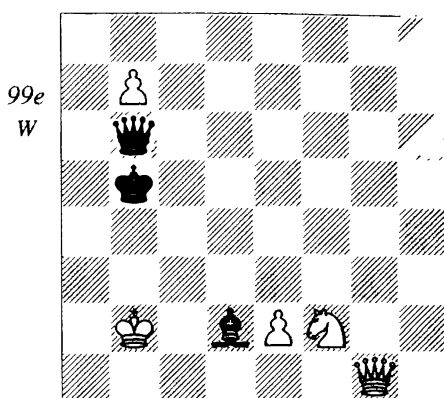
Shengelia – Zysk
Deizisau 2006

Black won by 1... $\text{f3 2 d6 f2 3 dxc7 (3 ♕f1 ♕xc6 4 dxc7 ♕xc7 5 ♕xf2 ♕e5}$ and Black wins as the white king is cut off) 3... ♕e1 (3... ♕xc7 also wins, but this is quicker) 4 ♕xe1 (4 c8 ♗f1♗+ is decisive) 4... $\text{fxe1♔+! 5 ♕e3 ♔g2+!}$ (not 5... ♕xc7? 6 ♕f4 drawing) 6 ♕f3 ♕xc7 0-1 .



Schmittziel – Reefschräger
German Ch, Binz 1994

Underpromotion isn't always correct. The game went 1 $\text{♕h5 ♕g2 2 ♕a2+ ♕g1 (2...♕g3}$ is simpler) 3 ♕g4 h1♔? (Black also loses after 3... h1♗? 4 ♕g3 ; the saving line was 3... h5+! 4 ♕g3 h4+!) 4 $\text{♕f3 h5 5 ♕g2+ ♕f1 6 ♕h2 1-0}$ in view of 6... $\text{♕g1 7 ♕xh5 ♔f2 8 ♕d5 ♕f1 9 ♕d2}$.



Y. Bazlov

1st-2nd Honourable Mention, Kotov-75 JT,
Zadachy i Etiudy, 2004

In practice, promotion to rook or bishop can only be necessary to avoid stalemate, and such promotions are very rare. Therefore I shall give an example of each taken from studies by one of the world's leading composers.

In 99e, White is two pawns up, but in view of the exposed position of his king he will have to take immediate action if he wants to win.

1 ♖e4!

Now 1... ♖xg1 fails to 2 b8 ♖+ followed by 3 ♖xd2, but Black has a trick up his sleeve.

1... ♗e3! 2 ♖xe3

2 b8 ♖? ♗xg1 is an easy draw.

2... ♗a4!

This stalemate idea is the point of Black's defence.

3 ♗c2!

A spectacular point: White not only disdains Black's queen, but he also offers his own.

3... ♖xe3 4 ♖c3+

White defends everything with check, and it seems that after he promotes next move he will have a decisive material advantage.

4... ♗a3!

Black is not done yet. Now after 5 b8 ♖? ♖d2+ 6 ♗b1 ♖c1+ he forces stalemate after all.

5 b8 ♗!!

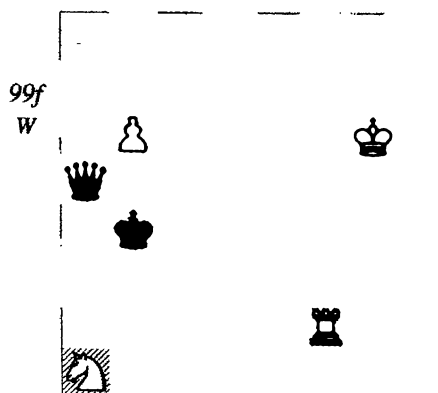
A real shock. Black has no viable checks, and he must deal with the threat of ♗d6+.

5... ♖c5

5... ♗b4 6 ♖d5+ also wins the queen.

6 ♗d6! ♖xd6 7 ♖b5+

White wins.



Y. Bazlov

1st Prize, *Shakhmaty v SSSR*, 1972

White's only chance for a win lies with his b-pawn.

1 ♖b2+ ♗a3!

The most resilient defence; after 1... ♗c3 2 ♖b3+ ♗c4 3 b7 ♖a6+ 4 ♗f5! ♖a5+ 5 ♗g4 Black runs out of checks and White wins.

2 ♖b3+

First White defends his rook with gain of tempo, and then he can push the b-pawn.

2... ♗a2 3 b7 ♖a6+!

Black starts checking, hoping that events will turn in his favour.

4 ♗g5!

White's king moves must be precise in order to keep Black's queen trapped on the a-file; for example, 4 ♗g7? ♖a7, 4 ♗f5? ♖f1+ and 4 ♗h5? ♖e2+ all allow Black to escape.

4... ♖a5+ 5 ♗g4! ♖a4+ 6 ♗g3!

The checks have run out, and it appears to be the end for Black.

6... ♗xa1!

Now 7 b8 ♖? may be met by 7... ♖xb3+! 8 ♖xb3 stalemate, so how does White win?

7 b8 ♗!

The threat is 8 ♖b1+ ♗a2 9 ♖b2+ ♗a3 10 ♖a1+ winning the queen.

7... ♗a2

Or 7... ♖a2 8 ♗f3! and Black is in zugzwang.

8 ♖b2+ ♗a3

8... ♗a1 9 ♖b1+ ♗a2 10 ♖b2+ is also a win.

9 ♖b1!

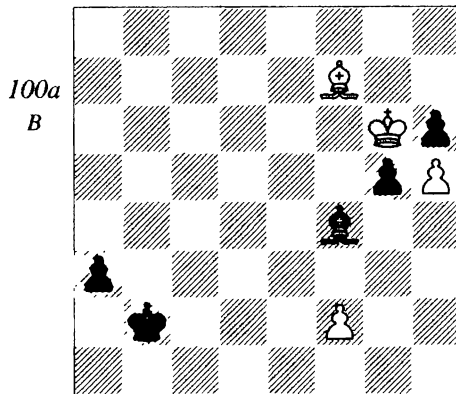
Black is defenceless.

9... ♗a2 10 ♖b2+ ♗a3 11 ♖a1+

White wins.

100

Imagination



Hindle – Möhring
Tel-Aviv Olympiad 1964

Endgame play can be greatly improved by appropriate study and I hope that this book has offered some modest help in that direction. However, chess cannot always be played according to a recipe book and there are many occasions, in the endgame as much as in other parts of the game, when imagination is necessary to find the best move.

In this position, the most obvious moves for Black only lead to a draw; for example, 1...a2 2 ♖xa2 ♜xa2 3 ♜xh6 ♜b3 4 ♜g6 ♜c4 5 h6 ♜d5 6 h7, or 1...g4 2 ♜f5. It would be easy to stop there and just dismiss the position as a draw, without even considering the winning move.

1...♗e3!

A striking continuation which, while not especially complex, would be easy to miss. Since it is the best move, there must be logic behind it, but logic often doesn't help in finding such moves over the board. More often, the feeling that there 'has to be something' is the spur which drives a player on to find exceptional moves which run counter to normal chess intuition.

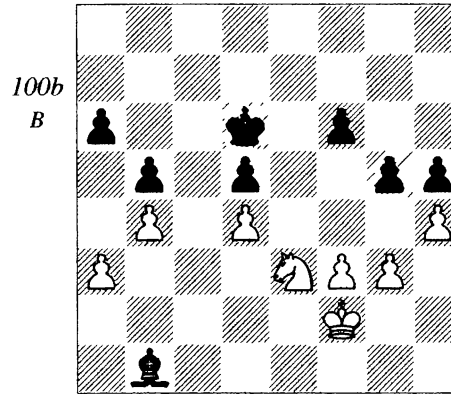
2 ♜xh6

Black wins comfortably after 2 fxe3 g4 3 ♜xh6 g3 or 2 f3 a2 3 ♗xa2 ♜xa2 4 ♜xh6 g4+.

2...g4+ 3 fxe3 g3 4 ♜h7 g2 5 h6 g1 ♖6 ♜h8 a2

The simplest way to win. White's e-pawn prevents stalemate and gives Black an easy win.

7 ♗xa2 ♜xa2 8 h7 ♖g6 9 e4 ♖f7 0-1



Karpov – Kasparov
World Ch (9), Moscow 1984/5

Some moves are so natural that one plays them almost by reflex, but once in a while the reflex is wrong. Here White has a good knight vs bad bishop situation, but this is irrelevant unless he can penetrate with his king.

1...gxf4?

1...♗e6! should draw; e.g., 2 g4 hxg4 3 hxg5 gxf3 4 ♜xf3 fxg5 5 ♜g4 ♜f6 6 ♜xd5+ ♜g6.

2 ♜g2!

A remarkable move, giving up a pawn to create a way in for the king. After 2 gxf4? White's king could reach f4 but would then be stuck.

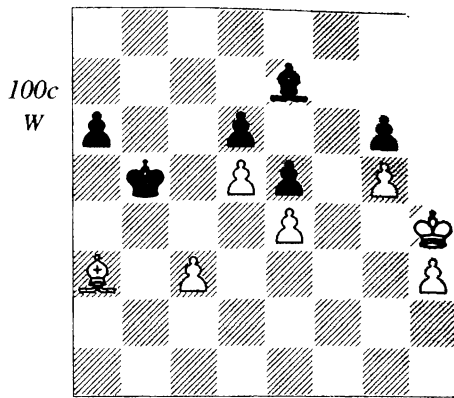
2...h3

After 2...h3 3 ♜f4 Black's h-pawns will fall.

3 ♜xg3 ♜e6 4 ♜f4+ ♜f5 5 ♜xh5 ♜e6 6 ♜f4+ ♜d6 7 ♜g4 ♗c2 8 ♜h5 ♗d1 9 ♜g6 ♜e7

Now White should have played 10 ♜h5! ♗xf3 11 ♜xf6, when he eventually wins the d5-pawn while keeping his king in an active position. One line is 11...♗e6 12 ♜e8 ♜d7 13 ♜g7 ♜e7 14 ♜f5 ♜d6 15 ♜f6 ♗g2 16 ♜f5+ ♜d7 17 ♜e5 ♗e4 18 ♜e3 ♜c6 19 ♜e6 ♗h7 20 ♜f5 ♗g8+ 21 ♜e5 ♜d7 22 ♜e3 ♜c6 23 ♜g4 ♗f7 24 ♜f6 and now d5 falls with an easy win.

The game continued 10 ♜xd5+? ♜e6 11 ♜c7+ ♜d7? (11...♜d6! draws) 12 ♜xa6 ♗xf3 13 ♜xf6 ♜d6 14 ♜f5 ♜d5 15 ♜f4 ♗h1 16 ♜e3 ♜c4 17 ♜c5 ♗c6 18 ♜d3 ♗g2 19 ♜e5+ ♜c3 20 ♜g6 ♜c4 21 ♜e7 ♗b7? (21...♗h1 is much tougher) 22 ♜f5 ♗g2 23 ♜d6+ ♜b3 24 ♜xb5 ♜a4 25 ♜d6 1-0.



Maroczy – Teichmann
Monte Carlo 1902

Here White is a pawn up, and can make a kingside passed pawn, but Black's king is active and he already has a passed a-pawn. White can win, but only by means of a surprising move.

1 ♖g4 ♘a4 2 ♙c1 ♗b3

Or 2...a5 3 h4 ♗b3 4 h5 gxh5+ 5 ♗xh5 a4 6 g6 ♙f8 7 c4! a3 8 ♙xa3 ♗xa3 9 c5 and White wins.

3 h4 ♗xc3

Now the natural 4 h5 gxh5+ 5 ♗xh5 ♘d4 6 g6 ♙f6 7 ♗h6 ♗xe4 8 ♙g5 ♙h8 only leads to a draw, so how does White win?

4 ♙a3!

This move looks very odd, as the bishop left a3 just two moves ago, but it is the only way to win. The idea is to prepare a sacrifice on d6.

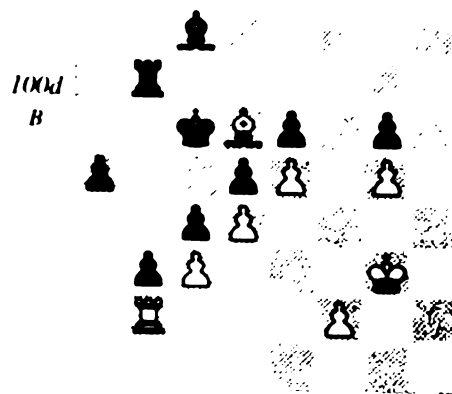
4...♗b3

Or 4...a5 (4...♗d3 loses to 5 ♗f3 followed by h5) 5 h5 gxh5+ 6 ♗xh5 a4 7 g6 ♙f8 8 ♗g4 ♗b3 9 ♙xd6 ♙xd6 10 g7 a3 11 g8 ♗ a2 12 ♗a8 ♙a3 13 ♗b7+ ♙b4 14 ♗a7 ♙a3 15 ♗e3+ ♗b2 16 ♗d2+ ♗b1 17 ♗d1+ ♗b2 18 ♗f5 and White wins.

5 ♙xd6! ♙xd6 6 h5 a5

6...gxh5+ 7 ♗xh5 a5 8 g6 a4 9 g7 a3 10 g8 ♗ a2 11 ♗g3+ ♗b2 12 ♗f2+ ♗b1 13 ♗b6+ ♗c2 14 ♗xd6 a1 ♗ 15 ♗c6+ gives White a winning queen ending.

7 h6 a4 8 h7 a3 9 h8 ♗ a2 10 ♗h3+ ♗b2 11 ♗g2+ ♗b1 12 ♗f1+ ♗b2 13 ♗b5+ ♗c1 14 ♗a6 ♗b1 15 ♗xd6 a1 ♗ 16 ♗xg6 ♗c2 17 ♗c6+ ♗d3 18 d6 ♗e3 19 ♗f5 ♗f1+ 20 ♗xe5 ♗f7 21 d7 ♗e7+ 22 ♗e6 ♗xg5+ 23 ♗d6 ♗d8 24 e5 ♗f8+ 25 ♗c7 ♗c5+ 26 ♗b7 1-0



Kmoch – Nimzowitsch
Bud Niendorf 1927

Black is a pawn up with two connected passed pawns, but at the moment his pawns are blockaded. How can he lift the blockade and win?

1...♞b4!

Offering a whole rook to set the pawns in motion.

2 cxb4

Black wins easily after 2 ♙xb4 axb4 3 cxb4 ♗b5 4 ♗f3 ♗xb4 5 ♗e2 c3 6 ♞b1 c2.

2...a4

Threatening 3...♗b5, after which the pawns are unstoppable.

3 b5+ ♗xb5 4 ♙a3 c3 5 ♞b1?

Giving up without a fight. White could have put up some resistance by 5 ♞c2 ♗c4 6 f4 ♗xd4 7 f5 ♗d3 (7...exf5 8 e6 b2 9 ♙xb2 cxb2 10 ♞xb2 ♙xe6 11 ♗f4 is not very clear) 8 fxg6 (8 ♗f2 exf5 is winning for Black) 8...♗xe2 9 g7 b2 10 g8 ♗ b1 ♗ 11 ♗xc8, although Black's passed pawns should prove decisive in the long run; e.g., 11...♗g1+ 12 ♗h4 ♗h1+ 13 ♗g4 ♗e4+ 14 ♗h5 ♗h7+ 15 ♗g4 d4 16 ♗c4+ d3 17 ♙c1 ♗f5+ 18 ♗h5 c2 19 ♗b4 a3 20 ♗d2+ ♗f1 21 ♗h6 a2 22 ♗a5 ♗e4 23 ♗xa2 ♗e2!, and the threats of 24...♗h1+ and 24...d2 are decisive.

5...♗c4 6 f4 ♗xd4

Black's task is easy thanks to White's passively placed rook on b1. The game ended 7 ♗f2 ♗c4 8 ♗e1 d4 9 ♗e2 ♗d5 (9...♙d7 is simpler) 10 ♗f3 (or 10 ♞h1 ♗e4 11 ♗d1 d3 12 ♞h2 ♙d7 13 ♞f2 ♙c6 14 ♗c1 ♗d4 15 ♙b4 ♙e4 16 ♞h2 ♙f3 and Black wins) 10...♙b7 11 ♞e1 ♗c4+ 12 ♗f2 b2 13 f5 exf5 14 e6 ♙c6 0-1.

Index of Players

References are to diagram numbers. When a player's name appears in **bold**, that player had White. Otherwise the FIRST-NAMED PLAYER had White.

- ABDELNABBI – **Yakovich** 21c
ABRAMOVIĆ – **Ilinčić** 72b
ADAMS – **Anand** 95b;
 Khalifman 89c; **Rozentalis**
 57c; **Salov** 42a; **Topalov** 36b
ADLY – **Balje** 25d
AKOPIAN – **Almasi, Z.** 7d
ALEKHINE – **Capablanca** 57a
ALMASI, Z. – **Akopian** 7d;
 Gomez Esteban 58c;
 Khalifman 29a
ALOMA VIDAL – **Delchev** 34c
ALTERMAN – **Tan** 70d
AMIRKIAEE – **Klein** 10c
ANAND – **Adams** 95b; **Carlsen**
 73d; **Kamsky** 64b; **Karpov**
 26e; **Kramnik** 97a; **Shirov**
 91d, 93c; **Tiviakov** 95a; **Van**
 Wely 71c
ANDERSSON – **Karpov** 22c; **Lau**
 80b; **Tal** 7b
ANKERST – **Kostić, V.** 63b
ANTUNES – **Miles** 82c
ARAKHAMIA-GRANT –
 Hennigan 63c
ARIAS – **Tokman** 15d
ARONIAN – **Bu Xiangzhi** 83b;
 Carlsen 78a; **Postny** 75c;
 Shirov 74c
ATALIK – **Predojević** 30b;
 Smirin 85a
AZMAIPARASHVILI – **Korchnoi**
 21b
BABULA – **Grishchuk** 90d;
 Kasparov 92b
BACROT – **Chabanon** 39d;
 Khenkin 29c; **Shirov** 89b
BADEA – **Lanzani** 28d
BAGIROV – **Schöne, R.** 63e
BALJE – **Adly** 25d
BAREEV – **Topalov** 57b
BARUA – **Khalifman** 37c
BELLAVSKY – **Hulak** 75b;
 Liberzon 34b; **Topalov** 42d
BELKHODJA – **Sokolov, A.** 43b
BELLON – **Fraguela Gil** 20c
BELORUSOV – **Kudrin** 87d
BEREZOVSKY – **Nijboer** 86d
BLATNY – **Popović** 23d; **Stocek**
 20d
BLAZKOVA – **Grandelius** 50d
BOGOLJUBOW – **Eliskases** 28e
BOGOSAVLJEVIĆ – **Perunović**
 47c
BOLOGAN – **Bouchet** 71b; **Dreev**
 51d; **Vaganian** 87c; **Zhang**
 Zhong 93e
BONIN – **Henley** 97c
BOTVINNIK – **Tartakower** 24d
BOUCHET – **Bologan** 71b
BRAGIN – **Gavrilov** 98a
BREYER – **Fahrni** 61d
BRITO GARCIA – **Kurajica** 35d
BRONSTEIN – **Gufeld** 62e
BROWNE – **Smejkal** 79c
BU XIANGZHI – **Aronian** 83b
BURMAKIN – **Hernandez**
 Carmenates 78d
BURN – **Spielmann** 44e
CABRERA – **Ruan** 96e
CAPABLANCA – **Alekhine** 57a
CARLSEN – **Anand** 73d; **Aronian**
 78a; **Van Wely** 88b
CARSTENSEN – **Hector** 96d
CATTI PRETA – **De Andrade** 11d
CERNOUSEK – **Vass** 32d
CHABANON – **Bacrot** 39d
CHANDLER – **Polgar, Zsu.** 26b
CHEPARINOV – **Navara** 85b;
 Yakovenko 75d
CHERNIN – **Karpov** 55b
CHISTIAKOVA – **Salinnikov** 96f
CIOARA – **Polei** 20b
CLARKE, P.H. – **Nunn** 60c
CLEMENTE LOPEZ – **Rodolfo**
 Redolfi 26d
COUDARI – **Dzindzichashvili**
 25e
CRANE – **Purdy** 15b
CUADRAS – **Pomar** 10d
DAMLJANOVIĆ – **Ermenkov** 16a;
 Pikula 99c
DAUTOV – **Lutz** 58b
DAVIES – **Nunn** 66a
DE ANDRADE – **Catta Preta** 11d
DE FIRMIAN – **Shirov** 72a
DE LA VILLA – **Nunn** 55d
DELICHEV – **Aloma Vidal** 34c
DERVISHI – **Miladinović** 22b
DEVEREAUX – **Rowson** 58a
DLUGY – **Nunn** 74d
DONCHEV – **Inkiöv** 98d; **Pinter**
 47b
DREEV – **Bologan** 51d;
 Malakhov 31f
DUMPOR – **Martinović** 62d
DZINDZICHASHVILI – **Coudari**
 25e
EHLVEST – **Kupreichik** 33c
EISING – **Nunn** 45d
ELISKASES – **Bogoljubow** 28e
ENEVOLDSEN – **Ponce** 30a
ERMENKOV – **Damljanović** 16a
EUWE – **Yanofsky** 32e
FAHRNI – **Breyer** 61d
FARAGO, I. – **Jacoby** 68c
FISCHER – **Larsen** 8a; **Spassky**
 95c
FISHBEIN – **Shirov** 72d
FLEAR – **Hebden** 18c
FLOHR – **Geller** 62c
FRAGUELA GIL – **Bellon** 20c
FTAČNIK – **Gausel** 12d; **Nikolić**
 55c
GAGUNASHVILI – **Navara** 69b
GALLAGHER – **Manik** 98e
GASHIMOV – **Kariakin** 26c;
 Svidler 24b
GAUSEL – **Ftačnik** 12d
GAVRIKOV – **Giordanengo** 96a
GAVRILOV – **Bragin** 98a
GELASHVILI – **Vouldis** 12c
GELFAND – **Kasparov** 32a;
 Korchnoi 36d; **Malakhov**
 37d; **Morozevich** 83a
GELLER – **Flohr** 62c; **Karasev**
 8d
GEORGIEV, KI. – **Milanović** 11b
GHEORGHIU – **Shabtai** 28a
GIORDANENGO – **Gavrikov** 96a
GOMEZ ESTEBAN – **Almasi, Z.**
 58c
GONGORA REYES – **Nogueiras**
 19g

- GONZALEZ ZAMORA – Leon Hoyos 35c
 GOPAL – **Zhang Pengxiang** 84c
 GRAF – **Socko, B.** 86a
 GRANDELIUS – Blazkova 50d
 GRAZZINI – **Short** 21d
 GRISHCHUK – Babula 90d
 GRIVAS – **Kotronias** 31e
 GUFELD – Bronstein 62e
 GUREVICH, M. – **Pinter** 22d
 GYIMESI – Lukacs 23c
 HANLEY – **Kazhgaleev** 51c
 HARANDI – Nunn 44c
 HARIKRISHNA – **Ivanchuk** 94c; Minasian 57d
 HARRWITZ – **Williams** 54d
 HARTSTON – **Stean** 10b
 HEBDEN – Flear 18c
 HECTOR – Carstensen 96d
 HEDJAZIAN – **Serafimov, T.** 7a
 HENLEY – Bonin 97c
 HENNIGAN – Arakhamia-Grant 63c
 HERMANN – Kestler 16c
 HERNANDEZ CARMENATES – **Burmakin** 78d
 HILLARP PERSSON – **Nakamura** 25c
 HINDLE – Möhring 100a
 HLOUŠEK – **Jansa** 49d
 HODGSON – Lalić 68a
 HORT – **Romanishin** 68b
 HORVATH, J. – Marciano 50c
 HÜBNER – **Kasparov** 23b
 HULAK – Beliaevsky 75b
 HUMPY KONERU – **L'Ami** 81d
 HUSCHENBETH – **Muranyi** 97e
 ILINČIĆ – **Abramović** 72b
 INKIOV – Donchev 98d
 ISTRATESCU – **Karpov** 87b
 IVANCHUK – Harikrishna 94c; Kariakin 38c
 IVKOV – **Sigurjonsson** 69a
 JACOBY – **Farago, I.** 68c
 JAKOVljević – **Terzić** 98b
 JAKUBOWSKI – Maslak 17c
 JANSÁ – Hloušek 49d
 JOBAVA – **Narciso Dublan** 39c
 KALOD – **Polak** 45b
 KAMSKY – **Anand** 64b; **Mamedyarov** 94d
 KARASEV – Geller 8d
 KARIAKIN – **Gashimov** 26c; **Ivanchuk** 38c
 KARPOV – **Anand** 26e; Andersson 22c; Chernin 55b; Istratescu 87b; Kasparov 100b; Lautier 59a; Ljubojević 66b; Polgar, J. 31d; **Salov** 36c; **Topalov** 45c; Topalov 84b; Yusupov 52d
 KASPAROV – Babula 92b; Gelfand 32a; Hübner 23b; **Karpov** 100b; **Kramnik** 32b, 88a; **Rublevsky** 59d; Salov 37a; **Seirawan** 14b; **Shirov** 90c; **Timman** 92d; **Topalov** 66d; **Yermolinsky** 93b; Yusupov 71d
 KAZHGALIEV – Hanley 51c
 KEMPINSKI – Rustemov 82b
 KENGIS – **Nisipeanu** 70c
 KESTLER – **Hermann** 16c
 KHALIFMAN – **Adams** 89c; **Almasi, Z.** 29a; Barua 37c; Leko 73b
 KHARITONOV – **Ulybin** 68d; Yagupov 34a
 KHASANGATIN – **Onoprienko** 36a; Vokarev 56c
 KHENKIN – **Bacrot** 29c
 KHURTSIDZE – Nunn 90b
 KIRIAKOV – Volkov 21e
 KLEIN – **Amirkhaee** 10c
 KLUGER, GY. – **Paoli** 97d
 KMOCH – Nimzowitsch 100d
 KORCHNOI – **Azmaiparashvili** 21b; **Gelfand** 36d; Nunn 69c; **Sokolov, A.** 8c; Tseitlin, Ma. 29b
 KOSASHVILI – **Salov** 24c
 KOSIKOV – **Malakhato** 70b
 KOSTIĆ, V. – Ankerst 63b
 KOTOV – Pachman 59b; **Szabo** 64a
 KOTRONIAS – Grivas 31e
 KOVAČEVIĆ, A. – Sulskis 20a
 KOVAČEVIĆ, V. – **Nunn** 94b; Smirin 29d
 KOZAROV – Orev 16d
 KRAMNIK – **Anand** 97a; Kasparov 32b, 88a; **Leko** 73a, 91c; Leko 92a, 93a, 98a; **Shirov** 89a; Shirov 90a; Topalov 74a
 KRASENKOW – Vallejo Pons 38a
 KRYLOV – **Malakhov** 88c
 KUDRIN – Belorusov 87d
 KUPREICHIK – **Ehlvest** 33c
 KURAJICA – **Brito Garcia** 35d; **Ljubojević** 88d
 KVEINYS – **Malakhov** 53a
 LABOURDONNAIS – McDonnell 70a
 LALIĆ – **Hodgson** 68a; **Velimirović** 7e
 L'AMI – **Humpy Koneru** 81d
 LANZANI – **Badea** 28d
 LARINO NIETO – **Narciso Dublan** 42c
 LARSEN – **Fischer** 8a; **Mariotti** 27f; Torre 53b
 LASKER, ED. – **Lasker, F.m.** 70c
 LASKER, EM. – Lasker, Ed 70c; Levenfish 65b
 LAU – **Andersson** 80b
 LAUTIER – **Karpov** 59a; **Morozevich** 30c; **Piket** 7c
 LEKO – **Khalifman** 73b; **Kramnik** 73a, 91c; **Kramnik** 92a, 93a, 98a; **Markowski** 43c; **Shirov** 74b; **Topalov** 33a
 LEON HOYOS – **Gonzalez Zamora** 35c
 LEPELLETIER – Nunn 92c
 LEVENFISH – **Lasker, Em.** 65b
 LIBERZON – **Beliaevsky** 34b
 LJUBOJEVIĆ – **Karpov** 66b; Kurajica 88d; Nunn 81b
 LUDGATE – Nunn 60a
 LUKACS – **Gyimesi** 23c
 LUTZ – **Dautov** 58b; **Seirawan** 81a
 MCDONNELL – **Labourdonnais** 70a
 MALAKHATKO – Kosikov 70b
 MALAKHOV – Dreev 31f; **Gelfand** 37d; Krylov 88c; Kveinys 53a; Nayer 5c
 MAMEDYAROV – Kamsky 94d
 MANIK – Gallagher 98e
 MARCIANO – **Horvath, J.** 50c
 MARIOTTI – Larsen 27f
 MARKOWSKI – **Leko** 43c
 MAROCZY – Teichmann 100c; **Thomas, G.** 28c
 MARTINOVIĆ – Dumpor 62d
 MASLAK – **Jakubowski** 17c
 MATIKOZIAN – **Mikhalevski, V.** 59c
 MEDVEGY – **Narciso Dublan** 96c
 MENDOZA – **Zapata** 27d
 MEPHISTO 68020 – Nunn 65a
 MERCIER – **Prié** 81c
 MIKHALEVSKI, V. – Matikozian 59c
 MILADINOVIĆ – Dervishi 22b

- MILANOVIĆ – **Georgiev, Ki.** 11b
MILES – **Antunes** 82c
MILOS – **Sunye Neto** 17d
MINASIAN – **Harikrishna** 57d;
Moiseenko 53d
MIROSHNICHENKO – **Polgar, J.**
22a
MNATSAKANIAN – **Romanishin**
80a
MÖHRING – **Hindle** 100a
MOISEENKO – **Minasian** 53d;
Pavasović 6d
MOROSOVA – **Sammul** 61c
MOROZEVICH – **Gelfand** 83a;
Lautier 30c
MOVSESIAN, S. – **Sadvakasov** 6e
MURANYI – **Huschenbeth** 97e
NAIDITSCH – **Short** 87e;
Stellwagen 98c
NAKAMURA – **Hillarp Persson**
25c
NARCISO DUBLAN – **Jobava**
39c; **Larino Nieto** 42c;
Medvegy 96c
NAVARA – **Cheparinov** 85b;
Gagunashvili 69b; **Sandipan**
54c; **Topalov** 65c
NAYER – **Malakhov** 5c
NI HUA – **Timofeev** 89d;
Zviagintsev 84d
NIJBOER – **Berezovsky** 86d
NIKOLIĆ – **Ftačnik** 55c;
Timman 8b; **Van Wely** 53c
NIMZOWITSCH – **Kmoch** 100d
NISIPEANU – **Kengis** 70c
NOGUEIRAS – **Gongora Reyes**
19g
NOVIKOV – **Onishchuk** 25b;
Ponomariov 79a
NUNN – **Clarke, P.H.** 60c;
Davies 66a; **de la Villa** 55d;
Dlugy 74d; **Eising** 45d;
Harandi 44c; **Khurtsidze**
90b; **Korchnoi** 69c;
Kovačević, V. 94b;
Lepelletier 92c; **Ljubojević**
81b; **Ludgate** 60a; **Mephisto**
68020 65a; **Pitt** 63a;
Polugaevsky 48c; **Pujol**
Sans 30d; **Rasmussen, K.**
93d; **Rochev** 60b; **Stohl** 38d;
Toth 94a; **Upton, T.** 37b; **Ye**
Rongguang 38b
NUR – **Sarkar** 11c
ONISHCHUK – **Novikov** 25b;
Shirov 39a; **Zagorskis** 79b
ONOPRIENKO – **Khasangatin** 36a
OREV – **Kozarov** 16d
PACHMAN – **Kotov** 59b
PAOLI – **Kluger, Gy.** 97d
PAPAIOANNOU – **Van Wely** 83d
PATT RUBINSTEIN, J. – **Rebizzo**
61b
PAVASOVIĆ – **Moiseenko** 6d
PAVIA MIRALLES – **Vilanova**
Corbi 44d
PELLETIER – **Rozentalis** 60d
PERUNOVIĆ – **Bogosavljević** 47c
PETROSIAN – **Portisch** 56d
PIKET – **Lautier** 7c; **Timman**
34d
PIKULA – **Damljanović** 99c
PINTER – **Donchev** 47b;
Gurevich, M. 22d
PITT – **Nunn** 63a
POLAK – **Kalod** 45b
POLEI – **Cioara** 20b
POLGAR, J. – **Karpov** 31d;
Miroshnichenko 22a; **Shirov**
39b
POLGAR, ZSU. – **Chandler** 26b
POLUGAEVSKY – **Nunn** 48c
POMAR – **Cuadras** 10d
PONCE – **Enevoldsen** 30a
PONOMARIOV – **Novikov** 79a;
Svidler 91b; **Turov** 83c;
Vallejo Pons 23a
POPOVIĆ – **Blatny** 23d
PORTISCH – **Petrosian** 56d
POSTNY – **Aronian** 75c
PREDOJEVIĆ – **Atalik** 30b;
Romanov, E. 35b
PRIÉ – **Mercier** 81c
PUJOL SANS – **Nunn** 30d
PURDY – **Crane** 15b
RADJABOV – **Shirov** 91a
RADULSKI – **Stefansson** 26g
RASMUSSEN, K. – **Nunn** 93d
RAVINSKY – **Smyslov** 16b
RAVN – **Vaitonis** 27c
REBIZZO – **Patt Rubinstein, J.**
61b
REEFSCHLÄGER – **Schmittdiel**
99d
REINDERMAN – **Van der Sterren**
31b
REMIZOV – **Shavtvaladze** 12e
RIBLI – **Spassky** 82a
ROCHEV – **Nunn** 60b
RODOLFO REDOLFI – **Clemente**
Lopez 26d
ROGERS – **Shirov** 5b
ROHDE – **Weinstein, N.** 11e
ROMANISHIN – **Hort** 68b;
Mnatsakanian 80a
ROMANOV, E. – **Predojević** 35b
ROWSON – **Devereaux** 58a
ROZENTALIS – **Adams** 57c;
Pelletier 60d
RUAN – **Cabrera** 96e
RUBLEVSKY – **Kasparov** 59d
RUSTEMOV – **Kempinski** 82b;
Sokolov, I. 96b
SADVAKASOV – **Movsesian, S.**
6e
SALINNIKOV – **Chistiakova** 96f
SALMAN – **Shahade, G.** 76f
SALOV – **Adams** 42a; **Karpov**
36c; **Kasparov** 37a;
Kosashvili 24c; **Timman** 55a
SAMMUL – **Morosova** 61c
SANDIPAN – **Navara** 54c
SARKAR – **Nur** 11c
SASHIKIRAN – **Stefanova** 71a;
Sundararajan 73c
SCHAEFER – **Tunc** 11a
SCHMITTDIEL – **Reefschläger**
99d
SCHÖNE, R. – **Bagirov** 63e
SEIRAWAN – **Kasparov** 14b; **Lutz**
81a
SERAFIMOV, T. – **Hedjazian** 7a
SERET – **Szabolcsi** 21f
SHABTAI – **Gheorghiu** 28a
SHAHADE, G. – **Salman** 76f
SHAVTVALADZE – **Remizov** 12e
SHENGELIA – **Zysk** 99b
SHIROV – **Anand** 91d, 93c;
Aronian 74c; **Bacrot** 89b; **de**
Firmian 72a; **Fishbein** 72d;
Kasparov 90c; **Kramnik** 89a;
Kramnik 90a; **Leko** 74b;
Onishchuk 39a; **Polgar, J.**
39b; **Radjabov** 91a; **Rogers**
5b; **Spassky** 61a; **Stefansson**
72c; **Topalov** 33d, 66c
SHORT – **Grazzini** 21d;
Naiditsch 87e; **Sokolov, I.**
84a
SIGURJONSSON – **Ivkov** 69a
SMEJKAL – **Browne** 79c
SMIRIN – **Atalik** 85a;
Kovačević, V. 29d;
Tukmakov 80c; **Vaisser** 27e
SMIRNOV – **Yandemirov** 99a
SMYSLOV – **Ravinsky** 16b
SOCKO, B. – **Graf** 86a; **Wall, G.**
95d

- SOKOLOV, A. – **Belkhodja** 43b;
Korchnoi 8c; Vorotnikov 5a
SOKOLOV, I. – **Rustemov** 96b;
Short 84a
SPASSKY – **Fischer** 95c; Ribli
82a; Shirov 61a
SPIELMANN – **Burn** 44e
STEAN – Hartston 10b
STEFANOVA – **Sashikiran** 71a
STEFANSSON – Radulski 26g;
Shirov 72c
STELLWAGEN – **Naiditsch** 98c
STOCEK – **Blatny** 20d
STOHL – **Nunn** 38d
SULSKIS – **Kovačević, A.** 20a
SUNDARARAJAN – **Sashikiran**
73c
SUNYE NETO – **Milos** 17d
SVESHNIKOV – **Zviagintsev** 31c,
47d
SVIDLER – **Gashimov** 24b;
Ponomariov 91b
SZABO – Kotov 64a
SZABOLCSI – **Seret** 21f
TAL – **Andersson** 7b; Alterman
70d
TARTAKOWER – Botvinnik 24d
TEICHMANN – **Maroczy** 100c
TERZIĆ – Jakovljević 98b
THOMAS, G. – **Maroczy** 28c
TIMMAN – Kasparov 92d;
Nikolić 8b; **Piket** 34d; **Salov**
55a; **Topalov** 75a
TIMOFEEV – **Ni Hua** 89d
TIVIAKOV – **Anand** 95a
TOKMAN – **Arias** 15d
TOPALOV – **Adams** 36b; **Bareev**
57b; **Beliavsky** 42d; **Karpov**
45c; **Karpov** 84b; **Kasparov**
66d; **Kramnik** 74a; **Leko**
33a; **Navara** 65c; **Shirov** 33d,
66c; **Timman** 75a; **Van Wely**
52c
TORRE – **Larsen** 53b
TOTH – **Nunn** 94a
TSEITLIN, MA. – **Korchnoi** 29b
TUKMAKOV – **Smirin** 80c
TUNC – **Schaefer** 11a
TUROV – **Ponomariov** 83c
ULYBIN – **Kharitonov** 68d; **Van
de Mortel** 67d
UPTON, T. – **Nunn** 37b
VAGANIAN – **Bologan** 87c
VAÏSSER – **Smirin** 27e
VAITONIS – **Ravn** 27c
VALLEJO PONS – **Krasenkow**
38a; **Ponomariov** 23a
VAN DE MORTEL – **Ulybin** 67d
VAN DER STERREN –
Reinderman 31b
VAN WELY – **Anand** 71c;
Carlsen 88b; **Nikolić** 53c;
Papaioannou 83d; **Topalov**
52c
VASS – **Cernousek** 32d
VELMIROVIĆ – **Lalić** 7e
VILANOVA CORBI – **Pavia**
Miralles 44d
VOITSEKHOVSKY – **Zagrebelny**
28b
VOKAREV – **Khasangatin** 56c
VOLKOV – **Kiriakov** 21e
VOROTNIKOV – **Sokolov, A.** 5a
VOULDIS – **Gelashvili** 12c
WALBRODT – **Zinkl** 58d
WALL, G. – **Socko, B.** 95d
WANG RUI – **Ye Jiangchuan**
25a
WEINSTEIN, N. – **Rohde** 11e
WILLIAMS – **Harrwitz** 54d
YAGUPOV – **Kharitonov** 34a
YAKOVENKO – **Cheparinov** 75d
YAKOVICH – **Abdelnabbi** 21c
YANDEMIROV – **Smirinov** 99a
YANOFISKY – **Euwe** 32e
YE JIANGCHUAN – **Wang Rui**
25a
YE RONGGUANG – **Nunn** 38b
YERMOLINSKY – **Kasparov** 93b
YUSUPOV – **Karpov** 52d;
Kasparov 71d
ZAGORSKIS – **Onishchuk** 79b
ZAGREBELNY – **Voitsekhovskiy**
28b
ZAPATA – **Mendoza** 27d
ZHANG PENGXIANG – **Gopal**
84c
ZHANG ZHONG – **Bologan** 93e
ZINKL – **Walbrodt** 58d
ZVIAGINTSEV – **Ni Hua** 84d;
Sveshnikov 31c, 47d
ZYSK – **Shengelia** 99b

Index of Composers and Analysts

- | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------|
| Averbakh, Y. | 33b, 41c | Grondijs, H. | 19d | Pervakov, O. | 18a |
| Barbier, J. | 41d | Horwitz, B. | 14d | Pikhurov, D. | 17b |
| Bazlov, Y. | 99e, 99f | Karstedt, M. | 18d | Prokeš, L. | 10a, 6b |
| Cassidy, F. | 3d | 'Lucena Position' | 45a | Prokop, F. | 19e |
| Chekhover, V. | 43d | Mandler, A. | 17a | Réti, R. | 6a, 41a |
| Chéron, A. | 32c | Matouš, M. | 80d | Saavedra, F. | 41d |
| de Feijter, C. | 6c | Mattison, H. | 2d | Sackmann, F. | 13d |
| Frink, O. | 77f | Mikhailov, M. | 67c | Troitsky, A. | 4d |
| Gorgiev, T. | 5d | Modlitba, Z. | 82d | Vančura, J. | 26f, 51a |
| Grigoriev, N. | 13c, 15c,
19c, 77g | Nunn, J. | 14c, 18d,
24a, 82d | Zinar, M. | 18b |

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