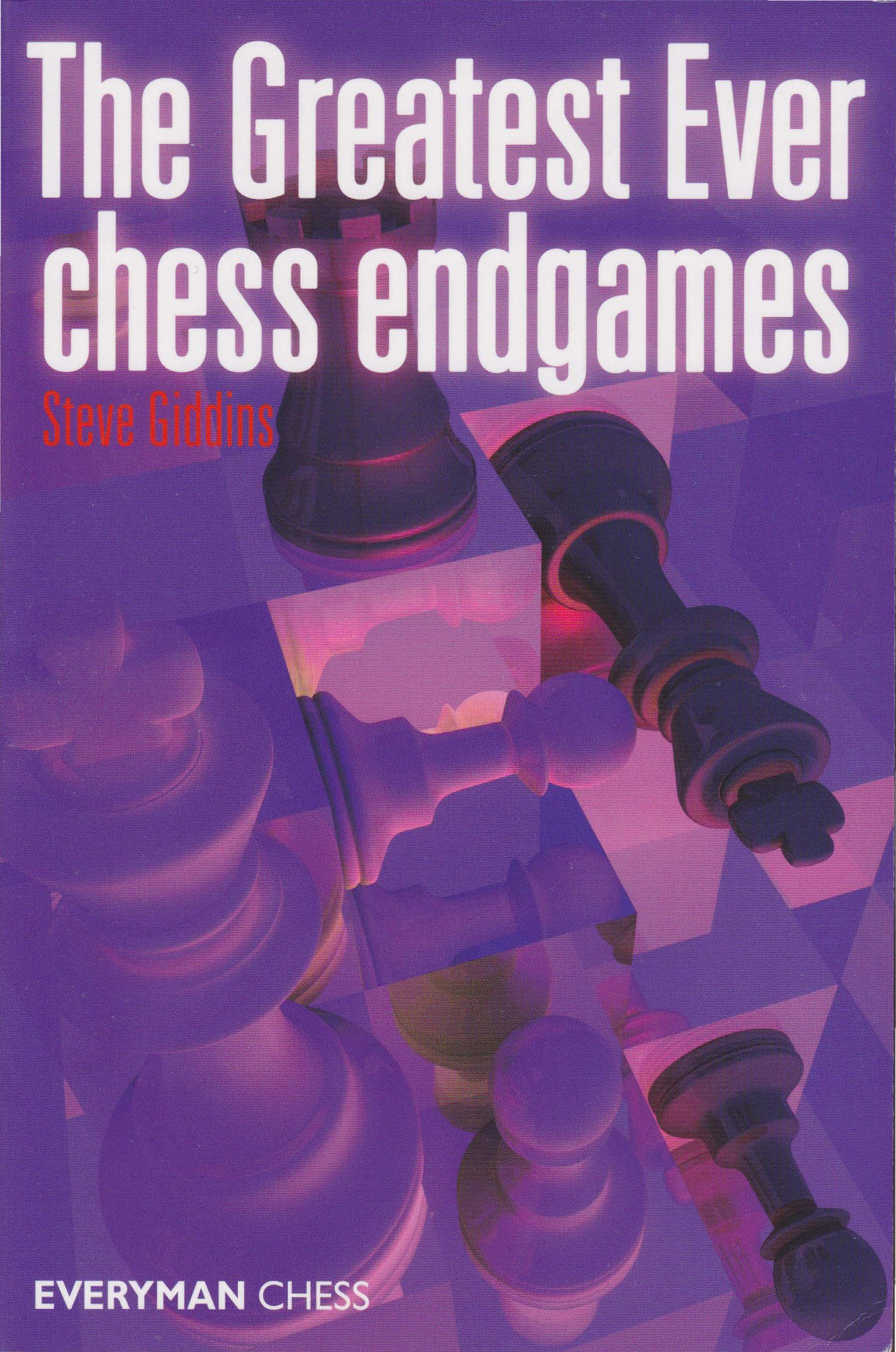


The Greatest Ever chess endgames



Steve Giddins

EVERYMAN CHESS

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Contents

Bibliography	7
Preface	9
1 Pawn Endings – Introduction	13
1: Cohn-Rubinstein, St Petersburg 1909	14
2: Brinckmann-Rubinstein, Budapest 1929	18
3: Randviir-Keres, Parnu 1947	21
2 Knight Endings – Introduction	24
4: Znosko Borovsky-Seitz, Nice 1931	25
5: Pillsbury-Gunsberg, Hastings 1895	29
6: Lasker-Nimzowitsch, Zürich 1934	31
7: Kramnik-Shirov, Tal Memorial, Moscow 2007	35
3 Bishop Endings – Introduction	38
8: Yanofsky-Pinkus, Ventnor City 1942	40
9: Averbakh-Furman, USSR Championship, Odessa 1960	43
10: Larsen-Polugaevsky, Le Havre 1966	46
11: Kotov-Botvinnik, USSR Championship, Moscow 1955	52
12: Kurajica-Karpov, Skopje 1976	56

4	Bishop versus Knight Endings – Introduction	60
	13: Reti-Rubinstein, Gothenburg 1920	62
	14: Plater-Botvinnik, Chigorin Memorial, Moscow 1947	65
	15: Fischer-Taimanov, Candidates Match, Vancouver 1971	68
	16: Torre-Jakobsen, Amsterdam 1973	74
	17: Henneberger-Nimzowitsch, Swiss Ch'ship, Winterthur 1931	79
	18: Smyslov-Tal, USSR Championship, Moscow 1969	82
	19: Flohr-Capablanca, Moscow 1935	86
	20: Karpov-Kasparov, World Championship, Moscow 1984	90
	21: Botvinnik-Smyslov, World Championship, Moscow 1957	97
	22: Flohr-Botvinnik, Moscow/Leningrad 1933	101
	23: Botvinnik-Bronstein, World Championship, Moscow 1951	107
5	Rook Endings – Introduction	111
	24: Alekhine-Capablanca, World Ch'ship, Buenos Aires 1927	113
	25: Alatortsev-Chekhover, USSR Championship, Tbilisi 1937	118
	26: Schlechter-Rubinstein, San Sebastian 1912	124
	27: Spielmann-Rubinstein, St Petersburg 1909	126
	28: Capablanca-Tartakower, New York 1924	131
	29: Flohr-Vidmar, Nottingham 1936	137
	30: Andersson-Miles, Tilburg 1981	141
	31: Botvinnik-Fischer, Varna Olympiad 1962	145
	32: Korchnoi-Karpov, World Championship, Baguio City 1978	151
6	Queen Endings – Introduction	156
	33: Botvinnik-Minev, Amsterdam Olympiad 1954	158
	34: Marshall-Maroczy, Ostend 1905	163
	35: Pillsbury-Burn, Vienna 1898	166
	36: Webb-Miles, British Championship, Morecambe 1975	169
	37: Schlechter-Lasker, World Ch'ship, Germany/Austria 1910	173
	38: Tal-Keres, Candidates T'ment, Bled/Zagreb/Belgrade 1959	180

7	Rook and Minor Piece Endings – Introduction	184
	39: Timman-Velimirovic, Interzonal, Rio de Janeiro 1979	185
	40: Alekhine-Lasker, St Petersburg 1914	190
	41: Marshall-Lasker, World Championship, USA 1907	193
	42: Andersson-Stean, Sao Paulo 1979	197
8	Multi-piece Endings – Introduction	200
	43: Englisch-Steinitz, London 1883	202
	44: Barcza-Soos, Varna Olympiad 1962	207
	45: Petrosian-Botvinnik, World Championship, Moscow 1963	211
	46: Fischer-Petrosian, Candidates Match, Buenos Aires 1971	216
	47: Petrosian-Bannik, USSR Championship, Riga 1958	219
	48: Carlsen-Azmaiparashvili, FIDE World Cup, Khanty Mansiysk 2005	222
	49: Karpov-Kasparov, World Championship, Moscow 1984	226
	50: Kramnik-Leko, World Championship, Brissago 2004	230
	Index of Games	233

Bibliography

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Bishop v Knight Endings, Yuri Averbakh (Batsford 1976)
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Preface

I was delighted when Everyman asked me to write a book on the greatest ever endgames, because this phase of the game has always been my favourite aspect of chess. Although we all enjoy seeing spectacular sacrificial attacks, it is in the endgame that the true depth and subtlety of chess is revealed. The complexities and fine points that can be hidden in positions with only a small number of pieces on the board never cease to astonish. The older masters, such as Capablanca, were absolutely right to recommend that beginners start their study of chess with the endgame, because it is by studying simplified positions, with only a few pieces on the board, that one can develop an understanding of the capabilities of the pieces, and what they do and do not “like”.

In this context, I recently came across an interesting story, which shows that chess is not the only game where such a study of the basics pays off. Walter Lindrum, the Australian star, who in the 1930s and 40s developed the game of billiards to such a level that he practically killed it as a competitive event, was tutored in his youth by his martinet father, himself an excellent player. Young Walter was forced to spend up to twelve hours each day, practicing. It seems that for the first three months, his father only allowed him one ball, the cue ball! As one can imagine, by the time he had spent that long, with just a cue ball, Walter could do just about anything imaginable with it, short of making it sing and dance, and this expertise was the foundation of his later immortality at the game. In chess, Vasily Smyslov is an excellent example of a player who learnt his chess expertise by starting with the endgame.

Obviously, there are many textbooks on the endgame which deal with the basic theoretical positions. The present book is somewhat different. As with other books in this series, *The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames* aims to entertain, and also to instruct the reader, by presenting some of the finest practical examples of endgame play in master chess. Through the medium of 50 annotated examples, we will look at the different types of endgame, and see how they have been played by the world's greatest masters.

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

I should say a word about the selection. Clearly, with a book such as this, a lot of the examples presented will be familiar to many readers, and will be games which have been published in other endgame books in the past. However, I have tried, as far as possible, to pick at least a few slightly less well-known examples, and there are bound to be some games missing from the book which readers might expect to see here. To take just two examples, Rubinstein's famous rook endings against Lasker (St Petersburg 1909) and Alekhine (Karlsbad 1911) have both been omitted, because I felt them to be so well-known that it would be impossible to say anything original about them. Where I have chosen other famous examples, I have tried, as far as possible, to add something new, or at least to pull together recent analytical discoveries published in more obscure sources. One example is Capablanca-Tartakower, New York 1924 (Game 28), where I have included a summary of some fascinating analysis published in the Russian journal *64* a few years ago. Where appropriate, I have also made use of the seven-man endgame tablebases, which have only recently become available. These have enabled me bring a degree of certainty to some positions that was previously unachievable.

One other thing I should comment on, as far as the selection is concerned, is the age of the games presented here. The reader will note that, with a few exceptions, most of the games were played no later than the 1980s, and many long before that. To some extent, this reflects my own interest in chess history, and reverence for the great masters of the past. However, I think there is also another, more objective reason, which is the change to tournament regimes and time-limits over recent years. A great many of the games in this book were played in the days of slow time-limits (40 moves in two and a half hours being the norm), and with adjournments. Whilst I would accept that adjournments, and the use of third parties to assist with analysis of adjourned games, does contradict the basic philosophy of chess, as being a battle between two individuals over the board, I think it is clear that abolishing adjournments has had a hugely negative impact on endgame play. One only has to look at the epic analytical achievement of Jan Timman and his second Ulf Andersson in Game 39, to see what we have lost by getting rid of adjournments. In recent years, this process has been taken even further, with the adoption of Fischer-style increment time limits, which almost all authorities agree have further damaged the standard of endgame play. The paucity of games from the past 20 years to be found in this book reflects this sad fact.

At the beginning of each chapter, I have added some introductory remarks, which summarize the main principles and characteristics of the different types of endgame. For now, there are three general endgame principles, applicable to all endings, which are worth mentioning here:

1. The principle of two weaknesses

In almost all of the endgames you will see in this book, the key to winning the position is for the stronger side to create a second front, so as to stretch the defender's resources beyond their limits. This may involve creating another passed pawn, opening a file, or simply weakening a single square, so as to allow penetration (or, quite often, merely the threat thereof) by a piece. Whatever the precise means, a second front is nearly always required. A single weakness is rarely enough to lose by itself.

2. Do not hurry!

Time and time again, in this book, you will see players delaying decisive action, in favour of taking minor prophylactic measures, playing small strengthening moves, marginally improving the position of a piece, etc. Such play is absolutely typical of the endgame. The majority of the time (rook endings are a frequent exception), the pace of the endgame is slower than the middlegame, and there is not the same pressure to take immediate action, or to avoid any suggestion of a wasted tempo. Instead, patient manoeuvring and gradual strengthening of the position tend to be the order of the day.

3. Endgames always become concrete!

This rule, which to some extent may seem to contradict point 2 above, was taught to me years ago by GM Jonathan Levitt. Despite the slower pace of endgames, and the need for patient manoeuvring, nearly all endgames eventually reach a phase where they become concrete, and exact calculation of specific variations is required. Many players tend to assume that tactics and calculation belong in the middlegame, and have little place in the ending, but this is a major fallacy. If you look through the endings in this book, especially the minor piece endings, you will see that a long bout of patient manoeuvring usually culminates in a specific, concrete tactical finish, which needs to be accurately calculated. This may be as simple as counting a passed pawn race in a king and pawn ending, or it may involve much more complex calculations, such as in Henneberger-Nimzowitsch (Game 17), but if you cannot or will not calculate variations, you will not be a successful endgame player.

This has been an immensely enjoyable book to write. Spending my days going through some of the finest practical endings ever played has been a great way to pass the last few months, and I hope the reader will gain a similar enjoyment from reading the book. If it serves to stimulate an interest in the endgame amongst

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

players who hitherto thought it dull, I will be even more delighted.

Last, but by no means least, acknowledgments are due to the following: John and Byron of Everyman, for their advice, technical support and general encouragement; Calle Erlandsen, Per Skjoldager and Jørn Erik Nielsen, who between them dug out and supplied details of Larsen's Danish commentary on Game 10; Gerard Welling, for supplying photocopies of Dutch-language material pertaining to Game 16; Bernard Cafferty, who clarified the probable repetition rules applying in Game 35; Matthew Sadler, for some interesting analytical suggestions in Game 25; Jakov Konovol, who provided results from his seven-man endgame tablebases (and also John Nunn and Harold van der Heijden, who put me in touch with Jakov in the first place); and finally, Laithwaites Wine, the eventide imbibing of whose products provided such splendid refreshment from my daily labours on this book!

Steve Giddins,
Rochester, UK,
January 2012

Chapter One

Pawn Endings

King and pawn endings are the basic building blocks of the endgame. Although there are not that many games where a long phase of play consists of such an ending, numerous games finish up being decided in king and pawn endings after simplification. The ability to understand and play king and pawn endings is absolutely basic to good overall endgame technique.

The main concepts of king and pawn endings are well known, and will be summarized only briefly here:

1. King activity. This is frequently critical in all sorts of endings, but never more so than when the kings are the only pieces remaining.

2. Opposition. King opposition, both direct and distant, are key ideas in such endings. Triangulation, to lose a tempo and transfer the move to the opponent, is a standard technique.

3. Outside passed pawns are often decisive, as are protected passed pawns. Such passed pawns often result from combinational breakthroughs.

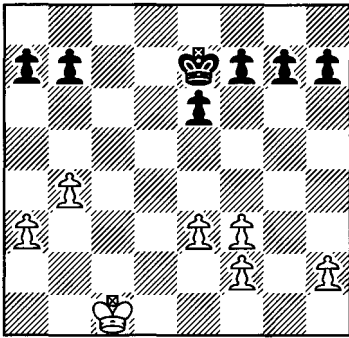
4. Above all, king and pawn endings are probably the most concrete of all, in that tempi are usually vital, and variations are everything. There is usually little scope for general strengthening moves, of the sort which are common in other endings. In king and pawn endings, it is generally essential to be able to calculate everything in detail.

In this section, we present three classic king and pawn endings. Two are by the great Akiba Rubinstein, widely acknowledged as one of the very greatest endgame players of all time. Game 1 sees a typical demonstration of how to exploit the vastly more active king. Game 2 shows a similar theme, but with the possibility of a combinational breakthrough, to establish a passed pawn. Finally, Game 3 sees an elegant example of triangulation, combined with threats of a tactical breakthrough to establish a passed pawn, by means of which Black is able to realize a miserable-looking extra pawn, which appears at first sight to be relatively insignificant.

Game 1

E.Cohn-A.Rubinstein
St Petersburg 1909

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 c5 3 c4 dxc4 4 dxc5
♞xd1+ 5 ♚xd1 ♝c6 6 e3 ♙g4 7 ♙xc4
e6 8 a3 ♙xc5 9 b4 ♙d6 10 ♙b2 ♝f6 11
♞bd2 ♚e7 12 ♚e2 ♙e5 13 ♙xe5 ♝xe5
14 ♞hc1 ♞ac8 15 ♙b3 ♞hd8 16 ♝c4
♝xc4 17 ♞xc4 ♞xc4 18 ♙xc4 ♝e4 19
♚e1 ♙xf3 20 gxf3 ♝d6 21 ♙e2 ♞c8 22
♚d2 ♝c4+ 23 ♙xc4 ♞xc4 24 ♞c1 ♞xc1
25 ♚xc1



White's play hitherto has been rather cooperative, to say the least. Cohn was obviously looking only for a draw and has systematically hoovered off the pieces, confident that he can hold the king and pawn ending despite the defect in his kingside pawn structure. But Rubinstein's assessment of the ending proves the more correct.

The reason White loses this ending is because of the well-known principle, especially important in endgames, of "two weaknesses". In chess, a single

weakness is frequently not enough to lose, as the defender can concentrate all of his defensive resources on that point, and simply hold. Instead, just as in warfare, the secret of winning frequently lies in opening a second front. The defender's forces are tied down to defence of one weakness, and then the attacking side switches his attention to the other target, utilizing his superior piece mobility. Such a change of front frequently proves enough to break the defence.

In this position, it is obvious that White has a weakness on the kingside, namely the isolated pawn on h2 (the doubled pawns on the f-file are not really an exploitable weakness here, as Black cannot effectively attack them). However, what is less apparent to the inexperienced eye is that his queenside pawns are also weak, because their advanced position makes them vulnerable to attack. Replace the white pawns on a2 and b2, and he would probably not be losing this ending, but as it is, he proves unable to defend. Black's plan consists of three steps:

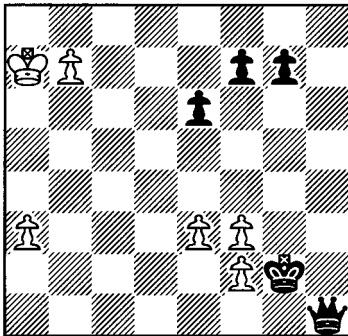
1. Advance his king to h3, forcing the white king to defend the h2-pawn passively.
2. Advance his kingside pawns as far as possible, and, at the right moment, exchange all the kingside pawns, so as

to leave the black king nearer to the queenside than his opposite number.

3. Exploit this last factor to race the king over to the queenside and win the white queenside pawns.

25...♟f6 26 ♟d2

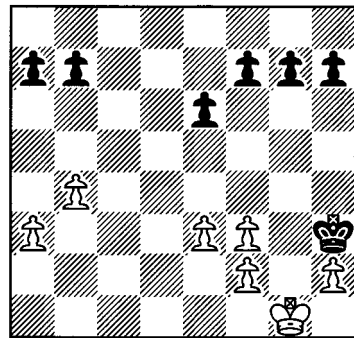
White has no choice but to fall in with his opponent's plans. His only alternative is to seek counterplay, by bringing his king to c7 with the idea of winning the black queenside pawns and queening his own pawn. However, calculation shows that this idea fails, because Black is able to exchange queens at the end and win on the kingside. Thus, the variation runs as follows: 26 ♟c2 ♟g5 27 ♟c3 ♟h4 28 ♟c4 ♟h3 29 ♟c5 ♟xh2 30 ♟d6 ♟g2 31 b5! (the best try; instead, after 31 ♟c7 b5! Black is far too quick, e.g. 32 ♟b7 h5 33 ♟xa7 h4 34 ♟b6 h3 35 ♟xb5 h2 36 a4 h1♚ etc.) 31...h5 32 ♟c7 h4 33 ♟xb7 h3 34 ♟xa7 h2 35 b6 h1♚ 36 b7.



It looks as though White is fine, but now comes the sting in the tail: 36...♚a1! 37 b8♚ ♚xa3+ 38 ♟b7 ♚b4+ 39 ♟c7 ♚xb8+ 40 ♟xb8 ♟xf3 and Black

wins easily. This is a good example of the kind of very long, but relatively simple variation that the player often needs to calculate in a king and pawn ending. Although some “30-ply” (to use computer speak, i.e. 15 moves for each side), it is not so hard to work out such a line at the board, always assuming one has sufficient time on the clock.

26...♟g5 27 ♟e2 ♟h4 28 ♟f1 ♟h3 29 ♟g1



The white king has just made it across in time, and this completes step one of Black's plan. Now he starts the advance of his kingside pawns.

29...e5!

This is an important move. As we will see many times in this book, weaknesses should, wherever possible, be fixed, and the text does that with the white doubled f-pawns. Now they cannot advance, because a subsequent f4 would always be met by ...exf4, followed by ...♟g4, winning a pawn. Seeing Black's next move, one might wonder why he did not play 29...b5 at once,

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

but this would have permitted 30 f4, after which the second stage of Black's plan is hindered.

30 ♖h1

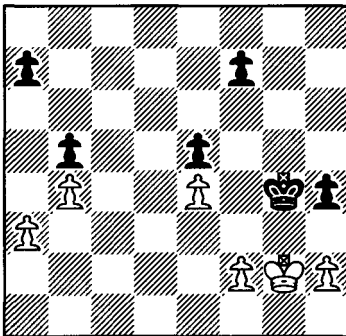
White could try to anticipate Black's next by playing 30 b5 himself, but it makes no particular difference. Black will still continue with the plan of advancing and eliminating the kingside pawns, followed by winning the white pawns on the queenside, and the fact that the pawns have been advanced even further merely weakens them still more.

30...b5

Rubinstein decides to fix the enemy queenside weaknesses anyway.

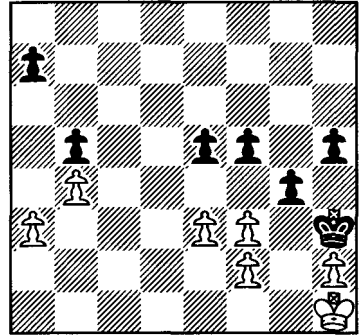
31 ♖g1

White is reduced to the totally passive tactic of oscillating his king between g1 and h1. The only other move he could try is 31 e4 but this does not help, because it weakens the f4-square. Averbakh then gives the following winning plan for Black: 31...g5 32 ♖g1 h5 33 ♖h1 h4! (a key preparatory move) 34 ♖g1 g4 35 fxg4 ♖xg4 36 ♖g2



36...h3+! (the point) 37 ♖g1 ♖f3 and wins easily.

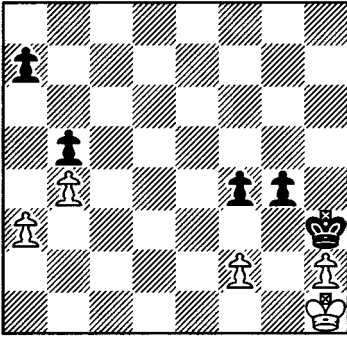
31...f5 32 ♖h1 g5 33 ♖g1 h5 34 ♖h1 g4



35 e4

This move loses rather easily, but play would have been much more interesting after the natural 35 fxg4. Now the simplest win, pointed out by Mark Dvoretsky, is the slightly counter-intuitive 35...fxg4 (away from the centre!), when Black wins in elementary fashion, by following his plan: 36 ♖g1 e4 37 ♖h1 h4 38 ♖g1 g3 39 hxg3 hxg3 40 fxg3 ♖xg3 and wins.

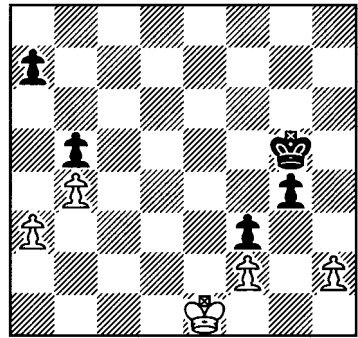
Interestingly, though, almost all books pre-Dvoretsky give only the move 35...hxg4, which also wins, although only with some accurate play by Black. Although superfluous in view of the simple win after 35...fxg4, it is worth looking at the variations after 35...hxg4, as they are both highly instructive and also not devoid of historical interest. After the further moves 36 ♖g1 f4 37 exf4 exf4 38 ♖h1 we reach the crucial position.



Here, several generations of commentators have mistakenly given 38...g3? as winning for Black. Averbakh, for one, continues 39 fxg3 fxg3 40 hxg3 ♖xg3 and adds the conclusion “and the success of Black’s plan appears in full relief”. Indeed, this does look like the logical culmination of Black’s plan, but as Jon Speelman pointed out in *Analysing the Endgame*, White in fact draws this position, after 41 ♔g1 ♕f3 42 ♕f1 ♔e3 43 ♔e1 ♔d3 44 ♔d1 ♕c3 45 a4! a6 (45...bxa4 46 ♔c1 is also drawn, as is 45...♔xb4 46 axb5 ♔xb5 47 ♔c1 etc.) 46 axb5 axb5 47 ♔c1 ♔xb4 48 ♔b2 etc. Speelman attributed this find to Jonathan Mestel, who also pointed out the correct winning plan for Black at move 38.

Back at the last diagram, Black actually needs to abandon his original plan of liquidating the kingside pawns, and instead play 38...f3! 39 ♔g1 ♔h4 and aim for a subtle zugzwang, combining threats of switching his king to

the queenside or still going after the h2-pawn: 40 ♕f1 (the other try is 40 ♕h1 when Black’s reserve tempo on the queenside proves decisive: 40...♔g5 41 h3 gxh3 42 ♔h2 ♔g4 43 ♔g1 ♕f4 44 ♕h2 ♔e4 45 ♔xh3 ♔d3 46 ♔g4 ♔e2 47 ♔g3 a6! and wins) 40...♔h5! 41 ♔e1 ♔g5!



This is zugzwang. 42 ♕f1 (42 ♔d2 ♕h4! wins the h-pawn) 42...♕f4! (now Black gets to the queenside with just one tempo to spare) 43 ♔e1 ♔e4 44 ♔d2 ♔d4 45 ♔c2 ♔c4 and Black has the opposition; the white king must give way: 46 ♔d2 ♔b3 47 ♔e3 ♔xa3 48 ♕f4 ♔xb4 49 ♔xg4 a5 and Black will queen on a1 first, thereby taking control of the white pawn’s promotion square on h8.

35...fxe4! 36 fxe4

Speelman also points out the line 36 fxg4 hxg4 37 ♔g1 e3! 38 fxe3 e4 39 ♕h1 g3 winning.

36...h4 37 ♔g1 g3 38 hxg3 hxg3 0-1

White clearly loses the e4-pawn.

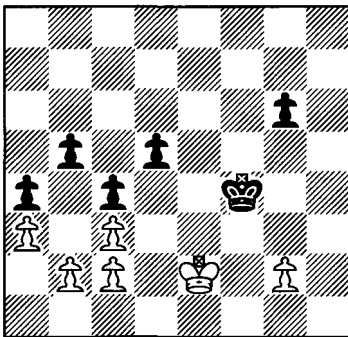
Game 2
A.Brinckmann-A.Rubinstein
 Budapest 1929

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♙b5
 ♘d4 5 ♘xd4 exd4 6 e5 dxc3 7 exf6
 ♗xf6 8 dxc3 ♙e7 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♙e3 c6
 11 ♙d3 d5 12 ♗d2 ♙f5 13 ♗fe1 ♙xd3
 14 ♗xd3 ♗fe8 15 ♙e2 ♗g6 16 ♗xg6
 hxg6 17 ♗ae1 ♙f8 18 ♙f4 ♗xe2 19
 ♗xe2 f6 20 ♙f1 ♙f7 21 h3 g5 22 ♙g3
 b5 23 ♙e1 ♗d8 24 f3 ♗d7 25 ♙d2 a5 26
 a3 a4 27 ♙d3 ♙c5 28 ♗e1 ♗d8 29 ♙c7
 ♗c8 30 ♙g3 ♗d8 31 ♙c7 ♗c8 32 ♙g3
 ♗h8 33 ♗e2 ♗a8 34 ♙c7 ♗a7 35 ♙g3
 ♗d7 36 ♗e1 ♙a7 37 ♗e2 ♙b6 38 ♙f2 c5
 39 ♙d2 ♗d6 40 ♙g3 ♗c6 41 ♙f2 ♙c7 42
 ♙d1 ♙e5 43 ♙c1 ♙g6 44 ♙b1 ♙f5 45
 ♗d2 ♙e6 46 ♗e2 ♙d6 47 ♗d2 ♗c8 48
 ♗d1 ♙c6 49 ♗d2 ♗e8 50 ♗e2 ♗e6 51 h4
 ♙d6 52 hxg5 fxg5 53 ♗e1 c4 54 ♙a7
 ♗e8 55 ♙e3 g4 56 fxg4 ♗e6 57 g5 ♙g3
 58 ♙c5+ ♙d7 59 ♗xe6 ♙xe6 60 ♙d4 g6
 61 ♙e3 ♙f5 62 ♙c1 ♙f4 63 ♙d2 ♙xg5
 64 ♙e2 ♙g4 65 ♙xf4 ♙xf4

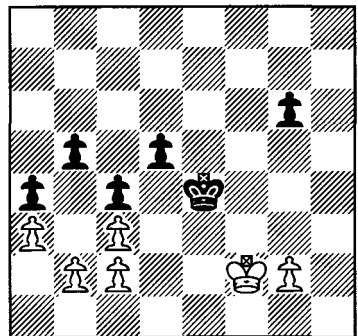
consists of the more active king. The other factor here is how his more advanced queenside pawns create the possibility of a breakthrough on that wing, establishing a passed pawn. We will see this motif in the game itself, and it is especially common when the pawn structure includes fixed doubled pawns, as is the case here.

66 ♙f2 ♙e4

An example of the sort of tactical opportunity for a pawn breakthrough, provided by this type of pawn structure, would be the line 66...d4 67 cxd4 b4 (with the threat of 68...c3, promoting a pawn) and if 68 axb4 then 68...c3! knocks out the last barrier in the way of Black's a-pawn. At present, however, this line fails to the move 68 c3!, but it is worth seeing as an illustration of the potential dangers facing White in such positions.

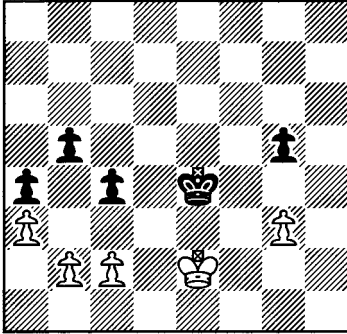


Once again, Rubinstein's advantage



67 ♖e2 g5 68 ♖f2

If 68 g3, then Black wins in the same way as in the game, by 68...d4 69 cxd4 ♜xd4 70 ♜d2 ♜e4 71 ♜e2,

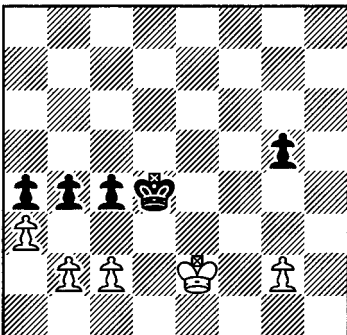


and now again the breakthrough idea applies: 71...b4! 72 c3 (the only defence against 72...c3) 72...b3! and Black wins by virtue of having the opposition. The key effect of Black's last two moves in this variation has been to force White to weaken the d3-square, so now Black's king can enter after 73 ♖f2 ♜d3, etc.

68...d4!

The same idea.

69 cxd4 ♜xd4 70 ♜e2 b4!



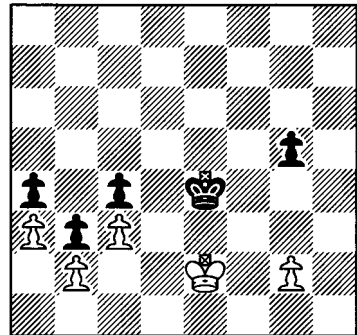
71 ♜d2

If 71 axb4 there follows 71...c3 72 bxc3+ ♜c4!! (this is the refinement – the black king stops White's passed b-pawn) 73 ♜d2 a3 74 ♜c1 ♜xc3! (threatening 75...a2, and thus forcing White's reply) 75 ♜b1 ♜xb4 76 ♜a2 ♜c3 77 ♜xa3 ♜xc2 and wins.

71...b3

As in the note to White's 68th, the key effect of Black's play is to force a fatal weakening of d3.

72 c3+ ♜e4 73 ♜e2



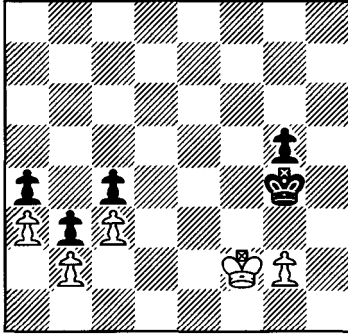
Now White's king has the opposition, but he can be outflanked on the kingside.

73...♜f4!

73...g4?? would be a dreadful mistake, because after 74 g3 the kingside is closed and Black has no space for his outflanking manoeuvre. The position would be drawn.

74 ♜f2 ♜g4!

This is the point. Now the pawn on g2 prevents the white king maintaining the opposition.



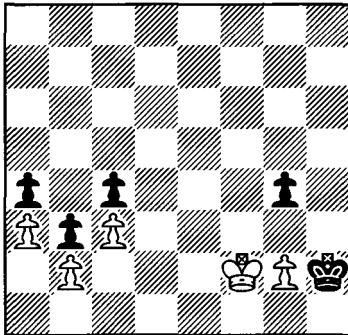
75 ♖f1

After the alternative 75 g3, Black wins as follows: 75...♖h3 76 ♖f3 ♖h2 77 ♖g4 (77 ♖f2 g4 wins) 77...♖g2 78 ♖xg5 ♖xg3 79 ♖f5 ♖f3 80 ♖e5 ♖e3 81 ♖d5 ♖d3 82 ♖c5 ♖c2, etc.

75...♖g3 76 ♖g1 g4!

The vital reserve tempo allows a further outflanking of the white king.

77 ♖f1 ♖h2 78 ♖f2



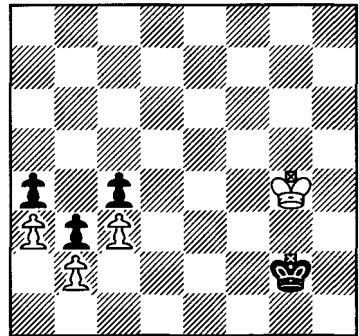
78...♖h1

Care is always required in the endgame! After 78...g3+?? 79 ♖f3, Black would only have a draw, e.g. 79...♖g1 80 ♖xg3 ♖f1 81 ♖f3 ♖e1 82 g4 ♖d2 83 g5 ♖c2 84 g6 ♖xb2 85 g7 ♖xa3 86 g8 ♖b2 87 ♖b8 b1♖! (simplest) 88 ♖xb1 stalemate.

79 ♖g3

79 ♖f1 g3 is hopeless.

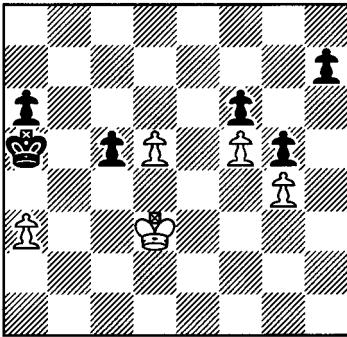
79...♖g1 80 ♖xg3 ♖xg2 0-1



The b2-pawn falls and Black will queen his own b-pawn, after 81 ♖f4 ♖f2 82 ♖e4 ♖e2 83 ♖d4 ♖d2 84 ♖xc4 ♖c2 etc.

Game 3
J.Randviir-P.Keres
Parnu 1947

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♜c6 3 d4 exd4 4 ♜xd4
 ♙c5 5 ♙e3 ♜f6 6 c3 ♜ge7 7 ♙b5 a6 8
 ♙a4 ♜e5 9 ♜e2 ♜7g6 10 ♜d2 ♜f4 11
 ♙xf4 ♜xf4 12 g3 ♜g4 13 ♜xg4 ♜xg4
 14 h3 ♜e5 15 ♙c2 d6 16 0-0-0 ♙d7 17
 ♜f1 0-0-0 18 ♜e3 ♜de8 19 ♜d2 ♙c6 20
 ♜ef5 ♙xd4 21 ♜xd4 ♙d7 22 f4 ♜c6 23
 ♜xc6 ♙xc6 24 ♜e2 ♜e7 25 ♙d2 f6 26
 ♜e3 ♜he8 27 ♜he1 g5 28 f5 ♜e5 29 c4
 b5 30 b3 ♙b7 31 ♙c3 ♙b6 32 ♙d4 ♙d7
 33 ♙d1 ♙a5 34 ♙c2 ♙b4 35 a3+ ♙a5
 36 ♜f1 c5+ 37 ♙d3 bxc4+ 38 bxc4 d5 39
 g4 ♜xe4 40 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 41 cxd5 ♜xg4
 42 hxg4 ♙b5+ 43 ♙e3 ♙xf1 44 ♙d3
 ♙xd3 45 ♙xd3

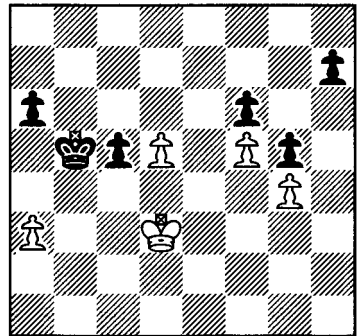


This is a particularly interesting position. Black has an extra pawn, but since it is the backward pawn on h7, it does not look all that valuable, as it seems unlikely to produce a passed pawn. Meanwhile, the white king is quite active in the centre, and he has a

passed pawn on d5 to set against Black's passed c5-pawn. However, despite these first impressions, the h-pawn in fact turns out to be vital after all. There are two reasons. One is that it provides a reserve tempo with ...h7-h6, which can play a vital role in a king dance for the opposition. Secondly, there is also the potential tactical breakthrough ...h5, should the black king be located within the square of the resulting white passed pawn after the reply gxh5.

These factors prove sufficient to win the game for Black, but only thanks to some extremely nifty footwork by his king which would not be out of place on *Strictly Come Dancing!*

45...♙b5!



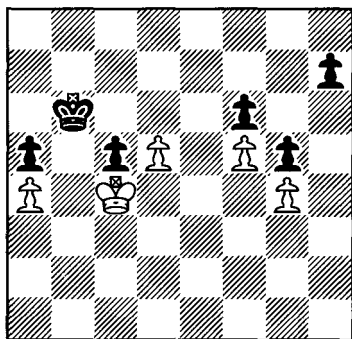
This is the only move to win, since after 45...♙b6 46 ♙c4 a5 47 a4 Black would be forced to expend his precious

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

reserve tempo with 47...h6. As will become clear later, the resulting position would only be a draw.

46 a4+ ♖b6 47 ♖c4 a5

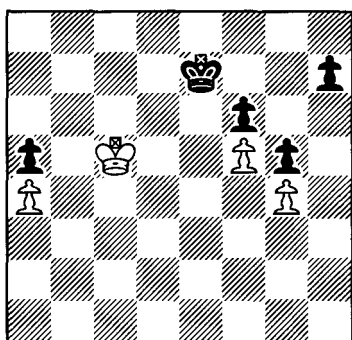
Now we have the same position as in the previous note, but with White to move – a crucial difference.



48 d6

Keres shows that White has no alternative to this exchange of passed pawns, since after 48 ♖c3 ♖c7 49 ♖c4 ♖d6 50 ♖b5 ♖xd5 51 ♖xa5, Black wins with the neat 51...♖c6! imprisoning the white king in front of his a-pawn.

48...♖c6 49 d7 ♖xd7 50 ♖xc5 ♖e7!



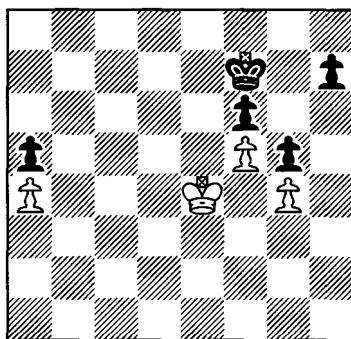
51 ♖d5

A vital moment. The move 51 ♖b5 is not possible, because after 51...h5! 52 gxh5 g4 the g-pawn promotes, whilst the white h-pawn is stopped by Black's king (see the introductory remarks). This is the key point of the whole ending, and shows that Black's extra h-pawn is not the irrelevance it may have first seemed. The threat of ...h7-h5 means that the white king is effectively held in an invisible prison, bounded by the square of the g5-pawn, and cannot go left of the c-file or further forward than c5.

51...♖f7

Now 52...h5 is again a threat, this time with a quieter follow-up, e.g. 52 ♖d4 h5! 53 gxh5 ♖g7! (with the idea of simply ...♖h6 and ...♖xh5) 54 ♖d5 g4! 55 ♖e4 ♖h6 56 ♖f4 ♖xh5 winning easily.

52 ♖e4



52...♖f8!

Now 52...h5? 53 gxh5 ♖g7 is not possible because of 54 ♖f3 ♖h6 55 ♖g4 and the white king is in time to defend the h5-pawn. The point of the

text is that White is in zugzwang. His king has to stay on the e-file, to be able to meet the threat of 53...h5 54 gxh5 ♖g7.

53 ♖e3

The only move, but now we see that this too has its drawbacks.

53...♗e7!

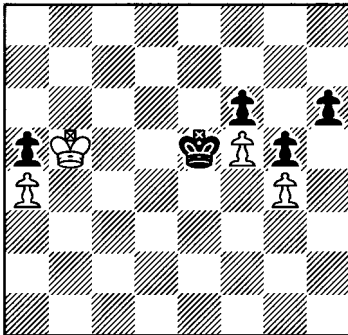
The black king changes direction and heads back to the centre. White must come to meet him and take the opposition, but, crucially, Black still has his reserve tempo in his pocket.

54 ♖e4 ♖d6 55 ♖d4 h6!

And here it is. Black takes the opposition and the white king must give way.

56 ♖e4

Going the other way also loses, once again because of the strike by the h-pawn: 56 ♖c4 ♖e5 57 ♖b5

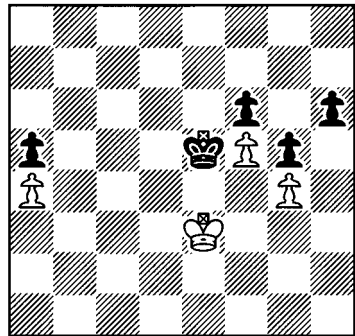


57...h5! Now the white king is outside the square of the g5-pawn! 58 gxh5 ♖xf5 59 ♖xa5 g4 60 ♖b5 g3 61 a5 g2 62 a6 g1♖ and wins.

56...♗c5 57 ♖e3 ♖d5!

57...♗b4 also wins, but allows unnecessary counterplay after 58 ♖d4 ♖xa4 59 ♖d5 ♖b3 60 ♖e6 etc. Keres' move maintains Black's dominance and wins without any alarms.

58 ♖d3 ♖e5 59 ♖e3



59...h5!

Fittingly enough, it is the h-pawn which administers the *coup de grâce*.

60 gxh5 ♖xf5 61 ♖f3 ♖e6

As Keres points out, this is again simpler than 61...g4+ 62 ♖g3 ♖g5 63 h6 although Black is still winning after 63...♖xh6 64 ♖xg4 ♖g6 65 ♖f4 f5.

62 ♖g4 ♖f7 63 ♖f5 ♖g7 0-1

A highly instructive endgame, showing several important themes.

Chapter Two Knight Endings

Knight endings are usually considered to be the closest to king and pawn endings, but the presence of knights still alters the position. The main characteristics of such endings are:

1. The knight's short range renders outside passed pawns especially strong.

2. Knights hate rooks' pawns! Knights are quite clumsy when fighting against passed pawns in general, but they are especially poor against a rook's pawn. This is because the edge of the board seriously restricts the knight's agility in a way that it does not always do to other pieces, certainly not to the same extent.

3. The knight is not able to lose a tempo by itself. This is often an important factor, and means that if some form of zugzwang position arises, only the kings can use triangulation to lose a tempo and transfer the move.

4. As in many endings, king activity is a big factor in knight endings, as is space generally.

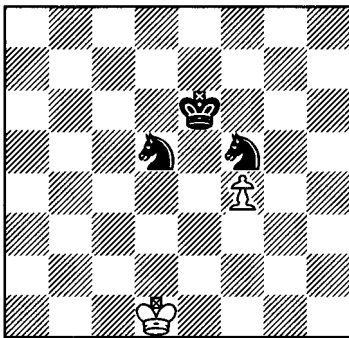
5. Finally, because of the knight's

clumsiness in fighting against a passed pawn, a knight sacrifice, to deflect its opposite number and set a passed pawn decisively in motion, is often a common feature of such endings.

In this section, we present four knight endings. In Game 4, we see the notorious ending of two knights versus pawn. This is one of the most fascinating theoretical endgames of all, and is very rarely handled correctly in practice. In Game 4, Dr Seitz gives a textbook demonstration. Game 5 sees a classic tactical battle of passed pawns. Game 6 shows a filigree endgame between two of the game's immortals, in which greater piece activity enables Black to squeeze a win out of a position with equal material. Finally, in Game 7, we see a relatively rare example of a double knight ending. Here, once again, a win is achieved in a position of equal material, this time also with a symmetrical pawn structure. White has a space advantage, which proves enough, without a clearly discernible mistake from his opponent.

Game 4
E.Znosko Borovsky-J.Seitz
 Nice 1931

1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 ♜c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♔g2 ♔g7 5
 ♜ge2 d6 6 d3 ♜f6 7 0-0 0-0 8 h3 ♔d7 9
 ♚h2 ♜b8 10 ♔e3 h6 11 ♚d2 ♚h7 12
 ♜d1 b5 13 f4 ♜g8 14 e5 ♚c7 15 exd6
 ♚xd6 16 ♜ec3 f5 17 a4 a6 18 axb5
 axb5 19 ♜a6 e6 20 ♚f2 ♔d4 21 ♔xd4
 cxd4 22 ♜e2 ♜ge7 23 ♜xd4 ♚xd4 24
 ♚xd4 ♜xd4 25 ♔d6 ♜xc2 26 ♜xd7 ♜fe8
 27 ♜f2 ♜b4 28 ♜e2 ♜bd8 29 ♜xd8
 ♜xd8 30 ♜xe6 ♜g8 31 ♜e2 ♜xd3 32
 ♜c3 ♜f6 33 ♜xb5 h5 34 ♔f1 ♚h6 35
 ♜c3 h4 36 ♜g2 hxg3+ 37 ♜xg3 ♔d4 38
 ♜e2 ♔d2 39 ♜b3 ♜d3 40 ♔g3 ♜e4+ 41
 ♚f3 ♜e1+ 42 ♚e3 ♜c2+ 43 ♚f3 ♜xe2
 44 ♚xe2 ♜d4+ 45 ♚d3 ♜xb3 46 ♚c2
 ♜d4+ 47 ♚d3 ♜e6 48 ♚e3 ♔g7 49 b4
 ♚f6 50 ♔d3 ♜d6 51 ♔e2 ♜c8 52 h4
 ♜b6 53 ♔f3 ♚e7 54 h5 gxh5 55 ♔xh5
 ♜d5+ 56 ♚f3 ♜d4+ 57 ♚g3 ♜xb4 58
 ♔g6 ♚e6 59 ♚f2 ♜d5 60 ♚e1 ♜f3+ 61
 ♚d1 ♜h4 62 ♔xf5+ ♜xf5



This ending is one of the most tech-

nically fascinating in chess, although it occurs rarely in practice. As is well known, two knights cannot force mate against a bare king, because at the crucial moment the defender's king will be stalemated. However, if the defender has a pawn, the stalemate does not arise, so it is possible to force mate.

Almost all of the research on this endgame was carried out by the legendary Russian analyst and study composer, Alexey Troitzky, in the early years of the 20th century. Troitzky's achievement is remarkable, as he analysed the endgame single-handedly, with no prior published theory or practice on which to build, and, of course, no computer help. He identified the basic plan, the techniques for corralling the defender's king, and he even worked out precisely where the defender's pawn needs to be, on each file, in order for the position to be a win. A few later analysts tidied up some loose ends, but almost all of the credit for solving this ending goes to Troitzky. The biggest compliment to the quality of his work came in 1995, when John Nunn published *Secrets of Minor Piece Endings*. This was part of a series of books in which Nunn updated and corrected established endgame theory, for new discoveries thrown up by the early generations of computer endgame ta-

blebases. When it came to two knights versus pawn, Nunn decided to omit this ending from his book, “after discovering that the pre-database work of Troitzky and other analysts was astonishingly accurate”. Effectively, the tablebase added nothing of real significance to the earlier analysis!

The basic technique for winning the endgame is always the same, and consists of three stages:

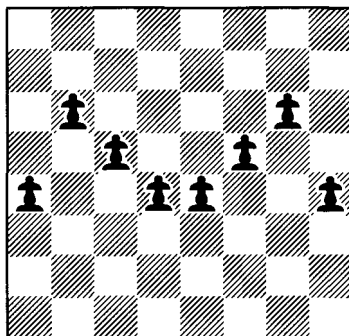
1. The stronger side blockades the enemy pawn with one of his knights.

2. He then drives the defender’s king into a corner, using his own king and the other knight.

3. Having confined the king in the corner, he brings over the blockading knight to effect the mate.

Obviously, when he commences stage 3, he has to release the blockade on the pawn, which will then advance. It is important that the pawn cannot promote before the knights are ready to give mate, and this in turn means that the pawn needs to be blockaded far enough back to ensure that this is the case. For various reasons, the line behind which the pawn must stand is not uniform, and it varies depending on which file the pawn stands. Troitzky identified the full line, which is as follows (the diagram assumes that White is the stronger side and that we therefore have a black pawn):

White wins, providing the black pawn is no further forward than shown in the following diagram.



We can see from this that, in the present case, and allowing for the reversed colours, the pawn is behind the “Troitzky Line”, and so the position is a win.

Despite Troitzky’s analysis, the ending is extremely complicated and far from easy to handle well, even for top grandmasters. In practice, when this ending arises, it tends to be drawn rather more often than it is won. A few years after the present game, for example, the leading grandmaster Andor Lilienthal reached the endgame, but was unable to win it (see Norman-Lilienthal, Hastings 1934-5). He obviously did not learn much from this, because six years later, he reached it again, and still failed to win it (Smyslov-Lilienthal, USSR Absolute Championship 1941)! In the present game, Dr Seitz plays the position in almost exemplary fashion, only 3-4 times playing a move that the tablebase shows to be sub-optimal, and never one bad enough to add more than a handful of extra moves to the mating process.

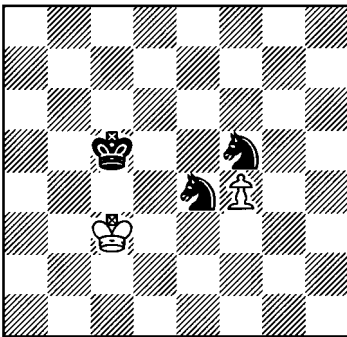
63 ♔d2 ♖f6 64 ♚c3 ♘d5 65 ♚b4 ♚c6
66 ♚c4

The main alternative defence was to flee towards the a8 corner with 66 ♚a5, although the tablebase shows that this is actually the weakest defence, and shortens the winning process by several moves. Black would continue 66...♚c5 67 ♚a6 ♖d7! 68 ♚a5 ♖b6! 69 ♚a6 ♖c4! 70. ♚b7 ♘d6, etc. The pattern shown over these last few moves is worth remembering, as it is a very typical one for this ending. It occurs again, much later, in the present game, but with the white king on the back rank – see moves 83-85 below.

66...♖e4

The knight on f5 can never move until stage three is reached, else White will just push his pawn (Black can never afford to capture it, of course), so the job of corralling the white king has to be done by the black king and the other knight.

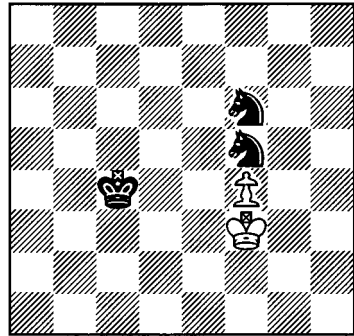
67 ♚b4 ♖ed6 68 ♚b3 ♚c5 69 ♚c3
♖e4+



We can already see how the white

king is gradually pushed back. One factor which makes this position slightly easier than some is that the blockading knight is quite centrally placed, and thus helps to control some squares, such as d4 and e3. With a rook's pawn, the blockading knight is further from the centre and exerts less influence, which complicates the job of driving the defender's king into the corner.

70 ♔d3 ♘d5 71 ♚e2 ♚c4 72 ♚f3 ♖f6



This is a good illustration of the last note. The two knights create an impenetrable barrier on the kingside, preventing the white king from fleeing.

73 ♚e2 ♚c3 74 ♔d1 ♖g4

This is one of Seitz's few inaccuracies in this whole endgame. The tablebase shows that 74...♔d3 would mate five moves more quickly than the text, but this is of little practical significance here, as Black has plenty of moves to spare within the 50-move allowance.

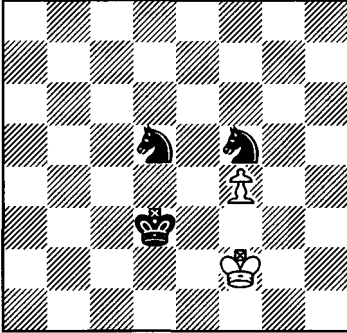
75 ♚e2 ♖ge3

This is an interesting formation. As a general rule of thumb, two knights are less effectively placed when they defend

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

each other, and are more effective on adjacent squares, creating a barrier, such as seen at move 72. However, here we see an exception – the two knights control g2, g3, g4 and h4, thus still confining the white king in the corner.

76 ♖e1 ♗d3 77 ♖f2 ♘d5

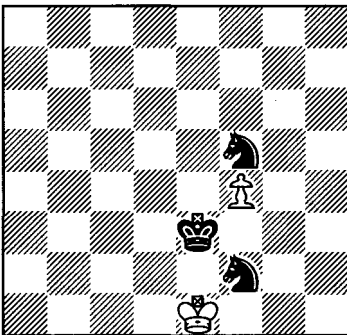


Now the knight heads to c3, to cut the white king off from d1.

78 ♖e1 ♘c3 79 ♖f2 ♖e4 80 ♖f1

The encircling is almost complete. If now 80...♗g2 then 80...♖e3 81 ♖h3 ♖f3.

80...♖f3 81 ♖e1 ♖e3 82 ♖f1 ♘d1 83 ♖e1 ♘f2



This is another typical formation. The knight on f2 stops the king going

to d1, and after the forced reply...

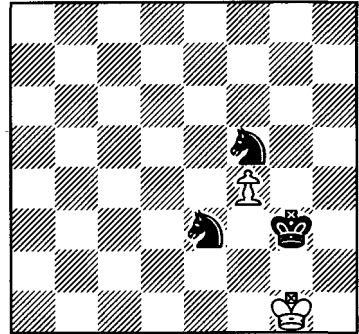
84 ♖f1

...the knight moves to take away e1:

84...♘d3 85 ♖g1 ♖e2 86 ♖g2 ♘f2 87 ♖g1

If instead 87 ♖h2 ♖f3 88 ♖g1 ♘d3 89 ♖f1 and now it is already time for stage 3: 89...♘e3+ 90 ♖g1 ♖g3 91 f5 ♘e5 92 f6 ♘f3+ 93 ♖h1 ♘d1 and mate next move.

87...♘g4 88 ♖g2 ♘ge3+ 89 ♖h2 ♖f2 90 ♖h3 ♖f3 91 ♖h2 ♖g4 92 ♖h1 ♖g3 93 ♖g1



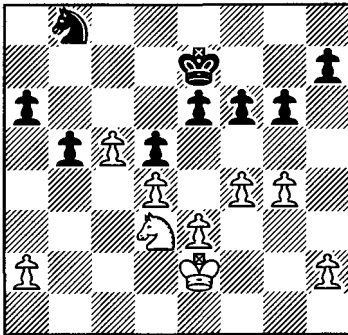
Now the king is finally trapped in the corner, and it is time for the final stage: administering mate.

93...♘h4 94 f5 ♘f3+ 95 ♖h1 ♘d1 96 f6 ♘f2 mate (0-1)

A splendid effort by Seitz, who scarcely put a foot wrong. It is interesting that two of the best technical displays in this book (the present game and Torre-Jakobsen, Game 16) should have come from players who did not even hold the grandmaster title. This shows that excellence in the endgame can be achieved by assiduous study.

Game 5
H.Pillsbury-I.Gunsberg
Hastings 1895

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 e3 g6 4 ♖c3 ♙g7 5
 ♜f3 ♜f6 6 ♙d3 0-0 7 ♜e5 dxc4 8 ♙xc4
 ♜d5 9 f4 ♙e6 10 ♚b3 b5 11 ♙xd5
 ♙xd5 12 ♜xd5 ♚xd5 13 ♚xd5 cxd5 14
 ♜d3 ♜d7 15 ♙d2 ♜fc8 16 ♙e2 e6 17
 ♜hc1 ♙f8 18 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 19 ♜c1 ♜c1 20
 ♙xc1 ♙d6 21 ♙d2 ♙f8 22 ♙b4 ♙e7 23
 ♙c5 a6 24 b4 f6 25 g4 ♙xc5 26 bxc5
 ♜b8



This is a classic example of an extremely dynamic endgame. There is no time here for quiet manoeuvring or the gradual strengthening of the position. Black is threatening to bring his knight to c6, neutralizing White's protected passed pawn, when he would have nothing at all to fear. However, in entering this position, Pillsbury had calculated a truly wonderful finish, which he had to see pretty much all the way to Black's resignation.

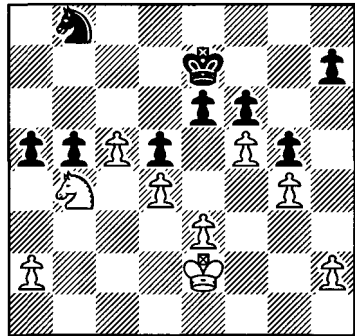
27 f5!

The key breakthrough. The threat is 28 ♜f4, when Black will be unable to defend d5, so the reply is forced.

27...g5 28 ♜b4!

Now the knight jumps to the other side, threatening the advance of the c-pawn. One move earlier, this would have been ineffective because of the reply in the game, but the changed central pawn structure makes all the difference.

28...a5



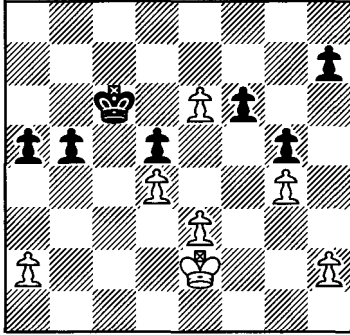
Once again, this is clearly forced.
29 c6!!

This is the real point of White's play, but he had to see a considerable distance to be able to play this.

29...♙d6 30 fxe6! ♜xc6

Black is being led down a narrow path of only moves. If 30...axb4? then 31 e7 ♙xe7 32 c7 wins.

31 ♜xc6 ♙xc6



This is the first stage of White's grand conception, but in order for it to work, he had to realize that this pawn ending, at first sight highly unfavourable, is in fact winning. Black threatens to help himself to the e6-pawn, when it is he who would be winning, but White has another breakthrough.

32 e4! dxe4 33 d5+ ♔d6 34 ♔e3

Now, at last, we begin to see the whole of Pillsbury's idea. His two central passed pawns are secure, and his king can cope with the enemy pawns. It is a rare case of a king and pawn ending in which central passed pawns prove stronger than outside ones.

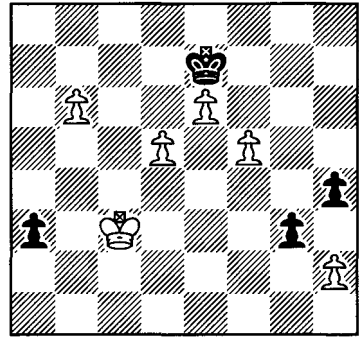
34...b4

Black has to try to make something of his queenside pawns, else White will simply take on e4 and then bring his king over to mop up the queenside.

35 ♔xe4 a4 36 ♔d4 h5

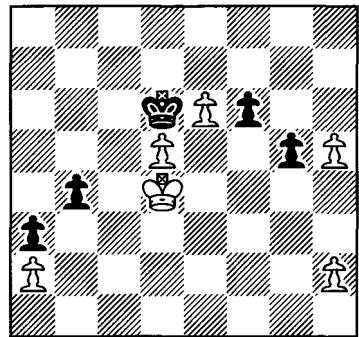
Desperation, but he is lost anyway. After the more natural 36...♔e7, play continues 37 ♔c4 b3 38 axb3 a3 39 ♔c3 f5 (the only remaining try, setting up a passed pawn on the kingside, but

White's pawns are faster) 40 gxf5 h5 41 b4 g4 42 b5 h4 43 b6 g3



44 d6+! and White will queen first, with check.

37 gxh5 a3



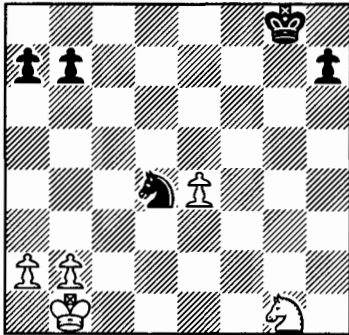
Threatening 38...b3.

38 ♔c4! f5 39 h6 f4 40 h7 1-0

A justly famous "white knuckle ride" by Pillsbury, who had to have calculated virtually the whole of the above sequence before entering the knight and pawn ending. Perish the thought that anyone should think that endings are boring, but if there really is someone who does think so, he should be converted by this example.

Game 6
Em.Lasker-A.Nimzowitsch
Zürich 1934

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 ♙b4 4 e5 c5 5
 ♙d2 ♗e7 6 ♘b5 ♙xd2+ 7 ♚xd2 0-0 8
 c3 ♘f5 9 g4 ♗h4 10 g5 cxd4 11 cxd4
 ♘c6 12 0-0-0 ♚a5 13 ♙b1 ♚xd2 14
 ♙xd2 f6 15 gxf6 gxf6 16 ♙h3 fxe5 17
 ♘c7 ♙b8 18 ♗xe6 ♙f6 19 ♘c7 ♙xh3 20
 ♗xh3 ♘f3 21 ♚dd1 exd4 22 ♘xd5 ♙f5
 23 ♘df4 ♙bf8 24 ♘d3 ♗ce5 25 ♗xe5
 ♙xe5 26 ♗g1 ♗g5 27 h4 ♗e6 28 ♙h2
 ♙e4 29 f3 ♙e3 30 ♙e2 ♙f4 31 ♙xe3
 dxe3 32 ♙d3 ♙xh4 33 ♙xe3 ♘d4 34 ♙e4
 ♙xe4 35 fxe4

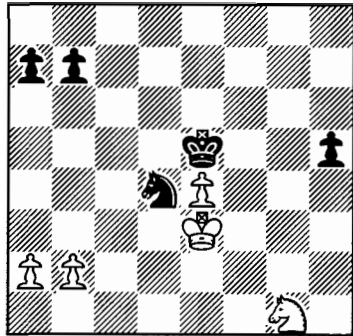


Although the position is heavily simplified and material level, Black has a number of important positional advantages: the outside passed h-pawn, the more active knight, and time to centralize his king before White will be able to do the same. The h-pawn is especially important in knight endgames, because knights have great difficulty dealing with rooks' pawns.

As usual, Black starts by bringing his king into the centre, in this case to the excellent outpost e5.

35...♙f7 36 ♙c1 ♙f6 37 ♙d2 ♙e5 38 ♙e3 h5

“Passed pawns must be pushed”!
 Black sets his main asset in motion.



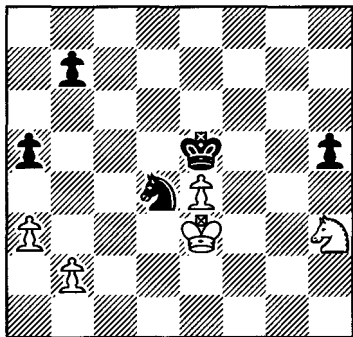
39 a3?!

Every pawn move creates a weakness, and the text gives the Black king a penetration square on b3. White's choice was motivated by the fact that after 39 ♗h3, there is 39...♗c2+ 40 ♙f3 ♗b4 41 a3 ♗d3 42 b4 ♗e1+ 43 ♙e2 ♗c2 winning material. However, Keres points out that White can instead play 40 ♙d2! when 40...♗b4 41 a3 repulses the knight. It is still far from clear that 39 ♗h3 would have saved the game, but it probably offers slightly improved chances thereof.

39...a5!

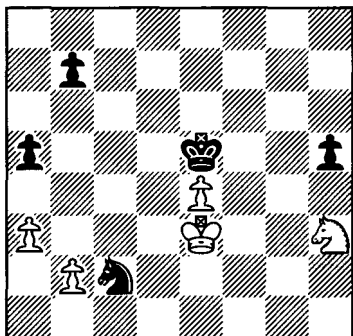
Setting up the later possibility of ...a5-a4, fixing the white queenside pawns (see move 52).

40 ♖h3



40... ♗c2+

The text-move works in the game, but in view of the resource pointed out in the following note, it should have led to nothing. Keres instead recommends 40... ♗e6! which forces 41 ♖f2 (else 41... ♗g5 wins the e-pawn) and now 41... ♗f4! maintains great pressure.



41 ♔d3?!

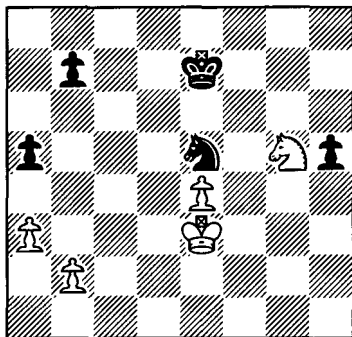
Once again, Keres points out that 41 ♔d2! is a better defence, when Black has nothing better than to return the

knight to d4 and try again.

41... ♗e1+ 42 ♔e2 ♗g2 43 ♗f3 ♖h4+ 44 ♗e3 ♗g6 45 ♗g5

45 ♖f2 ♖f4 would actually reach the position given in the note to move 40.

45... ♗f6 46 ♖h7+ ♔g7 47 ♗g5 ♔f6 48 ♖h7+ ♔e7 49 ♗g5 ♗e5



50 ♔d4

Dvoretsky makes the very sensible suggestion of 50 b3 here, to prevent the queenside pawns being fixed by the move ...a5-a4.

50... ♔d6

White's knight raid has somewhat disrupted Black's piece formation, but has not changed the essentials of the position. Black re-establishes his pieces in a secure central arrangement, and his h-pawn is ready to advance further.

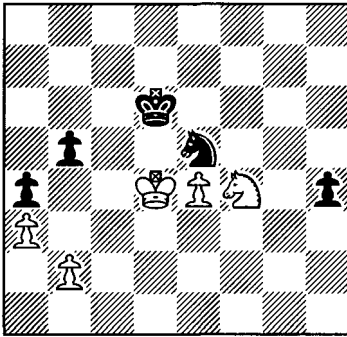
51 ♖h3 a4!

See the note to move 39. Black fixes the weakness of the enemy queenside pawns. Now White always has to worry about the black king entering via b3, or the black knight landing on c4.

52 ♖f4 h4 53 ♖h3 b6!

A typical endgame subtlety. Nimzowitsch plans to play the moves ...b5, ...d6+ and ...c5. However, he realizes that the knight check is best delivered with the white knight on h3, rather than f4. This is shown by the variation 53...b5?! 54 d4 d6+ 55 c3 and now the otherwise desirable 55...e5 walks into 56 d6+. In order to avoid this, Nimzowitsch sacrifices a tempo, by advancing his b-pawn in two moves, rather than one. "Do not hurry!"

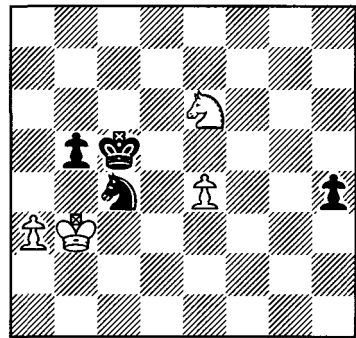
54 d4 b5



55 d3?

This is the decisive mistake. As the note to move 53 shows, the white knight is useful on f4, because it prevents the black king coming to e5, in view of the fork d6+. White should therefore retain this resource and instead play Dvoretsky's recommendation 55 c3! when it is not clear if Black can win. He can retain some pressure with 55...c5 (55...d6 56 d6xg6 h3 57 d4 h2 58 d5+ e5 59 d3 f4 60 d4 h1 e4 61 d2 is drawn) 56 d6+ b6 57 d4 d6! (such deflecting sac-

rifices are a typical idea in knight endings) 58 d3 (58 d6xg6? h3 and the knight cannot get back to stop the pawn) 58...c5 (Dvoretsky), but it is still not 100% clear if this is enough. Extending this line, a sample variation is 59 b3 axb3 60 cxb3 d5 (after 60...d4 61 c4 e4 62 cxb5 the white a-pawn is too dangerous) 61 d5 d6 62 d6+



62...b6 (62...d6 63 d6g5 is no help, since 63...e5 runs into 64 d3+) 63 d5 e5 64 a4 d2+ 65 c2 dxe4 (the last chance) 66 dxe4 exa4 67 d5 e3 68 b1 and the ending is a draw.

There may be improvements in this line, but it is certainly clear that White has excellent drawing chances, whereas after the text, he is lost.

55...d6+ 56 e3

56 d3 e5 57 e3 d5 is an illustration of the comment in the note to move 51. The black knight arrives on c4 with decisive effect.

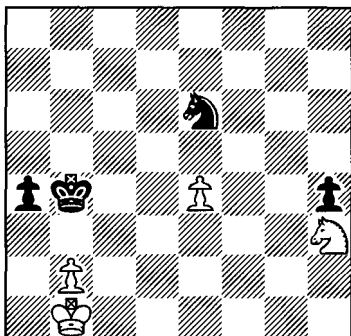
56...c5 57 d3 b4

57...d5+ 58 c3 would not get anywhere; now 57...d5+ is a real threat.

58 axb4+ ♖xb4 59 ♔c2 ♜d4+ 60 ♔b1

Desperately passive, but after 60 ♔d3 ♜e6 he would have to play 61 ♔c2 anyway, to stop the enemy king coming in to b3.

60...♜e6



61 ♔a2

White decides to go after the a-pawn, in an attempt to create some counterplay. The alternative 61 ♔c2 is met by 61...♔c4, and now the attack switches to the white e-pawn (two weaknesses!), e.g. 62 ♔d2 ♔d4 63 ♜f2 ♜g5 and the h-pawn marches forward.

61...♔c4

Now Black trades his a-pawn for the enemy e-pawn, and, more importantly, wins the white knight. In this last phase, we see the helplessness of a

knight in trying to defend against a RP. The proximity of the edge of the board means that the knight has too little room for manoeuvre.

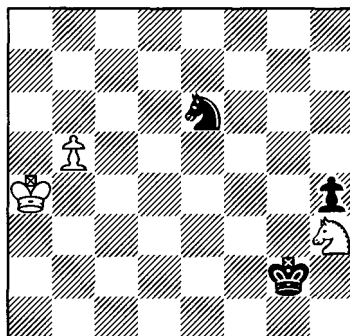
62 ♔a3 ♔d4 63 ♔xa4 ♔xe4

The black king is heading for g2, trapping the knight.

64 b4

64 ♜g1 ♔e3 is no help.

64...♔f3 65 b5 ♔g2 0-1

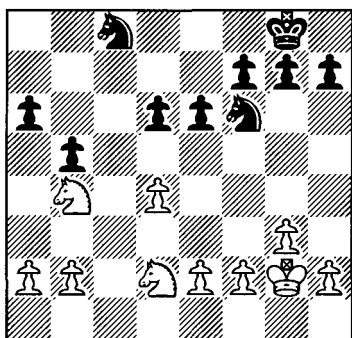


The centralized black knight is ideally placed, both denying the squares f4 and g5 to its opposite number, and also stopping the enemy b-pawn. 66 b6 ♔xh3 67 b7 ♜c5+ is the main point.

A beautifully played ending by Nimzowitsch, and one of the most famous knight and pawn endings in chess history.

Game 7
V.Kramnik-A.Shirov
 Tal Memorial, Moscow 2007

1 ♖f3 d5 2 d4 ♜f6 3 c4 e6 4 g3 ♙e7 5
 ♙g2 0-0 6 ♚c2 dxc4 7 ♚xc4 a6 8 ♙f4
 ♙d6 9 0-0 b5 10 ♚c2 ♙b7 11 ♜bd2
 ♜bd7 12 ♜b3 ♙e4 13 ♚d2 ♚e7 14 ♜fc1
 ♜fc8 15 ♙xd6 cxd6 16 ♚a5 ♜cb8 17
 ♜bd2 ♙d5 18 ♜c2 ♚d8 19 ♚xd8+ ♜xd8
 20 ♜ac1 ♜b6 21 ♜e1 ♜ac8 22 ♜d3
 ♜xc2 23 ♜xc2 ♜c8 24 ♜xc8+ ♜xc8 25
 ♜b4 ♙xg2 26 ♙xg2



Four-knight endgames are not very common. In this one, despite the material equality and symmetrical pawn formation, White has a small, but definite advantage. His pieces are more active, the black queenside pawns are somewhat weak, and White will have more space, once he advances e2-e4. As Botvinnik observed many years ago, space is often a significant factor in knight endings. Even so, the position should objectively be a draw, but Kramnik wins it against his powerful

opponent, without it being all that clear what Black does wrong.

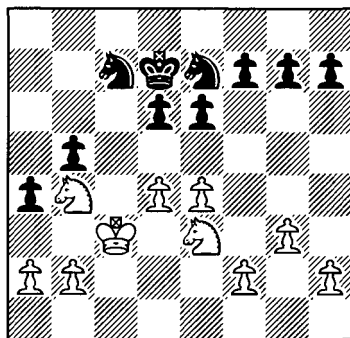
26...a5 27 ♜c6 a4 28 e4 ♜e8

28...♙f8 29 ♙f3 ♜e7 looks a logical approach, challenging the white knight. After 30 ♜b4 (30 ♜a7? b4 leaves White's knight trapped on a7) White retains the same small plus as in the game.

29 ♙f3 ♙f8 30 ♙e3 ♜c7 31 ♙d3 ♙e8
 32 ♙c3 ♜a6

Now we see the point of Black's knight manoeuvre, begun at move 28. The knight anticipates White's threat of 33 ♙b4.

33 ♜b4 ♜c7 34 ♜f1 ♙d7 35 ♜e3 ♜e7



36 g4!

A typical plan in such positions. White starts a kingside pawn advance, aiming to seize additional space on that side of the board. At the moment, there are no weaknesses to attack on

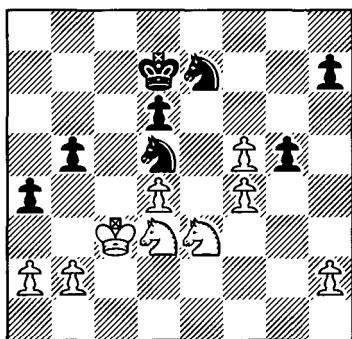
that flank, but the space advantage itself can represent a worthwhile plus.

36...g5!?

It is always difficult to know how to react in the defender's place – see also the comments in Fischer-Taimanov (Game 15), note to Black's 35th. Shirov decides to fight for space and not allow his opponent a free squeeze on the kingside, but this does weaken his position. Later in the game, White succeeds in establishing a passed pawn on the kingside, thanks partly to this advance of the g-pawn.

37 ♖d3 f6 38 f4! gxf4

The exchange is not bad in itself, but it is not forced. *Fritz 11* suggests 38...f5! which initially seems fine for Black after 39 gxf5 exf5 40 exf5 ♖cd5+.



This is the main tactical point of Black's 38th – by removing the white e4-pawn, he gets the use of d5 for his knights. White does retain an edge after 41 ♖xd5 ♖xd5+ 42 ♔d2 gxf4 43 ♔e2 ♖e3 44 ♖xf4 ♖xf5 45 ♔d3, although the simplifications should improve Black's drawing chances.

39 ♖xf4 e5 40 dxe5 fxe5

Another difficult choice for Black. The text cedes White an outside majority on the kingside, but Shirov was presumably concerned that after 40...dxe5 41 ♖h5, his f6-pawn would prove a nuisance to defend.

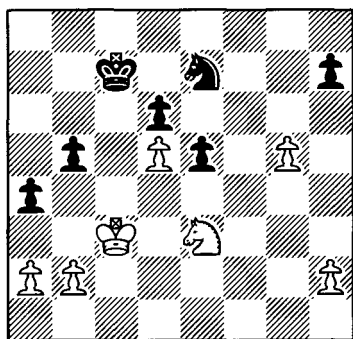
41 ♖fd5 ♖cd5+

Taking with the other knight makes little difference; after 41...♖exd5+ 42 exd5 White still enjoys a clear plus.

42 exd5!

Suddenly, White is better on both wings. His king still threatens the enemy queenside pawns, whilst on the kingside he has a potential passed pawn on the g-file. Black's defence is very difficult.

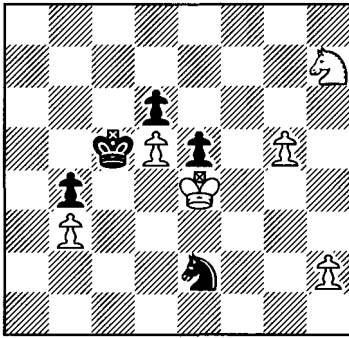
42...♔c7 43 g5



43...♔b6

43...♖g6 looks natural, to hold back the white h-pawn and threaten to attack d5 with ...♖f4 or ...♖e7, but after the strong reply 44 ♖g4! Black still has serious trouble. The white knight can come to f6, defending d5 and attacking h7. With his king tied down on the

other flank, Black would be hard pressed to hold the position. For example, 44...♖b6 45 ♖f6 ♗c5 46 b4+ axb3 47 axb3 b4+ 48 ♗d3 ♖f4+ (this counterattack is insufficient, but there is no hope after the passive 48...♖f8 49 ♗e4 followed by h2-h4, ♗f5, and a knight sacrifice on h7) 49 ♗e4 ♖e2 50 ♖xh7,



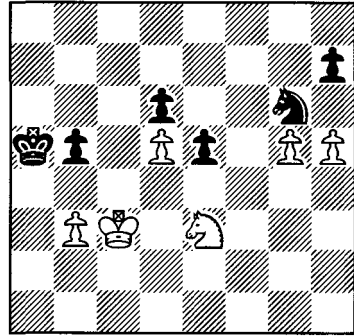
and White's kingside pawns will be stronger than Black's unsupported central ones, e.g. 50...♖c3+ 51 ♗f5 e4 52 g6 e3 53 ♖g5 e2 54 ♖f3 ♖xd5 55 g7 ♖e7+ 56 ♗e6 ♖g8 57 h4 d5 58 ♖e1! (holding up the d-pawn) 58...d4 59 ♗f7 ♖h6+ 60 ♗g6 ♖g8 61 h5 and wins.

44 b4! axb3

If Black does not exchange, White can bring his king to e4 and start pushing on the kingside. Meanwhile, the black queenside pawns are still not safe, as the moment his king strays too

far away, ♖c2-a3 will win the b5-pawn.

45 axb3 ♗a5 46 h4 ♖g6 47 h5



47...♖f4

47...♖f8 loses at once to 48 ♖f5 ♗b6 49 ♖e7 followed by 50 g6, whilst after 47...♖e7, the simplest win is 48 ♗d3 ♗b4 49 ♗e4 ♗xb3 50 ♖f5 ♖g8 51 ♖xd6 b4 52 ♖b5 and the d-pawn promotes.

48 g6 hxg6 49 h6 g5

The only way to stop the h-pawn, albeit only temporarily.

50 h7 ♖g6 51 ♗d3 1-0

The king march to e4-f5-f6-g7 wins easily, e.g. 51...♗b4 52 ♗e4 ♗xb3 53 ♗f5 ♖h8 54 ♗f6 ♗c3 55 ♗g7 b4 56 ♗xh8 b3 57 ♗g7 b2 58 ♖d1+ etc.

A highly impressive squeeze by Kramnik, in which it is very hard to pinpoint a clear error by Black.

Chapter Three

Bishop Endings

Bishop and pawn endings come in two distinct categories, depending on whether the bishops operate on the same colour squares, or squares of opposite colours. In both cases, the key characteristic of bishops is their colour-blindness – a bishop can only cover squares of one colour, which means that its influence is always limited to only half the squares on the board.

Same colour bishop endings are the more straightforward. The usual end-game assets are important here too – passed pawns, pawn weaknesses, king activity, etc. A particular issue in bishop endings is the placement of the pawns. In same colour bishop endings, one should almost always strive to place one's pawns on squares of the opposite colour from those on which one's bishop travels. This serves two purposes:

1. The colour-blindness of the bishop means that it can only control half the squares on the board. By placing the pawns on the squares of the

other colour, the player can establish a degree of control over those squares too.

2. If the pawns become fixed on the same colour squares as the bishop, its activity is restricted and it risks becoming a “bad bishop”.

Game 8 shows a typical case, where the defender suffers from the bad bishop. The consequent weakness of Black's dark squares, combined with White's more active king, allows Yanofsky to win a position with equal material and symmetrical pawns.

Game 9 sees White able to win by virtue principally of the much more active king, although here, too, Black is handicapped by his queenside pawns, fixed on the same colour squares as his bishop. This game also shows a typical device in such ending, viz. the sacrifice of the bishop for several pawns. Finally, Game 10 is a virtuoso display by Larsen, who exploits the smallest of positional advantages, against a world-class opponent. The ending illustrates espe-

cially well the battle between mutual passed pawns.

Opposite-colour bishop endings are notorious for their drawing tendency, although this should not be exaggerated. The fundamental concept in such endings is that of the fortress. Since bishops only control squares of one colour, it follows that opposite-coloured bishop endings allow the defender the possibility of setting up a fortress based on the colour squares which his bishop controls. By definition, he will have an extra piece over his opponent when it comes to the fight on those squares, and this frequently allows the defender to draw positions two, or even more pawns down.

An important detail about opposite-colour bishop endings is the pawn placement. Contrary to the usual rule in same-colour bishop endings, in positions with bishops of opposite colour, the defender should usually put his pawns on the same colour squares as

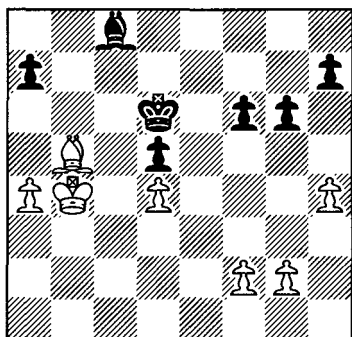
his bishop. This secures them from attack, since his own bishop can defend them, whilst the enemy bishop cannot attack them.

In order to win an opposite-colour bishop ending, the stronger side usually needs to create a second passed pawn, several files away from the first. This will usually force the defender to block one pawn with his king and the other with his bishop. The stronger side then needs to get his king over to support whichever pawn the enemy bishop is stopping.

In this chapter, we have two classic opposite-colour bishop endings, which illustrate this. Game 11 is a famous example of a combinational breakthrough, where Black is prepared to sacrifice several pawns, in order to create his second passed pawn. Game 12 shows Karpov, one of the finest-ever handlers of opposite-bishop endings, weave a magical win against a grandmaster, from a completely drawn position.

Game 8
D. Yanofsky-A. Pinkus
Ventnor City 1942

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♙e7 5
 ♙g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♚c2 c6 8 a3 ♙e8 9
 ♗d1 ♘f8 10 ♙d3 dxc4 11 ♙xc4 ♘d5 12
 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 13 0-0 b6 14 ♗c1 ♙b7 15
 ♙d3 ♗ec8 16 ♘xd5 exd5 17 ♙f5 ♗c7 18
 b4 g6 19 ♙d3 ♘e6 20 ♚b2 ♗ac8 21
 ♙e2 c5 22 bxc5 bxc5 23 dxc5 ♘xc5 24
 ♚b4 ♘e6 25 ♚xe7 ♗xe7 26 ♗xc8+
 ♙xc8 27 ♗c1 ♗c7 28 ♗xc7 ♘xc7 29 ♘d4
 ♙d7 30 ♙f1 ♙f8 31 ♙e1 ♙e7 32 ♙d2
 ♙d6 33 ♙c3 f6 34 ♙b4 ♙e8 35 ♙b5
 ♙f7 36 a4 ♙e6 37 ♘b3 ♙c8 38 ♘d4
 ♙e6 39 ♙d3 ♙d7 40 h4 ♘e6 41 ♙b5
 ♘xd4 42 exd4 ♙c8

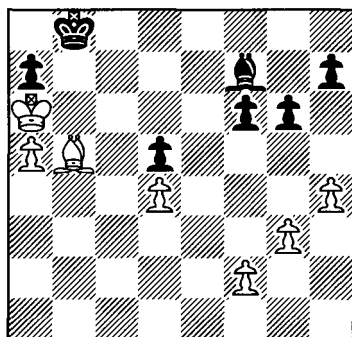


Yanofsky notes that the game was adjourned in this position, and the other competitors in the tournament all thought it was drawn. However, by very fine play, Yanofsky proves otherwise. White has the advantage of the more active king and the better bishop, principally because of the black pawn

on d5, which blocks in his own prelate. Black also has two of his kingside pawns on white squares, and Yanofsky hurries to capitalize on this. The first stage of his plan is to fix all three black kingside pawns on light squares.

43 ♙d3 f5

Coming rather quietly, but Yanofsky argues that the move is practically forced anyway. The threat is g2-g3, followed by h4-h5. Black can try to bring his bishop over, to defend the kingside pawns, but then he allows the white king into a6, when the a-pawn or d-pawn will fall. Yanofsky gives the variation 43... ♙d7 44 g3 ♙e8 45 ♙b5 ♙f7 46 ♙a5 ♙c7 47 ♙a6 ♙b8 48 a5



and Black is close to zugzwang. 48...g5 (48... ♙a8 49 ♙c6+ ♙b8 50 ♙b5, followed by ♙c5, wins the d-pawn) 49 f4 (in view of the next note, 49 ♙d3 h6 50 ♙b5 and ♙c5 is simpler) 49...h6 (the

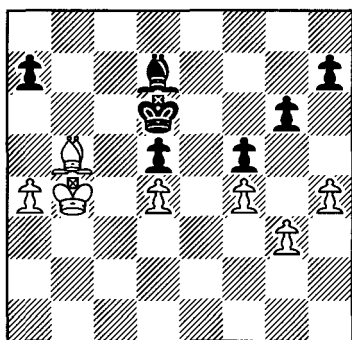
computer points out 49...gxh4! 50 gxh4 ♖g6! which probably draws, as White's king gets stuck on a6) and now 50 ♖a4! is the full "Volkswagen", as Nigel Short calls it: 50...♗e6 51 ♗e8! followed by ♜b5-c5.

44 f4

Immediately fixing the pawns on light squares.

44...♗e6 45 g3 ♗d7 46 ♖b5!

At present, the black bishop is ideally placed on d7, from where it is able to swing over to either wing. White's main plan is to play h4-h5, but if he prepares that with 46 ♖e2, then Black has 46...♗e8. Yanofsky therefore drives the enemy bishop off its ideal square, forcing it to choose an inferior post.



46...♗c8

Black chooses to maintain the guard of a6, but now the bishop loses the chance to come to e8, defending the other wing. If instead 46...♗e6, keeping the option of coming to f7, then White moves in on the queenside instead: 47 ♜a5 ♜c7 48 ♜a6 ♜b8 49 ♗e8 as in the note to move 43.

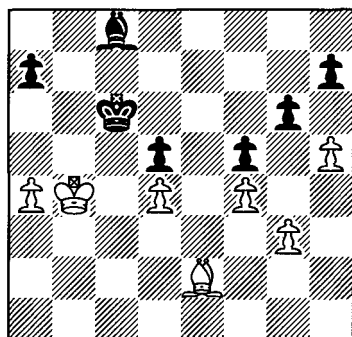
47 ♗e2!

With the enemy bishop no longer able to reach the e8-h5 diagonal, White can now prepare his h4-h5 break.

47...♜c6

47...h5 would obviously create a fatal weakness on g6, and after 48 ♖b5 there would already be no way to avoid loss of material, in view of the threat ♗e8. The king and pawn ending is of course lost after 48...♗d7 49 ♗xd7 ♜xd7 50 ♜c5 ♜e6 51 ♜c6.

48 h5



48...gxh5

If Black does not capture, White will have a pleasant choice between exchanging pawns, creating a fatal weakness on g6, or pushing on to h6. The latter creates various tactical threats involving the promotion of the h-pawn, for example 48...♗e6 49 h6 ♗c8? 50 ♖b5+ ♜d6 51 ♗e8 and there is no defence to the threat of ♗xg6.

49 ♗xh5

Now Black has a further weakness on f5.

49...♜b6 50 a5+! ♜c6

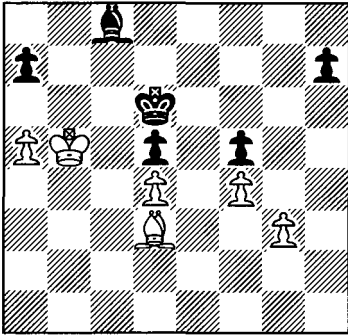
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Yanofsky points out that 50...♖a6 leads to a comic state of helplessness for Black after 51 ♙f7 ♜b7 52 ♙e6.

51 ♙e8+ ♜d6 52 ♜b5

White is gradually able to inch into the enemy camp.

52...♜e7 53 ♙h5 ♜d6 54 ♙e2 ♜b7 55 ♙d3 ♙c8



56 ♙c2!

Zugzwang again. The king cannot move without allowing the white king into c5, the bishop cannot go to b7 because the f5-pawn drops, and if the bishop moves to d7 or e6, it allows the white king into a6. There is only one other move.

56...h6 57 ♙d3!

But that only staves off the moment of truth by one move. Now Black must make a concession.

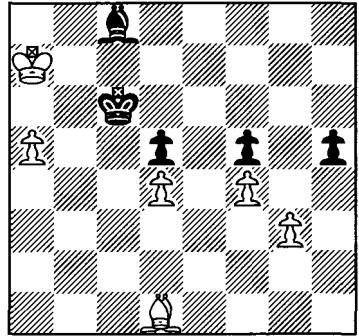
57...♙d7+ 58 ♜a6 ♜c7 59 ♜xa7 ♙c8

Black has been forced to surrender a pawn. He tries to make things difficult, by boxing in the white king, but once again zugzwang defeats him.

60 ♙c2! h5

This condemns another pawn to oblivion, but if 60...♙e6 61 ♜a6 ♜c6 then White frees his king by means of

61 ♙d1 ♜c6



62 ♙a4+

62 ♙xh5 ♜b5 63 a6 would also have won (63...♙xa6? 64 ♙e2+), but Yanofsky prefers not even to allow Black that forlorn hope of counterplay.

62...♜c7 63 ♙e8 ♙e6 64 a6 1-0

Megabase gives the final move as 64 ♜a6, but Yanofsky's own book gives the text. Either way, the position is obviously hopeless for Black. After 64 a6, Yanofsky gives the further line 64...♙c8 65 ♙xh5 ♙e6 66 ♙g6 ♙c8 67 ♙f7 ♜c6 68 ♙g8! with another zugzwang. The pawn promotes after 68...♜d6 69 ♜b6.

A splendid piece of precision play by the Canadian Champion, who was a noted endgame expert. His best game collection (alas, a bibliographical rarity these days) contains a number of finely played endgames, and can be highly recommended.

Game 9

Y.Averbakh-S.Furman

USSR Championship Semi-final, Odessa 1960

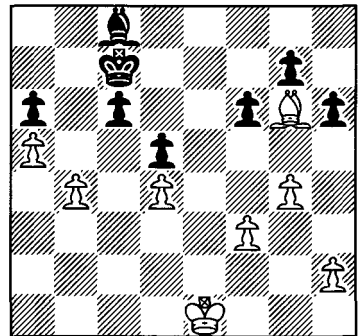
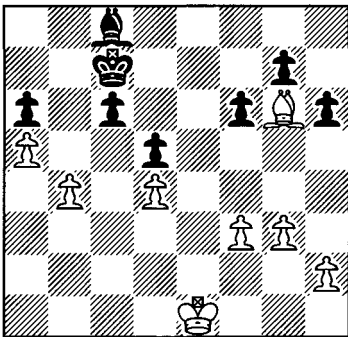
1 c4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 e3 e6 4 ♘c3 ♘f6 5
d4 d5 6 cxd5 exd5 7 ♙e2 ♙d6 8 dxc5
♙xc5 9 0-0 0-0 10 b3 a6 11 ♖a4 ♙d6 12
♙b2 ♘e4 13 ♜c1 ♞e8 14 ♘c3 ♘xc3 15
♙xc3 ♙c7 16 ♚d3 ♙e6 17 ♞fd1 ♜c8 18
♚b1 ♚e7 19 ♚a1 f6 20 ♘d4 ♘d4 21
♙xd4 ♙d6 22 ♙f3 ♜c6 23 ♙b2 ♞ec8 24
g3 ♙a3 25 ♞xc6 bxc6 26 ♙xa3 ♚xa3 27
♞d4 ♚a5 28 ♞a4 ♚b6 29 ♚f1 ♞a8 30
♚d3 ♙f7 31 b4 ♙e6 32 ♚d4 ♚xd4 33
exd4 ♙f8 34 ♙e2 ♙c8 35 f3 ♙e7 36
♙f2 ♙d6 37 ♞a5 ♙b7 38 ♙e3 ♙c7 39
♙d2 ♙b6 40 a3 ♞e8 41 ♜c5 ♙c8 42 a4
♙d7 43 ♙d3 h6 44 a5+ ♙b7 45 ♜c1 ♙c8
46 ♙g6 ♞e7 47 ♞e1 ♞xe1 48 ♙xe1 ♙c7

while, White will penetrate with his king on the weakened light squares on the kingside (two weaknesses!). It seems unlikely that he should be able to do so, but with the aid of zugzwang, his king makes it all the way to h8. Finally, we see another typical device in minor piece endings – the sacrifice of a piece, to net a winning collection of pawns.

Averbakh's handling of the endgame is technically flawless.

49 g4!

Fixing weaknesses – now the enemy kingside pawns are fixed in their place, and White can prepare to infiltrate them with his king.

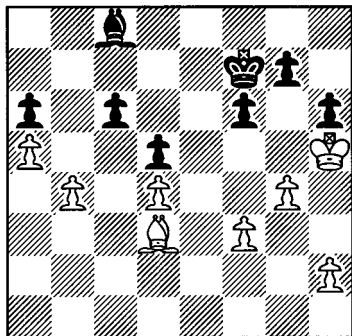


In almost any endgame, it is a significant advantage to have the more active king, and this is a perfect illustration of that rule applying in a bishop ending. Black has two weak pawns on a6 and c6, to the defence of which his bishop will be tied down. Mean-

49... ♙d6 50 ♙f2 ♙e7 51 ♙g3 ♙f8 52
♙h4 ♙e6 53 ♙h5 ♙c8 54 ♙d3!

Tying the black bishop down to the defence of a6.

54... ♙f7



55 h3!

Zugzwang. Now Black's king must give way, since 55...♖b7 results in his bishop being completely immobilized after 56 ♗f5.

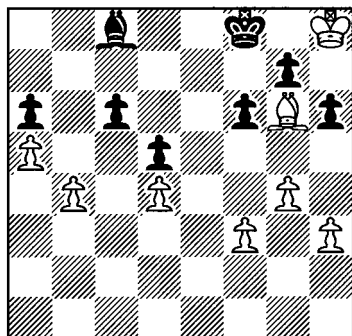
55...♖f8 56 ♖g6 ♖g8 57 ♗f1

Preparing a further zugzwang.

57...♖f8 58 ♗e2 ♖g8 59 ♗d3!

Once again, Black is in zugzwang and must give ground.

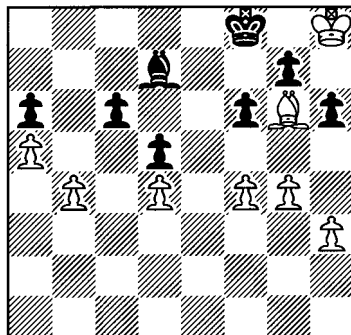
59...♖f8 60 ♖h7 ♖f7 61 ♗g6+ ♖f8 62 ♖h8



White's king has made it to the end of the earth. Now the next stage is to force Black to undefend the pawn on g7.

62...♗d7 63 f4

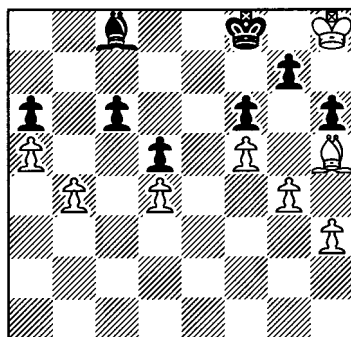
Gaining further ground. White sees that his bishop will no longer need the square f5, so he can advance his pawn there, to squeeze Black further.



63...♗c8 64 f5 ♗d7 65 ♗h5!

Setting up the final breakthrough.

65...♗c8



66 ♗e8!

A beautifully elegant final blow. The bishop sacrifices itself, on an empty square (always the most aesthetic form of sacrifice), in order to destroy the black kingside pawn structure.

66...♖xe8 67 ♖xg7 h5

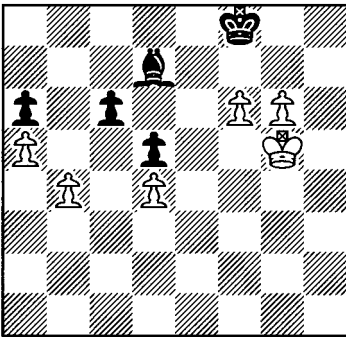
Desperation. If 67...♖e7 68 h4! (not

68 ♖xh6?? ♜f7 with a draw) 68...♗d7 and now simply 69 g5! and the f-pawn will promote.

68 ♖xf6 hxg4 69 hxg4

The two connected passed pawns will divert the black king and allow White's own king to penetrate to the queenside – two weaknesses again!

69...♜f8 70 g5 ♜g8 71 g6 ♜f8 72 ♖g5 ♗d7 73 f6

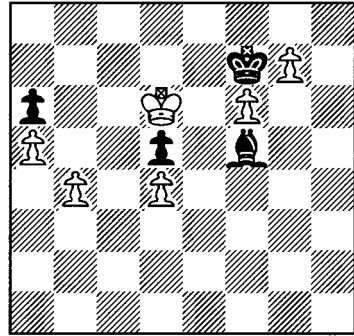


73...♗e8

73...♗c8 74 ♜f4 is no better.

74 ♜f5 ♜g8 75 g7 ♗f7 76 ♜e5 ♗g6 77 ♜d6 ♗d3 78 ♖xc6 ♜f7 79 ♜d6 ♗f5

If the bishop stays on the a6-f1 diagonal, to prevent White's next, then after 79...♗c4 White wins by 80 g8♖+! ♜xg8 81 ♜e7.

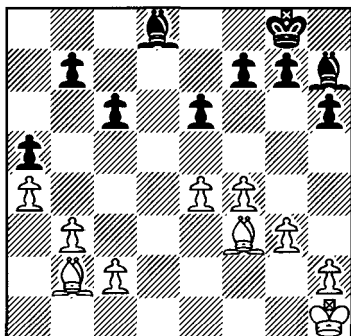


80 b5! 1-0

Now the a-pawn will decide. A beautifully elegant ending by the great Soviet endgame expert, and a highly instructive demonstration of some typical endgame ideas.

Game 10
B.Larsen-L.Polugaevsky
 Le Havre 1966

1 ♖f3 ♜f6 2 g3 d5 3 ♙g2 c6 4 0-0 ♙f5 5
 b3 e6 6 ♙b2 h6 7 d3 ♙e7 8 e3 ♙h7 9
 ♚e2 a5 10 a4 ♜a6 11 ♜c3 ♜c5 12 ♜e5
 0-0 13 f4 ♜fd7 14 ♜xd7 ♚xd7 15 e4
 dxe4 16 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 17 dxe4 ♜fd8 18
 ♜ad1 ♚c7 19 ♙h1 ♜xd1 20 ♜xd1 ♜d8
 21 ♙f3 ♜xd1+ 22 ♚xd1 ♚d8 23 ♚xd8+
 ♙xd8

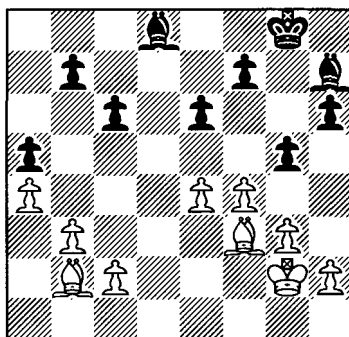


At a casual glance, the position looks dead drawn, and it is indeed hard to believe that anyone could win such a position against a world-class grandmaster such as Polugaevsky. However, this is one of the reasons why I have selected it for inclusion in the present book. Quite apart from Larsen's superb handling of the ending, especially in the latter phase, the game is instructive in demonstrating that even apparently drawish positions can be won, with only the smallest error from the opponent, if one has the determination

to try. In the first instance, the latter is the key. If one asks "How does one win such a position against a strong opponent?", the first stage of the answer is "By not agreeing a draw!".

In playing on, White does have a couple of small straws, from which to weave his basket. Firstly, the black bishop on h7 is currently shut out of play by the white e4-pawn and will take some time to emerge into play. Secondly, White has a space advantage, thanks to his pawns on e4 and f4.

24 ♙g2 g5



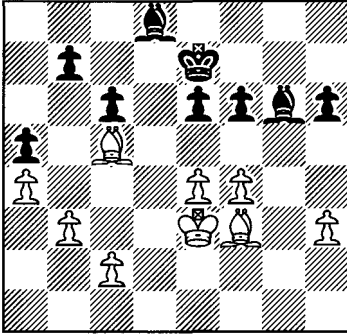
With this, Black removes the pawn from g7, where it was attacked by the white queen's bishop, and also hopes to create a target on f4. However, the downside is the weakening of the black h-pawn, which later becomes very important.

25 h3 ♙f8 26 ♙f2 gxf4 27 gxf4 f6 28

♔e3 ♕g6 29 ♖d4

With this move, White commences a plan of going after the black h-pawn.

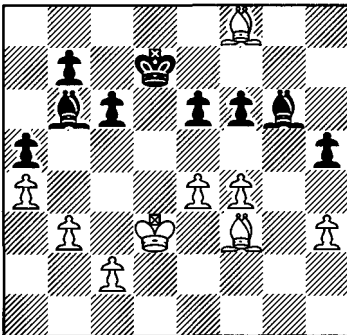
29...♗e7 30 ♖c5+



30...♗d7

30...♗f7 would keep the enemy bishop out of f8, but White could strengthen his position by means of 31 ♖e2 with the idea of transferring the bishop to c4 and threatening f4-f5. Black's position would be rather passive and still somewhat uncomfortable.

31 ♖f8 ♖b6+ 32 ♗d3 h5

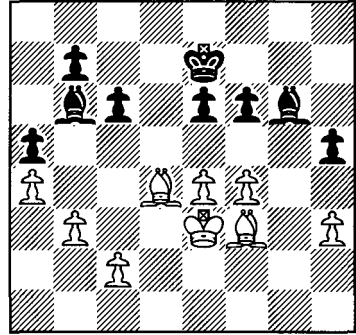


Now the h-pawn is potentially vulnerable to a later white king march to h4.

33 ♖a3 ♖c7 34 ♖c1 ♗d6 35 ♖b2 ♗e7

Black continues to use the weakness of f4, to tie White down and hamper his attempts to make progress.

36 ♗e3 ♖b6+ 37 ♖d4



37...♖c7

37...♖xd4+ 38 ♗xd4 ♗d6 was the alternative, when White retains some pressure after 39 e5+ fxe5+ 40 fxe5+ ♗c7 41 ♖e4. Polugaevsky prefers to retain the dark-squared bishops, believing that it will be harder for White to penetrate the black position with both bishops on the board.

38 ♖c5+ ♗d7 39 ♖e2 b6 40 ♖a3 ♖d6 41 ♖b2

Now the exchange would be less dangerous for Black, since after 41 ♖xd6 ♗xd6 42 ♗d4 e5+ it is White who has weaknesses on the dark squares.

41...♖c5+ 42 ♗f3 f5

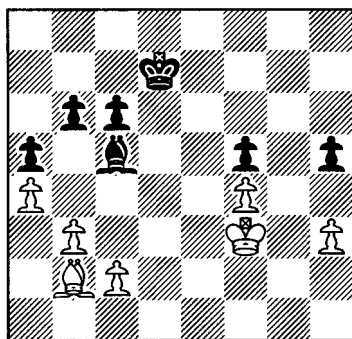
Passive defence with 42...♗e7 was also possible, but Polugaevsky prefers to clarify the position.

43 ♖d3 fxe4+ 44 ♖xe4 ♖f5 45 ♖xf5 exf5

With the light-squared bishops hav-

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

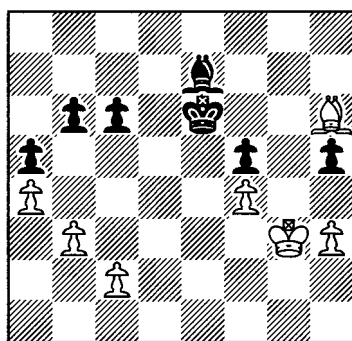
ing come off, Black still has some worries over his h5-pawn, which can prove vulnerable after ♖g3-h4. The position should still be drawn, but Black has problems to solve.



46 ♖g3 ♗e7 47 ♗g7!

White's plan is ♗h6-g5, followed by ♖h4.

47...♗e6 48 ♗h6



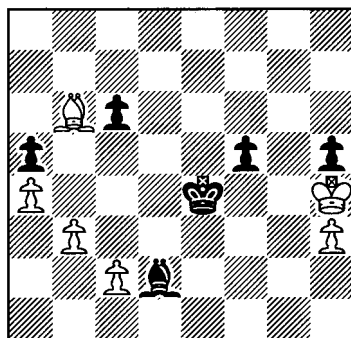
48...♗d5

Polugaevsky puts his faith in counterattack. Passive defence by 48...♗f7 49 ♗g5 ♗c5 should also be adequate to draw. It is worth noting that the game had been adjourned around move 41, so Polugaevsky was now following his

home analysis. The fact that Larsen still managed to win the position, even after his opponent had been able to analyse it at home, is a remarkable tribute to his endgame technique, and, in particular, his ability to continue to find ways to pose the maximum problems for Black.

49 ♗g5 ♗d6 50 ♗d8 ♖e4 51 ♗xb6 ♗xf4+ 52 ♖h4 ♗d2

Polugaevsky later wrote that he had reached this position in his adjournment analysis, and had stopped here, convinced that the strength of his passed f-pawn should be sufficient to draw.



53 ♖xh5 f4?

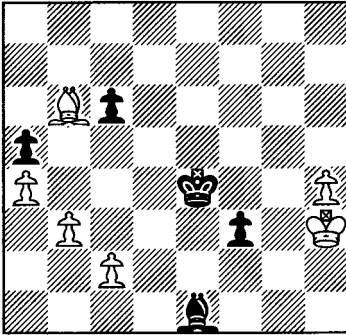
This natural move proves to be the decisive mistake, although it takes some superbly subtle play by Larsen to prove this. Polugaevsky later claimed that 53...♗f3! would have drawn, preventing the white king from coming back to help fight against the f-pawn.

54 ♖g4! ♗e1

54...♗e3? 55 ♗xa5 f3 56 ♖g3 wins easily. This simple variation illustrates

a key point about the ending – Black's f-pawn looks very dangerous, but is only so if the black king can reach the square e2. All the while the white pawn remains on c2, the only route for the king is the square e3, which White is able to patrol effectively with his bishop.

55 h4! f3 56 ♖h3!



This is the point. Now 56...f2 is not dangerous because of 57 ♖g2 and after 57...f1♖+ 58 ♖xf1 ♗xh4 59 ♗xa5 White wins easily.

56...♖f4 57 ♗c5 ♖f5

Since he is unable to support the further advance of his e-pawn, the black king returns to perform defensive duties in stopping the white h-pawn.

58 ♗e7?

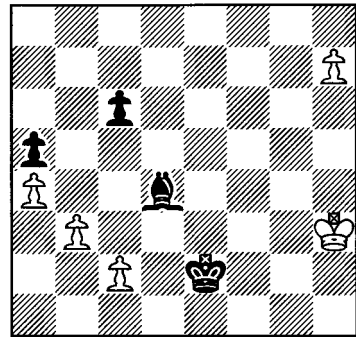
Preparing to advance the h-pawn, without allowing ...♖g5. All previous annotators of this ending, including both of the players, have assumed that Black was lost after his 53rd move, and that Larsen's play was a flawless demonstration of that fact. However, although the first part of the statement

is true, the second is not. In view of the note to Black's 62nd move, Larsen's last has to be considered a serious mistake, which should cost the win.

Instead, 58 b4! wins, by setting up a second passed rook's pawn. After 58...axb4 (58...♗xb4? 59 ♗xb4 axb4 60 ♖g3! wins at once) 59 h5! (59 a5? b3!) Black simply cannot cope with both passed pawns, e.g. 59...♖g5 (59...♗d2 60 ♖g3 ♖e4 61 ♖f2 also wins) 60 ♗b6 c5 61 a5 c4 62 a6 b3 63 a7 b2 64 a8♖ b1♗ 65 ♗d5+ forces mate.

58...♖e4 59 h5

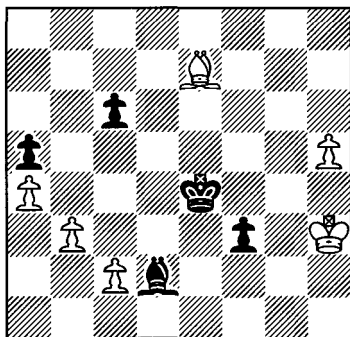
The black king has finally gained access to the square e3, but it is now too late, as the following variation shows: 59...♖e3 60 ♗c5+ ♖e2 (or 60...♖d2 61 h6 ♖xc2 62 ♗d4 and the h-pawn promotes) 61 h6 f2 62 ♗xf2 ♗xf2 63 h7 ♗d4.



Now there follows the decisive break 64 b4! axb4 65 a5 and the bishop cannot stop both passed pawns, e.g. 65...♖d2 66 a6 ♖xc2 67 a7 ♗xa7 68 h8♖ b3 69 ♗h7+ ♖c1 70 ♗xa7 b2 71 ♗c5+ and White wins in standard fashion.

ion, by forcing the black king in front of the b-pawn and then bringing his own king closer.

59...♔d2



60 ♖c5

The bishop returns just in time, to close off the e3-square once again. In the meantime, the white h-pawn has advanced one rank closer to promotion.

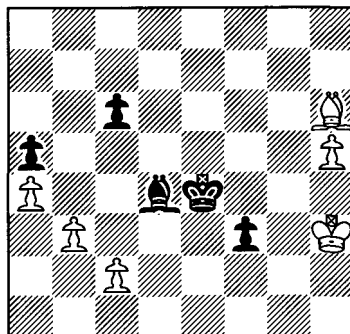
60...♗e3 61 ♖f8 ♗d4

62...♗e3 is again a threat, and 62 h6? ♗e3 63 ♖g7 fails to 63...♗xg7 64 hxg7 f2 when Black should draw the queen ending.

62 ♗h6

The bishop finds another diagonal, along which to control e3.

Polugaevsky, who was extremely generous in his commentary on this ending, awards Larsen's last four moves a total of five exclamation marks, including two for the last move, but in fact, Black has a simple draw here, apparently overlooked by both players, at the board and in subsequent analysis.



62...♗e3??

62...♗e3! is the way to draw. Both Larsen (in the Danish magazine *Skakbladet* 1966 pp 77-79) and Polugaevsky (in his Preface to the Russian edition of Larsen's best games collection, and in *Grandmaster Preparation*) dismiss this, on account of 63 ♖g7, when the e3-square is again denied to the black king, and the h-pawn threatens to advance. Larsen adds the moves 63...♗d4 64 h6 winning for White. However, the merciless computer points out that 63...♗c5! (or 63...♗b6!) renews the threat of 64...♗e3, and leaves White with nothing better than a repetition of moves after 64 ♗h6 (64 ♗f6? ♗e3 65 ♗h4 ♗d4 is also not winning for White; indeed, he may well be losing) 64...♗e3 etc. This possibility only came to light during the preparation of this book, and, as far as I am aware, it has not previously been pointed out anywhere else.

After the text move, Black is definitively lost.

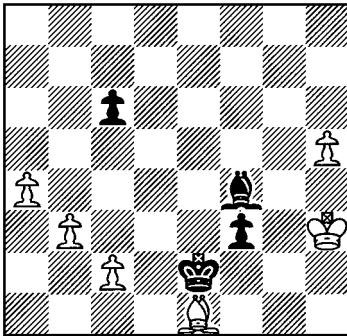
63 ♗d2!

Anticipating the threat of 63...♙f4, and also preparing to annex the a5-pawn, after which White will have two passed rooks' pawns.

63...♙f4 64 ♙xa5 ♖e3

Black will finally win the white bishop for his e-pawn, but it is too late, because the two passed rooks' pawns will be too much for Black's own bishop.

65 ♙e1 ♖e2



66 ♖g4!

A lovely final touch. White brings his king into contact with the f3-pawn, with gain of tempo. Instead, all of White's subtle play hitherto would come to naught after 66 ♙h4? ♙g5 67 ♙g3 ♙f4 with a draw.

66...♙h6 67 ♙h4 ♙d2 68 ♙g3!

Again, the most precise. Black will

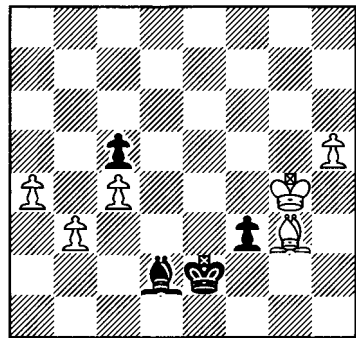
be driven into zugzwang.

68...c5

Or 68...f2 69 ♙xf2 ♖xf2 70 c3 ♙xc3 71 h6 ♖e3 72 h7 ♖d3 73 a5 and wins.

69 c4!

And here it is. If Black's bishop moves, it allows one of the white pawns to advance, whilst the black king has no waiting moves that do not lose the f-pawn.



69...f2 70 ♙xf2 ♖xf2 71 h6!

All beautifully done.

71...♖e3

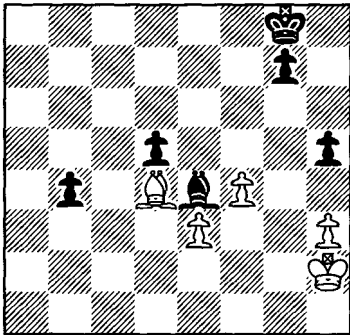
Now that the black pawn has been lured to c5, closing the a7-g1 diagonal, Black's bishop cannot stop the a-pawn after 71...♙xh6 72 a5.

72 h7 ♙c3 73 a5 1-0

Superlative play by Larsen, despite the lapse at move 58.

Game 11
A.Kotov-M.Botvinnik
 USSR Championship, Moscow 1955

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♖c3 ♜f6 4 ♜f3 e6 5 e3
 ♜bd7 6 ♜d3 ♜b4 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♜d2 ♜d6
 9 b3 ♜e7 10 ♜c2 e5 11 cxd5 cxd5 12
 dxe5 ♜xe5 13 ♜d4 ♜xd3 14 ♜xd3 ♜e5
 15 f4 ♜e7 16 ♜ac1 ♜d8 17 ♜c2 ♜c5 18
 ♜a4 ♜xd4 19 ♜xd4 ♜f5 20 ♜b4 ♜d7
 21 ♜c3 ♜e4 22 ♜cc1 b6 23 ♜fd1 f6 24
 ♜c3 ♜xc3 25 ♜xc3 ♜e4 26 ♜d2 ♜g4 27
 h3 ♜g6 28 ♜f2 h5 29 ♜h2 a5 30 ♜a3
 b5 31 ♜c5 b4 32 ♜cc1 ♜dc8 33 ♜d4
 ♜c2 34 ♜d2 ♜e4 35 ♜dd1 ♜f5 36 ♜e2
 ♜g6 37 ♜f2 a4 38 ♜xc8+ ♜xc8 39 bxa4
 ♜e8 40 ♜d2 ♜xa4 41 ♜h4 ♜c2 42 ♜xc2
 ♜xc2 43 ♜g3 ♜xa2 44 ♜xf6 ♜xg2+ 45
 ♜xg2 ♜xg2 46 ♜d4 ♜e4



This is one of the most famous opposite-coloured bishop endings in practice, and, although it has been reproduced in countless endgame textbooks, it bears repeating here since it is so instructive. As we said in the introduction to this section, the main theme

of opposite-bishop endings is the fortress, and in this game we see a classic example of breaking down the defensive fortress.

Black has an extra pawn, and an outside passed pawn at that, but with opposite-coloured bishops and no other pieces on the board, a single passed pawn is frequently not enough. In such situations, the “two weaknesses” principle is paramount: Black has to create a second passed pawn, on the other flank, so as to overstretch the defence.

The defender essentially has two defensive schemes. One is to use his bishop to stop the passed pawn and his king to defend the other wing. In that case, the winning plan is usually to break through to the passed pawn with the stronger side’s king, and force the win of the bishop. The second defensive plan, which Kotov uses here, is to deploy his king to stop the passed pawn, and rely on his bishop to defend the other flank. In this case, the key to success for the stronger side is to create a second passed pawn.

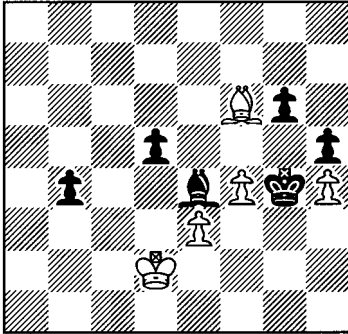
47 ♜g3 ♜f7 48 h4

As usual in opposite-bishop endings, the defender places his pawns on the same colour squares as his bishop, so that it can defend them.

48...g6 49 ♔f2

Now the white king heads off to the queenside.

49...♙e6 50 ♙e2 ♙f5 51 ♙d2 ♙g4 52 ♙f6

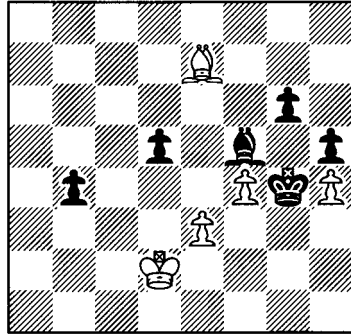


Here we see White's defensive scheme in operation. His bishop holds the h4-pawn, and can also come to d4 to defend the e3-pawn, if Black's king attacks it. Meanwhile, the white king stands guard over the enemy b-pawn. It looks as though Black can make no further progress, and, indeed, with accurate play by White that is the case, but it takes only one slip by Kotov to allow a combinative breakthrough, by which Black secures a decisive second passed pawn.

52...♙g3 53 ♙e7 ♙h3 54 ♙f6 ♙g4 55 ♙e7 ♙f5!

The start of a deep regrouping idea. The bishop is heading for e6. On the face of it, this appears a more passive square than e4, but in reality, this is not so. Black wishes to have his bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal, for two reasons: firstly, to defend the b-pawn when it

advances to b3; and secondly, to control the square g8. The point of this last factor will become clear in the following play.



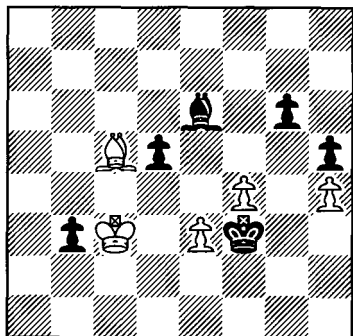
56 ♙f6 ♙f3 57 ♙e7 b3 58 ♙c3 ♙e6!

As Botvinnik pointed out, Black could win a second pawn with 58...♙xe3 59 ♙xb3 ♙xf4, but the resulting position would be a dead draw, typical of opposite-coloured bishop endings. Instead, in such endings, it is not so much the number of pawns that matters, as the presence of passed pawns.

59 ♙c5?

This natural move is the fatal error, allowing a combinative breakthrough. The bishop had to maintain guard over the square g5, as we will see. After 59 ♙d2 Black has no way to make progress, as 59...b2 60 ♙c2 ♙xe3 61 ♙xb2 ♙xf4 62 ♙c3 is the same dead-drawn ending we have already seen in the previous note.

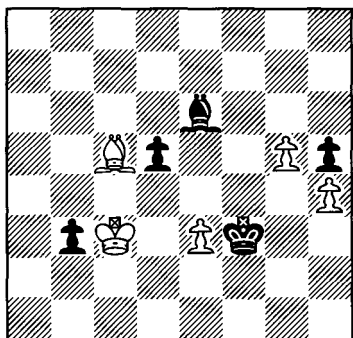
After the text, the stage is set for one of the most famous combinations in endgame literature.



59...g5!!

At first sight, this seems pointless, but the idea soon becomes clear. The purpose is to close the d8-h4 diagonal, so that the white bishop cannot defend the h4-pawn along that diagonal.

60 fxg5



60 hxg5 is obviously hopeless, and presents Black with a lethal passed h-pawn. However, it is worth pointing out, in that case, that the apparently dangerous white connected passed pawns on f4 and g5 are no threat at all whilst they remain unsupported by their king. The bishop can control them without any trouble, just by remaining

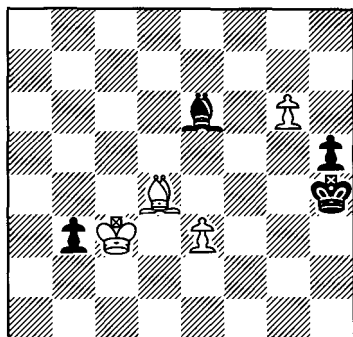
on the short diagonal e6-g8.

60...d4+!

A second pawn sacrifices itself, so as to preserve its colleague on b3. As Botvinnik notes with some pride, it is especially nice how the d-pawn advances to a square which is covered by no fewer than three white pieces!

61 exd4

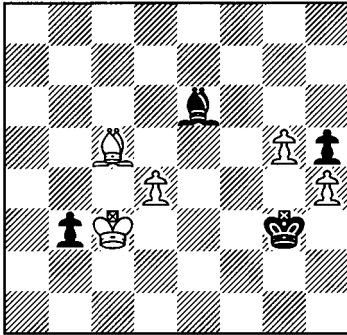
Taking with the king is obviously not possible, but the alternative 61 ♖xd4 is interesting. The game continues 61...♔g3 62 g6 ♖xh4.



The white pieces now need to swap roles. If left unaided, the bishop will be lost for the h-pawn, so the white king must try to get across to stop that pawn, and leave the bishop to control the unsupported b-pawn. However, Black is able to foil this by subtle play: 63 ♖d2 ♔h3!! (the obvious 63...♔g3? fails to 64 ♖e5+! ♔g2 – or 64...♔g4 65 ♖e1 and the white king gets across in time – 65 ♖f6 and the pawn is stopped) 64 ♖e2 (if the king does not approach, then just 64...h4 followed by ...♔g2 wins) 64...♔g2 65 ♖f6 h4! and

the bishop is fatally overstretched.

61...♔g3!

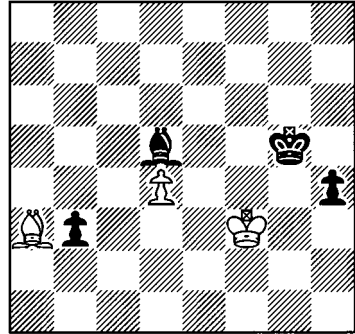


The climax of the combination. Black wins the h4-pawn and sets up a winning second passed pawn. Botvinnik points out that accuracy is still required; if 61...♔g4? White has the defence 62 d5! ♖xd5 63 ♖f2 keeping his h-pawn and drawing. After the text, there is nothing more that White can do. In this position, we can again see the importance of the black bishop controlling the square g8 (see the note to move 58): as well as defending its b-

pawn, the bishop also stops the white g-pawn posing any threat.

62 ♖a3 ♔xh4 63 ♔d3 ♔xg5 64 ♔e4 h4

65 ♔f3 ♖d5+ 0-1

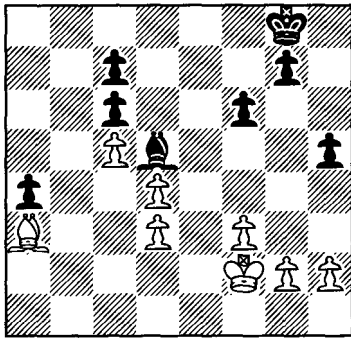


The white king can get across to stop the h-pawn, but after 66 ♔f2 ♔f4 Black's king goes to the other flank and wins the white bishop for the b-pawn, leaving Black with the "right" rook's pawn for his own bishop.

A minor masterpiece by Botvinnik, which in the space of a few moves, teaches one many of the key principles of opposite-coloured bishop endings.

Game 12
B. Kurajica-A. Karpov
Skopje 1976

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4 ♘f6
5 ♙xc6 dxc6 6 ♘c3 ♙d6 7 d4 ♙b4 8
♘xe5 ♘xe4 9 0-0 ♙xc3 10 bxc3 0-0 11
♙a3 ♘d6 12 c4 f6 13 ♘g4 ♗e8 14 ♘e3
♘f5 15 ♘xf5 ♙xf5 16 ♗d2 ♙e6 17 ♗c3
♗d7 18 ♗fe1 ♗f7 19 ♗b2 b6 20 c5 b5
21 ♙b4 a5 22 ♙d2 ♙d5 23 f3 ♗xe1+ 24
♗xe1 b4 25 a4 bxa3 26 ♗xa3 a4 27 ♙b4
♗g6 28 ♗c3 h5 29 ♙a3 ♗e8 30 ♗xe8+
♗xe8 31 ♙f2 ♗g6 32 ♗d3 ♗xd3 33
cxd3



The pawn structure means that Black effectively has an extra outside passed pawn, since White's three pawns in the centre are securely held by Black's two. Even so, the passed pawn is securely blockaded, and with the bishops of opposite colour, it seems that Black cannot hope to win. However, Karpov shows that by extremely subtle play, it takes only one or two imperceptible errors from White to

cost him the half point.

33...h4!

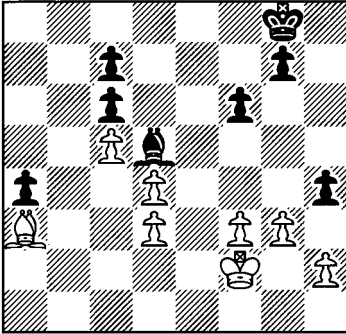
It is clear that Black's only possible breakthrough is on the kingside, so Karpov immediately places the h-pawn on an aggressive square. Now there are threats of a possible ...h4-h3 at some point, whilst it seems that White can hardly afford to play 34 h3, leaving all his kingside pawns fixed on light squares. He therefore challenges the black pawn at once.

34 g3?!

Karpov points out that here, or on the next move, White could have established a fortress by playing 34 g4 followed by 35 h3. This succeeds because the pawn on d3 prevents the black king having any way to break into the white position – even coming round the queenside to b5 achieves nothing. Mednis even went so far as to claim that White also draws by the immediate 34 h3; once again, Black seems to have no way to force a breakthrough, thanks to the vital pawn on d3 which keeps the black king out.

However, as Karpov also points out, it is psychologically extremely difficult to decide on a plan of fixing the kingside pawns on light squares. In general, in **opposite-coloured bishop endings**, the **defender seeks to place his pawns**

on the same-colour squares as his bishop, so that they can be defended. The necessary defensive plan here is therefore highly counter-intuitive, and it is not so surprising that Kurajica rejected it.



34...♖f7!

This is the only way to create serious winning chances, as 34...g5? 35 gxh4 gxh4 leaves Black no way of breaking in with his king – the moment it reaches f4, it is checked away by the bishop. The text is a very nice echo of Karpov's 47 ♖g2 against Kasparov (see Game 20) – once again, he is prepared to give up a pawn, in order to clear a path for his king to walk into the enemy kingside.

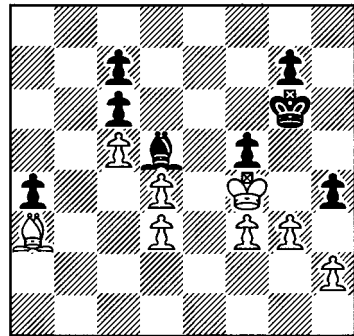
35 ♖e3

35 gxh4? ♖g6 is an example of what Karpov is seeking. After 36 ♗b2 ♖h5 37 ♗a3 (37 ♖g3 ♗b3 threatens to pick up the vital d3-pawn, after which Black has the plan of infiltrating with his king via the centre as well) 37...♖xh4, he can penetrate via h3.

35...f5

In view of the possibility pointed out in the note to White's 37th, it seems that Black would do better to bring his king to h5 first, and only then play ...f5. However, Karpov explained in his commentary on the game that he rejected this, because he was afraid it would push White towards the plan of playing g4, as discussed in the previous note. Indeed, after 35...♖g6 36 g4 White still has time to build the aforementioned fortress. This is a nice psychological point – sometimes, in order to provoke an error from the opponent, it can even pay to choose a slightly sub-optimal move oneself!

36 ♖f4 ♖g6



37 ♖e3

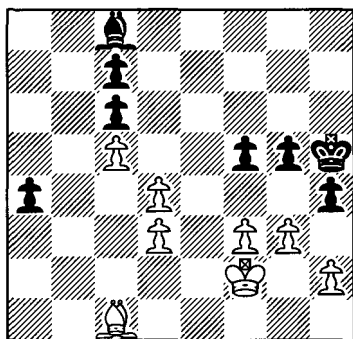
Karpov pointed out that, in this particular position, 37 gxh4! seems possible, because the white king is attacking f5, and after 37...♖h5 38 ♖xf5 ♗xf3 39 ♗b2 ♗d5 40 ♗c1 ♗f7 41 ♗b2 ♖xh4 there is the saving blow 42 d5!.

37...♖h5 38 ♗b4 g5 39 ♖f2 ♗a2 40 ♗a3 ♗b1 41 ♖e2 ♗a2

Karpov probes with his bishop, pos-

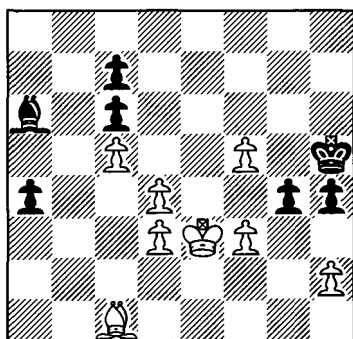
sibly also seeking to make the adjournment, without committing himself on the kingside.

42 ♖c1 ♗e6 43 ♖f2 ♖c8



44 d5?

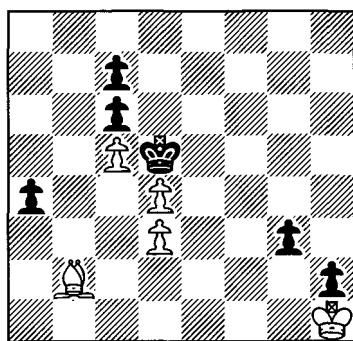
This panic reaction seals White's fate. The only move to prolong resistance was 44 ♖e2! (not 44 ♖e3? when 44...f4+! 45 gxf4 g4 forces a similar breakthrough to that in the game) which Karpov claims would still hold the draw after 44...♗a6 45 ♖e3 f4+ 46 gxf4 g4 47 f5!



This is the difference from the variation after 44 ♖e3? – the black bishop has left the c8-h3 diagonal, which al-

lows White to stir up counterplay with his extra f-pawn. Karpov stops the variation here, but we can show the draw by continuing: 47...g3 48 hxg3 hxg3 49 f6 ♖g6 50 f4 ♖xf6 51 ♖f3 ♗xd3 52 ♖xg3 ♖e6 53 ♖g4 when the f-pawn ties down Black's king and prevents him coming to assist his a-pawn.

After 44 ♖e2, the alternative, not considered by Karpov, is the immediate 44...f4 when White can, and must, exploit the fact that this advance is not check, to block things up with 45 g4+. Now the only winning chance is the sacrifice 45...♗xg4 46 fxg4+ ♖xg4 but this does not appear sufficient, e.g. 47 ♖f2 ♖f5 (or 47...♖h3 48 ♖g1 g4 49 ♗xf4 a3 50 ♗d2 a2 51 ♖c3 draws) 48 ♖f1 g4 49 ♖f2 h3 50 ♗b2 ♖e6 51 ♗a3 ♖d5 52 ♗b2 g3+ 53 hxg3 h2 54 ♖g2 fxg3 55 ♖h1

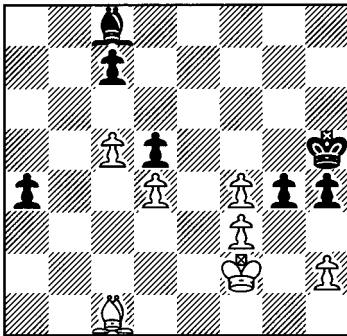


55...a3 (the only attempt to make progress; if 55...♖e6 56 ♗a3 ♖f5 57 ♗c1 ♖g4 58 ♖g2 Black achieves nothing) 56 ♗xa3 ♖xd4 57 ♗b4 ♖xd3 58 ♗a5 ♖d4 59 ♗xc7 ♖xc5 60 ♗xg3 draws.

44...cxd5 45 d4 f4 46 gxf4

After 46 g4+ the piece sacrifice 46...♗xg4 looks promising, but Mednis indicates that there is no need, as Black has a sound and logical positional win, starting with 46...♖g6. The key issue now is the absence of a white pawn from the square d3, which means that the black king can infiltrate with his king, via the queenside, e.g. 47 ♗a3 ♗a6 48 ♗.b2 ♗d3 (this ties the white king down, because of the threat of the bishop attacking the f3-pawn) 49 ♗a3 ♖f7 (now the king marches in) 50 ♗b4 ♖e8 51 ♗a3 ♖d7 52 ♗b4 ♖c6 53 ♗a3 ♖b5 with a simple win.

46...g4!



The key idea. Once more, a pawn sacrifices clears a path for Black's king.

47 ♖g2 ♗f5 48 ♖f2 gxf3 49 ♖xf3 ♗e4+ 50 ♖f2 ♖g4

Zugzwang.

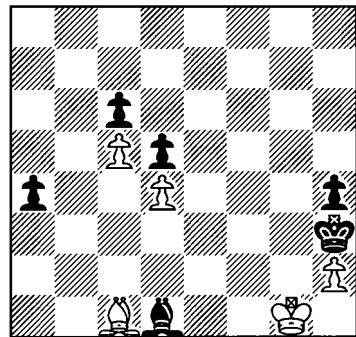
51 ♗b2

51 ♖g1 ♖f3 52 ♖f1 h3 renews the zugzwang, and after 53 ♖g1 ♖e2 the a-pawn costs White a bishop.

51...♖xf4 52 ♗c1+ ♖g4 53 ♗b2 c6!

As Mednis points out, this is a typical, "do not hurry" move. Black just eliminates any slight danger of counterplay by c6, followed by an attack on the c7-pawn.

54 ♗c1 ♖h3 55 ♖g1 ♗g6 56 ♖h1 ♗h5 57 ♖g1 ♗d1 0-1



White will be forced to allow the black king to the queenside, e.g. 58 ♖h1 ♖g4 59 ♖g2 ♖f5 60 ♖f2 ♖e4 61 ♖e1 ♗g4 62 ♗b2 ♖d3 etc.

Chapter Four

Bishop versus Knight Endings

The battle between bishop and knight is one of the most interesting in end-game practice. Which piece is superior depends on a number of factors:

1. The longer range of the bishop comes to the fore when there is play on both sides of the board, and the position is relatively open. In such positions, a bishop is frequently stronger than a knight.

2. Conversely, in blocked positions, when the bishop is obstructed by pawns, the knight is usually superior. This is also the case in positions with pawns in only one sector of the board, since then, the short-stepping knight does not suffer from its lack of long range.

3. However, the “colour-blindness” of a bishop should also not be forgotten. Even in an open position, a bishop can only ever control half of the squares on the board, the other 32 being inaccessible to it. The knight has no such problem, and a knight can often be superior to the bishop in such cases,

for example where there are weak pawns to attack. A bishop can only attack weak pawns if they are fixed on squares of the right colour, whereas a knight can hunt them down on whichever squares they try to hide.

In this chapter, we start with three examples where the bishop shows its superiority over the knight. Game 15, in particular, is a modern classic by Fischer, and includes the typical piece sacrifice, to obtain an overwhelming pawn mass. Games 16 and 17 illustrate cases where the bishop is bad and the knight is superior. Game 17 sees Nimzowitsch produce a superb piece of long-range calculation to convert his advantage, whilst Game 16 is another modern classic, although one undeservedly neglected in the literature. It shows how effective a knight can be in a position with pawns all in one small area.

Game 18 is a great example of point 3, above. Although the position is open and the bishop not especially “bad” in the conventional sense, the presence of

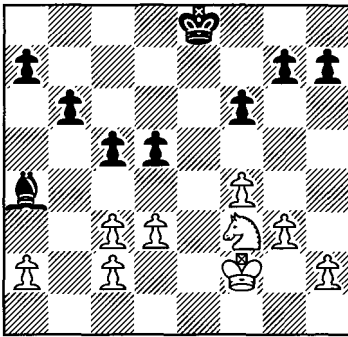
pawn weaknesses in Black's camp allows the knight to show its superiority. Game 19 looks at the standard ending of knight vs bad bishop, with the defender having an isolated queen's pawn (IQP). This frequently arises, and Capablanca's defensive strategy in Game 19 is a model of how to handle such positions.

Games 20 and 21 are two of the greatest world championship endings. In one, the knight out-manoeuvers the bishop, whilst in the other, it is the bishop which emerges on top.

Finally, we round off this chapter with two examples where the bishop pair proves its superiority over the knights. The reason two bishops are so strong is related to the colour-blindness of a bishop. Whereas a single bishop can only cover half the squares on the board, two bishops together can cover them all, which makes the bishops together a formidable weapon. For this reason, two bishops versus bishop and knight is frequently a greater advantage than a single bishop versus a knight.

Game 13
R.Retí-A.Rubínstein
Gothenburg 1920

1 e4 c5 2 d3 d6 3 e5 d5 4 d3 c6 5 g3 c6 6 g2 xc3 7 bxc3 d6 8 exd6 xd6 9 0-0 0-0 10 d3 e7 11 e3 d7 12 d2 c7 13 fe1 ad8 14 f4 d6 15 xd6 xd6 16 e3 b6 17 d2 e7! 18 c4 c7 19 e5 xe5 20 xe5 a4! 21 e2 d5 22 xd5 exd5 23 ae1 fe8 24 f4 f6 25 f3 f7 26 f2 xe2+ 27 xe2 e8 28 xe8 xe8



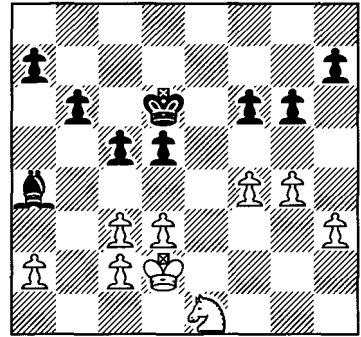
This is a classic case where the bishop is superior to the knight. Here, the biggest factor is the weakened white pawn structure, which leaves his pieces tied to the defence of c2. In addition, with pawns on both wings, and an open position, the superior mobility of the bishop proves decisive.

29 d1 e7 30 e3 e6 31 g4?

Retí quite naturally seeks to prevent the enemy king coming in to f5, but this weakening of the kingside pawn structure proves fatal. Dr Euwe sug-

gested that after 31 d4! e6 (31...e5 32 e3 gets nowhere, because after 32...h5 there is the strong retort 33 g2!) 32 e2 c6 33 g2 b5 34 e3, White would still have good chances of holding.

31...e6 32 h3 g6 33 e2



33...d7!

With c2 solidly defended, the bishop switches its attention to the other flank, creating the threat of 34...h5. This ability to influence both flanks is the reason why the bishop is usually superior to the knight when there are pawns on both sides of the board and the position is open.

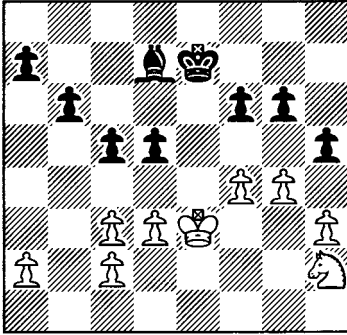
34 f3 e7!

Stronger than the immediate 34...h5 35 g5 exh3 36 gxf6.

35 e3 h5! 36 d2

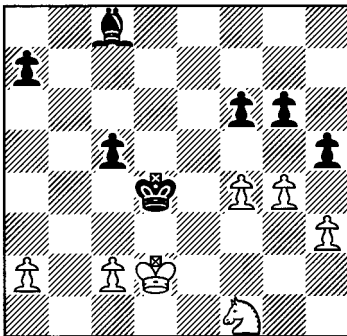
White struggles to maintain his pawn phalanx on the kingside, so as to

deny the black king entry squares. After 36 gxh5 gxh5 37 h4 there would be an obvious entry route via f5.



36...♖d6 37 ♖e2

37 d4 was again suggested as a better defence. Fine (also quoted by Averbakh) dismisses this as follows: 37...♖c6 38 ♖d2 ♖b5 39 ♖d3 ♙c8 (playing for zugzwang, but the direct 39...♖a4 40 dxc5 bxc5 41 c4 d4 42 c3 dxc3 43 ♖xc3 hxg4 44 hxg4 ♖a3 also looks promising) 40 ♖d2 ♖c4 41 dxc5 bxc5 42 ♗f1 d4 43 cxd4 ♖xd4.

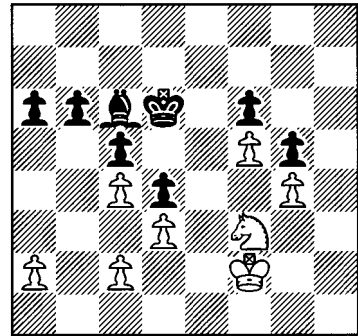


Fine now ends his analysis with 44 ♗e3 ♖e4 "etc", but White can improve substantially here by 44 gxh5 gxh5 45

h4 ♖e4 (45...♙g4 46 ♗g3) 46 ♗g3+ ♖xf4 47 ♗xh5+ ♖e5 48 ♖e3 when he appears to be holding. In view of this, Black is perhaps better advised to try the direct approach at move 39.

37...d4! 38 cxd4?!

38 c4 is a more tenacious alternative, trying to keep lines closed on the queenside. Once again, Fine analyses a win for Black, this time with more justification, as follows: 38...hxg4 39 hxg4 ♖e7! 40 ♖d2 (the white king cannot stray too far towards the kingside, because the c2-pawn drops after ...♙a4) 40...g5! 41 f5 (41 fxg5 fxg5 is no better) 41...♖d6 42 ♗f3 ♙c6 43 ♖e2 a6 (preparing a decisive transition into a king and pawn ending) 44 ♖f2

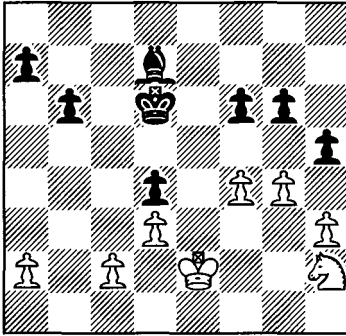


44...♙xf3! 45 ♖xf3 b5! 46 ♖e4 (White's king is now forced back by means of triangulation) 46...♖c6 47 ♖f3 ♖d7! 48 ♖e4 ♖d6 49 ♖f3 ♖e5 50 cxb5 (or 50 ♖g3 bxc4 51 dxc4 d3! 52 cxd3 ♖d4) 50...axb5 51 a3 ♖d5 52 ♖g3 c4 53 ♖f3 c3 54 ♖g3 ♖c5 55 ♖f3 b4 56 axb4+ (56 a4 b3) 56...♖xb4 57 ♖e4 ♖a3 58 ♖xd4 ♖b2 winning. A very nice

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

piece of analysis, which shows Black's winning plan very clearly.

38...cxd4



Now the black king threatens to enter via c5-b4, etc.

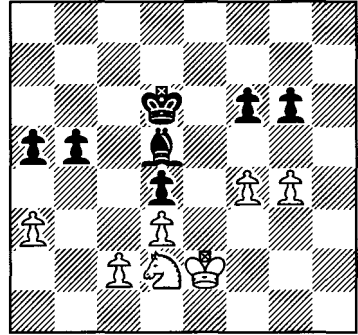
39 ♖d2 hxg4 40 hxg4

40 ♜xg4 ♜xg4 41 hxg4 is another lost king and pawn ending after, for example, 41...g5.

40...♜c6 41 ♖e2

Fine also points out 41 c3 dxc3+ 42 ♖xc3 ♜g2! stalemating the knight.

41...♜d5 42 a3 b5 43 ♜f1 a5 44 ♜d2



44...a4!

An instructive moment. Now there is always the tactical threat of ...b4, securing a passed a-pawn.

45 ♜e4+

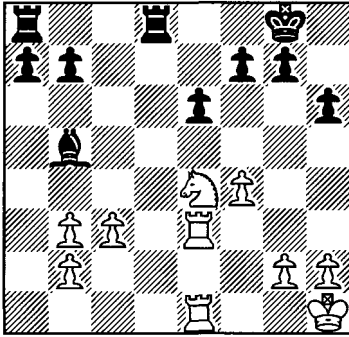
Or 45 ♜b1 ♜e6! 46 ♖f3 ♜a2! 47 ♜d2 b4! 48 axb4 a3 and the a-pawn queens (Fine).

45...♜xe4 46 dxe4 b4! 47 ♖d2 bxa3 48 ♖c1 g5! 0-1

The final thematic break, destroying the white phalanx and securing a king entry.

Game 14
K.Plater-M.Botvinnik
 Chigorin Memorial, Moscow 1947

1 e4 c5 2 ♖e2 ♗f6 3 ♜bc3 d5 4 exd5
 ♜xd5 5 ♜xd5 ♛xd5 6 ♜c3 ♛d8 7 ♙c4
 ♜c6 8 d3 e6 9 0-0 ♙e7 10 f4 0-0 11 ♜e4
 ♜a5 12 ♙b3 ♛d4+ 13 ♚h1 c4 14 c3
 ♛xd3 15 ♛xd3 cxd3 16 ♜f2 ♞d8 17
 ♞d1 ♙c5 18 ♞xd3 ♙d7 19 ♙e3 ♙xe3 20
 ♞xe3 ♙b5 21 ♜e4 h6 22 ♞ae1 ♜xb3 23
 axb3



Once again, we have a typical case where the bishop is superior to the knight. In addition, Black has a healthy pawn majority on the kingside, whilst White's queenside majority contains a doubled pawn, and Black also controls the open file. Botvinnik wins without undue difficulty.

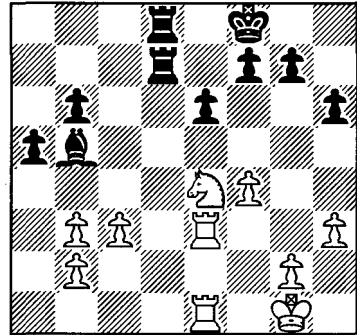
23...a5!

Again, our favourite device of fixing weaknesses. Black nails the b3-pawn to the spot.

24 h3 ♞ac8 25 ♚g1 ♜f8 26 ♚h2 ♞c7 27 ♚g3 b6

Completing the arrangement of his queenside pawns on dark squares, the opposite colour from Black's bishop, and also taking the c5-square from White's knight.

28 ♚h2 ♞cd7 29 ♚g1



29...♞d1!

Although Black's rooks have the open file, they cannot really use it to penetrate effectively, because of the knight on e4, controlling d2. Driving the knight away by ...f7-f5 would leave a weakness on e6, and allow the white rooks to start counterplay. Botvinnik therefore exchanges the rooks off, confident that in a pure minor piece ending his king will be able to become more active. The combined force of king and bishop will be too much for White's king and knight. Once again, it is what stays on the board that matters, not what comes off.

30 c4

This weakens the queenside, by allowing the black king a later penetration route via c5 and b4. However, Black will at some point be able to induce this move anyway, by putting his bishop on d5. Then White would have the unpleasant choice of playing c4, or having his knight tied permanently to the defence of the b3-pawn (the pawn fixed by Black's 23rd move!).

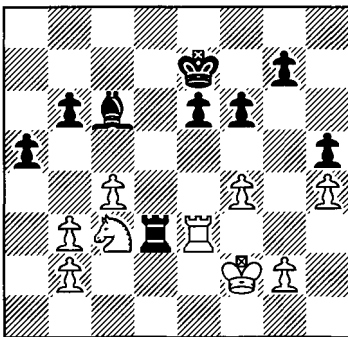
**30...♙c6 31 ♖c3 ♜xe1+ 32 ♜xe1 ♚e7
33 ♜e2 f6 34 ♙f2 ♜d3 35 h4**

Creating another weakness, this time on g4, but he wants to be able to challenge the black rook. The immediate 35 ♜e3? would lose a pawn after 35...♜xe3 36 ♙xe3 ♙xg2 37 ♖a4 ♙xh3.

35...h5

Fixing weaknesses!

36 ♜e3 ♜d2+ 37 ♜e2 ♜d3 38 ♜e3



38...♜d2+

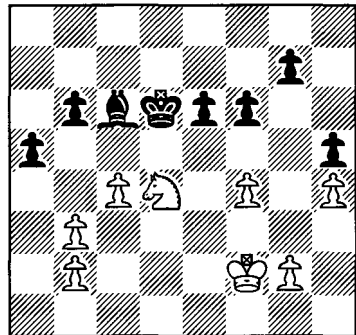
Now 38...♜xe3 39 ♙xe3 ♙xg2 40 ♖a4 is less effective for Black.

39 ♜e2 ♜xe2+

There is nothing for the rook to do, so Botvinnik heads for the pure minor

piece ending.

40 ♖xe2 ♚d6 41 ♖d4



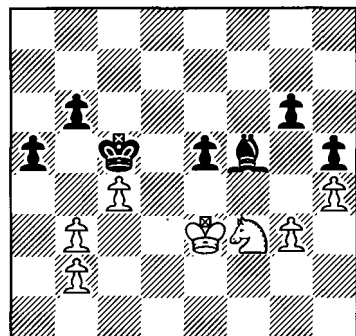
41...g6!

A typical idea. Black takes the f5-square away from the enemy knight, thereby preparing e5, establishing a passed pawn in the centre. Naturally, there can be no question of White entering the king and pawn ending, because Black will simply win the queenside pawns with ...♙c5-b4.

42 g3 e5 43 fxex5+ fxe5 44 ♖c2 ♙e4

Driving the knight away from its guard of b4, thus preparing the way for the black king.

45 ♖e1 ♙c5 46 ♙e3 ♙f5 47 ♖f3



47...♖b4!

Transformation of advantage. Black gives up the passed e-pawn, in order to win the white queenside pawns. A passed pawn on the a-file will be much stronger, and impossible for White to stop.

48 ♜d2

Forced.

48...♙c2

Now the b-pawn is doomed. Note, too, that the bishop still influences events on the rest of the board, here preventing the white king marching into e4 to start counterplay.

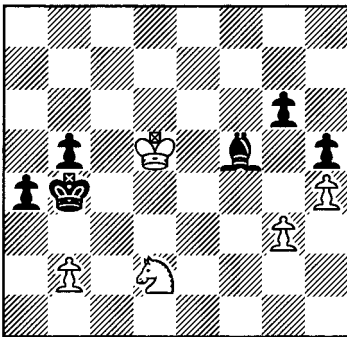
49 ♙f3 ♙xb3 50 ♙e4 ♙xc4 51 ♙xe5 ♙d3

The bishop continues to perform sterling service. Now it defends its kingside pawns against the white king.

52 ♙d4 ♙f5

Now there is no defence against the advance of the queenside pawns.

53 ♜c4 b5 54 ♜d2 a4 55 ♙d5



55...♙h3!

55...a3 56 bxa3 ♙xa3 is objectively winning, but Botvinnik prefers to create a passed a-pawn, knowing that this is the pawn that the knight has most trouble stopping – “knights hate rooks’ pawns!” In order to do so, he sets up a zugzwang, forcing the white king back.

56 ♙d4 ♙g2!

Now the white king must retreat.

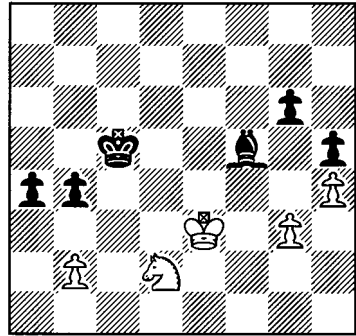
57 ♙d3 ♙c5

Freeing the way for the b4-pawn to advance.

58 ♙c3 b4+ 59 ♙d3 ♙d5 60 ♜b1 ♙e6!

Threatening 61...♙f5+.

61 ♜d2 ♙f5+ 62 ♙e3



62...♙c2! 0-1

Depriving the knight of the square b3, after which there is no defence to ...a4-a3, and the pawn promotes.

A model technical display by Botvinnik, which shows, with crystal clarity, the superiority of a bishop over a knight in such positions.

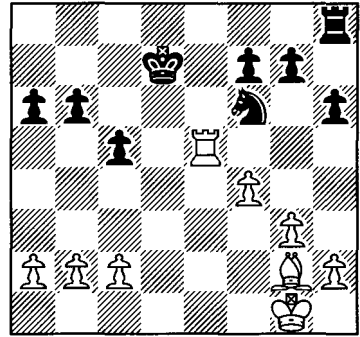
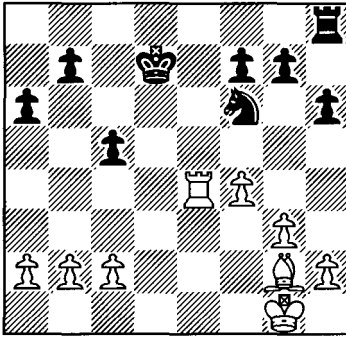
Game 15

R.Fischer-M.Taimanov

Candidates Match (Game 4), Vancouver 1971

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4
 ♖c7 5 ♘c3 e6 6 g3 a6 7 ♙g2 ♘f6 8 0-0
 ♘xd4 9 ♗xd4 ♙c5 10 ♙f4 d6 11 ♗d2
 h6 12 ♖ad1 e5 13 ♙e3 ♙g4 14 ♙xc5
 dxc5 15 f3 ♙e6 16 f4 ♖d8 17 ♘d5 ♙xd5
 18 exd5 e4 19 ♖fe1 ♖xd5 20 ♖xe4+
 ♘d8 21 ♗e2 ♖xd1+ 22 ♗xd1+ ♗d7 23
 ♗xd7+ ♘xd7

erally a more powerful combination than rook and knight, especially in open positions. Here, the presence of pawns on both sides of the board emphasizes that advantage. As the first stage, Fischer activates his pieces. 24 ♖e5 b6



This type of endgame, with rook and bishop vs rook and knight, was something of a Fischer speciality, and he won a number of famous examples. This is just about the purest and best of all. Although in this book, we have considered other examples with this material distribution in Chapter Seven, this particular example is placed here, because the rooks are soon exchanged and the majority of the ending is pure bishop vs knight.

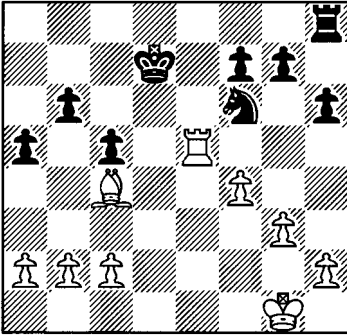
White's advantage is based on the fact that the rook and bishop are gen-

This leads to a severe weakening of the light squares on the queenside, and in view of the fact that it is on precisely these squares that the white king subsequently penetrates, it may be that Black should have resisted this concession.

The alternative is 24...♘d6 but then Marin points out that after 25 a4 (of course, not 25 ♙xb7? ♖b8 which gives Black active counterplay), White threatens artificially to isolate the c5-pawn by 26 a5, whilst after 25...b5 26 a5 Black has a weakness on a6. It may be this was still a better defence than

in the game, but it is a very hard judgement call. Taimanov no doubt hoped that his king and knight would be able to cover the weakened queenside light squares in the game.

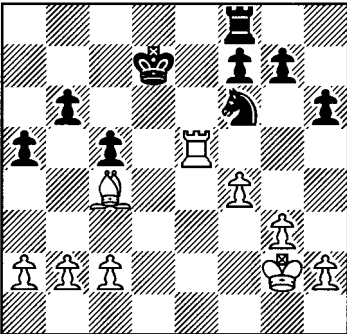
25 ♖f1 a5 26 ♖c4



Now White has secured a potential entry route for his king, via d3-c4-b5, and also placed his bishop very actively.

26...♞f8 27 ♔g2

Starting the process of activating the king.

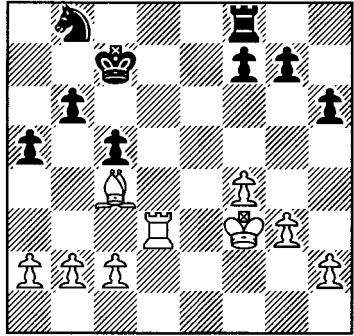


27...♔d6

In principle, Black would like to bring his knight to the square d6, from where it would defend b5 and f7, as

well as attacking the bishop on c4. However, the immediate 27...♖e8 allows White to get his rook to the seventh after 28 ♖b5+ ♔d8 29 ♞d5+ followed by ♞d7+.

28 ♔f3 ♖d7 29 ♞e3 ♖b8 30 ♞d3+ ♔c7



31 c3!

This is a nice move, of a type we will see several times in this book. The black knight is on its way to c6, so White “dominates” it with the c3-pawn, preventing it later coming to b4 or d4.

31...♖c6 32 ♞e3

Still trying to make it hard for Black to get his knight to d6. The text prevents both 32...♖e7 and 32...♖a7.

32...♔d6 33 a4

Fixing the queenside weaknesses once and for all.

33...♖e7 34 h3

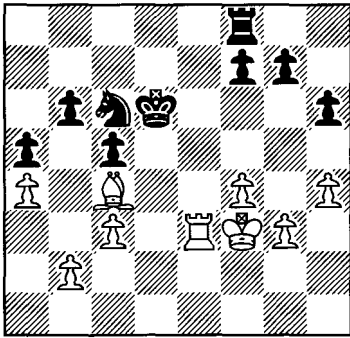
White’s medium-term plan is to gain space on the kingside by advancing his h-pawn, but he has to be careful. As usual, rushing is not good in the endgame. The immediate 34 h4 would allow Black to blockade things with 34...h5 followed by ...g6, when his

knight is well placed to jump to f5 and from there, to d6. Instead, Fischer takes things more slowly.

34...♘c6

Now 34...♗f5 would be less effective, because there is no pawn attacked on h4; White would continue 35 ♖e5 g6 36 g4 pushing Black back again. However, it seems more logical, in view of the previous play, to play 34...♘c8 heading for d6. Marin then gives the line 35 h4 ♔d7 36 ♙b5! ♕c7 37 h5. Black is still not ready to put the knight on d6, in view of ♖e7+, and meanwhile, White methodically increases his space advantage on the kingside. Now a later g4-g5 is on the cards.

35 h4



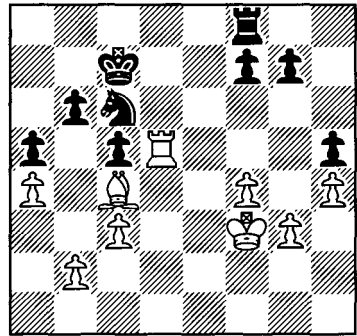
35...h5

Black decides to prevent the move h4-h5, which would give White the subsequent break g4-g5. The downside of his move is that he ends up with all of his kingside pawns fixed on light squares, where they are vulnerable to the white bishop, but this sort of dilemma is typical of the decisions that

the defender faces in such endings. If he sits passively and allows White to cramp his kingside with h4-h5, he can rest assured that later annotators, myself included, will criticize him for passive play, whilst if he fights for space by playing ...h6-h5 himself, as in the game, we criticize him for creating weaknesses in his own position! Who'd be a grandmaster?

36 ♖d3+ ♔c7 37 ♖d5

Fischer immediately responds to the changed situation on the kingside, and attacks the black pawns there.



37...f5

This move cannot be delayed for long, since after 37...g6 White will play 38 ♙b5! (stopping ...♗e7), when the threat of f4-f5 will force Black to play 38...f5 himself.

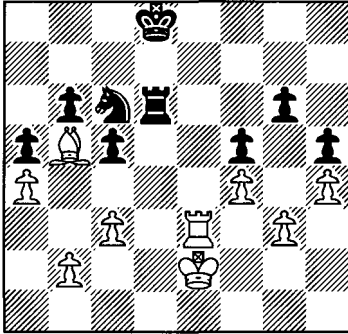
38 ♖d2

The rook has done its job on the fifth rank, and now returns, so as to have a choice of d- or e-files. Admittedly, it is not obvious why Fischer chose the second rank, rather than the third, but this does not really matter.

38...♙f6 39 ♖e2 ♔d7 40 ♖e3 g6

Note that, despite all his efforts, Black has still not managed to get his knight to d6!

41 ♗b5 ♜d6 42 ♔e2 ♔d8



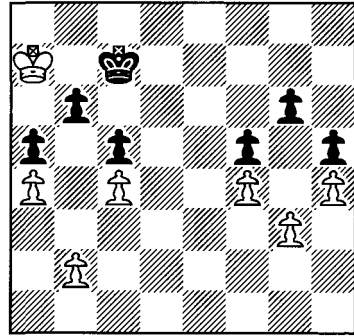
43 ♜d3!

This is the next stage of White's plan. Now that he has fixed the enemy kingside pawns on light squares, the rooks can be exchanged. In the resulting ending, a combination of attacks on the kingside pawns, and a threat to penetrate with the king on the queenside light squares (two weaknesses!) will eventually place Black in zugzwang.

43...♔c7 44 ♜xd6 ♔xd6 45 ♔d3 ♗e7

Note that the other factor Black must always take into account is the possible transposition into a king and pawn ending. Indeed, Marin points out that this was already a threat, because White has two reserve tempo moves with his queenside pawns, which enable his king to penetrate by means of zugzwang. Thus: 45...♔c7? 46 ♗xc6! ♔xc6 47 ♔c4 ♔c7 48 ♔b5 ♔b7 49 c4!

(the first zugzwang) 49...♔c7 50 ♔a6 ♔c6 51 ♔a7 ♔c7

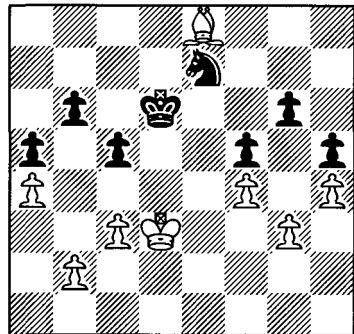


52 b3! (the second) 52...♔c6 53 ♔b8 and the white king wins all of the enemy queenside pawns.

46 ♗e8

Now the knight is tied down to defending g6. Note that Black would still like to get his knight to d6, and if he could do so without losing his kingside, he would be able to set up a fortress. The knight on d6 would stop the white king penetrating, and the game would be drawn. As it is, though, he is never able to achieve this.

46...♔d5



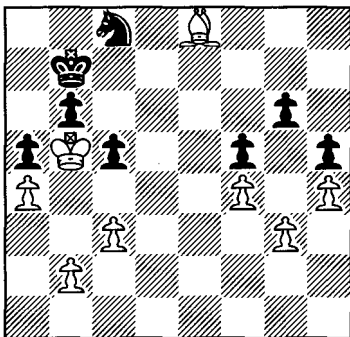
47 ♖f7+

The black king is driven back.

47...♔d6 48 ♖c4 ♖c6 49 ♖e8+

And again.

49...♖b7 50 ♖b5 ♖c8

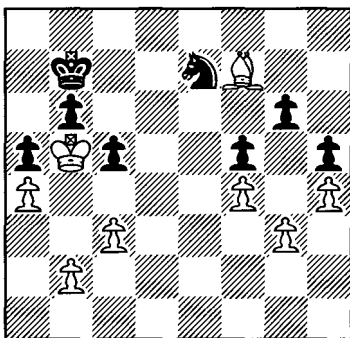


At last, Black is threatening to get his knight to d6, and this time with real effect – it would be mate in one! However, it is White to move...

51 ♖c6+ ♖c7 52 ♖d5 ♖e7

Now there is no value in putting the knight on d6, since the white king is already amongst Black's vitals. 52...♖d6+ 53 ♖a6 achieves nothing for Black.

53 ♖f7 ♖b7

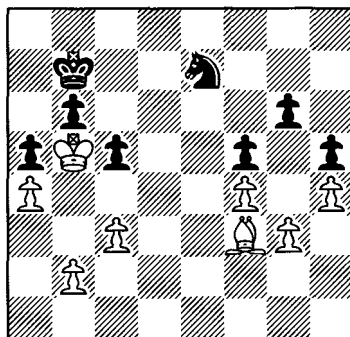


Now we have another position of zugzwang. Since it is White's move, he needs to lose a tempo and transfer the move to Black. His king is not able to triangulate to do this, but the bishop can.

54 ♖b3 ♖a7

Renewing the mate threat by 54...♖c8 also leads to zugzwang after 55 ♖d5+ ♖c7 56 ♖a6 ♖d6 57 c4 and Black will lose either the b- or the g-pawn.

55 ♖d1 ♖b7 56 ♖f3+



56...♖c7

The alternative is 56...♖a7 when White again uses zugzwang to force an entry with his king, this time via c6. Marin analyses 57 c4! as slightly more accurate than waiting moves with the bishop. The point is that later in the ending, Black has no counterplay with ...b6-b5, whilst the white bishop proves especially well placed on f3. 57...♖g8 (Black's only hope is to seek counterplay with his knight) 58 ♖c6 ♖f6 59 ♖d6 ♖e4+ 60 ♖e6 ♖xg3 61 ♖f6 and Black's temporary pawn plus will soon

be wiped out by the loss of all of his kingside pawns.

57 ♖a6 ♜c8 **58** ♙d5 ♜e7

58...♜d6 59 c4 is the same zugzwang position as in the note to Black's 54th move.

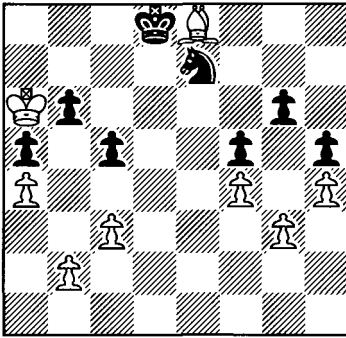
59 ♙c4 ♜c6

59...♙c6 60 ♙b5+ ♙c7 61 ♙e8 is again zugzwang.

60 ♙f7 ♜e7 **61** ♙e8

Yet again, Black has run out of moves. His last chance is to attack the white bishop.

61...♙d8

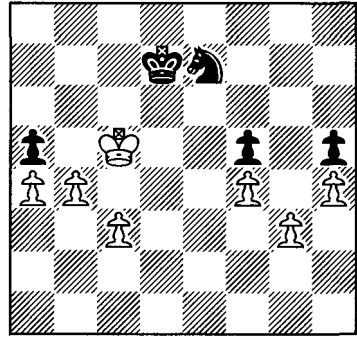


62 ♙xg6!

The culmination of White's play. The bishop is sacrificed for a decisive harvest of black pawns.

62...♜xg6 63 ♙xb6 ♙d7 **64** ♙xc5 ♜e7 **65** b4

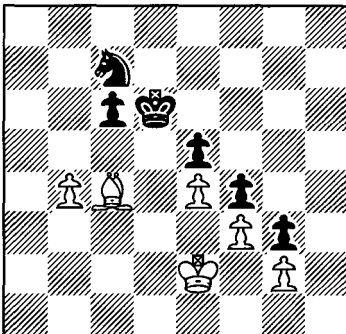
The rest is straightforward. The black knight cannot hold the passed pawns on its own, and if the king comes across to help, White's king penetrates to the other wing (two weaknesses!).



65...axb4 66 cxb4 ♜c8 **67** a5 ♜d6 **68** b5 ♜e4+ **69** ♙b6 ♙c8 **70** ♙c6 ♙b8 **71** b6 **1-0**

Game 16
E.Torre-O.Jakobsen
Amsterdam 1973

1 e4 g6 2 d4 ♗g7 3 ♖f3 d6 4 ♗e2 ♖f6 5 ♖c3 0-0 6 0-0 c6 7 a4 ♗c7 8 a5 e5 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♗e3 ♖g4 11 ♗c5 ♗d8 12 ♖d2 ♗h6 13 ♖cb1 ♖d7 14 ♗e7 ♗e8 15 ♗h4 ♖gf6 16 ♖c3 ♗g7 17 ♖c4 ♗e6 18 ♗d2 ♗f8 19 ♗fd1 ♗b4 20 f3 ♗b8 21 ♗a4 ♗e7 22 ♗f2 b5 23 axb6 axb6 24 ♗da1 b5 25 ♗a7 ♗b7 26 ♗xb7 ♗xb7 27 ♖a5 ♖b6 28 ♖xb7 ♗xb7 29 ♖d1 ♖fd7 30 ♗a5 ♗c5 31 ♗xc5 ♖xc5 32 ♗a7 ♗e7 33 ♗xb7 ♗xb7 34 ♖f2 f6 35 ♖e3 ♖f7 36 b3 f5 37 ♗d3 f4+ 38 ♖e2 ♖e6 39 ♖c3 ♖d7 40 b4 g5 41 ♖d2 h5 42 ♖d1 ♖b6 43 c3 ♖e7 44 ♖b2 ♖d6 45 ♗e2 ♗d7 46 ♖c2 ♖c7 47 ♗a7+ ♖c8 48 ♗xd7 ♖xd7 49 ♖d2 ♖e7 50 ♗d1 ♖c7 51 ♗b3 ♖e8 52 h3 ♖d6 53 ♖d3 ♖d7 54 ♖d2 g4 55 hxg4 hxg4 56 ♖d3 g3 57 ♖e2 ♖e8 58 ♖d2 ♖ef6 59 ♖e2 ♖d6 60 c4 bxc4 61 ♗xc4 ♖b6 62 ♗b3 ♖fd7 63 ♖d2 ♖f6 64 ♖e2 ♖e8 65 ♖b2 ♖c7 66 ♖c4+ ♖xc4 67 ♗xc4



This is a classic case of a knight vs bishop endgame where the limited number of pawns on the board means that the bishop is unable to exploit its longer range. Although at the moment, there are pawns on both flanks, that will not be the case for long, as the b- and c-pawns will be exchanged off. With just three pawns each remaining, all on one flank, the knight's shorter range is no problem.

The other big factor, naturally, is the fact that all the white pawns are on light squares, the same colour as his bishop. Furthermore, the very advanced black pawns also create additional problems for White. As we will see, the possibility of a knight sacrifice on f3 means that White's bishop spends much of its time tied down to the squares e2 and d1.

Black's systematic and precise play makes this endgame a classic. It is even more impressive when one takes into account that, when the game was played, the black player was not even an IM – in fact, he secured his IM title at this same tournament!

67...♖d7

The first stage of Black's plan is to bring his king to b6.

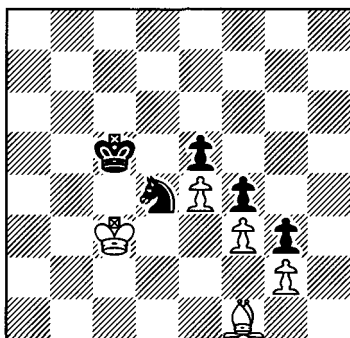
68 ♖d3 ♖c8 69 ♖c3 ♖b7 70 ♖b3 ♖b6 71 ♖c3

Stage two is to improve the knight's position.

71...♖e8 72 ♜e2 ♜f6 73 ♜d3 ♜h7 74 ♜f1 ♜g5 75 ♖c4 ♜e6 76 ♖c3 ♜d4

For now, d4 is the ideal square. From there, the knight ties down the white bishop, which cannot move without allowing ...♜xf3. Stage three is to exchange the queenside pawns, which is necessary, in order to give the black king a pathway into the enemy position.

77 ♖d2 c5 78 bxc5+ ♖xc5 79 ♖c3



The position has many resemblances to a king and pawn ending, since often the bishop is stalemated. This means that typical king and pawn endgame ideas, such as opposition and triangulation, play a part. The present position is a case of zugzwang, since White, to move, would have to give way and allow the enemy king forward. Thus, Black wishes to transfer the move to his opponent, but since the knight cannot lose a tempo, this has to be accomplished by a king triangulation.

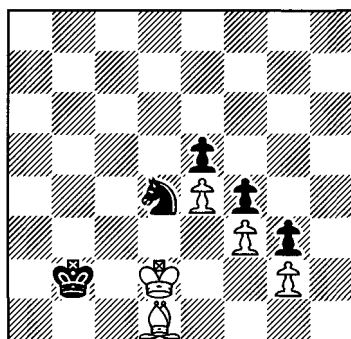
79...♖b6 80 ♖d2

Note that White cannot maintain the king opposition with 80 ♖b4? because of 80...♜c2+ and the knight comes to e3, winning at once.

80...♖a5 81 ♖c3 ♖b6 82 ♖d2 ♖c6 83 ♜e2

Now 83 ♖c3 ♖c5 would bring about the position after White's 79th move, but with White to move. Since the black king cannot be prevented from reaching b4, Torre seizes the chance to transfer his bishop to a better square.

83...♖c5 84 ♜d1 ♖c4 85 ♜e2+ ♖b3 86 ♜d1+ ♖b2



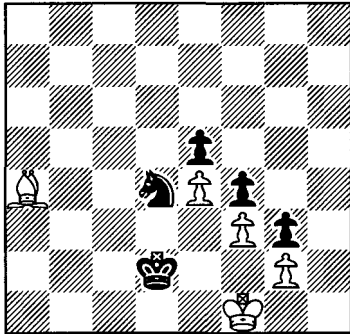
Now it is zugzwang again, because 87 ♜a4? allows 87...♜xf3+.

87 ♖e1 ♖c3 88 ♜a4 ♖d3

Black gradually inches his way in, but White's position still contains some resources.

89 ♜d1 ♖e3 90 ♖f1 ♖d2 91 ♜a4

But now what? This is again a position of zugzwang, but with the wrong player to move. White to move would have to retreat his king still further into the corner, but first, Black has to find a way to lose a tempo.



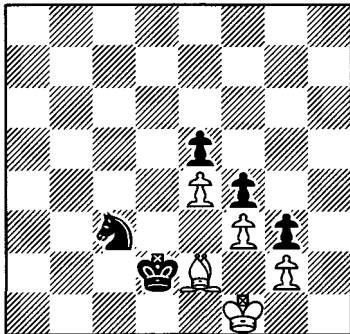
91...♞e2

The direct plan of bringing the knight to e3 fails, because 91...♞c2?? 92 ♙xc2 ♚xc2 is a drawn king and pawn ending. Even though Black can outflank his opponent and gain the opposition, the best he can achieve is stalemate, as the white king can just run to h1.

92 ♙d1

Torre uses all of his resources, including stalemate tricks!

92...♞c3 93 ♙e2



93...♞b1

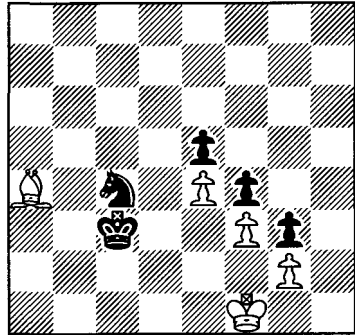
93...♞xe2 is again stalemate.

94 ♙c4 ♞a3 95 ♙b3

He must prevent the knight reach-

ing e3.

95...♚c3 96 ♙a4 ♞c4

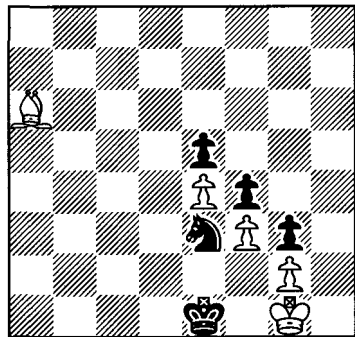


But now he cannot do so. The black king has had to give ground, but it does not matter, as the white king cannot come forward to e2.

97 ♙b5

Not 97 ♚e2? when 97...♞e3 wins the g-pawn.

97...♞e3+ 98 ♚g1 ♚d2 99 ♙a6 ♚e1



The black king continues to edge ever further into the white position, but now a further winning plan is needed. The key idea is to sacrifice the knight on f3 at an appropriate moment. This is achieved as follows:

1. Black transfers his knight to d2 and his king to e3.

2. When White brings his bishop to g4 or h5, to protect f3, Black can put his king on e1.

3. Then Black transfers the knight to e2 with check, forcing the white king on h1.

4. Then the black king comes to f2.

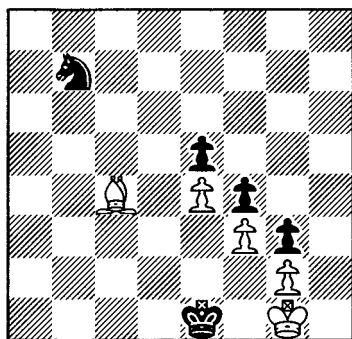
5. Finally, Black brings his knight to e1, when White cannot both defend the g2-pawn and stop the sacrifice of the knight on f3.

Although this plan seems long-winded, White has no counterplay, and in such blocked positions, multi-stage plans like this are a common feature.

100 ♖d3 ♗d1 **101** ♖a6 ♗c3 **102** ♖d3

White fights to stop the knight reaching b1 and, hence d2.

102...♗a4 103 ♖b5 ♗c5 **104** ♖c4 ♗b7!



The knight takes the scenic route. It is heading for a5, when White will not be able to prevent both ...♗b3 and ...♗c4, either of which will enable the knight to reach d2.

105 ♖b5

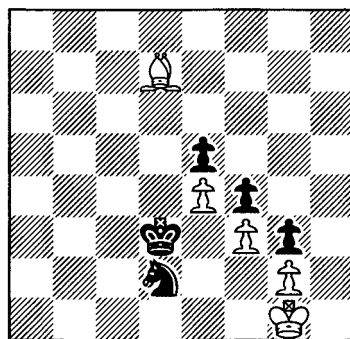
105 ♖b3 stops Black's plan of bringing the knight via a5, but after 105...♗d6 (105...♗a5? 106 ♖d5) 106 ♖d5 ♗b5 107 ♖c4 ♗d4 the knight gets to d4, and White is again in zugzwang; either the knight gets to check on e2, or it comes to b3 and d2.

105...♗a5 106 ♖a4 ♗c4 **107** ♖b5 ♗d2

Now the black king needs to come to e3.

108 ♖a4?

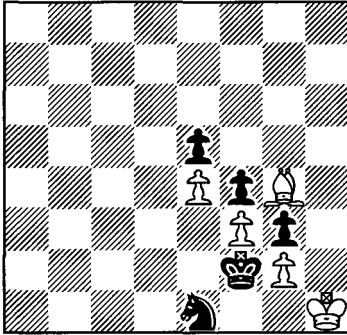
This does nothing to hinder the king transfer, but Lars Bo Hansen demonstrates that it cannot ultimately be prevented anyway: 108 ♖a6 ♗d1 109 ♖b5 ♗c2 (the king intends to come round via c3-d4-e3) 110 ♖a4+ ♗d3 111 ♖d7.



Following the defensive plan outlined in the note to move 99. The bishop comes round to defend the f3-pawn, but now Black wins as explained above: 111...♗e2 112 ♖g4 ♗b3 113 ♖h5 ♗d4 114 ♖g4 ♗e1 (Step 4, above) 115 ♖h5 ♗e2+ 116 ♗h1 ♗f2 117 ♖g4 (117 ♖e8 ♗d4 118 ♖a4 stops the knight reaching c2, and then e3/e1, but

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

allows 118...♖xf3 winning) 117...♗d4
118 ♕h5 ♗c2 119 ♕g4 ♗e1.

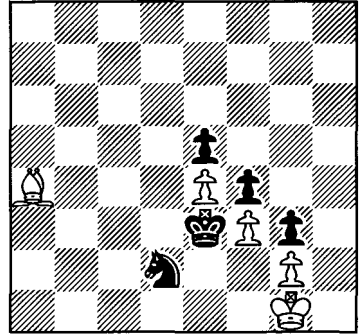


Completing step 5. White must either lose g2 or allow 120 ♕h3 ♗xf3 121 gxf3 ♗xf3 with a simple win.

108...♗e2

Now the sacrifice on f3 decides.

109 ♕b5+ ♗e3 110 ♕a4



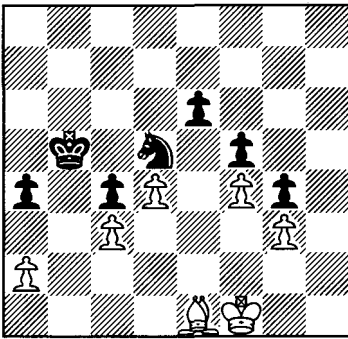
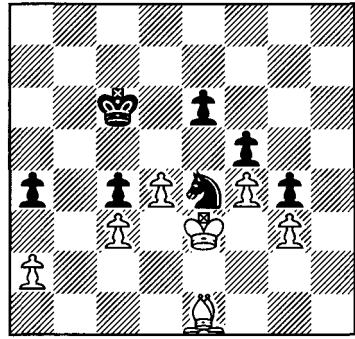
119...♗xf3+! 111 gxf3 ♗xf3 112 ♕c6 g2 0-1

An absolutely magnificent piece of logical planning and precise execution, and one of the classic endings of the past 40 years.

Game 17
W.Henneberger-A.Nimzowitsch
 Swiss Championship, Winterthur 1931

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 dxe4 4 ♗xe4 ♟f6
 5 ♟g3 c5 6 ♜b5+ ♙d7 7 ♙xd7+ ♗bxd7
 8 ♟f3 ♜a5+ 9 c3 ♜a6 10 ♜e2 ♜xe2+ 11
 ♗xe2 ♜c8 12 0-0 e6 13 ♙f4 ♙e7 14
 ♜fe1 ♗d5 15 ♙g3 c4 16 ♗e5 ♗xe5 17
 ♙xe5 f6 18 ♙g3 g5 19 f4 h6 20 ♙ad1
 ♜f7 21 ♜d2 b5 22 ♜f1 ♜he8 23 ♜f3 g4
 24 ♜f1 f5 25 ♙f2 ♜g8 26 g3 h5 27 ♙g2
 ♙d6 28 ♜c1 h4 29 ♙dd1 ♜h8 30 ♜d2
 ♙e7 31 ♜dc2 ♙d7 32 ♜e1 ♜h7 33 ♜a1
 hxg3 34 hxg3 a5 35 ♜cc1 ♜ch8 36 ♜h1
 ♜xh1 37 ♜xh1 ♜xh1 38 ♙xh1 b4 39
 ♙g2 a4 40 cxb4 ♙xb4 41 ♙f1 ♙c6 42
 ♙e1 ♙b5 43 ♗c3+ ♙xc3 44 bxc3

on c3 and g3, and then to seek a way of
 breaking through with the black king.
 44...♙c6 45 ♙e2 ♗f6 46 ♙e3 ♗e4



Thus we reach a “pure” knight vs bad bishop ending. The fact of Black’s great positional superiority is not in doubt, but the question is whether he can break through and win. Clearly, the logical plan is to bring the knight to e4, from where it will tie the white bishop to the defence of the two weak pawns

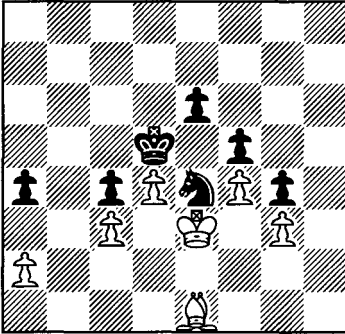
Thus, the first stage is completed easily enough. Now Black has to find a way to penetrate with his king, which is far from simple. In fact, deeper thought reveals that the only possible penetration with the king is via the central light squares d5 and e4, in which case the knight needs to move. Nimzowitsch conceives the plan as follows:

1. Put his king on d5. This will force the enemy king to remain on e3, to stop its opposite number penetrating.
2. Put the knight on b1, attacking c3. This will force the bishop to stand on e1, to defend the c3-pawn. In principle, such a position will be zugzwang, if it is White to move, since ♙d2 is met by an exchange on d2, followed by

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

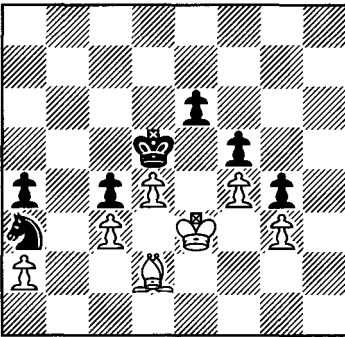
...♙e4. However, the knight must come to b1 only when the bishop is on e1, which means that Black must lose a tempo by triangulation.

**47 ♖e2 ♗d5 48 ♖e3 ♗d6! 49 ♖e2 ♗c6!
50 ♖e3 ♗d5**



Black has duly lost his tempo, and can now embark on stage 2, bringing his knight to b1.

51 ♖e2 ♗d6! 52 ♖e3 ♗b5 53 ♗d2 ♗a3



54 ♗c1!

White finds the only way to put up resistance. After 54 ♗e1 ♗b1 he is in zugzwang and loses after 55 ♗d2 ♗xd2 56 ♖xd2 ♖e4 57 ♖e2 a3!. Note the vital importance of this reserve

tempo; if the black pawn were already on a3, he would only draw.

54...♗b1 55 ♗b2

White has adopted the only other means of defending his c3-pawn. Now his bishop can still be paralysed, but in order to do so, Black must spend the reserve tempo with his a-pawn. In addition, he also entombs his own knight, so the finish requires extremely accurate and deep calculation by Black.

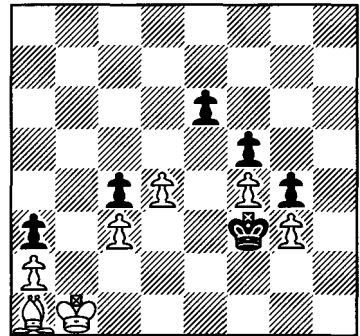
55...a3 56 ♗a1

Now Black must again triangulate, so as to transfer the move to White and force him to allow the black king in to e4.

56...♗d6! 57 ♖e2 ♗c6 58 ♖d1

The only chance. 58 ♖e3 ♗d5 would lose more simply.

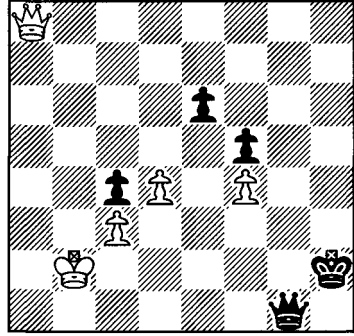
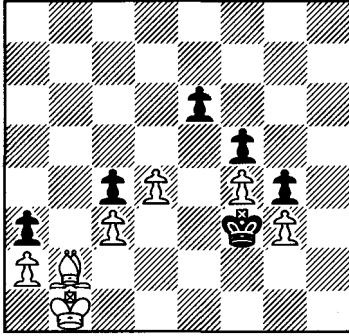
58...♗d5 59 ♖c2 ♖e4 60 ♖xb1 ♖f3



Clearly, Black is going to promote, but in entering this whole plan starting with 55...a3, he had to calculate the consequences of White's next.

61 ♗b2!

White, too, will obtain a passed pawn.



61...axb2!!

The superb point of Nimzowitsch's play. Declining the bishop actually loses after 61...♔xg3? 62 ♚xa3 ♕f3 63 ♚c5 g3 64 a4 g2 65 d5! and White promotes his a-pawn.

62 a4

Now it is a footrace, but as so often in such cases, there is a sting in the tail.

62...♔xg3 63 a5 ♔h2 64 a6 g3 65 a7 g2 66 a8♚ g1♚+ 67 ♔xb2

67...♚g2+!

And here it is. Nimzowitsch had to have seen this at least at move 55, if not even earlier!

68 ♚xg2+ ♔xg2

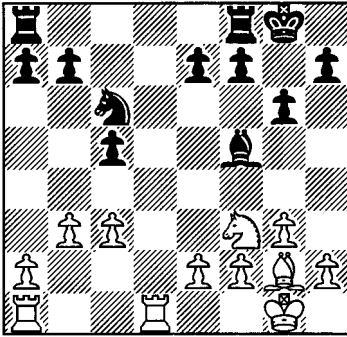
The pawn ending is an easy win.

69 ♔a3 ♕f3 70 ♔b4 ♕xf4 71 ♔xc4 ♕e3 72 d5 exd5+ 73 ♔xd5 f4 74 c4 f3 75 c5 f2 76 c6 f1♚ 0-1

A fantastic tour de force of deep and accurate calculation.

Game 18
V.Smyslov-M.Tal
 USSR Championship, Moscow 1969

1 c4 ♘f6 2 g3 c5 3 ♙g2 ♘c6 4 ♘c3 g6 5
 ♘f3 ♙g7 6 0-0 0-0 7 b3 d5 8 cxd5 ♘xd5
 9 ♙b2 ♘xc3 10 ♙xc3 ♙xc3 11 dxc3
 ♚xd1 12 ♜fxd1 ♙f5



Early simplifications have resulted in the endgame being reached very quickly, and indeed, Smyslov reports that Tal offered a draw with his last move. But White has the opportunity to carry out a somewhat unexpected exchanging manoeuvre, which leaves him with a long-term advantage.

13 ♘h4 ♙e6 14 ♙xc6!

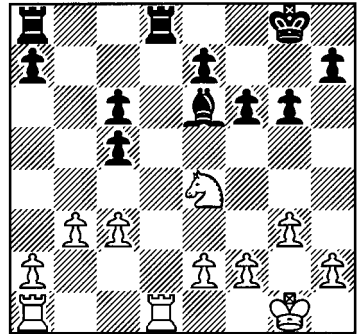
White's bishop on g2 looks a very fine piece, yet he exchanges it for the enemy knight. Smyslov understood that the broken black queenside pawns would represent a permanent defect in his position. Although rook and bishop often prove stronger than rook and knight, positions with such weak pawns are often favourable for the

knight, which can attack the pawns regardless of which colour square they stand on.

14...♙xc6 15 ♘f3 f6

If Black tries to exchange bishop for knight, then there can follow 15...♙g4 16 ♘e5 ♙xe2 17 ♜e1 ♙a6 18 ♘d7 ♜fe8 19 ♘xc5 ♙c8 20 ♜ad1 and the superiority of White's knight over the bishop is clear. After the text, 16...♙g4 is a real threat, but Smyslov anticipates it.

16 ♘d2 ♜fd8 17 ♘e4!

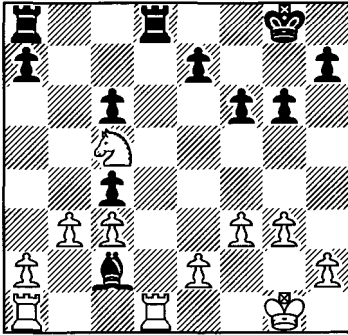


17...c4

This is a typical scenario in endings where a knight is fighting against a bishop, and there are weak pawns on the latter's side. In order to defend his weak pawns, Black is forced to play them onto squares of the same colour as his bishop, thereby gradually restricting the latter's mobility.

18 ♘c5 ♙f5 19 f3 ♙c2

Black could exchange off the doubled pawn by 19...cxb3 20 axb3, but that would expose his a-pawn and leave him with two weaknesses on the queenside. Instead, Tal forces his opponent to cede control of the open file, but it transpires that Black is unable to make any great use of it.



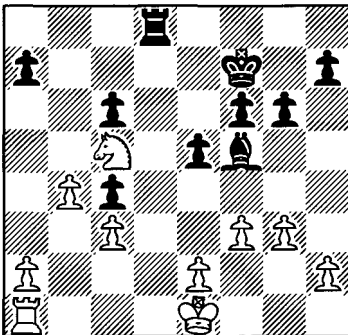
20 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 21 ♔f2 ♔f7

21...♗d2 is pointless after 22 ♔e1.

22 b4 ♔f5 23 ♔e1

Now 23...♗d2 was a real threat, after which the rook could establish itself on the seventh. After the text, however, White controls the key entry squares.

23...e5?!



This move weakens the sixth rank, which Black soon has cause to regret. Smyslov gave 23...♔c8 as “more careful”, but after 24 a4 Black is entirely passive, and can only wait, while White gradually increases the pressure.

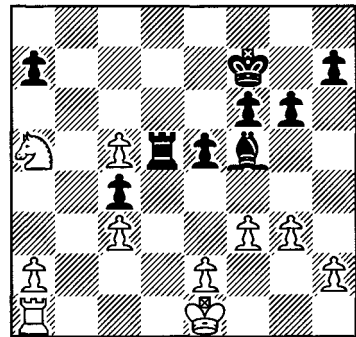
24 ♖b7!

Smyslov immediately strikes. Thanks to Black’s last move, the rook must stay on the d-file, to stop a knight check on d6, so his next move is forced.

24...♗d7 25 ♖a5!

Suddenly, two pawns are attacked.

25...c5 26 bxc5 ♗d5



27 ♖b7!

This is better than 27 e4 when Black can avoid loss of material by 27...♗xc5 28 ♖b7 ♗c7 29 ♖d6+ ♔e7 30 ♖xf5+ (30 ♖b5 ♗b7) 30...gxf5 31 exf5 ♗b7 and his active rook ensures that he can draw the rook ending without any trouble.

27...♗d7 28 ♖d6+ ♔e7 29 g4!

Another typical “little” endgame move. The black bishop is forced to leave the b1-f5 diagonal, thereby allowing the white rook to occupy the b-file.

29...♔e6

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

29...♙c2 30 ♖xc4 ♜c7? 31 ♗e3 wins material.

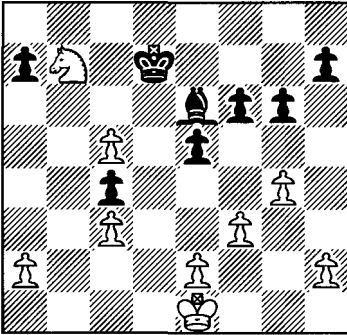
30 ♜b1 ♜c7 31 ♜b7

Thanks to his 29th move, White is now just in time to defend his extra pawn.

31...♞xb7

31...♙d7 32 ♜xc7+ ♙xc7 33 ♗e8+ is yet another example of the agility of the white knight, which is causing havoc in the enemy position.

32 ♗xb7 ♙d7



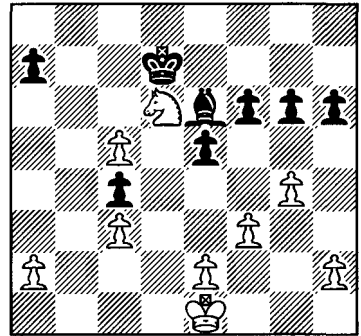
33 ♗d6

Smyslov describes this as a particularly difficult moment in the game. The alternative was 33 ♗a5, when the dark-square arrangement of knight on a5 and pawn on c5 enables White to keep his extra pawn safely. His further plan is then to bring his king to b4. However, Smyslov was worried that, at some point, Black would create counterplay on the kingside, and so he preferred to post the knight in the centre, where it plays on both flanks. With the knight on d6, the extra pawn on c5 is not so securely defended, but once again the

agility of the knight makes it surprisingly hard for Black to eliminate this pawn, without suffering significant “collateral damage” elsewhere on the board.

33...h6

The immediate 33...♙c6 can be met by 34 ♗e8 f5 35 g5, whilst 33...f5 also runs into 34 g5, in both cases fixing the h7-pawn, which soon drops off. Tal therefore prevents g4-g5, before going after the c5-pawn, but now White gains a tempo to activate his king.



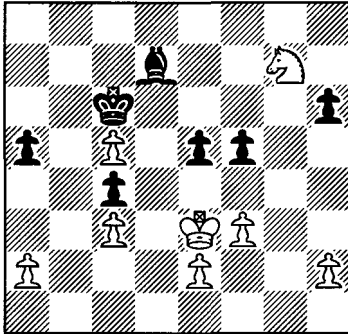
34 ♙f2 ♙c6 35 ♙e3 a5

35...♙xc5 was still not a threat, because of 36 ♗e4+, whilst 35...f5 is now answered by 36 gxf5 gxf5 37 f4!, forcing a breach in the e5-f5 pawn phalanx. Smyslov continues the variation 37...♙d5 38 ♗e8! (threat ♗c7+) 38...exf4+ 39 ♙xf4 ♙xc5 40 ♗g7 and the f5-pawn falls.

36 ♗e8 f5

As at move 17, a black pawn is chased onto a white square, which this time weakens the dark squares.

37 ♗g7 ♙d7 38 gxf5 gxf5

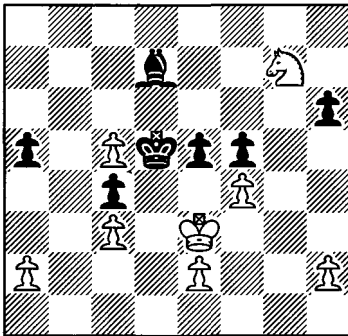


39 f4!

The same strategy as in the previous variation. Black cannot maintain his pawn barrier against the white king.

39...♖d5

Or 39...♗xc5 40 fxе5 ♖d5 41 ♗f4.

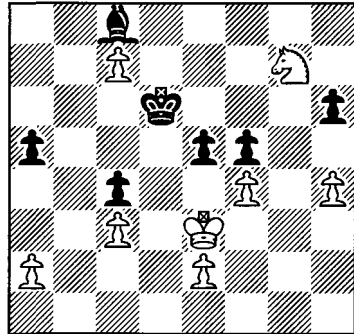


40 c6!

Like that of Mark Twain, the rumours of the c-pawn's death have been

greatly exaggerated. If the pawn is taken, either the e5- or f5-pawn drops in return.

40...♗c8 41 c7 ♖d6 42 h4 1-0

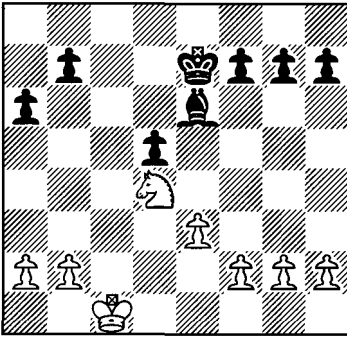


Here, the game was adjourned and Tal resigned without resuming. After 42...♗d7 there could follow 43 ♘h5 ♗c8 44 fxе5+ ♗xe5 45 ♘f4 ♗d7 46 ♘g6+ ♗f6 47 h5 and the white king advances (47...♗g5 48 ♘e7 queens the c-pawn).

A beautiful ending by Smyslov. The great lesson of this endgame is the remarkable agility of a knight, even on an open board, when there are weak pawns to attack. In the course of this game, White's king's knight executed the tour g1-f3-h4-f3-d2-e4-c5-b7-a5-b7-d6-b7-d6-e8-g7, with additional moves in many of the variations – a real “workhorse” if ever there was one!

Game 19
S.Flohr-J.Capablanca
Moscow 1935

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 ♜f6 4 ♜f3 ♜bd7
5 ♙g5 ♙e7 6 e3 0-0 7 ♚c2 c5 8 cxd5
♜xd5 9 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 10 ♜xd5 exd5 11
♙d3 cxd4 12 ♜xd4 ♚b4+ 13 ♚d2 ♜c5
14 ♙b5 ♚xd2+ 15 ♜xd2 a6 16 ♙d3
♙e6 17 ♜ac1 ♜fc8 18 ♜c2 ♜xd3 19
♜xd3 ♜xc2 20 ♜xc2 ♜f8 21 ♜d2 ♜c8
22 ♜c1 ♜xc1 23 ♜xc1 ♜e7

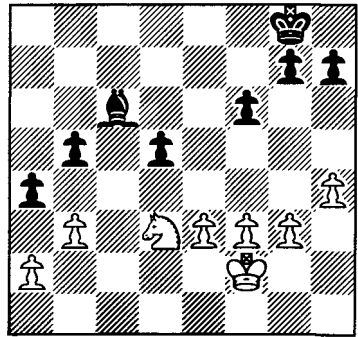


I include this game because it is a textbook example of how to defend a type of endgame which frequently arises in practice. Many lines of the QGD, as well as other openings, result in Black obtaining an IQP, and if things go wrong, an endgame such as this can easily arise. A large majority of such endings end in a win for White, but in the present game Capablanca demonstrates that such a position should be tenable, with the right defensive plan and its accurate execution.

As well as the weakness of the d5-

pawn, White has a knight against the inferior light-squared bishop, which is blocked by its own d-pawn. This game shows that such advantages are insufficient, by themselves, for the win. 24 ♜d2 ♜d6 25 ♜c3 b6!

This is a key element in Black's defence. It is essential that he arranges his pawns so as to deny the white king potential entry squares, such as c5. In this respect, it is useful to compare this position with a similar one, from another Capablanca game, played a year after the present encounter:

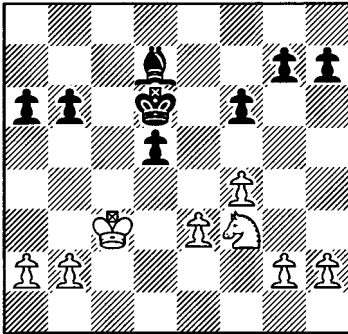


This is Capablanca-Reshevsky, Nottingham 1936. The key difference from Flohr-Capablanca lies in Black's advanced queenside pawns. White's extra possibility of infiltrating via c5 rendered the position untenable for Black, and Capablanca duly won (in fact, he did commit a later inaccuracy, granting

Black a drawing chance, which the latter missed, but these vicissitudes do not alter the general assessment).

In the present game, Capablanca avoids this and keeps his pawns back to cover the dark squares.

26 f4 ♖d7 27 ♜f3 f6!

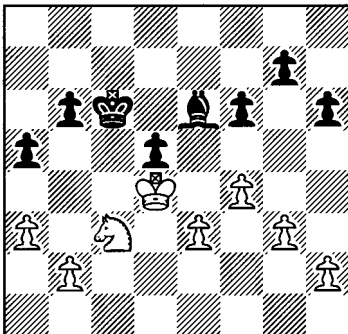


Once again, Black pursues the strategy of using his pawns to protect the entry squares. The pawn on f6 keeps White's pieces out of e5 and g5.

28 ♖d4 a5!

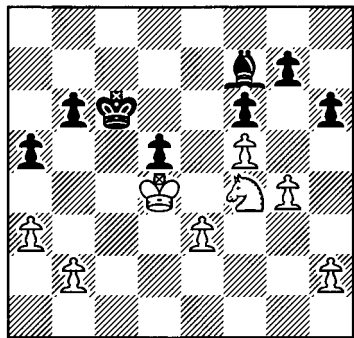
Still continuing the strategy of placing his pawns on dark squares.

29 ♜d2 ♗c8 30 ♜b1 ♗e6 31 ♜c3 ♖c6 32 a3 h6 33 g3



33...h5!

Averbakh discusses an interesting way for White to play, if Black adopts purely waiting tactics on the kingside. The plan (actually suggested by Ilya Rabinovich) involves setting up White's kingside pawns on f5 and g4, and then putting his knight on f4. If we assume for the present that Black just marks time with his king, we could get the following: 33...♖d6 34 ♜e2 ♖c6 35 ♜g1 ♖d6 36 ♜f3 ♖c6 37 ♜h4 ♖d6 38 f5 ♗f7 39 g4 ♖c6 40 ♜g2 ♖d6 41 ♜f4 ♖c6.

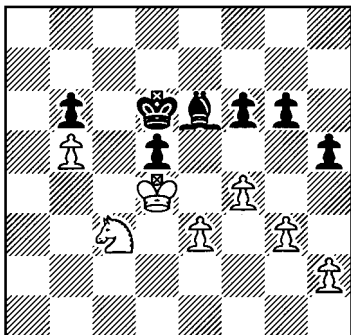


Now White can strike with 42 ♜e6! and he is winning the king and pawn ending after 42...♗xe6 43 fxe6 ♖d6 44 e7! ♗xe7 45 ♖xd5 ♖d7 46 b4 etc. This shows that Black must not allow White to achieve the f5-g4 vs f6-g7-h6 pawn structure on the kingside. Capablanca, in the present game, fights against this, by putting his pawns on h5 and g6. This is a counter-intuitive decision, because the natural tendency is to want to keep the pawns on dark squares, but in this instance, Capab-

lanca is proved entirely correct.

34 b4 axb4 35 axb4 ♖d6 36 b5 g6 37 ♜a4 ♜c7 38 ♜c3 ♜d6

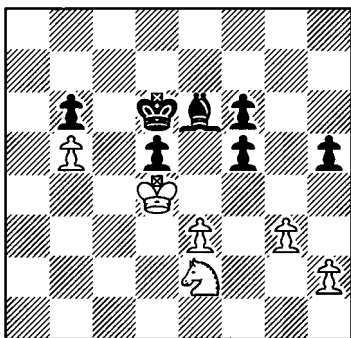
White has no way to progress by quiet play, but his next breakthrough forces Black to defend very accurately.



39 f5! gxf5

This is forced, because after 39...gxf5 40 ♜xd5 Black has two pawns attacked, and he cannot save his material by 40...♙d7 because of 41 ♜xf6 ♙xb5 42 ♜d5 ♜c6 43 ♜e7+.

40 ♜e2

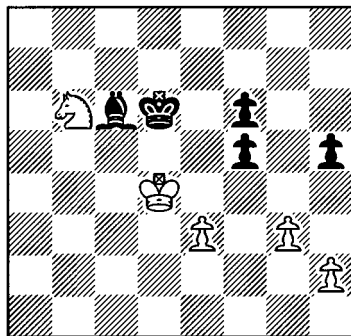


40...♙d7

Averbakh points out that 40...♙g8 41 ♜f4 ♙f7 is marginally more accu-

rate, and would save a tempo over the game, but Capablanca's move is good enough.

41 ♜f4 ♙e8 42 ♜xd5 ♙xb5 43 ♜xb6 ♙c6



44 ♜c4+ ♜e6 45 ♜b2

If the white knight could reach f4, Black would still be in trouble, but his bishop manages to prevent this.

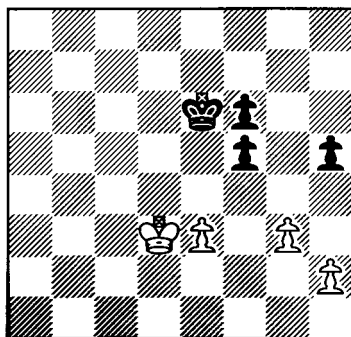
45...♙b5! 46 ♜d1 ♙e2 47 ♜f2 ♙f1!

Keeping d3 and h3 under observation.

48 ♜d3

The only try, but Black has calculated the pawn ending very accurately.

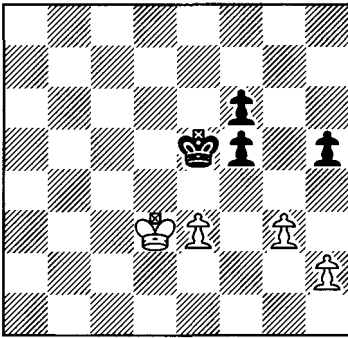
48...♙xd3 49 ♜xd3



This final stage of the game belongs to Chapter One. White aims to get his king to f4.

49...♔e5!

Careful footwork is required. 49...♔d5? loses after 50 ♔d2! ♔e5 (50...♔e4 51 ♔e2 h4 – or 51...♔d5 52 ♔f3 ♔e5 53 h3! ♔d5 54 ♔f4 ♔e6 55 h4! and zugzwang – 52 gxh4 f4 53 h5! ♔f5 54 exf4 wins) 51 ♔e1! (exploiting the distant opposition) 51...♔d5 52 ♔f2! ♔e4 53 ♔e2! and White wins.



50 ♔e2

If 50 ♔d2, Black's only defence is 50...h4! (now timed just right; the

white king is too far back) 51 gxh4 f4 52 h5 fxe3+! drawing.

50...♔e4

Now Black has the key zugzwang position, but with White to move.

51 h3

51 ♔f2 h4! draws, because 52 gxh4 f4 53 h5 fxe3+ is check, so White has no time for 54 h6.

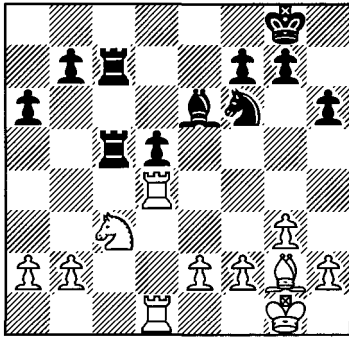
51...♔d5 52 ♔f3 ♔e5 ½-½

After 53 h4 White has used up his last tempo move, so 53...♔d5 54 ♔f4 ♔e6 leaves him without another, whilst 55 e4 fxe4 56 ♔xe4 f5+ 57 ♔f4 ♔f6 is a draw.

Model defensive play by Capablanca, and a key lesson in how to handle such positions. Having said that, it is clear that great accuracy is required from Black, and the ending contains many pitfalls. Players of the IQP are definitely advised “not to start from this position”, if they can avoid it, but if they do stumble into it, they should remember Capablanca's master-class here.

Game 20
A.Karpov-G.Kasparov
World Championship (Game 9), Moscow 1984

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5 4 cxd5 exd5 5 g3 ♘f6 6 ♙g2 ♙e7 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♘c3 ♘c6 9 ♙g5 cxd4 10 ♘xd4 h6 11 ♙e3 ♗e8 12 ♗b3 ♘a5 13 ♗c2 ♙g4 14 ♘f5 ♗c8 15 ♙d4 ♙c5 16 ♙xc5 ♗xc5 17 ♘e3 ♙e6 18 ♗ad1 ♗c8 19 ♗a4 ♗d8 20 ♗d3 a6 21 ♗fd1 ♘c4 22 ♘xc4 ♗xc4 23 ♗a5 ♗c5 24 ♗b6 ♗d7 25 ♗d4 ♗c7 26 ♗xc7 ♗dxc7



Once again, we include this game in the present section, because it soon simplifies to a pure minor piece battle.

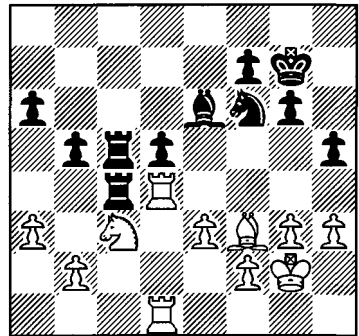
Black's Tarrasch Defence has yielded a nightmare endgame, with the IQP being a target, and his inferior light-squared bishop. All of White's pieces, bar his king, are trained on the weak pawn and Black is condemned to passivity. He faces a thankless defensive task.

27 h3 h5 28 a3

Naturally, there is no point in White's jumping in with the premature pawn grab 28 ♘xd5? after which Black

obtains counterplay in the rook ending after 28...♘xd5 29 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 30 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 31 ♗xd5 ♗c2.

28...g6 29 e3 ♙g7 30 ♙h2 ♗c4 31 ♙f3 b5 32 ♙g2 ♗7c5



33 ♗xc4

After some preliminary manoeuvring, White takes his first big decision of the ending, exchanging a pair of rooks. Note that this is only possible because Black cannot recapture with the d-pawn (see next note).

33...♗xc4

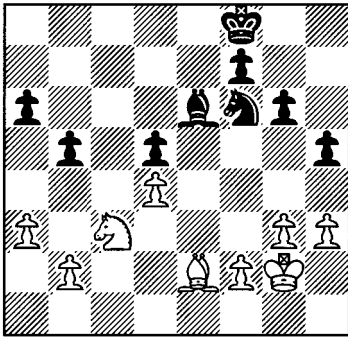
33...♗xc4? loses a pawn at once after 34 ♗d6 a5 35 ♗b6. However, 33...♗xc4! was worth considering. In return for the blockaded hanging pawns on c4 and d5, Black can hope to attack the backward white pawn on b2. I suspect Kasparov was deterred from this by the awkward position of his rook on c5; it cannot get to the b-file very easily,

since it is tied to the defence of d5, whilst bringing the black king over to d6, to free the rook from its defensive duties, would run into e3-e4. Kasparov therefore keeps the pawn structure intact and hopes to use the open c-file as the basis for some counterplay, especially if his d-pawn falls.

34 ♖d4

White is happy to exchange both rooks, as this will reduce Black's potential counterplay.

34...♙f8 35 ♖e2 ♗xd4 36 exd4



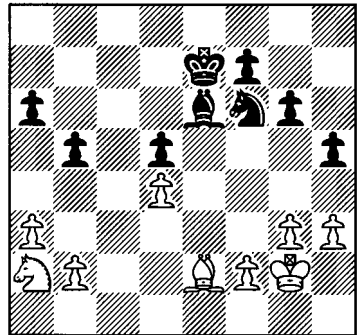
The change in the pawn structure is worth commenting upon. On the face of it, White's decision looks a little strange, since now he also has an IQP, and has lost the use of the classic blockading square d4, in front of the enemy IQP. However, as several classic Botvinnik games showed, such "mutual IQP" structures can still confer a significant advantage on White, when, as here, Black has the "bad" light-squared bishop, obstructed by the d5-pawn. A further point in his favour is the presence of the black pawn on b5, which

has weakened the queenside dark squares, especially c5.

Karpov will no doubt have been familiar with several famous games with the same pawn structure, including Saïdy-Fischer, from the latter's famous "clean sweep" US Championship triumph in 1963-4. That game, and other classic examples of this type of endgame, are analysed in detail by Marin, whose treatment of the subject can be highly recommended.

36...♙e7 37 ♘a2

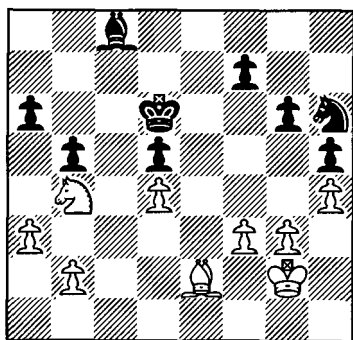
The knight aims for b4, from where it will attack both targets on a6 and d5, as well as threatening sometimes to invade via c6.



37...♙c8 38 ♘b4 ♙d6 39 f3

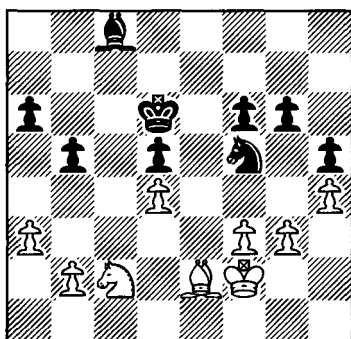
We have seen such pawn moves a number of times in this book. The white f-pawn "dominates" the enemy knight, depriving it of the active jumps to e4 and g4. The latter square will shortly be weakened by the advance h3-h4, which is necessary in order to free the white king from the defence of the h3-pawn.

39...♖g8 40 h4 ♘h6



Black in his turn responds to White's 39th move, by seeking greener pastures for his knight. It is heading for f5, from where it will attack the weak white pawns on d4 and g3. The problem is, however, that White can always threaten to eliminate the knight by ♗d3xf5, whereas Black has no such option with White's knight.

41 ♔f2 ♘f5 42 ♘c2 f6



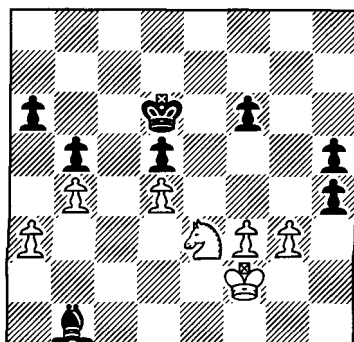
43 ♗d3!

Seizing his chance to make the favourable bishop-for-knight trade, now that the g6-pawn has been weakened.

43...g5

Black is resigned to the minor piece exchange, which leaves White with a classic knight vs bad bishop position, but in return, Black gets two of his kingside pawns off white squares. However, the remaining pawn is left on h5, fixed on a light square, and isolated.

44 ♗xf5 ♗xf5 45 ♘e3 ♗b1 46 b4 gxh4



47 ♘g2!!

One of the most striking moves in world championship history. Rather than recapturing automatically on h4, Karpov sacrifices a pawn, in order to open additional lines of entry on the kingside, so that his king can get into the black position. Karpov's move was found during adjournment analysis, but rather than reducing its value, in a strange way it makes it even more impressive. This is for a curious practical reason, which is that when analysing, most strong players tend to effect a pawn exchange, such as that on h4, by simply scooping the g5- and g3-pawns off the board in a single motion of the hand, rather than physically playing

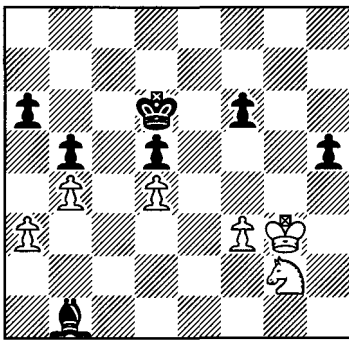
the moves 46...g5xh4 and 47 g3xh4. As a result, the position after Black's 46th move does not physically arise on the board when one is analysing, which makes it even harder to spot the idea of 47 ♖g2!!.

The point of Karpov's idea is that after 47 g3xh4 his king would not have a way into the black position. It can get as far as f4 but no further, because Black will, of course, keep the f-pawn on f6, covering e5 and g5. It is not clear how White can make any further progress.

47...hxg3+

47...h3 does not really help, as after the capture of the h3-pawn, White's king will still have potential access to the h4-square.

48 ♖xg3

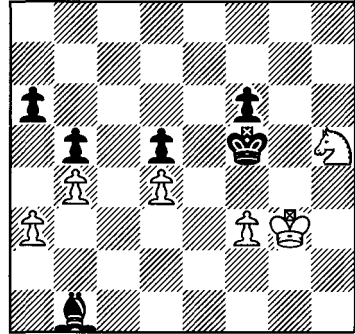


48...♖e6

Black gives back the pawn at once, but 48...♗g6 49 ♖f4 ♗f7 50 ♖h4 is no improvement. White will take on h5 next move anyway, and Black cannot enter the king and pawn ending, which is lost for him, e.g. 50...♖e7 51 ♖xh5

♗xh5? 52 ♖xh5 ♖f7 53 ♖h6 and the black king is outflanked after 53...♖e7 54 ♖g6 ♖e6 55 f4 f5 56 ♖g5 etc.

49 ♖f4+ ♖f5 50 ♖xh5



The effect of White's remarkable 47th move can now be seen. By eliminating the h-pawns, he has "widened the front" on the kingside, and his king now has a potential entry route round the back of the black position, via the h-file.

50...♖e6 51 ♖f4+ ♖d6 52 ♖g4

Of course, with a white pawn on h4 and black pawn on h5, this move would have been impossible.

52...♗c2

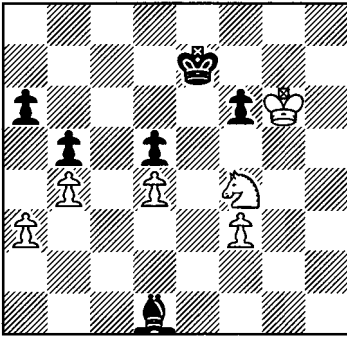
Stopping the white king coming to f5.

53 ♖h5 ♗d1 54 ♖g6

It is notable that White is not averse to an exchange of f-pawns. Usually in endings, the stronger side prefers to avoid pawn exchanges, which tend to increase the defender's drawing chances. This is especially true when the exchanges leave all the pawns on one side of the board. However, end-

ings with knight vs bishop are something of an exception, as the knight is especially adept in such positions with all the material on one wing. As we have already seen in the game Torre-Jakobsen, the knight can overcome a bad bishop even with very limited material, all on one side of the board.

54...♖e7

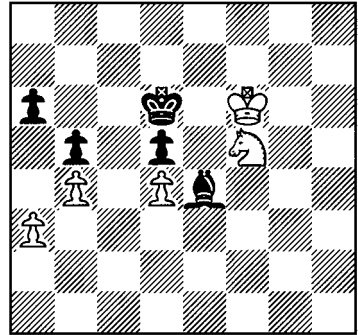


55 ♖xd5+?

Even for a World Champion at the height of his form, it can be hard to resist the temptation to win a pawn with check, even more so in a minor piece endgame, where material is usually key. However, in this instance, the text is a serious error, which could and should have cost Karpov the win. After his superlative play hitherto, that would have been a tragedy. The problem with the text, as we will see, is that it allows the black king a path into the white position, via d5 and c4. For the time being, White should leave the d5-pawn on the board, where it hampers Black's counterplay, and only take it when the time is ripe. In fact, Karpov's

error is a perfect example of breaching our beloved principle "Do not hurry!", and it is rare indeed to see the 12th World Champion err in this respect.

The correct winning method was to annex only the f-pawn, and gradually inch his way into the black position, as follows: 55 ♖h5! ♙xf3 56 ♖xf6 ♖e6 57 ♖e8 (threatening ♖c7+) 57...♗d7 58 ♖g7 (taking the e6-square away from Black's king) 58...♖e7 59 ♖f5 ♗d6 60 ♖f6 ♙e4 61 ♖f5+



61...♗d7 (of course, the king and pawn ending is lost after the exchange on f5) 62 ♖e5 (White is gradually inching his way in on the dark squares) 62...♙f3 63 ♖e3 ♖c6 64 ♖e6 ♙e4 65 ♖f5 ♙f3 66 ♖e7+ ♖c7 67 ♖xd5+. Now that White has full control, he can take the d5-pawn without allowing counterplay, and he will win simply.

55...♖e6?!

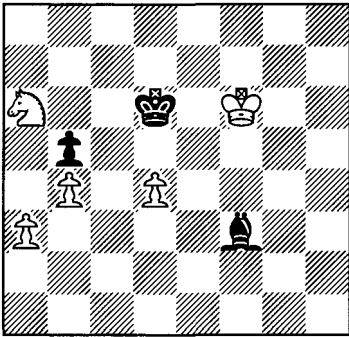
55...♗d6 56 ♖xf6 ♙xf3 was suggested by Geller and Mikhalchishin, and appears to draw fairly simply. Compared with the game, it deprives White of the extra option of going after

the a6-pawn, and after 57 ♖f5 ♙g2 58 ♜f4 ♜b7 59 ♜e3 ♜c6 60 ♜d3 ♜b7 61 ♜e4+ ♜d5 62 ♜c5 ♜c8 (Marin), White does not appear to have any way to make progress.

56 ♜c7+

By comparison with the previous note, the analogous line 56 ♜xf6 ♜xf3 57 ♜e8 would be met by 57...♜d5 and Black has enough counterplay to draw, e.g. 58 ♜c7+ ♜xd4 59 ♜xa6 ♜c3 and White loses his a-pawn.

56...♜d7 57 ♜xa6 ♜xf3 58 ♜xf6 ♜d6



White now has two extra pawns, but he cannot stop Black obtaining counterplay by ...♜d5.

59 ♜f5 ♜d5 60 ♜f4

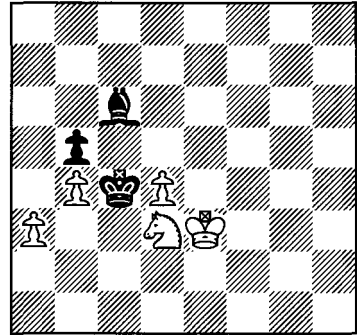
This tempo gain allows White to consolidate his two-pawn advantage, but it turns out that it is still very hard to convert.

60...♙h1 61 ♜e3 ♜c4 62 ♜c5 ♜c6

Black plays his bishop over the e4-square, so that a later ♜e4 does not block the bishop's control of d5. White has managed to hold onto his material, but it is hard to make progress with the

d-pawn without allowing the black king into b3.

63 ♜d3



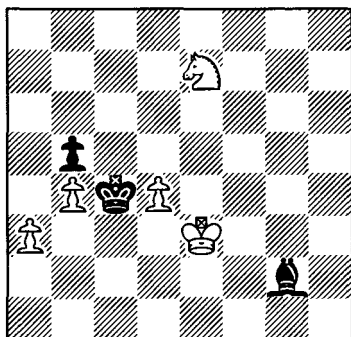
63...♙g2

The immediate 63...♜b3? is bad, because after 64 ♜e5 ♙d5 65 ♜d3 ♜xa3 66 ♜c3 White has consolidated, and the black king is out of play. White will simply bring his knight round to e3 and set his passed pawn in motion. Black must time his active counterplay for a moment when his king can eliminate both white queenside pawns, allowing him then to sacrifice the bishop for the remaining white pawn.

64 ♜e5+ ♜c3

64...♜b3? is again bad because of 65 ♜d3, but waiting tactics by 64...♜d5 were also possible. It seems that White can then win if he can arrange the move a3-a4, e.g. 65 ♜d3 ♙e4+ 66 ♜c3 ♙f5 67 ♜d3 ♙g4 68 ♜c5 ♜c8 69 a4 bxa4 70 ♜xa4 and the tablebase confirms that this is a win for White. However, in this line, it is still not clear how White makes progress after 67...♙d7 68 ♜c5 ♙e8.

65 ♖g6 ♔c4 66 ♗e7



66...♗b7?

It seems that this move definitely loses. The critical line was 66...♗h1! 67 ♗f5 ♔d5. This position was the subject of an exhaustive analysis by Marin, who in turn built upon a previous analysis by Timman. Whereas the latter had claimed that White is winning this position, Marin found a key im-

provement for Black, and after several pages of analysis of this position, he concluded that White cannot win, despite his two extra pawns. One key point is that Timman's 68 ♗g3 ♗g2 69 ♔f2 ♗h3 70 ♗e2 can be met by 70...♗g4! 71 ♔e3 ♗xe2! 72 ♔xe2 ♔xd4 when the pawn ending results in a draw.

67 ♗f5 ♗g2

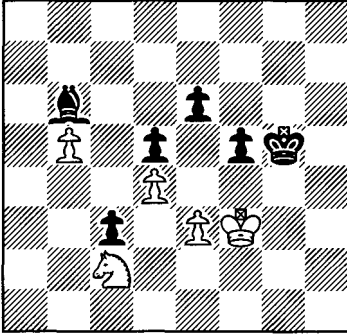
67...♔d5 poses only slightly greater problems, as Marin demonstrates: 68 ♔d3 ♗a8 69 ♗e3+ ♔e6 70 ♗d1 and once the knight reaches c3, Black is helpless, as his king is driven back from d5 and White is preparing a3-a4.

68 ♗d6+ ♔b3 69 ♗xb5 ♔a4 70 ♗d6 1-0

A magnificent endgame, despite the errors. Karpov's 47 ♗g2!! is one of the most famous moves in world championship match history.

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

on the queenside, in the hope of creating counterplay. This would indeed have offered some chances of holding. Thus, Smyslov gives the line 43 a3 ♖h5 44 b4 axb4 45 axb4 ♙xh4 46 b5 ♙d8 47 ♗g3 g5 48 fxg5 ♗xg5 49 ♗f3 ♙b6



50 ♖e1 (50 ♖b4 offers some chances of survival, according to Smyslov, although he offers no analysis) 50...♗f6 51 ♖c2 e5 52 dxe5+ ♗xe5 53 ♖e1 d4 54 exd4+ ♗xd4 55 ♗f4 ♗c4 56 ♗xf5 ♙f2 57 ♖c2 ♗b3 and wins.

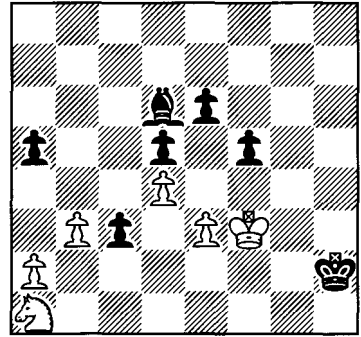
43...♗h5 44 ♗f3 ♗xh4 45 ♖e1 g5 46 fxg5 ♗xg5 47 ♖c2 ♙d6 48 ♖e1

Once again, White could abandon his waiting tactics and set up the queenside passed pawn, but this now gives Black the extra option of retaining the a-pawns. 48 a3 ♗h4 49 b4 a4 50 b5 ♙c7 51 ♖e1 ♗g5 52 ♖c2 ♙a5 53 ♖e1 ♙b6 54 ♖c2 ♗f6. Compared with analogous variations, the extra pair of pawns on a3 and a4 enhances Black's winning chances.

48...♗h4 49 ♖c2 ♗h3 50 ♖a1 ♗h2

This is the key to Black's winning plan. His king aims to get behind its

opposite number and penetrate to the white queenside from the rear.



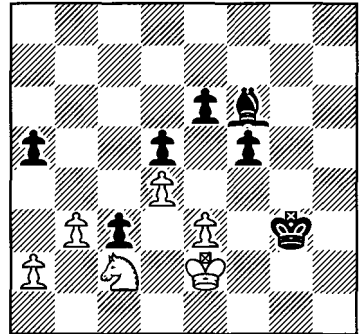
51 ♗f2 ♙g3+ 52 ♗f3 ♙h4 53 ♖c2 ♗g1

Black is able gradually to inch his way in.

54 ♗e2 ♗g2 55 ♖a1 ♙e7 56 ♖c2 ♗g3

57 ♖e1 ♙d8 58 ♖c2 ♙f6

Once again, Black uses zugzwang to make further progress with his king. The point is that the white knight cannot leave c2, because of the advance ...f5-f4 undermining his d4-pawn.



59 a3

Now the a3-pawn will be an additional target. On the other hand, 59 ♗d3 allows the black king in: 59...♗f2

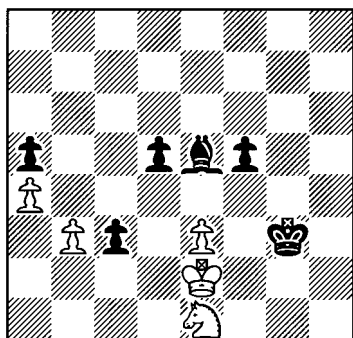
60 ♖a1 (60 ♗xc3 ♜e2 followed by ♜g5 wins the e3-pawn, much as in the note to White's 63rd in this variation) 60...♜e1 61 ♜c2+ ♜d1 62 ♖a1 ♜e7 and now:

a) 63 ♗xc3 ♜e2 64 ♜c2 ♜g5 wins the e3-pawn, and the queen ending after 65 a4 ♜xe3 66 ♜xe3 ♜xe3 67 b4 axb4+ 68 ♗xb4 f4 69 a5 f3 70 a6 f2 71 a7 f1 ♖ 72 a8 ♖ ♖c4+ 73 ♗a3 ♖xd4 is lost for White.

b) 63 ♜c2 ♜d6 64 ♖a1 ♜c1 65 ♗xc3 ♜b4+ 66 ♜d3 ♜b2 67 ♜c2 ♜xa2 and Black wins the b3-pawn and the game.

59...♜e7 60 b4

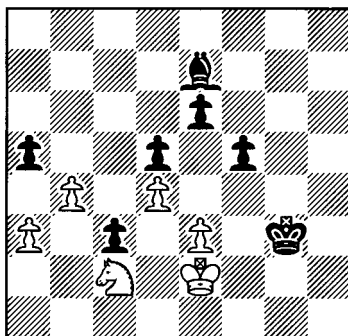
Pushing the pawn with 60 a4 also loses, once again because White falls into zugzwang: 60...♜d6 61 ♖e1 e5 62 dxe5 ♜xe5 and now:



a) 63 ♜c2 d4! 64 exd4 ♜d6 and the second passed pawn decides. In typical fashion, Black can even sacrifice a piece, as in the variation 65 ♜e3 f4! 66 ♖f5+ ♜g4 67 ♜xd6 f3+ and White cannot stop both pawns.

b) 63 ♜d3 d4! 64 exd4 ♜d6 65 ♜c2 f4 66 ♗xc3 f3 67 ♜e3 f2 68 ♜d3 ♜f3 69

♜f1 ♜f4! 70 d5 ♜g2 71 ♜e2 ♜g1 and wins.



60...a4

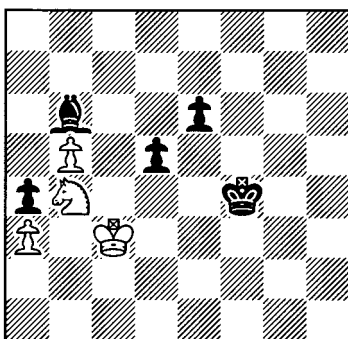
Once again, it is better to retain the a-pawns.

61 ♖e1 ♜g5 62 ♜c2 ♜f6

White is again in zugzwang, since a knight move allows 63...f4.

63 ♜d3

63 b5 also loses: 63...♜d8 64 ♖e1 ♜a5 65 ♜c2 ♜g4 66 ♖e1 ♜c7 67 ♜c2 ♜b6 (now Black is ready for ...f5-f4) 68 ♖b4 f4! 69 exf4 ♜xd4 70 ♜d3 ♜b6 71 ♗xc3 ♗xf4.



White has eliminated the passed c3-pawn, but now the two connected

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

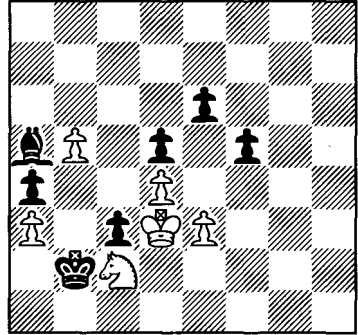
passed pawns in the centre decide: 72 ♖c6 (or 72 ♖d3 ♖e5 73 ♖c6+ ♖d6 and the pawns will roll) 72...♗e3 73 ♗b4 d4 74 ♖e5 d3 75 ♗xa4 d2 76 ♖c4+ ♗e2 77 ♖xd2 ♗xd2 78 ♗b4 e5 79 a4 e4 80 a5 ♗d8 81 b6 e3 and wins.

63...♗f2 64 ♖a1 ♗d8 65 ♖c2 ♗g5 66 b5 ♗d8 67 ♖b4 ♗b6 68 ♖c2 ♗a5 69 ♖b4 ♗e1! 0-1

White resigns as 70 ♗xc3 ♗e2 wins, as does 70 ♖c2+ ♗d1 71 ♖a1 ♗c1 72 ♖c2 ♗b2.

The final position of this variation

deserves a diagram: Black's king has completed a "Long March" of which Mao would have been proud!

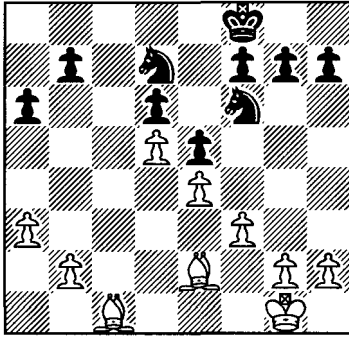


Game 22

S.Flohr-M.Botvinnik

6th match-game, Moscow/Leningrad 1933

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♙b4 4 ♗c2 c5 5
 dxc5 ♘a6 6 a3 ♙xc3+ 7 ♗xc3 ♘xc5 8 f3
 d6 9 e4 e5 10 ♙e3 ♗c7 11 ♘e2 ♙e6 12
 ♗c2 0-0 13 ♘c3 ♗fc8 14 ♙e2 a6 15 ♗c1
 ♘cd7 16 ♗d2 ♗b8 17 ♘d5 ♙xd5 18
 cxd5 ♗xc1+ 19 ♗xc1 ♗d8 20 0-0 ♗c8 21
 ♗d2 ♗c7 22 ♗c1 ♗xc1+ 23 ♗xc1 ♗xc1+
 24 ♙xc1 ♙f8



This example is rather more complicated than the Englisch-Steinitz one, examined in Chapter Eight, for a couple of reasons. In the first place, there are no rooks on the board. As we will see in Englisch-Steinitz, with rooks on the board, there is always the possibility of an exchange of bishops, leading to an ending where rook and bishop are stronger than rook and knight. Here, White does not have that possibility. The second factor here is that the position is more closed than in Englisch-Steinitz, which also complicates the

stronger side's task. On the other hand, here White has the "whole" bishop pair, i.e. two bishops versus two knights, rather than bishop and knight. Overall, the position should objectively be drawn, but in practice, it is extremely hard to defend as Black.

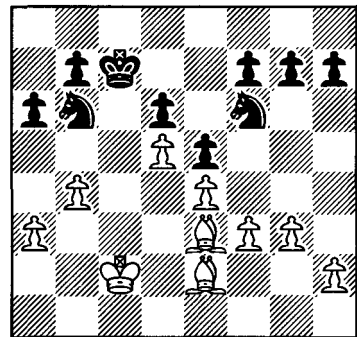
25 ♙f2 ♙e7 26 ♙e3 ♘d8 27 ♙e1 ♙c7
 28 ♙d2

As usual, king centralization is one of the first steps in the ending.

28...♘c5 29 b4 ♘cd7?!

This is a little passive, Flohr himself suggested 29...♘a4 followed by ...b7-b5. If White exchanges the knight on a4 for his light-squared bishop, he loses the bishop pair and it is not clear how his king can ever break through effectively on the queenside.

30 g3 ♘b6 31 ♙c2



31...♘bd7

Black passes up another chance to

establish his knight on a more active square by 31...♖a4.

32 a4

Now White puts paid to the idea once and for all, and also seizes additional space on the queenside.

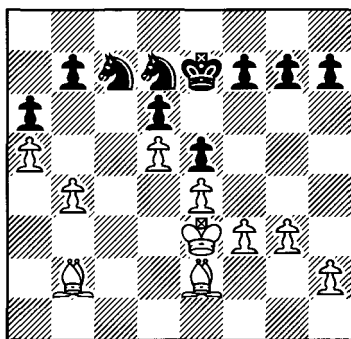
32...♗b6 33 a5

Now Black must always reckon with the possibility of a breakthrough on the queenside, either by b4-b5, or the tactical trick ♕xa6 followed by b5, promoting the a-pawn. It may never happen – as, indeed, it does not – but it is a threat that hangs over Black’s head for the rest of the game, and which he must always bear in mind, should his pieces stray too far away from the queenside.

33...♗bd7 34 ♕c1 ♖d8 35 ♖b2

White cannot make any progress on the queenside for the moment, and it is clear that his immediate plan is to advance on the other flank. To that end, the bishop takes up position on the long diagonal, getting ready for the advance f3-f4.

35...♗e8 36 ♖d2 ♗c7 37 ♖e3 ♖e7



38 ♖f1

Now the other bishop readies itself to come to an active diagonal on h3. That will create a potential threat of penetrating to c8 at some moment. Note how slowly and patiently Flohr plays the ending. The kingside pawn advance f4 can come at any moment, so rather than rush it, Flohr first places each of his pieces on the most effective squares he can find. This is classic technique – in positions where the opponent has no counterplay, never hurry.

38...♗b5

Now we see another reason why Flohr placed his bishop on b2. From there, it “dominates” the enemy knight at b5, preventing it penetrating White’s position at a3, c3 or d4. This relative position of bishop and knight is a standard device for keeping the knight passive – see Steinitz’ ...♕c4 against Englisch. As always in such endings, one should never lose sight of possible counterplay by the opponent.

39 h4

Once again, Flohr seizes every opportunity to strengthen his position. Before bringing the bishop to h3, he advances the h-pawn, gaining a little more space.

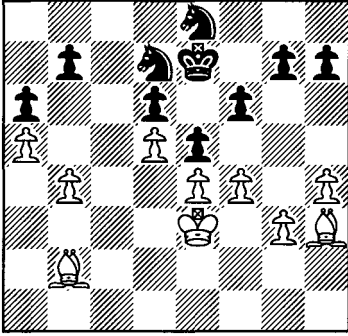
39...♗c7 40 ♖h3 ♗e8

Black has nothing active to do on the queenside, so he withdraws the knight to a defensive role on the other flank. He can only await developments.

41 f4

Finally, this advance comes. Now there is an immediate threat of 42 $\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{x}d7$, winning the e5-pawn.

41...f6



42 $\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{f}5!$

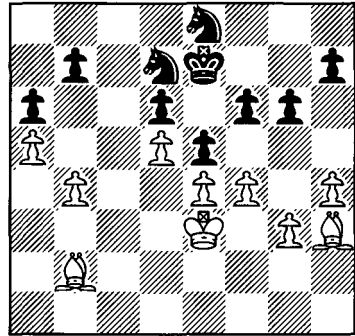
This is a very important and typical move. White tries to provoke a further weakness in the enemy pawn structure on the kingside. If Black does nothing, his knight is tied to the defence of the h7-pawn. If he plays 42...h6, the light square g6 is seriously weakened, and there would be the long-term possibility of the white king penetrating via g4-h5(f5)-g6. Once again, it may never happen, but it would be another threat for Black to worry about. Note too how similar this scenario would be to the one we outline in Englisch-Steinitz, where Black created the threat of penetrating via d5-c4-b3 with his king. That threat also never actually materialized, but it hung over White's head and added to his defensive burden. This is how such positions are won – the stronger side gradually piles more and more small worries onto the defender,

until eventually one straw breaks the camel's back.

42...g6

Botvinnik chooses to keep the light squares covered, but he weakens the dark squares instead. Now he has to reckon on the possibility of an exchange on e5, and if he recaptures with the f6-pawn, the white king may have an entry route via g5 to h6 or f6.

43 $\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{h}3$



Now White has other possible ways to attack the kingside. One is f4-f5, which would set up the possibility of fxg6 followed by g4 and h5, establishing an outside passed pawn.

43...h6

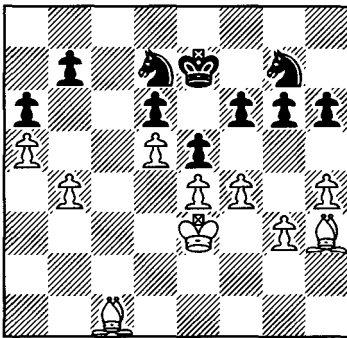
Now the idea is to meet a subsequent f5 with ...g5, and after hxg5, to be able to recapture with the h6-pawn, not giving White a passed pawn on f5. However, the text weakens the light squares, especially g6, which may tell later on. Note how White's gradual probing is forcing his opponent into small concessions.

44 $\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{c}1!$

The bishop has done its job on b2, from where it has prevented the enemy knight creating any counterplay from b5, and has also pressurized the e5-pawn, so as to force the weakening pawn move ...f6. With e5 so solidly defended and the enemy knight back on e8, the bishop no longer has any function on b2, so Flohr redeploys it. Taking advantage of Black's last move, the bishop immediately eyes the freshly-weakened h6-pawn. Now when the white king moves, there will be a threat of fxe5, with a discovered attack on h6 – something else for Black to worry about.

44...♖g7?!

Flohr points out that the knight is not well placed here, and that 44...♖c7 would have been a little better.

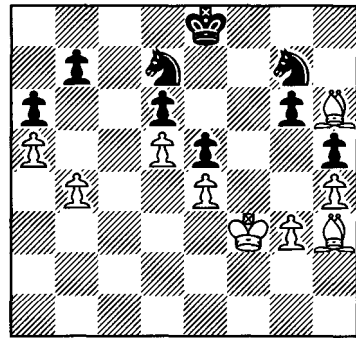


45 fxe5!

Another great example of switching to concrete play at just the right moment. Flohr pounces on a small tactical detail inherent in Black's last move, to force a favourable transformation of the pawn structure.

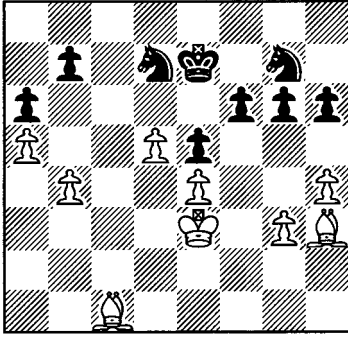
45...dxe5

Doubtless played with a heavy heart, since this gives White a passed pawn on d5. However, the move is forced. 45...♖xe5 loses to 46 ♔c8 (see note to move 38!), whilst 45...fxe5 runs into a very nasty tactical point: 46 ♖f3 (attacking h6) 46...h5 47 ♔g5+ and Black is lost: after 47...♗e8 (47...♖f6 48 ♔c8 again wins) 48 ♔h6! and he is actually losing a piece, since his g7-knight has no square and the king cannot defend it without losing the other knight!



This might seem like a bit of bad luck for Black, and it is true that no such immediate catastrophe would have followed if he had played 44...♖c7. Even so, this variation is a logical triumph of White's superb play, and for the fact that he has gradually improved his position and placed his pieces on the best possible squares. It is also a tribute to his tactical sharpness, in that, despite 40-plus moves of patient manoeuvring, with almost no tactics happening, he does not miss the

tactical opportunity the moment it comes along.

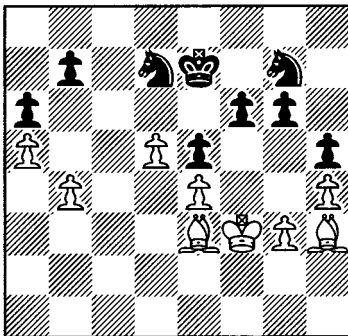


46 ♖f3

Tactics work both ways. Flohr points out that White must not play 46 ♔d3? because of 46...♞h5! when Black suddenly has counterplay.

46...h5 47 ♖e3

The small tactical interlude at move 45 has brought White a major additional trump, in the form of a protected passed pawn on d5, but the game is still far from over.



47...♔d6

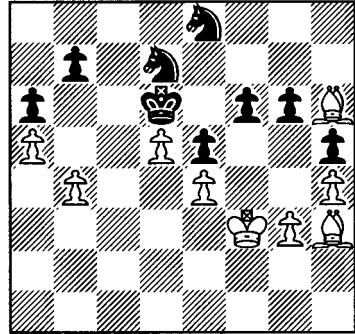
Stopping a potential ♖c5+, but now that the king has strayed from the

kingside, White strikes there – classic “two weaknesses” stuff.

48 ♖h6

Forcing the knight back to a passive square.

48...♞e8



49 g4!

And now White forces the opening of further lines for his bishops. Black cannot allow the exchange on h5, when his h-pawn would be hopelessly weak, so his next move is forced.

49...hxg4+ 50 ♖xg4 ♞c7 51 ♖e3 ♞b5 52 ♖e2!

Black is threatening to create counterplay on the queenside, so the white king comes back to deal with it.

52...♞c7

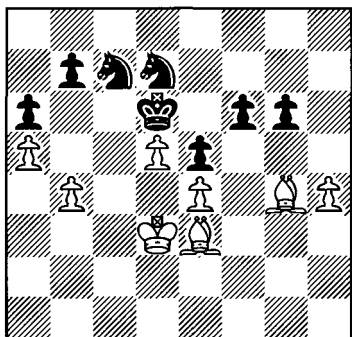
Flohr points out that the trick 52...♞c3+ 53 ♖d3 ♞xe4 fails to 54 ♖xd7.

53 ♖d3

Black is now in zugzwang. His king cannot move because of ♖c5+, his d7-knight cannot move for the same reason (as well as because of ♖c8), and the c7-knight cannot move, because of ♖e6

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

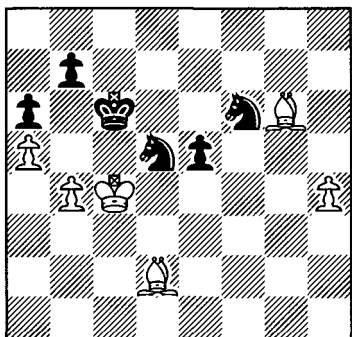
followed by ♔f7 winning the g6-pawn. Desperation is all that is left.



53...f5 54 exf5 gxf5 55 ♔xf5 ♖xd5 56 ♔d2

Black has avoided material loss, but now White has a monster outside passed pawn on the h-file. Knights are notoriously bad at stopping rooks' pawns, and this one will cost Black a piece.

56...♖7f6 57 ♔c4 ♔c6 58 ♔g6

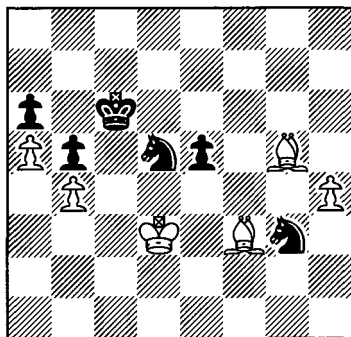


White methodically prepares the advance of the passed pawn.

58...b5+ 59 ♔d3 ♖e7 60 ♔e4+ ♖ed5

Black finally has the chance to eliminate one of his tormentors, but it is too late to do him any good. After 60...♖xe4 61 ♔xe4 ♔d6 62 h5 ♔e6 63 ♔c3 and wins.

61 ♔g5 ♖h5 62 ♔f3 ♖g3



63 ♔d2!

Do not hurry! 63 h5 would allow unnecessary complications after 63...♖xh5 64 ♔xh5 ♖xb4+. After the text, the b4-pawn is defended and h5 cannot be stopped anyway.

63...♔d6 64 ♔g4!

Once again, attention is required to the very end. The hasty 64 h5? would throw away the hard-earned win, thanks to 64...e4+! 65 ♔xe4 ♖xh5.

64...♖f6 65 ♔c8 ♔c6 66 ♔e1 e4+ 67 ♔d4 ♖gh5 68 ♔f5 ♔d6 69 ♔d2 1-0

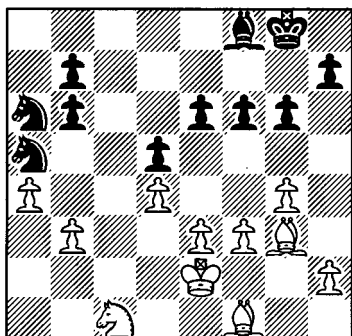
A magnificent example of patient technique by Flohr. Botvinnik clearly learned a lot from this painful lesson, and 18 years later it came in handy...

Game 23

M.Botvinnik-D.Bronstein

World Championship (Game 23), Moscow 1951

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 g3 c6 4 ♙g2 d5 5
 cxd5 cxd5 6 ♜c3 ♙g7 7 ♜h3 ♙xh3 8
 ♙xh3 ♜c6 9 ♙g2 e6 10 e3 0-0 11 ♙d2
 ♜c8 12 0-0 ♜d7 13 ♜e2 ♜b6 14 ♙c3
 ♜fd8 15 ♜f4 ♜f6 16 ♜b3 ♜e4 17 ♜xb6
 axb6 18 ♙e1 ♜a5 19 ♜d3 ♙f8 20 f3
 ♜d6 21 ♙f2 ♙h6 22 ♜ac1 ♜ac4 23
 ♜fe1 ♜a5 24 ♙f1 ♙g7 25 g4 ♜c6 26 b3
 ♜b5 27 ♙e2 ♙f8 28 a4 ♜c7 29 ♙g3
 ♜a6 30 ♙f1 f6 31 ♜ed1 ♜a5 32 ♜xc8
 ♜xc8 33 ♜c1 ♜xc1 34 ♜xc1



It may not look it, but this is one of the most dramatic positions in world championship history. It was the first world championship match to be played under the auspices of FIDE, and using the “new” system of 24-game matches, with the champion retaining his title in the event of a 12-12 tie. This 23rd game saw Botvinnik trailing by one point, and with this being his final game with the white pieces, it was a

must-win situation.

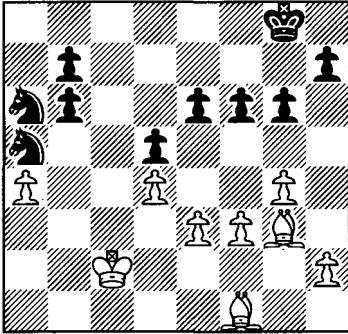
A symmetrical opening had resulted in rather a sterile manoeuvring game, but despite the match situation, this was probably not so unwelcome for Botvinnik. He was greatly Bronstein’s superior in such dry, technical positions, and, indeed, had already gained several extra half-points in the match thanks to Bronstein’s endgame lapses. Had it not been for these, the struggle would already have been done and dusted several games earlier, with a new world champion crowned.

In this position, White has the bishop pair, whilst the black queenside pawns are doubled and weak. However, Black has a temporary initiative, and could have maintained the balance fairly easily. Unfortunately, a positional trap awaits Black: he can win a pawn in this position, by giving up his bishop for White’s knight, thereby presenting White with the “whole” bishop pair. Bronstein could not resist.

34...♙a3 35 ♙d1 ♙xc1?

Botvinnik suggested that Black could maintain equality with simply 35...♙f7 when White has nothing after either 36 ♙xa6 bxa6 37 ♙c7 ♙xc1 38 ♙xc1 ♜xb3+ 39 ♙b2 ♜a5, or 36 ♙c2 ♜b4+.

36 ♙xc1 ♜xb3+ 37 ♙c2 ♜a5



Black has won his pawn, but there the good news ends. The pawn itself is the miserable doubleton on the b-file, and is of no real significance, whilst White now has the whole bishop pair, and Black's knights lack secure central posts. Despite the material balance, White has a clear advantage.

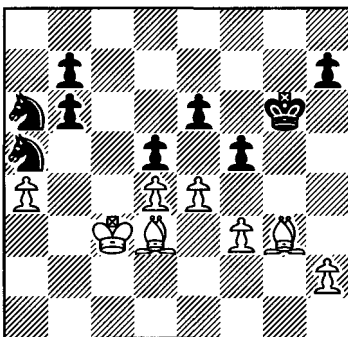
38 ♖c3 ♜f7 39 e4

As always with the bishop pair, White seeks to open the position.

39...f5?!

Botvinnik criticized this as playing into White's hands. Now the h7-pawn will be left weak.

40 gxf5 gxf5 41 ♔d3 ♜g6



42 ♔d6?

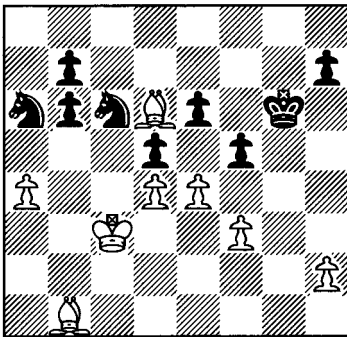
At this point, the game was adjourned overnight, with Botvinnik sealing his 42nd move. His second in this match was the noted endgame expert Salo Flohr, who quickly established that White was winning after the move 42 ♔b1! (threatening 43 exd5 exd5 44 ♔a2) 42...♖c6 (or 42...♖c4 43 ♔f4! – dominating the knight – and ♔a2 will follow) 43 exd5 exd5 44 ♔a2 ♖ab4 45 ♔b3 and Black will lose the d-pawn after 46 ♔d6.

Alas, Botvinnik had not sealed 42 ♔b1, but the weaker text-move. However, this fact is associated with one of those stories, which demonstrates Botvinnik's lifelong suspicion. Amazingly, he was so concerned about a "leak", that would alert his opponent to the sealed move, that he did not tell Flohr that he had sealed another move! Poor Salo Flohr was left to spend all night analysing the position after 42 ♔b1, whilst Botvinnik went to his room and analysed the true sealed move by himself. It was not until the next day, literally moments before taking his seat for the resumption, that Botvinnik whispered to Flohr (using the affectionate diminutive form of the latter's name), "Actually, Salomonchik, I sealed a different move!" Botvinnik later wrote that, at this moment, Flohr was almost in tears, so humiliated was he at the obvious lack of trust!

Back at the game, however, the Bronstein camp was unaware of this

drama, and had spent a discouraging night convincing themselves that their man's position was hopeless after 42 ♖b1. It would appear that they did not take the precaution of analysing other moves, possibly because they had too much faith in Botvinnik's accuracy – surely The Patriarch could not miss the simple 42 ♖b1, could he? Bronstein had not looked at the game continuation at all, which cannot have helped his chances. As a result, he missed the defence which might have made him the next world champion.

42...♗c6 43 ♖b1

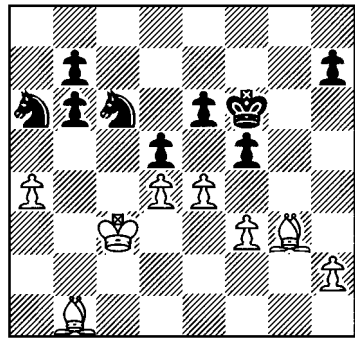


43...♗f6

This is the difference from 42 ♖b1. The extra tempo wasted on placing the bishop on d6 unnecessarily, allows the black king to get across to e6, to defend the d5-pawn.

However, natural though the text move is, it is not the strongest. Had Bronstein and his team devoted some attention to Botvinnik's actual sealed move, they might have found the defence 43...♗a7!. The idea is to meet 44

exd5 exd5 45 ♖a2 with the surprising 45...b5! 46 a5 (46 ♖xd5 bxa4 47 ♖xb7 ♗b5+ 48 ♗b2 ♗xd6 49 ♖xa6 ♗g5 and Black is in no danger) 46...b4+! 47 ♗d3 (or 47 ♖xb4 ♗b5+) 47...♗b5 48 ♖e5 ♗ac7 49 ♗c2 ♗f7 50 ♗b3 ♗a6 and Black appears to be holding (Botvinnik).
44 ♖g3!!



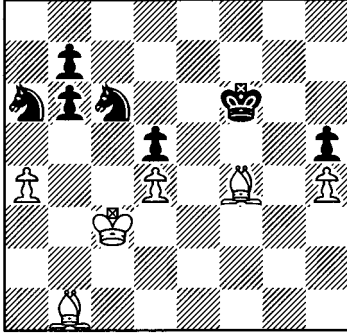
This is the key winning idea, which Botvinnik admitted that he only found at 8.00am on the morning of the resumption. Black is now in zugzwang. His king must maintain the defence of f5, and if it moves, say with 44...♗g5, then it loses the chance to reach e6, and White continues 45 exd5 exd5 46 ♖a2 ♗cb4 47 ♖b3 followed by 48 ♖d6. 44...♗e7 loses a pawn after 45 ♖h4+, and 44...♗ab4 is met by 45 ♖e5+! (driving the king away from contact with e6) 45...♗g5 46 ♖d6 ♗a6 47 exd5 exd5 48 ♖a2. Finally, 44...h5 45 h3 changes nothing.

44...fxe4

All that remains is this exchange, which at least frees the black king from the necessity of defending f5. However,

now the white bishops gain much greater freedom.

45 fxe4 h6 46 ♖f4 h5 47 exd5 exd5 48 h4



Fixing the h5-pawn as a target, and also securing g5 for White's bishop. One can see at a glance how powerful the white bishops are.

48...♟ab8 49 ♖g5+ ♔f7 50 ♖f5

Now 51 ♖c8 is a threat, and 50...♟d7 is prevented. The black knights never succeed in obtaining any decent central posts.

50...♟a7

Black returns to the idea of ...b6-b5. Botvinnik also analyses 50...♟e7, when White can win a pawn at once with 51 ♖xe7 (keeping up the pressure with 51 ♖h3 is also good) 51...♟xe7 52 ♖g6.

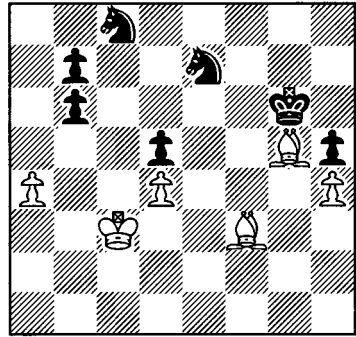
51 ♖f4 ♟bc6 52 ♖d3

Preventing the counterplay with ...b6-b5.

52...♟c8 53 ♖e2 ♟g6 54 ♖d3+ ♟f6 55 ♖e2 ♟g6 56 ♖f3 ♟6e7

Or 56...♟8e7 57 ♖c7 ♟f5 58 ♖xd5 ♟fxd4 59 ♖xb6 and White is winning.

57 ♖g5 1-0



Black is in zugzwang. Bronstein thought for 40 minutes and, much to the surprise of most of the spectators, he resigned. Indeed, some commentators even claimed later that he could still have drawn by placing his knights on c6 and d6, but this does not seem correct. After 57...♟c6 58 ♖xd5 ♟d6 59 ♖f3 ♟f5 Smyslov recommended 60 ♖c1! (60 ♖xh5 ♟e4+ 61 ♟c4 ♟xg5 62 hxg5 ♟xg5 is less clear) with the idea of meeting 60...b5 with 61 ♖xc6 bxc6 62 a5, when White should win without much trouble.

This dramatic and textbook two-bishop endgame enabled Botvinnik to level the scores, and a draw as Black in the final game meant that he retained his world title. David Bronstein, on the other hand, was psychologically scarred for life by the experience...

Chapter Five

Rook Endings

Rook endings are the most common of all endings, and also the most difficult. Despite an outwardly simple appearance, they conceal an enormous number of subtleties. One illustration of this is John Nunn's book *Secrets of Rook Endgames*. This contained 352 pages, but despite this, it dealt only with positions containing rook and pawn against rook!

Rook endings tend to be rather more "concrete" than minor piece endings, with long spells of patient manoeuvring, and lengthy, multi-stage strategic plans rather less common. Rook endings are much more about specific variations, which is why they are so much harder to analyse and play accurately.

Because of their relatively concrete, tactical nature, it is hard to formulate many rules of thumb in rook endings, but the best piece of general advice one can give is that *activity* is almost always crucial. In the great majority of cases, it is worth sacrificing a pawn or even two, in order to activate the rook,

and we will see this theme repeatedly in the examples in this chapter.

We start with one of the most famous and instructive of rook endings, the final game of the Alekhine-Capablanca match. This is the single most famous example of the dictum that "rooks belong behind passed pawns". Game 25 shows a case with the same material, but with the stronger side's rook at the side of the pawn. This should usually be a draw, but Black soon goes wrong in this example, and loses. The most notable feature of the game is the study-like finish, which shows the subtleties concealed in an apparently simple position.

Games 26 and 27 are two immortal endings by Rubinstein, widely acknowledged as the all-time great master of such endings. Both show the importance of the more active rook. Game 28 is another classic, where the active rook and king prove more important than material. Games 29 and 30 are further examples of the exploitation of

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

the more active rook.

Finally, we close the chapter with two titanic struggles. Game 31 is a classic battle between Fischer and Botvinnik, in which the latter rescues half a point from a seemingly lost ending,

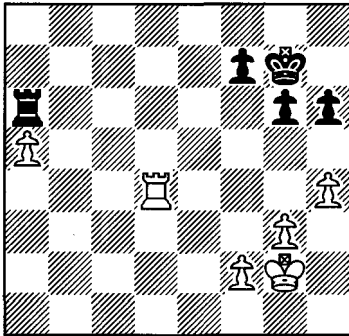
whilst in Game 32, the great Viktor Korchnoi (another of the greatest masters of rook endings) squeezes out a win against Karpov, in one of their most dramatic world championship battles.

Game 24

A. Alekhine-J. Capablanca

World Championship (Game 34), Buenos Aires 1927

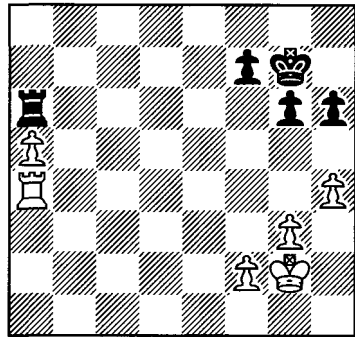
1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 ♜f6 4 ♙g5 ♜bd7 5
 e3 c6 6 a3 ♙e7 7 ♜f3 0-0 8 ♙d3 dxc4 9
 ♙xc4 ♜d5 10 ♙xe7 ♜xe7 11 ♜e4 ♜5f6
 12 ♜g3 c5 13 0-0 ♜b6 14 ♙a2 cxd4 15
 ♜xd4 g6 16 ♜c1 ♙d7 17 ♜e2 ♜ac8 18 e4
 e5 19 ♜f3 ♜g7 20 h3 h6 21 ♜d2 ♙e6 22
 ♙xe6 ♜xe6 23 ♜a5 ♜c4 24 ♜xa7 ♜xb2
 25 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 26 ♜xb7 ♜c4 27 ♜b4 ♜a8
 28 ♜a1 ♜c6 29 a4 ♜xe4 30 ♜xe5 ♜d6
 31 ♜xc4 ♜xe5 32 ♙e1 ♜d6 33 ♜c1 ♜f6
 34 ♜e4 ♜xe4 35 ♜xe4 ♜b8 36 ♜e2 ♜a8
 37 ♜a2 ♜a5 38 ♜c7 ♜a6 39 ♜c3+ ♜h7
 40 ♜d2 ♜b6 41 ♜d7 ♜b1+ 42 ♜h2 ♜b8+
 43 g3 ♜f5 44 ♜d4 ♜e8 45 ♜d5 ♜f3 46 h4
 ♜h8 47 ♜b6 ♜a1 48 ♜g2 ♜f6 49 ♜d4
 ♜xd4 50 ♜xd4 ♜g7 51 a5 ♜a6 52 ♜d5
 ♜f6 53 ♜d4 ♜a6



This is *the* textbook demonstration of how to exploit an extra, outside passed pawn in a rook ending, with the stronger side's rook behind the passed pawn. If the white rook were on a6 and

the black rook on a4, the game would be a draw, although it is not as easy to defend as once thought, as mentioned in the next example, but as it is, White is winning by force. The ending is also of great historical significance, because this was game 34 of the Alekhine-Capablanca world championship match. Alekhine led 5-3 in decisive games, needing six wins to take the world title, so this was the endgame which dethroned the great "invincible" Cuban and gave the chess world its fourth world champion.

54 ♜a4!



The vital first step. The rook takes up position behind its passed pawn. Now the black rook is tied to a6, else the white pawn will advance, whilst the white rook can make tempo moves back down the a-file, as required.

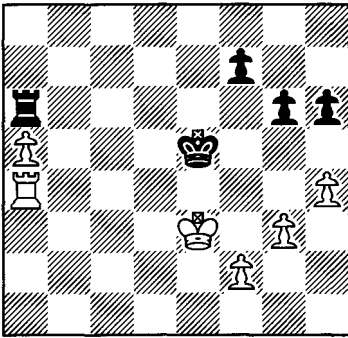
White's plan is as follows:

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1. Bring his king over towards the pawn. The black king will have to stand in opposition, to prevent the white king reaching b5 and forcing the advance of the pawn.

2. Once the kings stand in opposition, a waiting move by the white rook will force the black king to give way; either it allows its opposite number into b5, or into the kingside (two weaknesses!).

54...♞f6 55 ♞f3 ♚e5 56 ♞e3

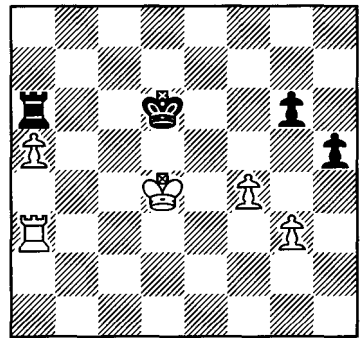


56...h5!?

I have always thought it curious that, although this ending has been examined in almost every major endgame textbook, this move has hardly ever been commented upon. Yet it is open to the objection that it weakens the square g5 and so allows the white king an avenue via this square into black's kingside pawns, as indeed occurs later in the game. It therefore seems logical to suggest 56...♞d5, keeping the pawn on h6.

By a curious coincidence, just as this book was being written, German end-

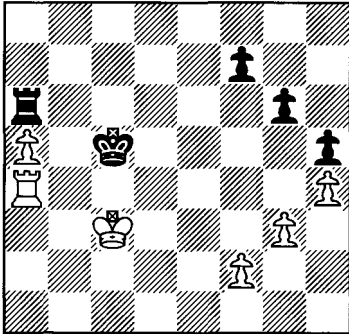
game expert Dr Karsten Müller devoted one of his *Chess Cafe* endgame columns to an examination of this very move, prompted by analysis supplied by a German amateur, Erich Körber. The full analysis is too extensive to reproduce here, and can be found in Müller's column anyway, but the conclusion is that White still wins. The main line of the analysis immediately exploits Black's failure to play 56...h5, as follows: 57 h5 ♞e6 (or 57...g5 58 f4 gxf4+ 59 ♞xf4 and White's king invades the kingside, rather as in the final phase of the game continuation) 58 hxg6 fxg6 and White will now be able to create another passed pawn, this time on the kingside. Just as in the game, Black will not be able to hold both fronts: 59 f4 h5 60 ♞d4 ♞d6 61 ♖a3!



and White wins in similar fashion to the game: his king will either penetrate on the queenside and support the a-pawn, or will attack the kingside pawns, supported at the crucial moment by a switch of his rook. Readers wishing to see the complete analysis

should visit www.chesscafe.com, and look up the Karsten Müller article “News on a classical rook ending”, dated 19 October 2011.

57 ♖d3 ♗d5 58 ♖c3 ♗c5



Step one has been accomplished.

59 ♖a2!

Step 2. Black's king must give way.

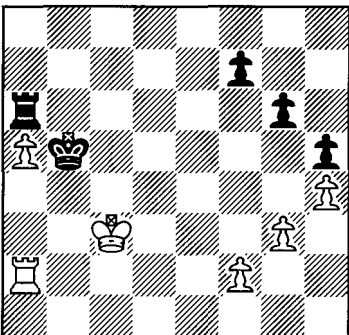
59...♗b5

59...♗d5? 60 ♖b4 obviously loses much more quickly.

60 ♖b3

Before advancing his king, White repeats moves.

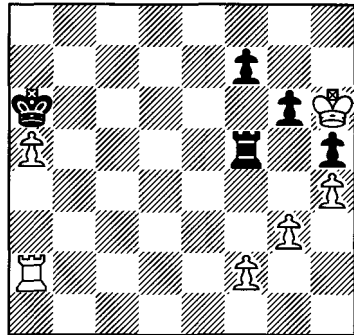
60...♗c5 61 ♖c3 ♗b5



62 ♖d4!

Continuing the next stage of the plan. Now the white king will mount a raid on the black kingside pawns, and seek to establish a decisive material advantage on that side of the board. As usual, Black cannot take the a-pawn, because the resulting king and pawn ending would be hopeless, so his only defensive idea is to “change the guard” on the queenside; the king will occupy a6, blocking the passed pawn, and the black rook will endeavour to hold off the white king.

62...♖d6+ 63 ♖e5 ♖e6+ 64 ♖f4 ♗a6 65 ♖g5 ♖e5+ 66 ♖h6 ♖f5

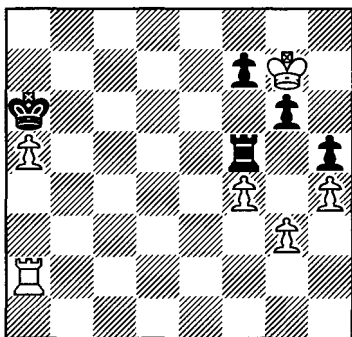


For the time being, Black has achieved his best possible defensive formation. His king holds up the passed pawn, whilst his rook defends the kingside pawns. However, as so often, zugzwang will prove to be the straw that breaks the camel's back.

67 f4?!

“Do not hurry!” Alekhine is here guilty of breaking that cardinal rule, and although it does not imperil the win, it does make it harder. I am sure a

Rubinstein or an Ulf Andersson would have played the precise zugzwang finish 67 ♖g7! ♜f3 68 ♖f8! ♜f5 69 ♖g8! Triangulation. 69...♜f3 (or 69...♜f6 70 f4 ♜f5 71 ♖g7) 70 ♖g7! ♜f5 71 f4



and Black must lose a pawn.

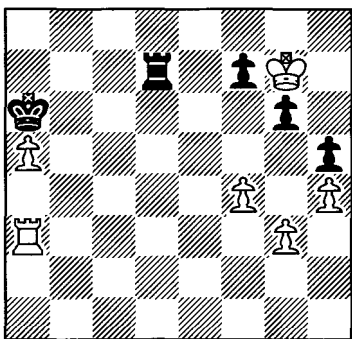
67...♜c5!

Seizing his chance to re-position the rook onto the second rank, where he has enough squares to avoid zugzwang.

68 ♞a3

68...♜c3 was a threat.

68...♜c7 69 ♖g7 ♞d7



Now we can see that White has complicated things. His rook has lost

much of its mobility, because of the need to defend g3, whilst the black rook has plenty of squares on the second rank and cannot be driven into zugzwang. Fortunately, White still has another way of breaking the enemy resistance – undermining his kingside pawn structure with a pawn break.

70 f5!

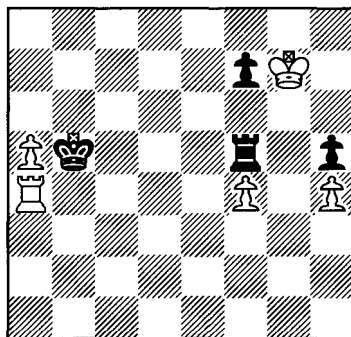
This is the key idea. Black must capture, after which the h-pawn falls and his remaining kingside pawns are weak.

70...gxf5 71 ♖h6 f4

71...♞d5 was another defensive try, but then 72 ♖g5! (72 ♖xh5? f4+) 72...♞c5 73 ♖f6 ♞d5 74 ♖xf7 f4 (passive play also loses, e.g. 74...♞c5 75 ♖f6 ♞d5 76 ♜f3! etc.) 75 gxf4 ♜f5+ 76 ♖g6 ♜xf4 77 ♖xh5 and wins.

72 gxf4 ♞d5 73 ♖g7 ♞f5 74 ♞a4 ♖b5

Clearly, the only hope.



75 ♞e4!

The decisive switch to the kingside. The a-pawn will fall, but the black king is too far away to avoid devastation on the opposite flank.

75...♔a6

75...♔xa5? 76 ♖e5+ is immediately decisive.

76 ♔h6 ♖xa5

Black could still pose practical problems by 76...♔b7 77 ♖e7+ ♔a6 78 ♖e5 ♖xf4 79 ♔xh5 f6, although the table-base confirms that White is winning

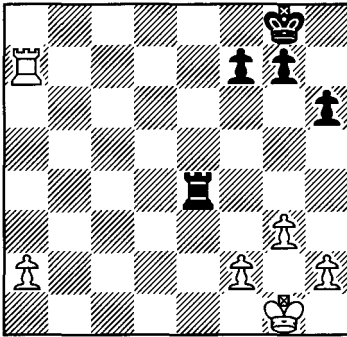
with the transfer of his rook to the h-file by 80 ♖e3 ♔xa5 81 ♖h3 etc.

77 ♖e5 ♖a1 78 ♔xh5 ♖g1 79 ♖g5 ♖h1 80 ♖f5 ♔b6 81 ♖xf7 ♔c6 82 ♖e7 1-0

Of course, many endings with this material distribution are theoretically drawn, but not with the black king cut off so far away.

Game 25
V. Alatortsev-V. Chekhover
 USSR Championship, Tbilisi 1937

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 ♖b4+ 4 ♗d2 ♚e7
 5 ♗g2 ♘c6 6 ♗f3 e5 7 dxe5 ♘xe5 8
 ♘xe5 ♗xd2+ 9 ♚xd2 ♚xe5 10 ♘c3 0-0
 11 0-0 d6 12 ♖fe1 ♚c5 13 ♘d5 ♘xd5 14
 cxd5 ♚b6 15 ♖ac1 ♗d7 16 ♖c3 c5 17
 dxc6 ♗xc6 18 ♗xc6 bxc6 19 ♖ec1 c5 20
 ♖b3 ♚a6 21 ♖a3 ♚b6 22 ♖b3 ♚a6 23
 ♖a3 ♚b6 24 ♖d3 ♖ad8 25 b3 ♚c6 26
 ♖d5 ♖fe8 27 e3 h6 28 ♚d3 ♚c7 29 ♖d1
 ♖e6 30 e4 ♖c8 31 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 32 ♚xd6
 ♚xd6 33 ♖xd6 c4 34 bxc4 ♖xc4 35 ♖a6
 ♖xe4 36 ♖xa7



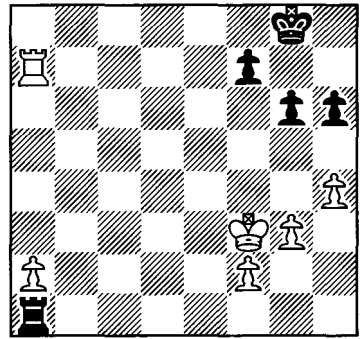
This is an ending played by two players whose names will not be found amongst the all-time greats. Despite this, White's play was superb, and although he had some help from his opponent, the final stages of the ending make it worth its place in this book. The position should be a draw, of course, as Black can transfer his rook behind the passed pawn. Initially, he

does just that, but soon he is tempted from the path of righteousness, and eventually pays the inevitable price for his sins.

36...♖e1+

36...♖e2! (Sadler) is probably more accurate, when the attack on f2 slows down White's plan of bringing his king over to the queenside.

37 ♗g2 ♖a1 38 h4 g6 39 ♗f3



39...♖e1?!

Although this move does not lose, it makes Black's life more difficult, by permitting White to transfer his rook to the side of the passed pawn. The standard way to draw the position would be 39...h5 followed by ...♗g7-f6. However, even here, there are a few subtleties that Black needs to be aware of. The theory of this ending has recently been updated, following some detailed researches by a Swiss player,

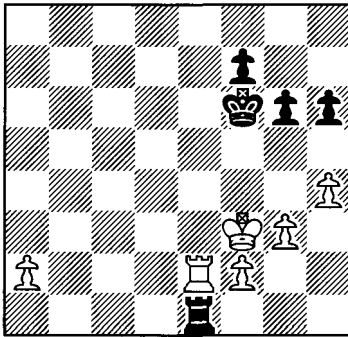
Johannes Steckner, augmented by Grandmasters Müller, Dautov, Dvoretzky and others. I can recommend the section in the second edition of *Dvoretzky's Endgame Manual* for a detailed summary of their findings.

40 ♖d7!

White immediately seizes the opportunity to transfer his rook to a better location, alongside the pawn.

40... ♗g7 41 ♜d2 ♕f6 42 ♞e2!

And now he also cuts off the black king.



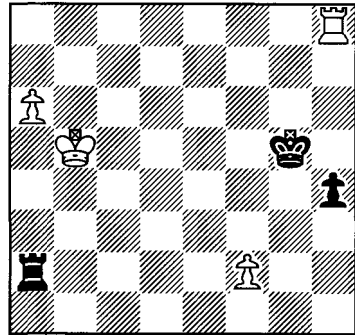
42... ♞d1 43 ♕e3

Now White's plan is clear. He will gradually bring his king over to the queenside, by sheltering the monarch behind the rook. Black must meet this by preparing counterplay on the kingside, which White will necessarily have to abandon in order to carry out his plan.

43... ♕f5 44 ♞d2 ♜c1 45 ♕d3 ♗g4 46 ♞c2 ♞d1+ 47 ♕e2

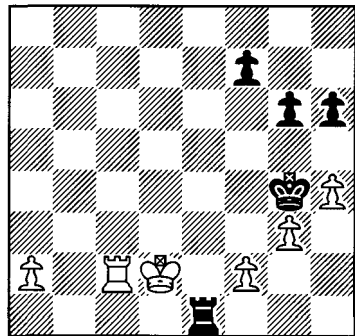
Biding his time for the moment. After 47 ♕c3 Black will start counterplay with 47...f5!. Fine then continues the

variation 48 ♕b3 ♞b1+ (the immediate 48...f4 allows 49 ♞c4) 49 ♞b2 ♞e1 50 a4 f4 51 gxf4 ♕xh4 52 a5 ♕g4 53 a6 ♞e8 with a draw. This appears correct, although it is close, e.g. 54 ♕c4 h5 55 ♞b6 ♕xf4 56 ♞xg6 ♞e2 57 ♕b5 ♞a2 58 ♞h6 ♕g5 59 ♞h8 h4



60 f4+ ♕g4 61 f5 ♞b2+ 62 ♕c4 ♞c2+ 63 ♕d4 ♞c7 64 f6 h3 65 ♞g8+ ♕f3 66 ♞g7 ♞c8 etc.

47... ♞a1 48 ♕e3 ♞e1+ 49 ♕d2

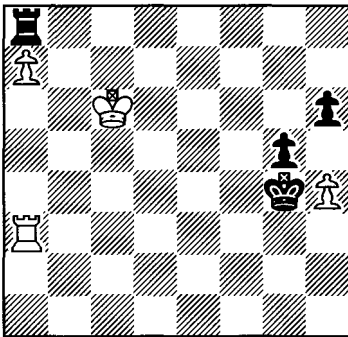


49... ♞a1

Fine does not make clear whether he thinks this is the decisive error, but I believe it is. Fine analyses 49...♞e5! as the clearest way to draw. It seems

rather illogical to switch the rook back in front of the enemy passed pawn, but with his king so far advanced amongst White's kingside pawns, Black has just enough play to draw.

Fine's analysis, in which neither I, nor my silicon assistants, have been able to find any flaws, runs as follows: 50 a4 f5 51 ♖a2 ♖a5 52 ♜c3 f4 53 ♜b4 ♖a8 54 ♖a3 ♖b8+! Black's counterplay has hit a temporary brick wall, so there is no time to lose. The rook switches roles yet again, returning to the counterattack. 55 ♜c5 ♖b2 56 a5 ♖xf2 57 gxf4 ♖xf4 58 a6 ♖f8 59 a7 ♖a8 60 ♜c6 g5

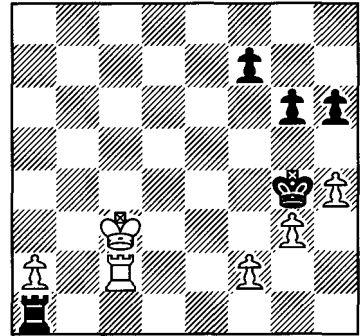


61 hxg5 (*Fritz* initially thinks 61 h5 offers better winning chances, but after 61...♜xh5 62 ♜b7 ♖xa7+ the table-base confirms that the position is a draw, whichever way White recaptures on a7) 61...hxg5 62 ♜b7 ♖xa7+ 63 ♜xa7 ♜f4 64 ♜b6 g4 65 ♜c5 g3, and the position is a draw.

Another try here is Sadler's 53 ♖a3 (instead of 53 ♜b4). The idea is to try to induce Black to exchange on g3, which stabilizes White's kingside. Even so, it

seems that Black can hold, after 53...♖a8 54 ♜d4 ♖d8+! (not 54...♖a5 55 ♜e4 h5 56 gxf4 ♜xh4 57 ♖a1 and White looks to be winning) 55 ♜e5 ♖d2 56 gxf4 ♖xf2 57 a5 ♖xf4 58 a6 ♖f8 59 a7 ♖a8 60 ♜f6 g5! 61 hxg5 hxg5 62 ♖a4+ ♜h5 and draws.

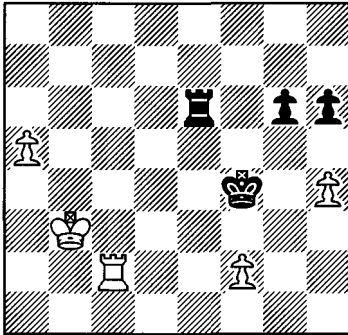
50 ♜c3



50...g5?

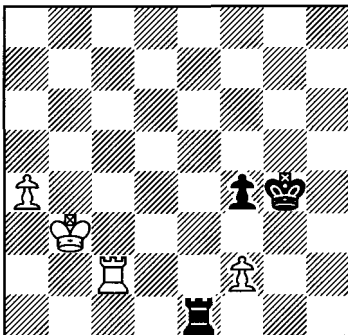
This is a further mistake, after which Black is definitely lost, although it takes some study-like play by White to prove it. Clearly, Black should have played 50...f5. Fine merely writes that this "was better", without analysing further, or saying whether it is sufficient to draw. By comparison with the position examined in the note to White's 47th move, here Black's rook is on a1 rather than d1. This allows White to gain a tempo with 51 ♜b2 (51 ♜b3 ♖b1+ is the line examined in the note to White's 47th) and it seems to me that White is now winning. Compared with the line after White's 47th, here the white rook is excellently placed on c2, because he can always answer Black's ...f5-f4 break with ♖c4.

This appears to hold up Black's counterplay enough for White to win, e.g. 51...♖e1 52 a4 ♖e6 53 ♔b3 ♕f3 (53...♞b6+ 54 ♕a3 f4 is still met by 55 ♞c4, e.g. 55...g5 56 a5 ♞a6 57 ♕b4 and Black has no real threats on the kingside) 54 a5 f4 55 gxf4 ♕xf4



56 ♕b4 g5 57 hxg5 hxg5 58 ♞a2 ♞e8 59 a6 ♞a8 60 ♕c5 with a simple win – Black has no counterplay.
51 hxg5 hxg5 52 ♕b2 ♖e1 53 a4

Now Black's counterplay is a couple of tempi slower, and there is also one less pawn each on the kingside, which enables White to squeeze out a win.
53...f5 54 ♕b3 f4 55 gxf4 gxf4

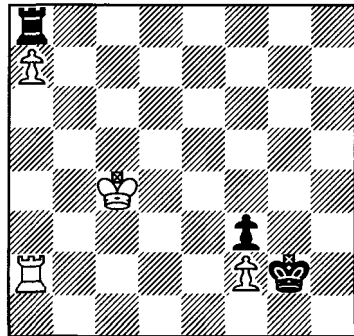


See the last note – compared with earlier variations, there is no white h-pawn, about to drop, and no black h-pawn, about to become a dangerous passed pawn.

56 a5 f3 57 a6 ♕h3

Obviously, Black's only hope is to give up his rook for the a-pawn and win the white f-pawn with his king. In order to do this, Black needs to sacrifice on a7, at a moment when White must recapture with the rook.

58 a7 ♞e8 59 ♞a2 ♞a8 60 ♕c4 ♕g2



Now we begin to see White's problem. If his king strays too far towards the a-pawn, Black will be able to sacrifice on a7 and draw the resulting king and rook vs king and pawn position.

61 ♕c5!

61 ♕b5? ♞xa7 62 ♞xa7 ♕xf2 is a draw, whereas after the text, the white king is close enough to get back and stop the f-pawn, after 61...♞xa7 62 ♞xa7 ♕xf2 63 ♕d4 ♕e2 64 ♞a2+ ♕e1 65 ♕e3.

61...♞c8+!

This is obviously the only chance, else White simply marches his king to

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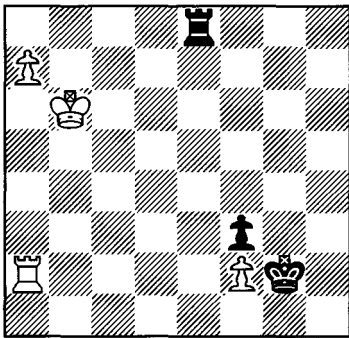
b7 and wins the enemy rook, whilst his own rook defends the f-pawn.

62 ♖b6

It looks as though Black must resign, but now he reveals that he still has another shot in his locker.

62...♞e8!

Now Black is prepared for lateral checks after 63 ♖b7 ♞e7+ 64 ♖b8 ♞e8+ etc., whilst his rook is also ready to come to e2, in certain circumstances.



63 ♖c6!!

A magnificent move, which places Black in zugzwang. The obvious way for White to proceed is 63 ♞c2, preparing to use the rook to shelter his king against the lateral checks. Thus, a waiting move such as 63...♖f1? would fail to 64 ♖b7 ♞e7+ 65 ♖b8 ♞e8+ 66 ♞c8 and the a-pawn queens. After the further moves 66...♞xc8+ 67 ♖xc8 ♖xf2 68 a8♞ White wins the resulting queen vs bishop's pawn position, because the pawn is only on the sixth rank rather than the seventh. Likewise, not the immediate 63...♞e2? when 64 ♞xe2 fxe2 65 a8♞+ is check – a crucial detail.

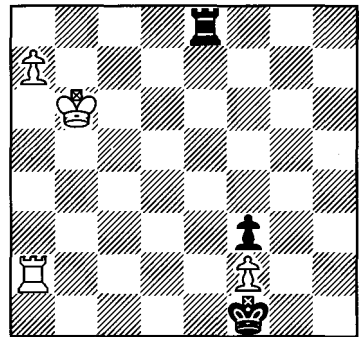
However, Black can instead defend after 63 ♞c2 by 63...♞e6+! 64 ♖b7 ♞e2!. Now this is playable, since the white king blocks the long diagonal, so 65 ♞xe2 fxe2 66 a8♞ is not check, whilst 65 a8♞ ♞xc2 is also a draw.

After 63 ♖c6!! Black has no choice but to wait with his king, whilst maintaining the attack on the f-pawn.

63...♖f1

At first sight, it may not be obvious why this makes any difference to White's dilemma, but we will see that it does. The rook checks 63...♞e6+? 64 ♖d7 and 63...♞c8+? 64 ♖b7 both lose at once. Similarly, 63...♞e2? fails to 64 a8♞, since the rook on a2 is defended; the ♞e2 idea only works when White has brought his rook to c2, where it is undefended.

64 ♖b7! ♞e7+ 65 ♖b6 ♞e8



66 ♞c2!

Now we see the difference. The threat is 67 ♖b7 ♞e2 and now 68 ♞c1+! which is why the king stands badly on the back rank. Consequently, Black must return his king to g2.

66...♔g2

If we compare this position with that arising after Black's 62nd move, we see that White has gained a tempo – his rook is already on c2.

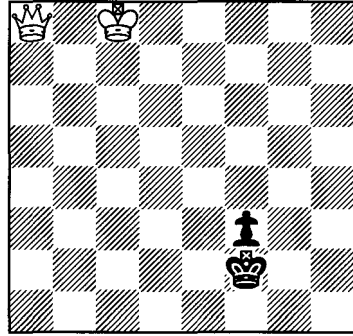
67 ♖c7!!

It is still too early for 67 ♖b7? ♜e2 but after the text, Black once again finds himself in zugzwang.

67...♜e7+

As we know, moving the king to the back rank loses after 67...♔f1 68 ♖b7 ♜e2 69 ♜c1+!, whilst 67...♜e2? 68 ♜xe2 fxe2 69 a8♚+ is again check. Moving the rook off the e-file, for example with 67...♜h8, deprives Black of the resource ...♜e2, so now 68 ♔b7 ♜h7+ 69 ♔b8 ♜h8+ 70 ♜c8 wins. The only other king move is 67...♔h2, but now the king does not attack the f-pawn, and Black is a crucial tempo too slow after 68 ♔b7 ♜e2 69 ♜c6 ♜e8 70 a8♚ ♜xa8 71 ♔xa8 ♔g2 72 ♜c2 etc.

68 ♔b8 ♜e8+ 69 ♜c8 ♜xc8+ 70 ♔xc8 ♔xf2 71 a8♚



And, as we know, this is a theoretical win.

71...♔e3 72 ♚d5 ♔f2

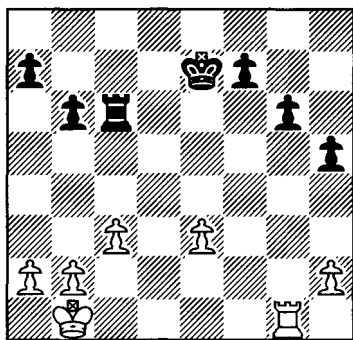
After 72...♔e2 White forces the king in front of the pawn by 73 ♚e4+ ♔f2 and then brings up his king.

73 ♔d7 ♔g3 74 ♔e6 f2 75 ♚h1! 1-0

A really magnificent endgame by Alatortsev. His conduct of the final stage, with rook and two pawns against rook and one, is a model of precise calculation, and illustrates very well the subtleties that can be concealed in an outwardly simple position.

Game 26
C. Schlechter-A. Rubinstein
San Sebastian 1912

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 ♗f6 4 ♗g5 dxe4 5
 ♗xe4 ♗bd7 6 ♗f3 ♗e7 7 ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 8
 ♗d3 b6 9 ♗e5 ♗b7 10 ♗b5+ c6 11 ♗xc6+
 ♗xc6 12 ♗xc6 ♖d5 13 ♗e5 ♖xg2 14 ♖f3
 ♖xf3 15 ♗xf3 ♖c8 16 0-0-0 ♗d5 17 ♗xe7
 ♗xe7 18 ♗b1 ♖hd8 19 ♖hg1 g6 20 ♗e5
 ♗b4 21 c3 ♗c6 22 ♗xc6+ ♖xc6 23 ♖d3
 ♖d5 24 ♖h3 h5 25 ♖f3 e5 26 dxe5 ♖xe5
 27 ♖e3 ♖xe3 28 fxe3



Here, Black has no material advantage, but he has the superior pawn formation. White's two isolated pawns will result in his rook being tied down to passive defence, whereupon Black will be able to use his greater piece activity to exploit his kingside pawn majority. White's majority on the queenside is a healthy one, which can yield a passed pawn, but the passivity of his pieces means that they will be unable to support the passed pawn as effectively as Black is able to do with his. In

the end, this makes all the difference. Rubinstein's handling of the ending is peerlessly accurate.

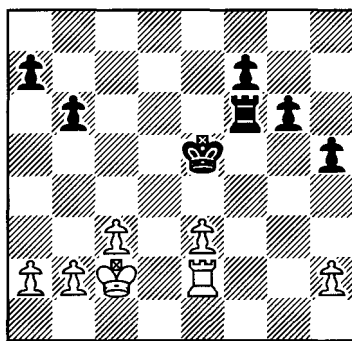
28...♗e6!

Immediately fastening onto the white pawn weakness and forcing the enemy rook to take up a passive position.

29 ♖e1 ♖f6

Now the threat is 30...♖f2, which forces another passive white response. At the same time, Black frees the path for his king to advance down the e-file.

30 ♖e2 ♗e6 31 ♗c2 ♗e5



32 c4

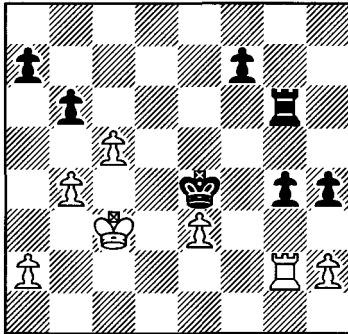
Schlechter tries to get his pawns moving at once, to create counterplay. Trying to keep the king out with 32 ♗d3 is simply met by 32...♖d6+ followed by 33...♗e4, whilst Fine shows that passive defence with 32 ♗d2 is also hopeless after 32...♗e4 33 ♗e1 ♖f3

34 ♔d2 g5 35 c4 g4 36 b4 h4 37 c5 bxc5
38 bxc5 ♜f5! and the c-pawn is lost,
with no release of the pressure. This
variation is instructive, in demonstrat-
ing what we said in the opening com-
ments: even if White creates a passed
pawn out of his queenside majority, his
passive pieces are unable to support it
adequately.

32...♙e4 33 b4 g5 34 ♔c3 g4 35 c5 h4

We see the same phenomenon
again. White has his passed pawn, but
it is going nowhere because it lacks
support, whereas Black's kingside ma-
jority is about to produce a passed
pawn, powerfully supported by its king.

36 ♜g2 ♜g6



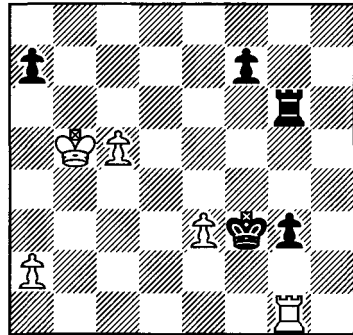
The active black rook does double
duty, both protecting his own soon-to-

be-passed pawn, and holding up the
enemy's.

37 ♔c4

White's only hope is to use his king
to support the c-pawn. His rook will
have to be sacrificed for the black g-
pawn.

37...g3 38 hxg3 hxg3 39 ♔b5 bxc5 40
bxc5 ♙f3 41 ♜g1

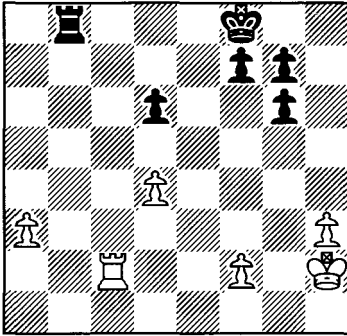


41...a6+! 0-1

A nice final touch, which holds up
White's counterplay for a couple of vi-
tal moves. Now the white king must
spend two tempi transferring to d5,
before his c-pawn becomes a real
threat; meanwhile, Black annexes the
white rook: 42 ♔c4 g2 43 ♔d5 ♙f2 44
♜xg2+ ♜xg2 45 c6 ♔xe3 followed by
46...♜c2, with a simple win.

Game 27
R. Spielmann-A. Rubinstein
 St Petersburg 1909

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♜c6 3 ♟b5 a6 4 ♟a4 ♜f6
 5 0-0 ♟e7 6 ♜e1 b5 7 ♟b3 d6 8 c3 ♟g4
 9 h3 ♟h5 10 d3 0-0 11 ♜bd2 d5 12
 exd5 ♜xd5 13 ♜f1 ♟f6 14 g4 ♟g6 15
 g5 ♟e7 16 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 17 ♜xe5 ♜b6 18
 d4 ♜d7 19 ♜e1 ♟xg5 20 ♟xg5 ♜xg5+
 21 ♜g4 ♜d8 22 ♜g3 ♜f6 23 ♜f3 ♜d7
 24 ♟h2 a5 25 a3 ♜ab8 26 ♜e5 ♜fe8 27
 ♜g1 b4 28 ♜xa5 bxc3 29 ♜xc3 ♜e4 30
 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 31 ♜d5 ♜e7 32 ♜c5 ♜e2 33
 ♜g3 ♜d6 34 ♜xd6 cxd6 35 ♜c7 ♜xb2
 36 ♜gc1 ♟f8 37 ♟c2 ♜a2 38 ♟xg6 hxg6
 39 ♜1c2 ♜xc2 40 ♜xc2

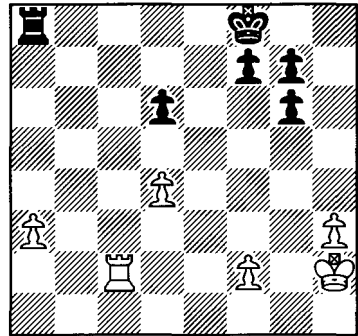


This is one of Rubinstein’s most famous achievements in the field of rook and pawn endings. Although modern analysis has revealed several drawing opportunities for White, these do not really detract significantly from the value of the ending. Indeed, from an instructional viewpoint, they are quite helpful, because the thing they all have

in common is that they involve White activating his rook at the critical moment, even at the cost of material. This, above all, is the great lesson of this ending.

Fine makes the point about this position that, from a structural point of view, White ought to stand better, because he has an outside passed pawn, whereas Black’s 3-2 kingside majority contains a doubled pawn. However, White also has four pawn islands against two, and, crucially, it is Black’s move, which means that he will be the first to take an active position with his rook.

40... ♜a8!

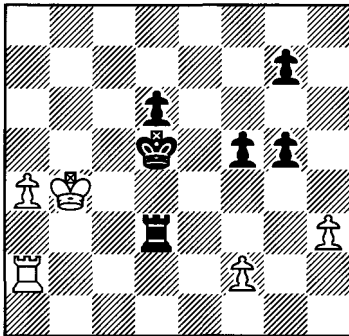


41 ♜c3?

This is already the first critical moment of the ending. On the principle that “rooks belong behind passed pawns”, it is obvious that 41 ♜a2! is the

move White would like to play, but the problem is that it involves a pawn sacrifice after 41...♖a4. It is understandable that Spielmann should have been reluctant to play the ending a pawn down, and felt that he would have more drawing chances with equal material, but it appears that he was simply mistaken. The analysis of the resulting position can be very lengthy, but a typical line runs as follows: 42 ♔g3 ♖xd4 43 a4 ♖b4 44 a5 ♖b7 45 a6 ♖a7 46 ♔f4 ♔e7 47 ♔e4 ♔e6 48 ♖a5 and Black cannot make progress, as his pieces are simply too passive.

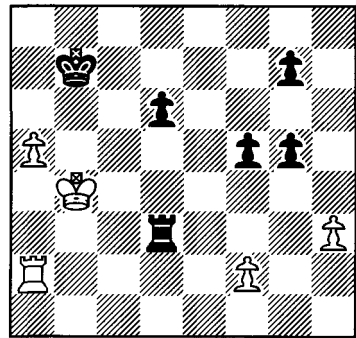
Analysts such as Fine and Smyslov/Levenfish also consider a more subtle approach by Black, but that too seems only enough for a draw: 42...♔e7 43 ♔f3 ♔e6 44 ♔e4 g5 45 ♖a1 f6 46 ♖a2 f5+ 47 ♔d3 ♔d5 48 ♔c3 ♖c4+ 49 ♔b3! ♖xd4 50 a4 ♖d3+ 51 ♔b4 and now:



a) 51...♖xh3 52 a5 ♖h8 53 a6 ♖a8 54 a7 ♔e4 55 ♔b5 ♔f3 56 ♔b6. Smyslov and Levenfish stop here, with the assessment “=”. This is confirmed by the

further variation 56...g4 57 ♔b7 ♖xa7+ 58 ♔xa7 f4 59 ♖d2 g3 60 fxg3 fxg3 61 ♖xd6 g2 62 ♖g6 and White gives his rook for the two black pawns.

b) 51...♔c6 52 a5 ♔b7 This time, the black king does guard duty on the enemy passed pawn, but here, too, White’s all-round advantage in piece activity yields sufficient counterplay to draw.



53 ♖e2! An important moment. The white rook gives up supporting the passed pawn and switches over to hunting Black’s weak pawns. As Mark Dvoretsky has observed of endgames in general, especially rook endings, weak pawns have a tendency to get exchanged off for one another. 53...♖xh3 54 ♖e7+ ♔a6 55 ♖xg7 ♖h4+ 56 ♔c3 ♔xa5 57 ♖xg5 ♖f4 58 ♖g6 d5 59 ♖d6 ♖xf2 60 ♖xd5+ ♔a4 61 ♔d3 with a drawn rook and pawn vs rook position (Fine).

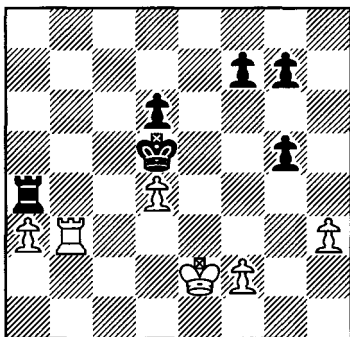
41...♖a4 42 ♖d3

Now White has adopted an entirely passive set-up, and Black is free to strengthen his position.

42...♖e7 43 ♔g3 ♕e6 44 ♖f3 ♔d5 45 ♖e2 g5!

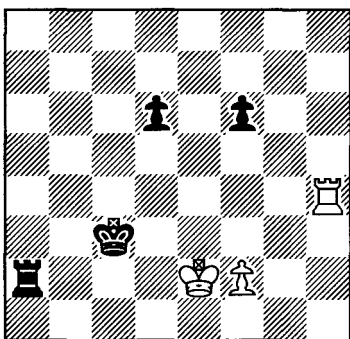
45...♞xd4? 46 ♖e3! forces a king and pawn ending, in which the strength of the outside passed pawn ensures White at least a draw.

46 ♞b3



46...f6

46...♗d4 47 ♞b7 is dismissed by Fine as “a fairly certain draw”, but Smyslov and Levenfish continue the line with 47...f6 48 ♞xg7 ♞xa3 49 h4 gxh4 50 ♞g4+ ♖c3 51 ♞xh4 ♞a2+ and claim that “...in our opinion, White would have to fight hard to hold this position.”



With the aid of the recently available seven-man endgame tablebases, it can now be stated with certainty that this position is indeed winning for Black. The tablebase’s main line runs as follows: 52 ♖e1 d5 53 ♞h3+ ♖c4 54 ♞g3 d4 55 ♞f3 ♞a6! 56 ♖e2 ♞b6! 57 ♖d2 ♖d5 58 ♞f4 ♖e5! 59 ♞f3 f5 60 ♞h3 ♞b2+ 61 ♖e1 ♖e4 62 ♖f1 f4 63 ♞h6 d3 64 ♖g2 ♞b4 65 f3+ ♖d4 66 ♞d6+ ♖c3 67 ♖f1 ♞b2 68 ♞e6 ♞e2! 69 ♞f6 ♖d2 70 ♞g6 ♖e3 71 ♞d6 ♞f2+ 72 ♖g1 ♞xf3 and wins.

So, objectively speaking, Rubinstein could have won by taking on d4, whereas, as we will see, his slower choice allows White a further drawing chance later in the ending. Even so, it is hard to criticize him too severely, since it has taken many decades and a major advance in computing power to prove that the simplifying variation wins for Black. From a practical, over-the-board standpoint, his choice of 46...f6 is very understandable.

47 ♖e3 ♖c4 48 ♞d3 d5 49 ♖d2 ♞a8

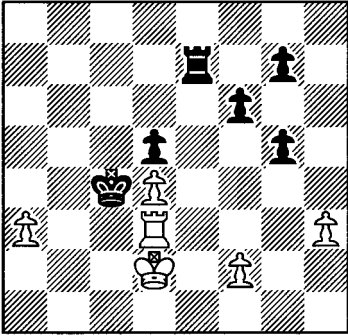
With the white rook immobilized, Rubinstein starts probing with his own rook, hoping for a zugzwang.

50 ♖c2

The first point of Black’s last is 50 ♖e3 ♞b8! and the rook will penetrate to b2.

50...♞a7 51 ♖d2 ♞e7!

Now it is zugzwang. 52 ♖c2 leads to a lost pawn ending after 52...♞e2+ 53 ♞d2 ♞xd2+ 54 ♖xd2 ♖b3! so White must surrender the d4-pawn.



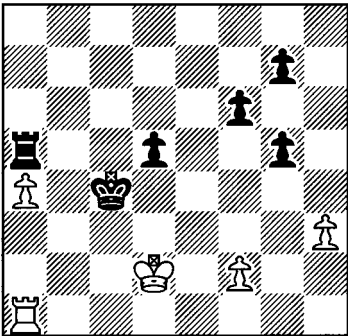
52 ♖c3+ ♕xd4 53 a4! ♜a7 54 ♜a3

At least White has managed to get his rook behind the passed a-pawn, but it is obvious that he has a much inferior version of what he could have had by playing 41 ♜a2.

54...♜a5!

In such positions, it is always useful to stop the enemy passed pawn as far back as possible, so as to reduce counterplay to a minimum.

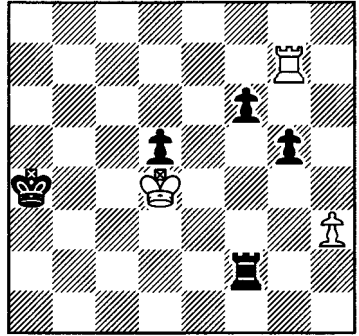
55 ♜a1 ♕c4



56 ♕e3

Spielmann defends passively again, but here, too, he would probably have done better to “go active” with 56

♜c1+. Smyslov and Levenfish then analyse 56...♕b4 57 ♜b1+ ♕xa4 58 ♕d3 ♜c5 59 ♕d4 ♜c2 60 ♜b7 ♜xf2 61 ♜xg7 as offering White drawing chances.



Continuing this analysis further, 61...♜d2+ 62 ♕c5 ♕b3 63 ♜f7 (63 ♜d7 ♕c3 64 ♜xd5 ♜d3 65 ♜f5 ♜xh3 is a tablebase win) 63...d4 64 ♜xf6 ♕c3 and the d-pawn looks too strong, but even here, 65 ♜a6 ♕d3 66 ♕d5 ♕e3 67 ♜e6+ ♕f3 68 ♜f6+ ♕g3 69 ♜g6 draws.

On balance, then, it appears that Spielmann could probably still have drawn by activating his rook at this moment. This is the second chance in the game that he could have done so. After his passive choice in the game, he will have no further chances.

56...d4+ 57 ♕d2 ♜f5!

The start of the decisive stage. The king will take over the task of blockading the white passed pawn, whilst the black rook will win another pawn on the kingside.

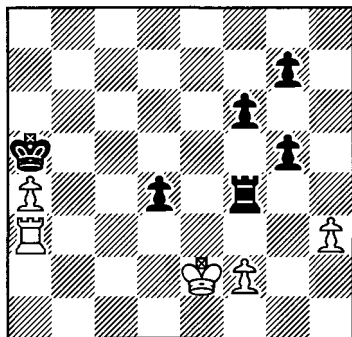
58 ♕e1

Now it is too late to give up material in order to get the a-pawn marching:

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

58 a5 ♖xf2+ 59 ♔e1 ♜b2 60 a6 ♜b8 61 a7 ♜a8 62 ♔d2 ♔c5 and Black simply trades his d-pawn for the a-pawn, with a winning 3v1 majority on the other flank (doubled g-pawns notwithstanding).

58...♔b4 59 ♔e2 ♔a5 60 ♜a3 ♜f4



61 ♜a2

If the white king defends the h-pawn, then the combined force of the black king and d-pawn decide: 61 ♔f1 ♜h4 62 ♔g2 ♔b4 63 ♜a1 d3 64 a5 d2 65 a6 ♜h8 66 a7 ♜a8 67 ♔f1 ♜xa7! etc.

61...♜h4 62 ♔d3

62 ♜a3 ♔b4 63 ♜a1 ♜xh3 64 a5 ♜h8 65 a6 ♜a8 66 a7 ♔b5 wins as in the note to White's 58th move.

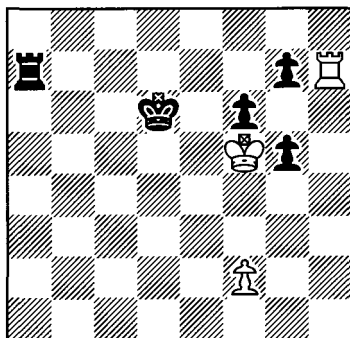
62...♜xh3+ 63 ♔xd4 ♜h4+ 64 ♔d3 ♜xa4

Now the ending is a theoretical win.

65 ♜e2 ♜f4 66 ♔e3 ♔b6 67 ♜c2 ♔b7 68 ♜c1 ♜a4 69 ♜h1

If he maintains the cut-off on the c-file, Black just plays ...♜a6-c6.

69...♔c6 70 ♜h7 ♜a7 71 ♔e4 ♔d6 72 ♔f5



72...g6+!

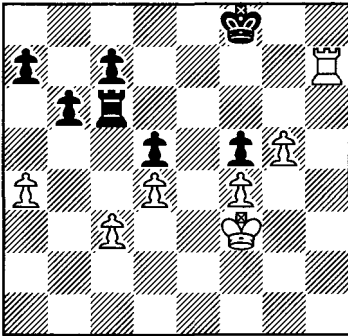
The last tactic to wrap things up.

73 ♔xg6 ♜xh7 74 ♔xh7 ♔e5 75 ♔g6 g4 0-1

One of Rubinstein's most famous rook endings, and still a marvellous example of the more active rook. However, the analysis shows that at two different points White could have drawn, had he seized the chance to activate his rook at the cost of a pawn. This is the single biggest lesson of the ending.

Game 28
J. Capablanca-S. Tartakower
 New York 1924

1 d4 e6 2 ♘f3 f5 3 c4 ♘f6 4 ♙g5 ♙e7 5
 ♘c3 0-0 6 e3 b6 7 ♙d3 ♙b7 8 0-0 ♖e8 9
 ♗e2 ♘e4 10 ♙xe7 ♘xc3 11 bxc3 ♗xe7
 12 a4 ♙xf3 13 ♗xf3 ♘c6 14 ♖fb1 ♖ae8
 15 ♗h3 ♖f6 16 f4 ♘a5 17 ♗f3 d6 18
 ♖e1 ♗d7 19 e4 fxe4 20 ♗xe4 g6 21 g3
 ♙f8 22 ♙g2 ♖f7 23 h4 d5 24 cxd5 exd5
 25 ♗xe8+ ♗xe8 26 ♖xe8+ ♙xe8 27 h5
 ♖f6 28 hxg6 hxg6 29 ♖h1 ♙f8 30 ♖h7
 ♖c6 31 g4 ♘c4 32 g5 ♘e3+ 33 ♙f3 ♘f5
 34 ♙xf5 gxf5



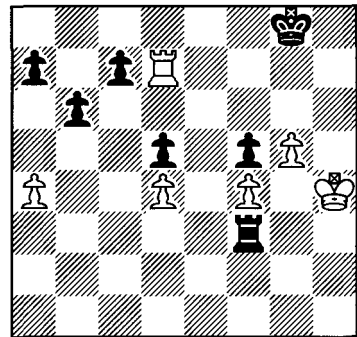
This is an extremely famous and also highly instructive position. With the white c-pawn indefensible, and Black's rook so active, it probably looked to the spectators as though things had gone wrong for the great Cuban legend, but in fact, Capablanca knew exactly what he was doing. What he had understood was that White's passed g-pawn, combined with the rook's control of the seventh rank,

would be turned into an irresistible force, if joined by the white king. Once this happens, a few extra black pawns on the queenside will be an irrelevance.

Play continued:

35 ♙g3! ♖xc3+

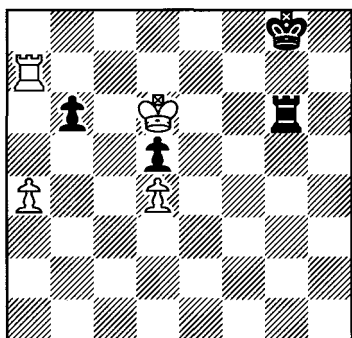
In issue 12/2003 of the Russian journal 64, Vladimir Goldin (a Russian master, not to be confused with the US-resident Grandmaster, Alexander Goldin) suggested the paradoxical move 35...♙g8!?. Now White has nothing better than 36 ♖d7, whereupon Black can now take on c3 in better circumstances than the game: 36...♖xc3+ 37 ♙h4 ♖f3.



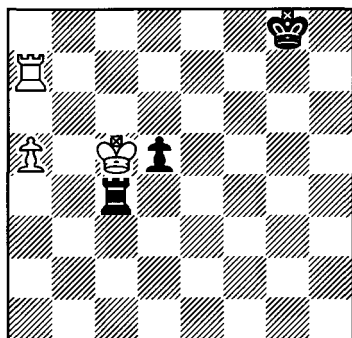
Now 38 g6 is less effective after 38...♖xf4+ 39 ♙g5 ♖e4 40 ♙f6 ♖e8!. This is the big difference from the game continuation. The black rook has managed to return to the back rank, with the f5-pawn still a distraction for White. 41 ♖g7+ ♙f8 42 ♖xc7 f4! 43 ♙g5

a6 44 ♖f7+ ♔g8 45 ♜xf4 ♜f8! 46 ♜h4 b5 and Black establishes his own passed pawn, and is in no danger (Goldin).

However, several months after Goldin's analysis appeared, Karpov's former trainer Igor Zaitsev, one of the Soviet chess school's leading analysts for many years, published a reply (see 64, 5/2004), in which he pointed out that White still seems to be winning after 35...♔g8. In the position of the last diagram, he should continue 38 ♔h5! ♜xf4 39 ♔g6 ♔f8 40 ♔f6 ♜e4 41 ♜f7+! ♔g8 42 ♜xc7 ♜e8 43 ♔xf5 (compared with the previous line, White has eliminated the black f-pawn earlier) 43...♜e4 44 ♔f6! ♜f4+ 45 ♔e5 (45 ♔g6 ♔f8 46 ♜xa7 ♜xd4 is less good) 45...♜g4 46 ♜xa7 ♜xg5+ 47 ♔d6 ♜g6+.



Thus far was all given by Goldin in his original article, when he claimed a draw after 48 ♔xd5 ♔f8. But Zaitsev found the much stronger 48 ♔c7! which appears to win, e.g. 48...♜g4 (48...♔f8 49 ♜b7! ♜g4 50 ♜xb6 ♜xd4 51 a5 wins) 49 ♔xb6 ♜xd4 50 a5 ♜b4+ 51 ♔c5 ♜c4+ and now:

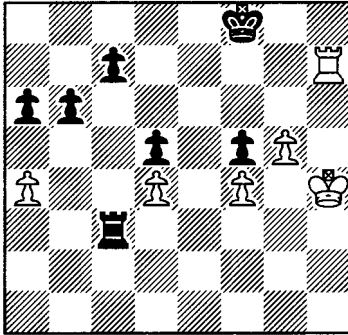


a) 52 ♔xd5? ♜g4! is the Vancura position, a well-known theoretical draw – something which appears to be unknown to *Fritz 12*, as the silicon beast persists in claiming White is winning!

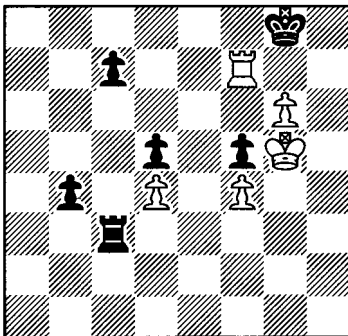
b) 52 ♔b5! ♜c1 and White, who is effectively playing with an extra king, is winning, as confirmed by the table-base. For example, 53 ♜d7 ♜b1+ 54 ♔c6 ♜c1+ 55 ♔b6 ♜b1+ 56 ♔c7 ♜c1+ 57 ♔d8! ♜a1 58 ♜xd5 and Black will not succeed in reaching one of the drawn rook and rook's pawn vs rook positions.

36 ♔h4 ♜f3?

This makes things easy for White, by removing the black rook from a position to give check along the sixth rank, and thus allowing the white king into f6, with devastating effect. Some 15 years ago, a large analytical discussion flared up, again in the pages of the Russian journal 64, over whether White can win against the toughest defence 36...a6! (once again, Vladimir Goldin deserves the credit for suggesting this defence).

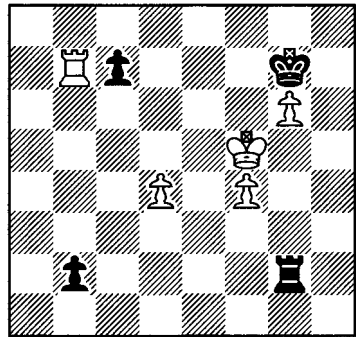


This move has two purposes: firstly, it starts the process of creating a passed pawn on the queenside; and secondly, the black rook remains ready to check on c6, thus preventing the white king marching into the black position in the way it does in the game. Thus, after the obvious 37 g6 there follows 37...b5 38 axb5 axb5 39 ♖g5 b4 40 ♜f7+! (this move, analysed by Kasparov in 64, issue 7/2003, is the best try; after 40 ♖xf5 b3 41 ♖e5 b2 42 ♜h8+ ♖g7 43 ♜b8 ♜c2 Black has enough counterplay to hold, e.g. 44 f5 ♜e2+ 45 ♖xd5 ♖f6 46 ♖c6 ♜c2+ 47 ♖d7 ♖xf5 48 g7 ♜g2 etc.) 40...♖g8.



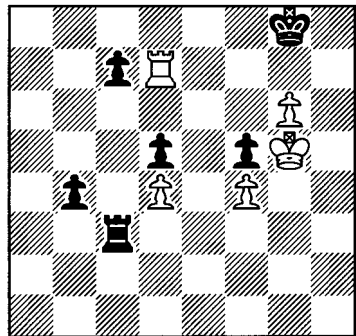
Now White has two tries:

a) 41 ♜xf5 ♜g3+! 42 ♖h5 (42 ♖f6? ♜g4! – Barsky – places White in a curious zugzwang, where he must lose a pawn) and now the leading Russian study composer Oleg Pervakov found a study-like draw with 42...♜h3+! 43 ♖g4 b3!! 44 ♜xd5 b2 45 ♜b5 ♜h2 46 ♜b7 ♖g7 47 ♖g5 ♜g2+ 48 ♖f5

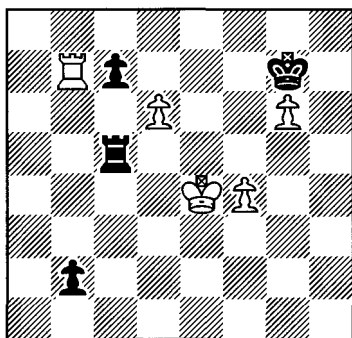


48...♖h6! 49 d5 ♜d2 50 ♖f6 ♜xd5 51 ♜xb2 ♜d6+ 52 ♖e5 ♖xg6 with a theoretical draw – even if he loses the c-pawn, Black can reach the Philidor position, with his king in front of the white pawn.

b) White's second try is 41 ♜d7,



but here, too, Kasparov analysed the position to a draw: 41...b3 42 ♖xd5 b2! 43 ♖b5 ♖c2! 44 ♖b7 ♔g7! with a position similar to the previous variation. After 45 d5 (threat 46 d6) 45...♗g2+ 46 ♔xf5 White has effectively gained a tempo over the previous variation, in which the black king already stood on h6. However, this is still not enough to win: 46...♖c2! (even 46...♔h6 47 d6 ♖xg6 48 dxc7 ♖c6 49 ♖xb2 ♖xc7 holds) 47 d6 ♖c5+! 48 ♔e4 (48 ♔e6 ♖c6 49 ♖xc7+ ♖xc7 50 dxc7 b1♗ 51 c8♗ ♗e4+ is a drawn queen ending)

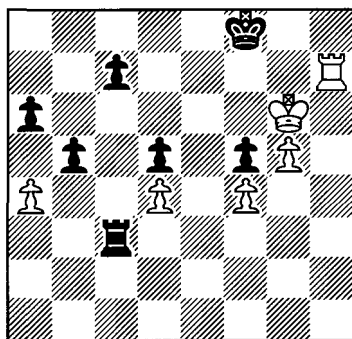


48...♖c6! (49...♖b6 is the threat) 49 ♖xb2 ♔xg6 50 d7 ♖d6 and a draw.

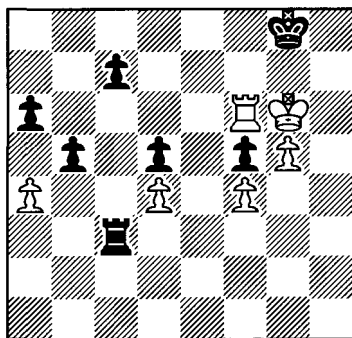
This all resulted from meeting 36...a6 with 37 g6, analogously with the game. Another try analysed in the pages of 64 is 37 ♔h5 b5. Now after 38 axb5 axb5 39 ♔g6 (39 g6? fails to 39...♖h3+ 40 ♔g5 ♖xh7 41 gxh7 ♔g7 when it is Black who wins!), there is 39...♔g8! (threatening 40...♖c6+) 40 ♖g7+ ♔f8 41 ♖f7+ ♔g8 42 ♖f6 b4 43 ♖a6 43...♖a3! drawing. White fares no better with 38 a5 ♖c6 39 g6 b4 40 ♔h6

b3 41 ♖h8+ ♔e7 42 ♖b8 ♖c2! 43 ♔g5 (43 ♖xb3? ♔f6) 43...b2 44 ♔xf5 ♖g2 and White has no way to strengthen his position.

It was again Igor Zaitsev who found the winning path for White after 36...a6. White should start with 37 ♔h5 b5, and then play 38 ♔g6!!.



The preliminary pawn exchange on b5 is weaker. 38...♔g8 (now 38...bxa4 is met by 39 ♔xf5 a3 40 ♖h6! and the rook gets behind the a-pawn in time, e.g. 40...c6 41 ♖h8+ ♔e7 42 ♖a8 a2 43 ♖xa6 ♖c2 44 g6 with a winning position: 44...♖g2 45 ♖a7+ ♔d6 46 ♔f6 etc.) 39 ♖g7+ ♔f8 40 ♖f7+ ♔g8 41 ♖f6!.



Now we see the point of refraining from the exchange on b5. White will capture the a6-pawn, at the same time threatening mate, and his combined force of king, rook and passed g-pawn will again be too strong, just as in the game continuation. For example, 41...b4 42 ♖xa6. The big difference with the line beginning 38 axb5 is that here, White has an extra pawn on a4. This cuts out the defence 42...♖a3, which Black had in the analogous position in the 38 axb5 variation. 42...♙f8 43 ♙f6 and the g-pawn will promote. Note how, in this variation, the excellently placed white rook on the sixth rank secures his king from lateral checks, which were one of the key features of Black's defensive plan.

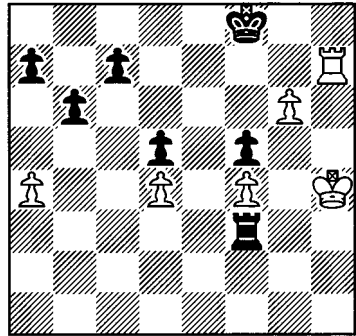
The only remaining question is whether, in view of Zaitsev's winning line, Black can meet 37 ♙h5 with the immediate 37...♖c6 (instead of 37...b5), so as to stop the white king entering on g6. However, this commits the rook too early, and White can now win by simply 38 g6, the difference being that Black no longer has a rook check on h3, as was the case in the line with 37...b5 38 axb5 axb5 39 g6?

The conclusion of this long analytical diversion is that White appears to be winning even after 36...a6, but this move would have rendered Capablanca's task immeasurably more difficult than in the game.

37 g6!

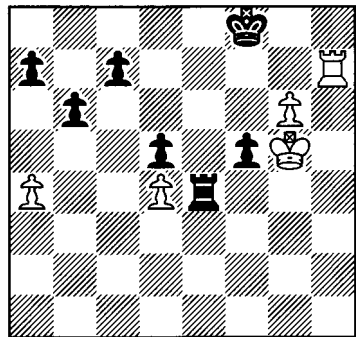
Now things are much more

straightforward, and the essence of White's idea is seen with full clarity. His combined force of king, rook and pawn is too strong.



37...♖xf4+ 38 ♙g5 ♖e4

38...♖xd4 is no better. After 39 ♙f6 ♙e8 40 ♖xc7 ♖xa4 41 g7 ♖g4 42 ♖xa7, White will win the black rook with 43 g8♙ next move.



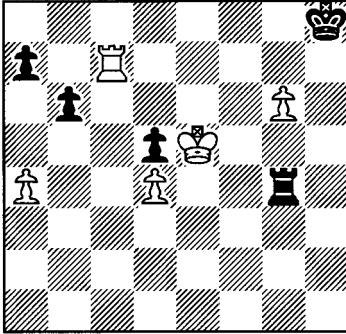
39 ♙f6!

Note that 39 ♙xf5? would be a serious mistake, as it would expose the white king to checks from behind, e.g. 39...♖xd4 40 ♙f6 ♖f4+ etc. Leaving the black pawn on the board, to serve as an "umbrella" behind which to shelter the

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

white king, is a common theme in rook endings.

39...♔g8 40 ♖g7+ ♔h8 41 ♖xc7 ♖e8 42 ♔xf5 ♖e4 43 ♔f6 ♖f4+ 44 ♔e5 ♖g4



45 g7+! ♔g8

The king and pawn ending is hopeless after 45...♖xg7 46 ♖xg7 ♔xg7 47 ♔xd5 ♔f7 48 ♔d6 a6 49 ♔c6 etc.

46 ♖xa7 ♖g1

46...♖g5+ 47 ♔d6 is no help, as ♔c6 will pick up the b-pawn.

47 ♔xd5 ♖c1 48 ♔d6 ♖c2 49 d5 ♖c1 50 ♖c7 ♖a1 51 ♔c6 ♖xa4 52 d6 1-0

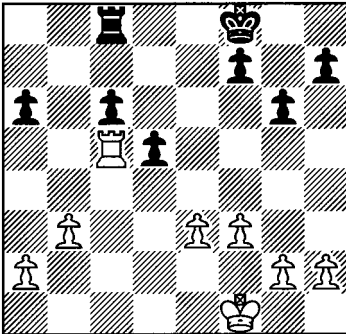
A very famous ending, from which generations of players have learned the strength of a passed pawn on the sixth rank, supported by its king and rook. The analytical discoveries made over the last 15 years, by various Russian players, have added a great deal of interest to this classic endgame.

Game 29
S.Flohr-M.Vidmar
Nottingham 1936

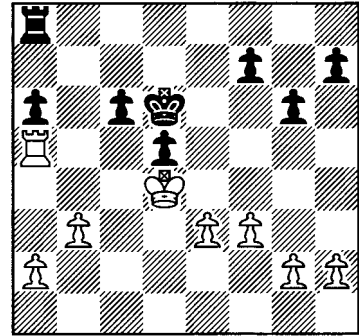
1 c4 e6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 d4 ♘f6 4 ♖g5 ♙e7 5
 e3 0-0 6 ♘f3 ♘bd7 7 ♚c2 c5 8 cxd5
 ♘xd5 9 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 10 ♘xd5 exd5 11
 ♙d3 g6 12 dxc5 ♘xc5 13 0-0 ♙g4 14
 ♘d4 ♚ac8 15 ♚d2 a6 16 ♙c2 ♚g5 17 f3
 ♙d7 18 ♚fe1 ♚fd8 19 ♚ad1 ♚f6 20 ♙b3
 ♙a4 21 ♙xa4 ♘xa4 22 ♚c1 ♘c5 23
 ♚ed1 ♚b6 24 ♘e2 ♘d7 25 ♚d4 ♚xd4
 26 ♘xd4 ♘e5 27 b3 ♙f8 28 ♙f1 ♚xc1
 29 ♚xc1 ♘c6 30 ♘xc6 ♚c8 31 ♚c5 bxc6

32 ♙e2 ♙e7 33 ♙d3 ♙d6 34 ♚a5 ♚a8
 35 ♙d4

White has achieved his first aim, of holding back the black c-pawn.



Just as in Games 26 and 27, the stronger side's advantage is based on the superior pawn formation, which allows him to post his pieces more actively than their opposite numbers. Flohr gives one of the classic demonstrations of how to handle such endings, but, just as in Spielmann-Rubinstein, the defender made things easier by failing to seize the opportunity to activate his rook when he had the chance.



35...f5!?

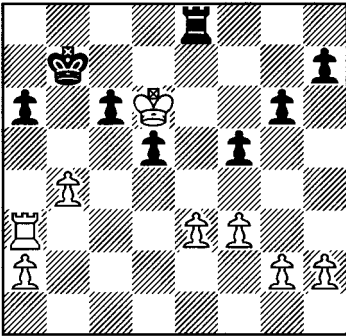
Fine criticized this, and claimed that after it, "...Flohr demonstrates that White can win by force". As we will see, this is not true, and Black's real error came on the next move. It is true that the text is positionally double-edged, because it weakens e5 and allows the white king a potential entry on the square. On the other hand, it prevents g2-g4. As Fine himself acknowledges, 35...♙c7 36 g4 actually forces the reply 36...f5 anyway, since Black cannot afford to allow his kingside to be clamped by g4-g5.

36 b4 ♚b8?

This passive move really does leave Black in desperate straits. Instead,

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

Black should take steps to activate his rook, by bringing over his king to effect a “changing of the guard”, with 36...♔c7, planning ...♔b6. It is true that the black king abandons the centre, but in rook endings, activating the rook is just so crucial that this must take priority. After 37 ♖c5 ♔b7 the black rook is free to roam, and has a target on e3. Play might continue 38 ♔d6 ♜e8 39 ♜a3.



Now Black has to decide how to continue his policy of seeking active counterplay:

a) The immediate 39...f4? fails, because after 40 exf4 ♜e2 41 g4 White will establish a winning passed pawn by f4-f5.

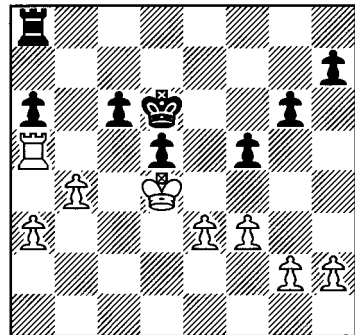
b) Smyslov and Levenfish analyse 39...d4!? (another very typical move for rook endings; Black sacrifices a pawn, in order to activate his rook still further) 40 exd4 ♜e2. They conclude that Black has sufficient counterplay after 41 ♜c3 ♜xg2 42 ♜xc6 ♜xh2 43 a4 g5 but Dvoretsky continues this line with 44 ♜c7+ ♔b6 45 ♜g7 and argues

that White maintains the advantage, because of the strength of his passed d-pawn. As in the Schlechter-Rubinstein example, we see here that White’s passed pawn is actively supported by his pieces, whereas Black’s passed kingside pawns lack the support of their king.

c) In view of his improvement at the end of this variation, Dvoretsky suggests as stronger still the move 39...g5!, preparing the break ...f4. The idea is to activate the black rook, without presenting White with a passed d-pawn. Now 40 ♜c3 f4 41 exf4 gxf4 42 ♜xc6 ♜e2 gives Black enough counterplay, as White lacks a strong passed pawn, whilst the alternative 40 g3 can be met by the ingenious 40...g4! 41 f4 ♜e4, with the idea of 42 ♜c3 ♜c4!. The point of all these lines is to activate the black rook at all costs, which appears to yield enough counterplay to hold.

Instead of all this, Vidmar tries to defend passively, but this proves inadequate.

37 a3 ♜a8

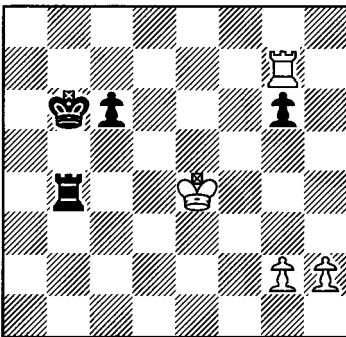


38 e4!

This is another typical idea in such positions, “widening the front”. White has to clear some space to give his king a route into the enemy position.

38...fxe4 39 fxe4 dxe4 40 ♖e4 ♖a7?

Here, Black misses his last chance to implement the defensive plan indicated above, and transfer his king to defend the a-pawn, so as to free his rook. It is less effective now than on move 36, but still offers some defensive chances after 40...♖c7!. Smyslov and Levenfish then give 41 ♖e5 (41 ♖f4 gets nowhere after 41...♖f8+! 42 ♖g5 ♖f2) 41...♖b6 42 ♖e7 a5! (offloading one of the weak pawns and preparing to activate the rook along the a-file) 43 ♖xh7 axb4 44 axb4 ♖a4 45 ♖g7 ♖xb4+.



Now Black has a passed pawn, which provides vital counterplay: 46 ♖f3 ♖h4 47 h3 ♖h6 (the rook goes temporarily passive, but while White brings up his king to exploit this, the black b-pawn starts rolling) 48 ♖f4 c5 49 ♖g5 ♖h8 50 ♖xg6+ ♖b5 51 ♖g7 c4 52 h4 ♖c8 and Black’s pawn is so dan-

gerous that White cannot win.

Probably White’s best winning chance is Dvoretzky’s more restrained approach 41 h4 ♖b6 42 g4 but he himself admits that it remains unclear whether White’s advantage is enough to win.

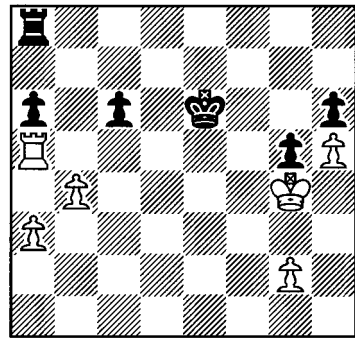
41 ♖f4

Now the position really is winning by force, and Flohr’s execution is highly instructive.

41...h6 42 h4 ♖e6 43 ♖g4 ♖a8 44 h5!

Forcing a breach.

44...g5



Now the h6-pawn is fixed as a weakness, but 44...gxh5+ 45 ♖xh5 is also hopeless, e.g. 45...♖g8 46 g4!.

45 g3!

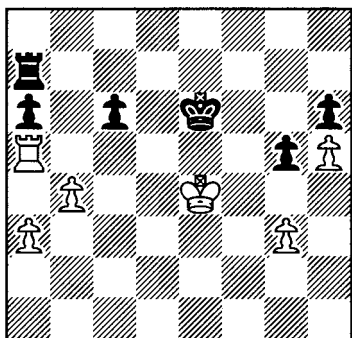
A very nice, typical “do not hurry” move. White takes control of the square f4, thus eliminating possible black counterplay, such as would follow from 45 ♖f3?! ♖f8+ 46 ♖e4 ♖f4+.

45...♖a7 46 ♖f3

Now the white king returns to the centre, to take up opposition vis-à-vis its enemy.

46...♖a8 47 ♔e4 ♜a7 48 ♔d4 ♔d6 49 ♔e4 ♔e6

Once again, a little repetition of moves, for the usual reasons – clock time and psychological effect.



50 ♜e5+

The final, decisive manoeuvre. The black king must give ground to one side or the other, whereupon the white king will enter.

50...♔d6

If 50...♔f6 then 51 ♜c5! ♜c7 52 ♜a5! ♜a7. White's last two moves have transferred his rook to a5 with tempo, and now his king penetrates on the queenside: 53 ♔d4 ♔e6 54 ♔c5 and wins.

51 ♜e8

Now ♜h8 is menaced.

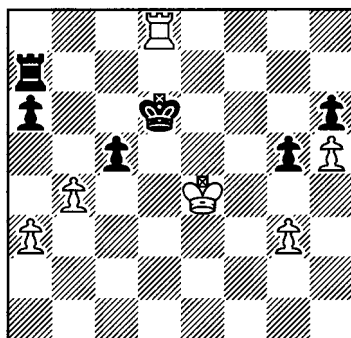
51...c5

51...♜e7+ 52 ♜xe7 ♔xe7 53 ♔e5 is a

hopeless king and pawn ending.

52 ♜d8+

Precise to the very end.



52...♔c6

The point of Flohr's last move is the line 52...♔c7 53 ♜h8 cxb4 54 ♜h7+ ♔b8 55 ♜xa7 ♔xa7 56 axb4 ♔b6 57 ♔f5 ♔b5 58 ♔g6 ♔xb4 59 ♔xh6 a5 60 ♔xg5 a4 61 h6 and White queens just in time to stop the a-pawn. A neat example of the value of accurate calculation in the endgame; no matter how slow and patient manoeuvring an endgame may involve, the stage is always reached when play becomes concrete, and accurate calculation is required.

53 ♜c8+

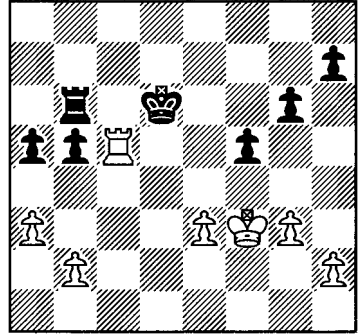
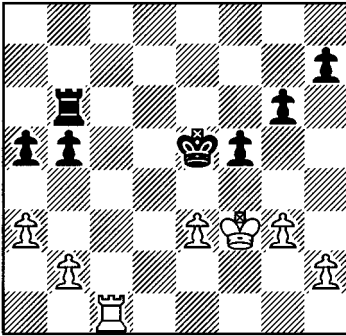
Now the c-pawn is lost.

53...♔b6 54 ♜xc5 ♜h7 55 ♜e5 ♔c6 56 ♜e6+ ♔b5 57 ♔f5 ♜f7+ 58 ♜f6 1-0

Game 30
U.Andersson-A.Miles
 Tilburg 1981

1 c4 c5 2 g3 g6 3 ♔g2 ♔g7 4 e3 e6 5 ♖c3
 ♜c6 6 ♜ge2 ♜ge7 7 d4 cxd4 8 ♜xd4 d5
 9 cxd5 ♜xd5 10 ♜xd5 ♜xd4 11 ♜c3 ♜c6
 12 ♚xd8+ ♜xd8 13 ♔d2 0-0 14 ♜c1 ♔d7
 15 0-0 ♔c6 16 ♜c2 ♔xg2 17 ♜xg2 ♜c6
 18 ♜e4 ♜fd8 19 ♔c3 ♜ac8 20 ♔xg7
 ♜xg7 21 ♜fc1 ♜b8 22 a3 a5 23 ♜c3 f5 24
 ♜c5 ♜d6 25 ♜b3 b5 26 ♜d3 ♜xd3 27
 ♜xd3 ♜b6 28 f4 ♜f6 29 ♜f3 e5 30 fxе5+
 ♜xe5+ 31 ♜xe5 ♜xe5

mean endgame player, by the way).
 32 ♜c5+ ♜d6

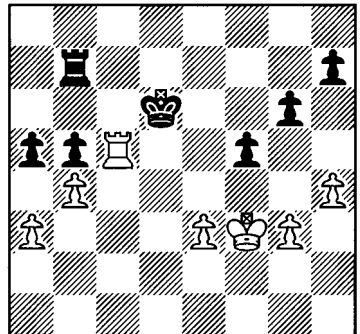


It seems barely credible that White should be able to win this position by force. Material is equal, and White even has the nominally weaker pawn structure, with the extra island on e3. But it is his move, as a result of which his rook is able to take up a more active position. This difference in activity proves enough for Andersson, the great endgame grinder of the modern era, to win the position, without a discernible mistake from his opponent (who was also no

33 b4!

Fixing b5, as well as securing the white rook in its active position. In common with the standard “two weaknesses” approach, White’s plan is to probe the black kingside, by threatening a king penetration via f4-g5, combined with the march of the white h-pawn.

33...♜b7 34 h4

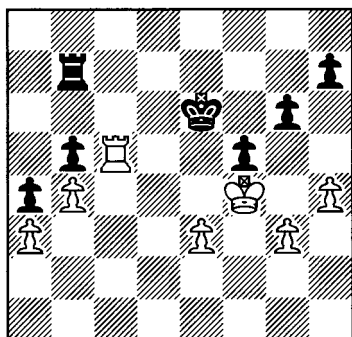


34...a4

The best chance. Although the defender is generally recommended to exchange pawns, in this case, 34...axb4 35 axb4 would simply reduce his hopes of counterplay. The text move fixes the white weakness on a3, so that Black has the idea of activating his rook at some point and going after that pawn.

35 ♖f4 ♖e6

Naturally, 35...h6? would just walk into the undermining blow 36 h5, after which the black kingside would cave in.

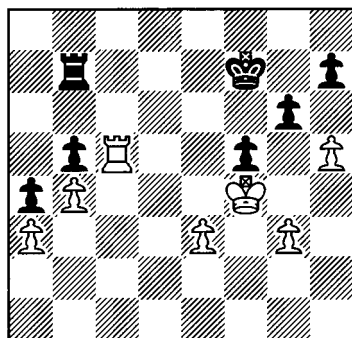


36 h5

With his pawn on h5, White now has two options: either to exchange on g6, creating a weakness on g6, or to advance the pawn to h6, which provides various options, such as attacking the h7-pawn, or even, in some extreme cases, a rook sacrifice on g6. The beauty of White's position is that he does not have to choose between these two options just yet, since he can stop ...g6-g5 from coming with check, whilst ...gxh5 would leave the black pawns too weak. That means White can retain both op-

tions and keep them hanging over Black's head, thereby making the latter's defensive task much more difficult.

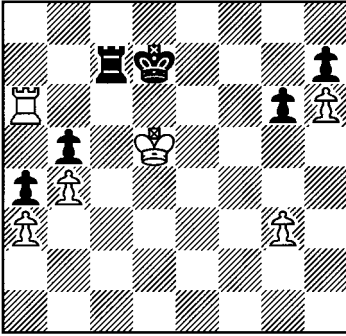
36...♖f6 37 ♖c6+ ♖f7 38 ♖c5



38...♖d7

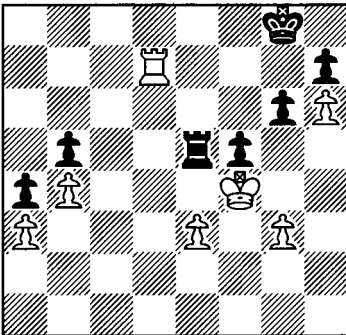
Kaufeld and Kern, in their recent book on Ulf Andersson, criticize this bid for activity, and instead recommend 38...♖f6. However, their suggested follow-up for White is unconvincing: 39 g4 g5+ 40 ♖f3 fxcg4+ 41 ♖xcg4 and now it seems to me that White has lost much of his advantage after the move 41...h6.

Instead, I think Andersson would have answered 38...♖f6 with 39 ♖c6+ ♖f7 40 h6! (40 hxg6+ hxg6 41 ♖g5 ♖e7 is much less convincing). Continued passive play by Black can be met by the plan of e3-e4, forcing the exchange of pawns, followed by a king advance to c5, for example. With the pawn on h6 a permanent thorn in Black's flesh, I do not think he will be able to hold the position, e.g. 40...♖e7 41 e4 ♖d7 42 ♖a6 fxe4 43 ♖xe4 ♖c7 44 ♖d5.



White will push his pawn to g5, and the various threats (including ♖a8-h8) will be too much. All of Black's pieces are hopelessly passive.

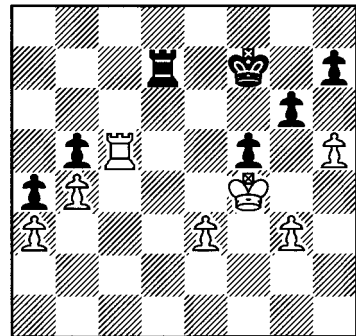
In the light of these variations, one's next thought is the defence 40...♞e7 stopping the e3-e4 advance, and meeting 41 ♜b6 with 41...♞e4+ 42 ♚f3 ♞e5. However, now we see the great power of the pawn on h6: 43 ♞b7+ ♚g8 44 ♞g7+ ♚h8 45 ♞d7 ♚g8 46 ♚f4!



and the white king marches into f6. After the further moves 46...♞e4+ 47 ♚g5 ♞xe3 (47...♞e6 48 ♞b7) 48 ♚f6 ♞e8 49 ♞g7+ ♚h8 50 ♞b7 Black is again hopelessly passive.

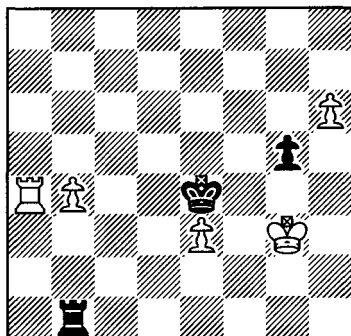
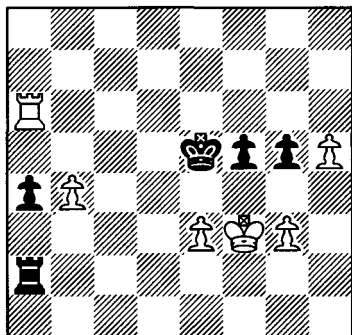
That only leaves the active bid 40...♞d7. This is similar to the game, with the differences that the white pawn on h6 is again an enormous strength, but on the other hand, White is slower in winning the b5-pawn. After 41 ♞b6 ♞d3 42 ♞xb5 ♞xa3 43 ♞b7+ ♚f6 44 ♞b6+ ♚f7 45 ♞a6 (44 ♞xh7 g5+! 45 ♚f3 g4+! forces the white king back and draws), White retains some winning chances, although it is not quite clear if he is actually winning by force.

All in all, it is possible that 38...♚f6 was slightly better than Miles' choice. However, I am certainly not surprised that Miles played what he did. We have already seen plenty of examples in this book where a timely bid for activity could have saved the weaker side in a rook ending. Miles' choice is therefore natural, whereas it is very counter-intuitive to allow the white pawn to h6 before seeking activity.



39 ♞xb5 ♞d3 40 ♞b7+ ♚f6
40...♚g8 41 h6 is much like variations examined above.
41 ♞xh7 g5+ 42 ♚f3 ♞xa3 43 ♞a7 ♞a2

44 ♖a6+ ♔e5



Black actually threatens mate in one!

45 g4 fxg4+ 46 ♔xg4 ♖g2+ 47 ♔h3 ♖b2

Defending the a-pawn is no help:
47...♖a2 48 h6 ♖a1 49 b5 is the simplest way to win.

48 ♖xa4 ♔e4 49 ♔g3 ♖b1

49...♔xe3 50 h6 ♖b1 51 ♖a3+! ♔e4
52 ♔g4 ♖g1+ 53 ♖g3 (Panchenko) is also winning for White.

50 h6

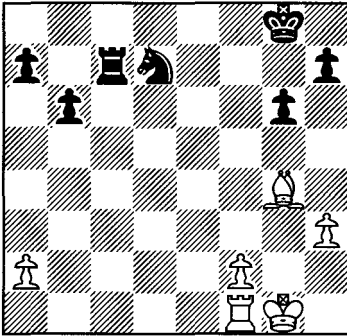
Black's position is hopeless, and he resists further mainly out of inertia.

50...♖g1+ 51 ♔f2 ♖h1 52 ♖a6 ♔d5 53 ♔g3 ♖h4 54 ♖g6 ♔e4 55 b5 ♔f5 56 ♖c6 ♖e4 57 ♔f2 ♖e7 58 b6 ♖b7 59 ♔g3 1-0

An almost magical display by Andersson, who beats a world-class grandmaster with consummate ease, from a position which many club players would probably assess as a complete draw. It is a perfect example of the value of activity in rook endings.

Game 31
M.Botvinnik-R.Fischer
Varna Olympiad 1962

1 c4 g6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 ♘f3 ♙g7 5 ♚b3 dxc4 6 ♚xc4 0-0 7 e4 ♙g4 8 ♙e3 ♘fd7 9 ♙e2 ♘c6 10 ♖d1 ♘b6 11 ♚c5 ♚d6 12 h3 ♙xf3 13 gxf3 ♖fd8 14 d5 ♘e5 15 ♘b5 ♚f6 16 f4 ♘ed7 17 e5 ♚xf4 18 ♙xf4 ♘xc5 19 ♘xc7 ♖ac8 20 d6 exd6 21 exd6 ♙xb2 22 0-0 ♘bd7 23 ♖d5 b6 24 ♙f3 ♘e6 25 ♘xe6 fxe6 26 ♖d3 ♘c5 27 ♖e3 e5 28 ♙xe5 ♙xe5 29 ♖xe5 ♖xd6 30 ♖e7 ♖d7 31 ♖xd7 ♘xd7 32 ♙g4 ♖c7



This game was one of the most famous of both players' careers. It was their only meeting over the board, played when Botvinnik was the reigning World Champion, and was of great personal and political significance for them both.

Despite being Black, Fischer had seized the advantage from the opening, refuting over the board some old opening analysis Botvinnik had made

some years earlier, when preparing for one of his world championship matches against Smyslov. In principle, Black is just a good pawn up and should win. The fact that White has the rook and bishop combination on an open board offers him little compensation in this case, since the black knight has such an excellent post on c5.

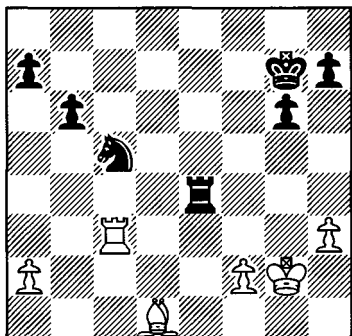
Fischer certainly thought he was winning easily, and this may well have influenced his play adversely – he thought it was going to be a little easier than was really the case.

33 ♖e1 ♙f7 34 ♙g2 ♘c5 35 ♖e3 ♖e7 36 ♖f3+

Botvinnik points out that, in principle, White would be happy to exchange rooks, if he could get his king to d4, bishop to c2 and pawn to f4. Then he would establish a barrier, which Black would find it hard to cross. Unfortunately, this plan cannot be realized, because of the poor position of the bishop on g4. After the sequence 36 ♙f3 h5! 37 ♖xe7+ (37 ♙c8 ♖c7) 37...♙xe7 38 ♙c8 ♙d8 he actually loses the bishop!

36...♙g7 37 ♖c3 ♖e4 38 ♙d1

White still wants to get his bishop to the important square c2, from where it dominates the black knight and eyes Black's kingside pawns.



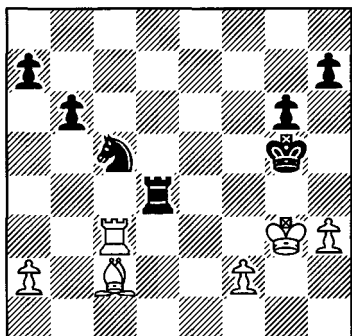
38...♖d4?!

And this allows White to achieve exactly that. Botvinnik was expecting the stronger 38...♖e1 when the bishop cannot come to c2 because of 39 ♔c2? ♜c1.

39 ♔c2 ♕f6 40 ♕f3 ♕g5

Here Botvinnik recommended 40...♕e5 with the idea of placing the king on d6, defending the knight, and then advancing the queenside pawns. He considered this would have won without undue trouble.

41 ♕g3



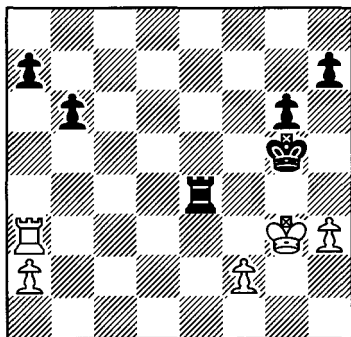
41...♗e4+?

This is a very impulsive decision, for

which Botvinnik severely criticized his opponent. Fischer clearly thought the position was an easy win, and according to Botvinnik, he made this very clear in the manner of his play, implying that it was tantamount to an insult for White to play on. Quite apart from the fact that he greatly underestimated White's resources in the resulting rook ending, this decision to exchange minor pieces was also very impractical. The players had now passed the time-control and were about to adjourn overnight. In such circumstances, it makes no sense at all to take a committal decision like this immediately before adjournment. The pragmatic approach for those days was to do nothing, just play a couple of waiting moves, adjourn the game, and then find the winning plan in home analysis. Botvinnik recommended 41...♖b4 42 a3 ♜d4 43 f3 a5 when White is virtually in zugzwang.

42 ♔xe4 ♜xe4 43 ♖a3

43 ♜c7 was more accurate here.



43...♜e7?!

Fischer was in no hurry to adjourn, considering his position easily won, and apparently keen to demonstrate this to both his opponent and the spectators. However, rook endings are notoriously difficult, even for such a great player as Fischer, and his hurried play soon spoils things. As Botvinnik pointed out, here Black could have played simply 43...a5 44 ♖b3 ♖b4 when the king and pawn ending is winning for Black: 45 ♖xb4 axb4 46 f4+ ♔f5 47 ♔f3 ♔e6 48 ♔e4 ♔d6 49 ♔d4 b5 and Black has the opposition.

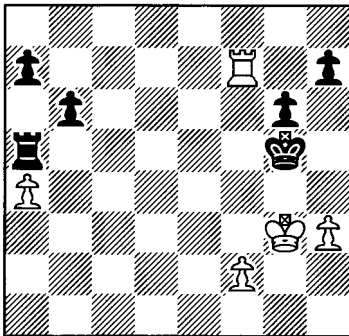
44 ♖f3 ♖c7 45 a4

Here the game was finally adjourned, and Fischer sealed his move.

45...♖c5

The strongest move. Botvinnik analyses 45...♖c4 46 a5! bxa5 47 ♖f7 a6 48 h4+ ♔h6 (48...♖xh4?? 49 f4+ ♔h5 50 ♖xh7 mate) 49 ♖d7 as a draw; White will play 50 ♖d6 and take the a6-pawn, after which Black cannot win.

46 ♖f7 ♖a5



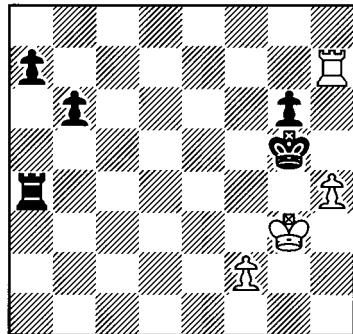
47 ♖xh7!!

This idea is the key to White's de-

fence. Passive play with 47 ♖f4 would allow Black to improve his position systematically, and there is no reason for White to hope to draw. The text, famously found by Geller during overnight analysis, is counter-intuitive, because it presents Black with two connected passed pawns. However, as we will see, it also forms the start of counterplay for White. Once the black queenside pawns start to move, White will be able to harass the black king with checks from b6 and b7. In order to avoid these, the king will have to approach the queenside, thereby abandoning his g6-pawn. After removing it, White will create counterplay with his own passed pawns.

Of course, 47 ♖xh7!! is a great move and a wonderful idea, but it is also one more demonstration of the fact that, in rook endings, activity is almost always preferable to passivity.

47...♖xa4 48 h4+



48...♔f5

Botvinnik cites the following variation as typical of the ideas outlined in

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

the previous note: 48...♔f6 49 ♖b7 (holding up the queenside pawns) 49...♞a5 (the only way to set the pawns in motion) 50 ♔g4 b5 51 f4 a6 52 ♞b6+ ♔f7 53 ♞b7+ and White draws, since running the black king towards the queenside allows too rapid counterplay.

The text brings the black king over, whilst keeping White's king at bay for the time being.

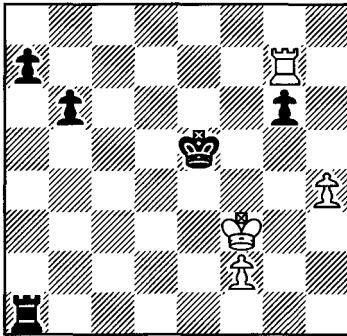
49 ♖f7+ ♔e5 50 ♖g7

Immediately Black undefends the g-pawn, White goes after it.

50...♞a1

Defending g6 tactically, by the threat of a check on g1.

51 ♔f3

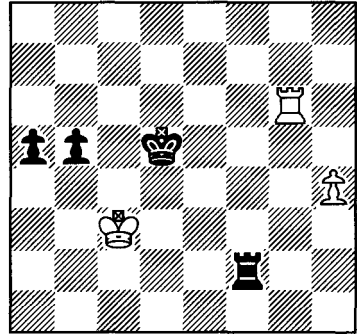


51...b5?

The critical moment. The text move, missing the reply, definitely only draws, as the game continuation shows. After the game, and for some 15 years afterwards, the arguments raged over whether Black could win here.

Fischer first claimed that Black was winning after 51...♔d5, but immediately after the Olympiad (Botvinnik actually

claimed the main line of the analysis was found on the plane back to Moscow!) it was established that White draws after 52 ♞xg6 b5 53 ♔e3 a5 54 ♔d3 ♞a3+ 55 ♔c2 ♞a2+ 56 ♔c3 ♞xf2

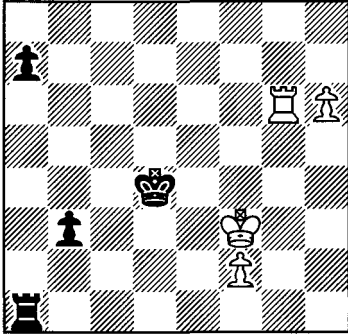


57 ♞g5+ ♔c6 58 ♞g6+ ♔d7 59 ♞g7+ ♔e6 60 ♞a7 etc.

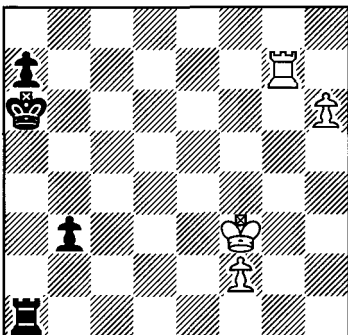
But then Euwe suggested the much stronger try 51...♔d4, which leads to very long and complicated variations. All in all, the variation is a fascinating analytical story. First, Botvinnik published analysis, showing a draw for White. In *My 60 Memorable Games*, Fischer claimed to refute this and show that Black was winning after all, but Botvinnik then shot back and pointed out that White was drawing, even in Fischer's line. Then, finally, in 1977, Botvinnik gave the ending as a training exercise to pupils in his chess school. One of them, a certain 13-year old called Garry Kasparov, found another way for White to draw!

Let us follow the twists and turns of this famous analytical duel. Botvinnik's initial analysis ran: 52 ♞xg6 b5 53 h5

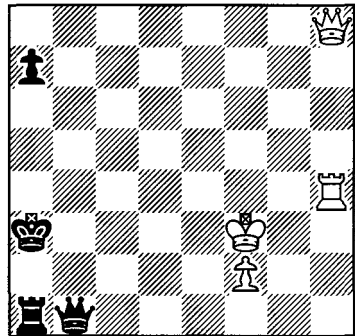
(the point of 51...♔d4, as opposed to 51...♔d5, is to keep the white king from coming across to stop the queenside pawns, so his only hope is counterplay on the other flank) 53...b4 54 h6 b3



55 ♖g4+! (55 h7? ♜h1 wins) 55...♔c5
 56 ♖g5+ ♔c6! (the best try; coming forward allows the white rook to defend from behind the queenside pawns, as analysed by Fischer: 56...♔b4 57 ♖g7! b2 58 h7 ♜h1 59 ♖xa7 ♔b3 60 ♜b7+ ♔c2 61 ♖c7+ ♔d2 62 ♜b7 and draws) 57 ♖g6+ ♔b7 58 ♖g7+ ♔a6. Black's idea is a "long march", via b7 and back up the a-file, so as to stop White's rook getting to b7.

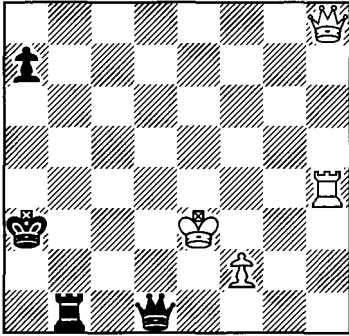


59 ♖g6+ (in order to understand White's defensive idea in the game, it is instructive to look at what happens if White plays 59 ♔g2? stopping the enemy rook coming to h1 – there follows 59...b2 60 h7 b1♜ 61 h8♜ but now Black starts a winning attack with 61...♜e4+!) 59...♔a5 60 ♖g5+ ♔a4 61 ♖g4+! (now it is too late to switch behind the b-pawn, because after 61 ♖g7 a5 62 ♜b7? ♜h1 Black wins, as he has retained both queenside pawns) 61...♔a3 62 ♜h4 b2 63 h7 b1♜ 64 h8♜ and draws.



The big difference here, compared to similar variations above (e.g. the note to move 59), is that the black rook is boxed in by its own king, and there is no queen check on e4. As a result, Black cannot launch a winning attack on the enemy king, commencing with a rook check.

Botvinnik's analysis stopped here, but Fischer continued with the sequence 64...♜b3+! 65 ♔e2 (65 ♔g2 ♜d5+ 66 f3 ♜d2+) 65...♜d1+ 66 ♔e3 ♜b1!



67 ♖f8+ (67 ♖c3+? ♜b3) 67...♔a2 with the conclusion that “the white king cannot hide from a deadly check”. However, Botvinnik showed that after 68 ♖c5! White successfully holds.

The final word on this amazing game was spoken by the young Garry Kasparov, who found that, in the position of the last diagram, instead of Fischer’s 67 ♖f8+, adequate though that is, White can also draw with 67 ♜c4! ♜b3+ 68 ♜c3, e.g. 68...♗e1+ 69 ♔d3 ♖f1+ 70 ♔d2 (but not 70 ♔e3? ♖h3+!! winning) 70...♗xf2+ 71 ♔d3 and Black cannot strengthen his position.

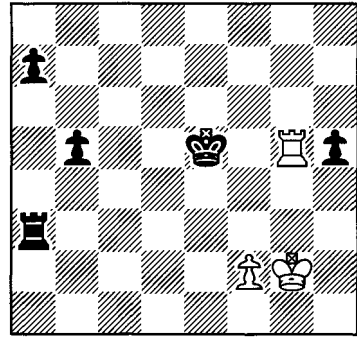
The overall conclusion is therefore that the position is a draw after 47 ♜xh7!!, although it takes some fantastically deep analysis to prove it.

52 h5!

Fischer had missed this simple tactical blow, counting only on 52 ♜xg6? ♔d4, which transposes into the variations just examined above. As we have seen, White draws by a hair’s breadth

in those lines, but the text move is much simpler.

52...♜a3+ 53 ♔g2 gxh5 54 ♜g5+



The point. Black loses his b-pawn, after which the ending with two rook’s pawns against one pawn is a known theoretical draw.

54...♔d6 55 ♜xb5 h4 56 f4 ♔c6

Botvinnik records that his opponent’s face was as white as a sheet at this point, as Fischer realized that his win had slipped away. He plays a number of further moves out of inertia, but the draw is now inevitable.

57 ♜b8 h3+ 58 ♔h2 a5 59 f5 ♔c7 60 ♜b5 ♔d6 61 f6 ♔e6 62 ♜b6+ ♔f7 63 ♜a6 ♔g6 64 ♜c6 a4 65 ♜a6 ♔f7 66 ♜c6

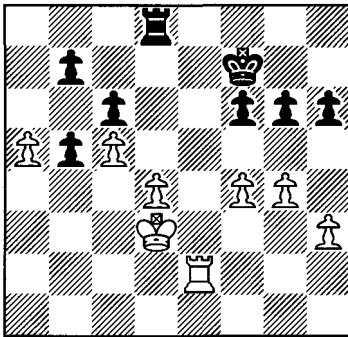
There is no way for Black to strengthen his position.

66...♜d3 67 ♜a6 a3 68 ♔g1 ½-½

One of the most titanic battles in chess history, and a drama that continued for some 15 years after it was played, thanks to the ongoing battle of published analyses of this fascinating endgame.

Game 32
V.Korchnoi-A.Karpov
 World Championship (Game 31), Baguio City 1978

1 c4 e6 2 ♖c3 d5 3 d4 ♗f6 4 cxd5 exd5
 5 ♙g5 ♙e7 6 e3 0-0 7 ♙d3 ♗bd7 8 ♗f3
 ♜e8 9 ♜c2 c6 10 0-0 ♗f8 11 ♙xf6 ♙xf6
 12 b4 ♙g4 13 ♗d2 ♜c8 14 ♙f5 ♙xf5 15
 ♜xf5 ♜d7 16 ♜xd7 ♗xd7 17 a4 ♙e7 18
 ♜fb1 ♗f6 19 a5 a6 20 ♗a4 ♙f8 21 ♗c5
 ♜e7 22 ♗f1 ♗e8 23 ♗e2 ♗d6 24 ♗d3
 ♜ce8 25 ♜e1 g6 26 ♜e2 f6 27 ♜a1 ♙h6
 28 ♗db3 ♙f8 29 ♗d2 ♙h6 30 h3 ♗f7
 31 g4 ♙f8 32 f3 ♜d8 33 ♗db3 ♗b5 34
 ♜f1 ♙h6 35 f4 ♙f8 36 ♗d2 ♗d6 37
 ♜fe1 h6 38 ♜f1 ♜b8 39 ♜a1 ♜be8 40
 ♜a1 ♜b8 41 e4 dxe4+ 42 ♗dxe4 ♗b5
 43 ♗c3 ♜xe2 44 ♜xe2 ♙xc5 45 bxc5
 ♜d8 46 ♗xb5 axb5



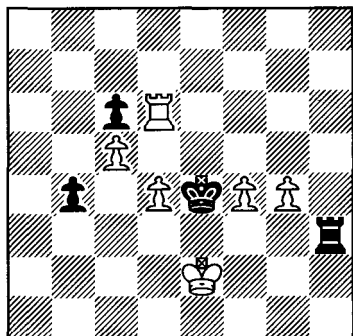
This ending occurred in a key game of the 1978 world championship match between Karpov and Korchnoi. At this stage in the match, Korchnoi trailed 5-4, with the first to six wins taking the match. White has maintained pressure throughout the game, but objectively

this ending should be a draw. After overnight adjournment analysis by both players and their teams of seconds, play resumed the next day.

The complexity of this ending is such that, in his book on rook endings, Korchnoi devoted no fewer than 25 pages of analysis (a quarter of the whole book!) to this endgame. Even then, he admits that he had not exhausted all of the possibilities, and it is an ending to which he returns periodically even to this day. White has a space advantage, and the possibility of a tactical breakthrough based on the advances d4-d5 and a5-a6. However, this is just about his only plan, which somewhat eases Black's defensive task.

47 f5

The alternative was 47 ♜a2, setting up the break a5-a6, but Korchnoi says he did not wish to allow the black king to become active after 47...♗e6. In his book, he analyses 48 a6 bxa6 49 ♜xa6 ♜c8! and concludes that White is not winning. For example, the raid on Black's kingside by 50 ♜a7 h5 51 ♜g7 picks up a pawn, but after 51...hxg4 52 hxg4 ♜h8 53 ♜xg6 ♗d5! 54 ♜xf6 ♜h3+ 55 ♗e2 b4 56 ♜d6+ ♗e4!, so great is Black's activity here that Korchnoi concludes that "it is not clear who stands better!"



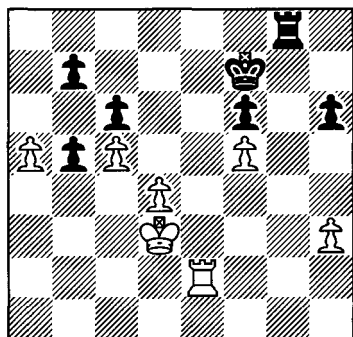
This position bears some resemblance to Capablanca-Tartakower, with Black's compact unit of king, rook and passed pawn representing a fearsome force, which is potentially stronger than White's extra pawns.

47...gxf5 48 gxf5

Now White has confined the black king to a considerable extent, and has a possible outpost for his rook on e6. However, in return, Black has weak pawns to target on f5 and h3, and can immediately activate his rook on the freshly opened g-file.

48...♖g8

Which he does!

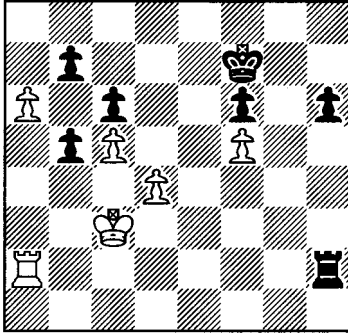


49 ♔c3

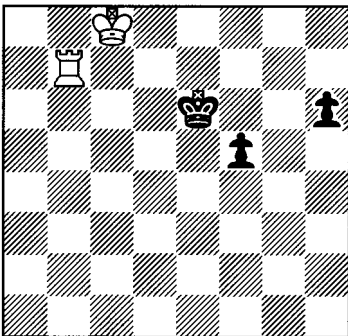
This is a one of the most important moments of the game. Korchnoi relates that he first thought he was winning with 49 d5 (with the idea 49...cxd5 50 ♖e6) until he saw the defence 49...♗d8! 50 d6 ♖e8! Now the king and pawn ending is a draw, whilst after a rook move, such as 51 ♖g2 there is 51...♗e5! and "it is White who has to think about how to make a draw!"

Korchnoi admits that the text move, which looks a little strange, was actually a deliberate psychological trick. During overnight analysis, he and his team had failed to find a win for White, and he felt sure that Karpov's powerful team of seconds (who included Tal) would have analysed the position at least as well. Consequently, he deliberately played a somewhat vague, even second-rate move, in order to get Karpov away from his adjournment analysis and force him to solve problems by himself, at the board.

Korchnoi notes that, objectively speaking, White had two stronger possibilities: 49 ♖a2 and 49 ♖e6. He spends some 14 pages of his book, showing some of the amazing variations that could follow after these two moves. Black is constantly balancing on a precipice, but always seems to have just enough resources to stay alive. One typical variation runs as follows: 49 ♖a2 ♖g3+ 50 ♔e4 ♗xh3 51 a6 ♗h4+ 52 ♔d3 ♗h3+ 53 ♔d2 ♗h2+ 54 ♔c3 and now



54...♖h3+ (54...♞xa2?? 55 axb7) 55 ♕b4 bxa6 56 ♞xa6 ♞d3 57 ♞xc6 ♞xd4+ 58 ♕xb5 ♞d5. This variation shows the truth of Dvoretsky's observation that weak pawns tend to get exchanged off for one another. Black will win the f-pawn and even be a pawn up, but the white c-pawn is immensely strong. 59 ♞c7+ ♕e8 60 ♕b6 ♞xf5 61 c6 ♞f1 62 ♞b7 ♞b1+ 63 ♕a7 ♞c1 64 c7 ♕d7 65 ♕b8 ♕e6 66 c8♚+ ♞xc8+ 67 ♕xc8 f5



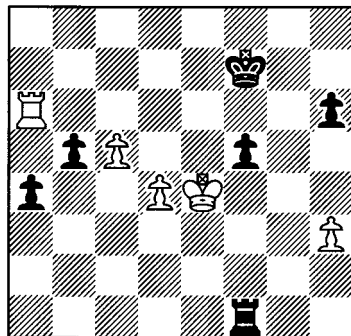
and thanks to his h-pawn, Black draws this ending.

49...♞e8

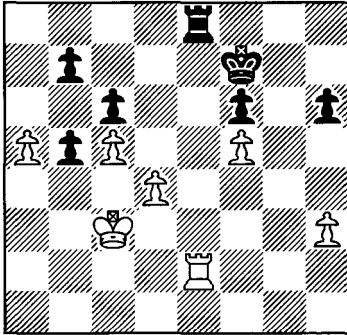
Black had other options here, and Korchnoi analyses three of them.

49...♞g3+, although perhaps the most obvious to the club player, is actually the weakest. White is able to effect his breakthrough ideas after 50 ♕b4 ♞xh3 51 a6! bxa6 52 d5 cxd5 53 c6 when his c-pawn is enormously strong. Korchnoi analyses this to a win after 53...♞h4+ 54 ♕c5 ♞c4+ 55 ♕xd5! ♞c1 56 ♕d6 etc.

49...♞g1 is also analysed to a loss by Korchnoi, but the strongest of the alternatives is 49...♞g5! and suffices for a draw. One line then is 50 ♞e6 ♞xf5 51 a6! bxa6 52 ♞xc6 a5 and Black's own passed pawns also become very strong, e.g. 53 ♕d3 (Korchnoi gives 53 ♞a6 as "objectively stronger", but notes that White has no winning chances after 53...♞f3+ 54 ♕d2 b4! 55 ♞xa5 ♕e6 because his king is cut off) 53...a4 54 ♕e4 ♞f1 55 ♞a6 f5+ and, if anything, the black pawns are stronger.



56 ♕e5 f4 57 ♞a7+ ♕g6 and now White himself has to seek a draw after 58 ♞a5 b4 59 ♞xa4 b3 60 ♞b4 ♞b1 61 ♕xf4 b2 62 ♕e5 ♞e1+ 63 ♕d6 b1♚ 64 ♞xb1 ♞xb1 65 c6 etc.



50 ♖d2

After 50 ♖a2 Black can safely take the h-pawn: 50...♞e3+ 51 ♔b4 ♞xh3 52 a6 bxa6 53 ♞xa6 ♞d3 and Black succeeds in drawing.

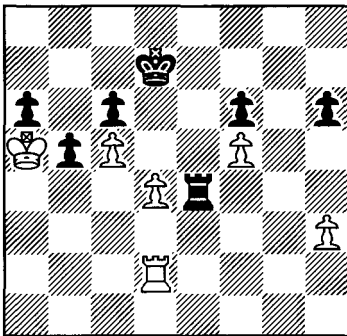
50...♞e4!

Anticipating the threat of the advance 51 d5.

51 ♔b4

White's plan is to penetrate with his king on the queenside.

51...♔e8 52 a6 bxa6 **53** ♔a5 ♔d7



54 ♔b6

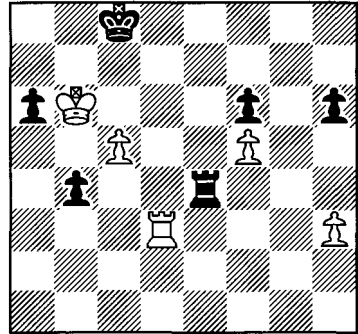
Korchnoi points out that after 54 ♔xa6 ♔c7 White can no longer achieve his central breakthrough: 55 d5?? ♞a4

mate.

54...b4 55 d5 cxd5 **56** ♞xd5+

Pushing the c-pawn at once fails after 56 c6+ ♔d6 57 ♞c2 b3 58 c7 ♞e8. Once again, the black passed pawns throw a large spanner in the works.

56...♔c8 57 ♞d3

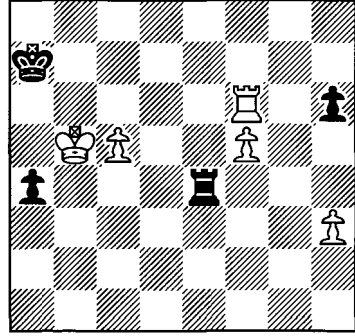
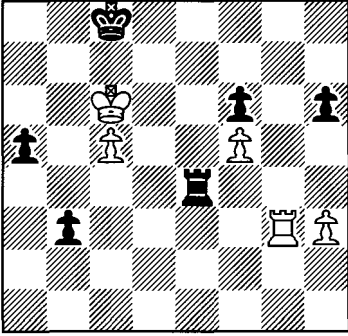


57...a5?

Finally, Karpov makes a significant error, losing a vital tempo. In such a position, this proves fatal. He should have played 57...♞c4! after which White cannot win, as Korchnoi shows, e.g. 58 c6 ♞c3! (this is the point – Black's rook does not just defend, but also aids his own b-pawn) 59 ♞d6 (not 59 ♞d7? when White even loses after 59...b3 60 ♞g7 ♔d8 61 c7+ ♞xc7! 62 ♞xc7 b2) 59...b3 60 ♞xf6 ♔d8 61 ♞d6+ ♔e7 62 ♞e6+ ♔d8 (Black can even play for a win with 62...♔f7, when Korchnoi demonstrates that White has to play a whole series of only moves, in order to hold) 63 ♞d6+ with a draw.

58 ♞g3 b3 **59** ♔c6!

This is the move Karpov had overlooked, and he is now lost.



59...♔b8

Handing over the b-pawn with check is equivalent to resignation. 59...♔d8 is more tenacious, but is also losing after 60 ♖xb3 ♜b4 61 ♜d3+ ♔e8 62 ♔d6 and the c-pawn is much stronger than Black's a-pawn. Korchnoi analyses 62...a4 63 c6 ♜c4 64 c7 ♜c1 (setting up checks when the white rook leaves the d-file) 65 h4 h5 66 ♜d4 a3 67 ♜a4 ♜d1+ 68 ♔e6 ♜e1+ 69 ♔xf6 ♜c1 70 ♜a8+ ♔d7 71 ♜xa3 and White wins.

60 ♖xb3+ ♔a7 61 ♜b7+ ♔a6 62 ♜b6+ ♔a7 63 ♔b5 a4 64 ♜xf6

The rest is clear.

64...♜f4 65 ♜xh6 a3 66 ♜a6+ ♔b8 67 ♜xa3 ♜xf5 68 ♜g3 ♜f6 69 ♜g8+ ♔c7 70 ♜g7+ ♔c8 71 ♜h7 1-0

A marvellous example of a purely practical rook endgame. The complexity of such positions is enormous, and nobody can hope to analyse them with complete certainty, especially in a game situation. Korchnoi's success came from the ability to pose the maximum practical difficulties for the opponent, which eventually induced a fatal error.

Chapter Six Queen Endings

Queen endings are the ones that frighten the average player the most, in my experience. The vast scope for checks means that queen endings are often very long, as the stronger side makes very slow and painstaking progress. A typical scenario sees him advance a passed pawn one square, then the defender spends the next ten or more moves checking. Eventually, the checks run out, the passed pawn advances another square, and then another long sequence of checks starts, etc.

The two big factors in queen endings are passed pawns and king safety. Unlike a rook, a queen can force home a passed pawn on its own, against the enemy queen. This means that the defender, if he cannot get his own king across to help, must rely on checks, with the ultimate threat of perpetual, if he is to defend successfully against an enemy passed pawn.

The other issue in queen endings is the activity of the queen. When placed on a central square, the queen exerts

enormous influence, on all sides of the board, and we will see this theme many times in the examples that follow.

Here, we examine three pure queen endings. In Game 33, we see a theoretical example of queen and pawn vs queen, in which many of the key ideas and themes of queen endings are shown. In Game 34, we see a case where Black wins by virtue of having much the more active queen, without any material advantage. Finally, Game 35 shows Black exploiting an extra pawn, but rather than the usual outside pawn majority, his extra pawn is in the centre, which poses unusual difficulties.

We then round off the chapter with three examples of endings with queen plus other pieces. The first two show queen and rook endings. Such “heavy piece” endings are highly tactical in nature, thanks to the enormous attacking power of the queen and rook combination. King safety is paramount in such endings, as is possession of the initiative. In Game 36, Tony Miles gives

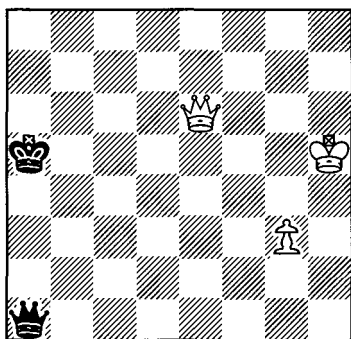
an impressive exploitation of the superior activity and safer king, whilst Game 37 is justifiably the most famous heavy piece ending in the whole of chess literature, as well being one of the most dramatic games in world

championship history.

Finally, in Game 38, we see a rare example of the ending queen plus knight against queen plus knight. Here, too, the initiative is a big factor, and Keres fashions a precisely-played win.

Game 33
M.Botvinnik-N.Minev
 Amsterdam Olympiad 1954

1 ♖f3 ♜f6 2 c4 c6 3 d4 d5 4 ♜c3 e6 5 e3
 6 ♜bd7 7 ♙d3 dxc4 8 ♙xc4 b5 9 ♙d3 b4
 10 ♜e4 ♙b7 11 ♜xf6+ gxf6 12 ♙e4 ♙d6
 13 ♙e4 ♙d6 14 ♙e4 ♙d6 15 ♙e4 ♙d6
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 52 ♙e4 ♙d6 53 ♙e4 ♙d6 54 ♙e4 ♙d6
 55 ♙e4 ♙d6 56 ♙e4 ♙d6 57 ♙e4 ♙d6



Relatively little was known about this type of endgame at the time this game was played, and despite a few inaccuracies in the play, Botvinnik first

demonstrated the winning method for such an ending in this game. The complexities of queen and pawn vs queen are enormous, and even though the whole endgame has now been “table-based”, it is not always a simple matter to divine the underlying point behind many of the computer’s moves. Broadly, we can point out the following rules of thumb:

1. One of White’s main weapons in such endings is the “cross-check”, i.e. answering a check by interposing his queen, so as himself to give check, and so force an exchange of queens. This idea lies behind several of the other principles of such endings.

2. Whilst there are no hard and fast rules as to which positions are won and which are not, it is true to say that the stronger side generally has most winning chances with a centre pawn or bishop’s pawn, fewer chances with a knight’s pawn, and fewest of all with a rook’s pawn. The tablebase confirms that the present position should be a draw with best play.

3. The stronger side’s queen usually takes up a post in the centre of the board, where its influence is at its greatest, and the chance of cross-checks is maximized.

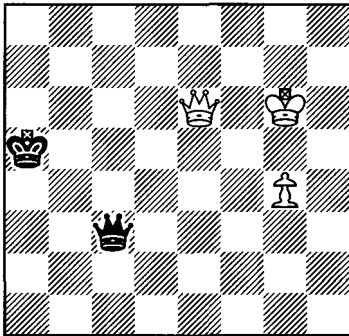
4. The stronger side should usually

try to place his own king on the same or adjacent rank or file as the enemy king. This maximizes the chance of cross-checks.

5. With a knight's pawn as here, the defender's king should generally head for the corner diagonally opposite to the pawn's queening square (in other words, the a1-corner in this position). This, too, is motivated by the defender's desire to reduce the chances of cross-checks.

Armed with these basic principles, we will see how Botvinnik handled the ending. It should be noted that he had the benefit of adjournment analysis, of course; and since this was an Olympiad, it can be assumed that his teammates will have contributed. In my opinion, none of this diminishes the value of Botvinnik's achievement in this game.

57... ♖h8+ 58 ♔g6 ♚c3 59 g4



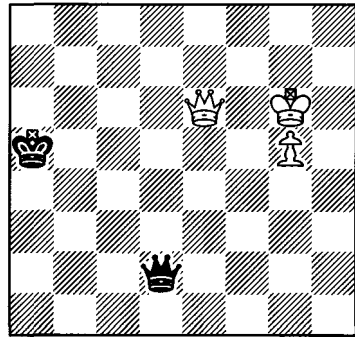
It should be noted that White cannot be prevented from advancing his pawn at least as far as the sixth rank in such positions. This does not mean that

the position is lost or that the defender has erred. The real technical problems for White starts once his pawn gets to the sixth rank.

59... ♚d2

This is a typical example of the application of the principles enunciated above, especially principles (3) and (4). Thanks to the position of his king and queen, White is in a position to meet checks such as 59... ♚d3+?? with the cross-check 60 ♖f5+.

60 g5



60... ♚d4?!

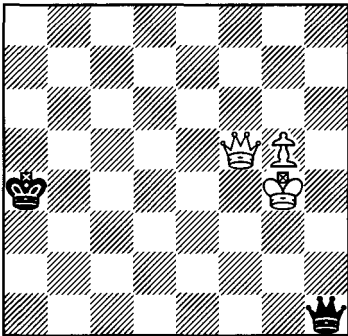
Thus far, the tablebase confirms that Black has defended well enough to keep the position within drawing bounds, but his last move is an inaccuracy, after which the position is a win for White, albeit in 65 moves. Black has five possible drawing moves here, but the most logical of these, following principle (5) above, is 60... ♔a4, heading the black king towards the safety zone in the south-west corner.

61 ♖f5+?!

An inaccuracy in turn. The ruthless

tablebase shows that White has only one move to win here, and that is the rather illogical 61 ♔h7, which goes against the principle that the white king should seek a position on the same or the adjacent file as its opposite number. However, I do not think either player can be reproached for such minor imprecisions, given the huge complexity of such endings. All any human player can hope for is to understand the basic principles and apply them as far as possible; the tactical features of these positions are so great that they are always going to be beyond a human player's capacity.

61...♔a4 62 ♔h5 ♚h8+ 63 ♔g4 ♚h1?!



Another imprecision, after which the assessment swings over to “winning” once again. Of Black’s three drawing moves, two involve following principle (5) above and heading his king towards the safe corner: 63...♔a3 or 63...♔b3.

64 ♚f4+!

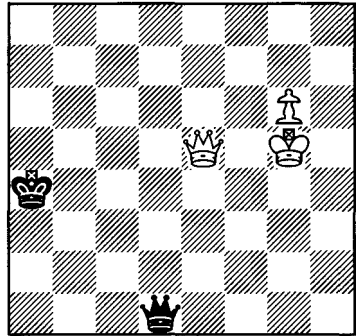
White finds the most accurate move, underlining the drawback of

Black’s last. Now his king is forced away from the safe corner, because 64...♔a3? runs into the cross-check 65 ♚f3+.

64...♔a5 65 ♚e5+

There is nothing wrong with the immediate 65 g6 (indeed, it even wins two moves quicker), but Botvinnik’s move is more logical from the human viewpoint – he first puts his queen on a more centralized square, in accordance with principle (3).

65...♔a4 66 g6 ♚d1+ 67 ♔g5



67...♚d8+

Once again, the proximity of the opposing kings means that cross-checks are in the air, both after 67...♚d2+? 68 ♚f4+, and 67...♚g1+ 68 ♔f5! when there are no safe checks.

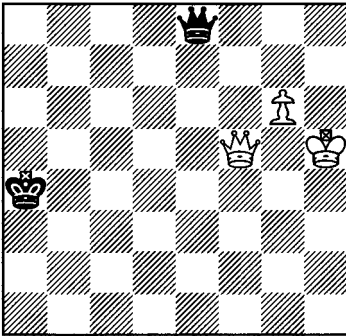
68 ♔f5 ♚c8+ 69 ♔f4 ♚c1+ 70 ♚e3 ♚c7+ 71 ♚e5

In itself, this move does not spoil anything, but it is the start of a short phase during which Botvinnik loses his way. He should prefer 71 ♔g4 or 71 ♔g5.

71...♚c1+ 72 ♔f5 ♚c8+ 73 ♔g5 ♚d8+ 74 ♚f6?!

We have actually reached the same position as after Black's 67th move. The first time round, Botvinnik found the most accurate move, 74 ♔f5. It should also be noted that the plan of placing the white king in front of his pawn with 74 ♔h6? ♚h4+ 75 ♔g7 is much weaker. This was a lesson that Botvinnik had been forced to learn the hard way, as he had made exactly that mistake in the same ending, against the Soviet master Ravinsky, eight years earlier. The tablebase confirms that the ending is then a draw.

74...♚d5+ 75 ♚f5 ♚d8+ 76 ♔h5 ♚e8



Now there are no more profitable checks, since after 76...♚h8+ 77 ♔g4, Black once again suffers from his king being on the same rank as its opposite number. One can see how much easier his defensive task would be if his king were now on a2 or a1, as it could have been, had he taken his chances earlier in the endgame. However, even though he is out of checks, Black is not yet completely out of ammunition. Instead, Minev resorts to another typical

defensive technique in such queen endings – pinning the pawn.

77 ♚f4+?

A fundamental error of principle, which again endangers the win. This move simply drives the black king closer towards the safe corner, and the tablebase confirms that the position should be drawn after this. Instead, White can win with several continuations, the main one being 77 ♔g4. However, the difficulty of such endings is attested to by the fact that the win still takes 60 moves from this position! (However, this does not mean it is a draw – White will, of course, advance his g-pawn again inside the 50 moves allowance).

77...♔a5?

Returning the favour. It is clear that Minev did not understand the point about where his king was best placed, a forgivable error for his time, but one which makes Botvinnik's task easier. Obviously, the black king should emulate the birds and gratefully migrate to the kinder climate of the south, with 77...♔a3!.

78 ♚d2+ ♔a4 79 ♚d4+

Botvinnik follows principle (3), and takes the chance to centralize his queen with gain of tempo. In so doing, he maximizes its influence, and so reduces the enemy queen's scope for checks.

79...♔a5 80 ♔g5!

Now we see the effect of Botvinnik's piece positioning. Black soon runs out

of checks, whilst the superbly placed white queen also controls the next square of the pawn, g7.

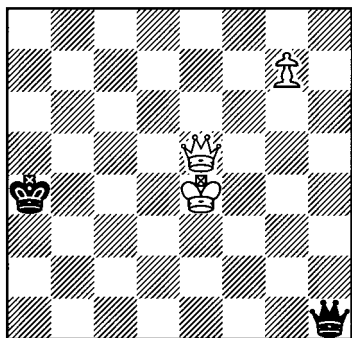
80... ♖e7+ 81 ♔f5 ♗f8+ 82 ♔e4

Once again, the possibility of a cross-check means that Black is out of checks, and this time he cannot prevent the pawn advancing further.

82... ♗h6 83 ♗e5+

Once again, the tablebase shows that the immediate 83 g7 wins slightly more quickly, but the human instinct is to improve the queen position first.

83... ♔a4 84 g7 ♗h1+



85 ♔d4

Another characteristic idea for such endings. With the pawn only one square from queening, the white king approaches closer towards its opposite number, to seek the elusive cross-check.

85... ♗d1+ 86 ♔c5 ♗c1+ 87 ♔d6

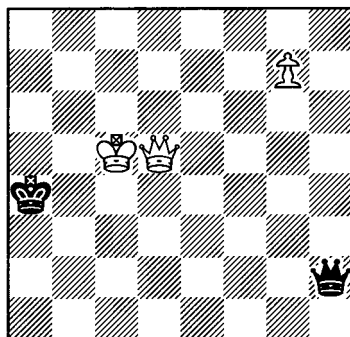
Curiously, Mark Dvoretzky gives the note “87 ♔d5?! ♗c8!”, but the tablebase shows that this wins for White in

exactly the same number of moves as the text.

87... ♗d2+ 88 ♔e6 ♗a2+

88... ♗h6+ 89 ♔d5 is again the end of the checks.

89 ♗d5 ♗e2+ 90 ♔d6 ♗h2+ 91 ♔c5 1-0

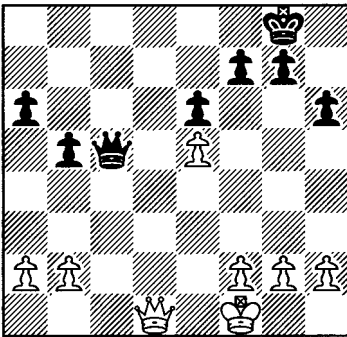


The final position deserves a diagram, as it perfectly illustrates the elements of the winning method. The white queen occupies a dominating central square, also controlling the queening square of the pawn, the two kings stand close together, and all the possible checks are defeated by a cross-check.

Despite a number of inaccuracies, this is a classic endgame, and immensely instructive. Without the aid of either tablebases or any substantial theoretical practice, apart from his own game against Ravinsky years before, Botvinnik effectively “solved” this ending in his adjournment analysis, identifying all the key elements of the winning method in such positions.

Game 34
F. Marshall-G. Maroczy
 Ostend 1905

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗f6 4 ♙g5 ♙e7 5
 e3 ♗bd7 6 ♙d3 dxc4 7 ♙xc4 a6 8 ♗f3
 0-0 9 0-0 c5 10 ♚e2 b5 11 ♙b3 ♙b7 12
 ♚ad1 ♚c7 13 ♙c2 ♚fd8 14 ♙f4 ♚b6 15
 ♗e5 ♚ac8 16 ♙g5 ♗f8 17 ♙e4 ♙xe4 18
 ♗xe4 cxd4 19 exd4 ♗g6 20 ♚f3 ♗xe5
 21 dxe5 ♗xe4 22 ♙xe7 ♗d2 23 ♚e2
 ♗xf1 24 ♙xd8 ♚xd8 25 ♙xf1 h6 26 ♚c2
 ♚xd1+ 27 ♚xd1 ♚c5



Maroczy was famous as an outstanding specialist in queen endings, and here he gives a perfect demonstration of how to exploit what appears, on the face of it, to be a very small positional advantage. His only real plus here is the weakness on e5, and the greater queen mobility that results therefrom, but it proves enough to win.

28 ♚d8+ ♙h7 29 ♚d3+ g6 30 ♚c3 ♚d5
 31 a3 ♚d1+ 32 ♚e1 ♚d3+ 33 ♙g1

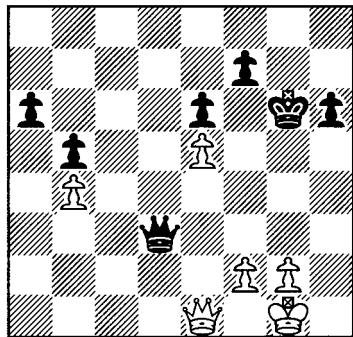
33 ♚e2? loses a pawn at once after
 33... ♚b1+.

33... ♚c2

Taking up a dominant position with the queen.

34 ♚a1

It must have been hard for White to swallow the need for such a grievously passive move. The alternative 34 b4 involves a pawn sacrifice after 34... ♚b2, because the weakness of White's back rank prevents the defence 35 ♚e3. Panchenko suggests that White should sacrifice the pawn anyway, and continue 35 h4 in an attempt to create some counterplay, by loosening up the enemy king position. However, this seems inadequate after 35... ♚xa3 (Panchenko only analyses 35... h5 36 ♚e3) 36 h5 ♚d3! 37 hxg6+ ♙xg6 (Dvoretzky),



and although the black king has been exposed a little, White remains too passively placed to exploit this.

34...a5!

As so often in endgames, the key idea for Black is to establish a zugzwang. This will be achieved by fixing the white queenside pawns by means of ...a5-a4.

35 g3 a4 36 f4

Both defending the e5-pawn, and also to have the chance of a subsequent f4-f5, seeking to open up the black king for possible counterplay.

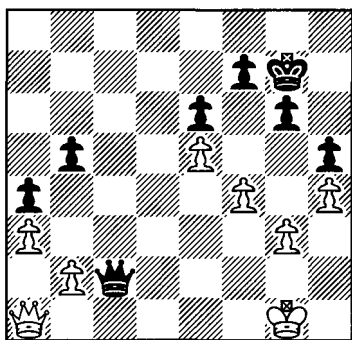
36...♔g8!

White is in zugzwang, as his queen cannot move without dropping the b2-pawn.

37 h3

37 ♖h1 ♜f2 sets up the threat of ...h5-h4, undermining the white king-side structure.

37...h5 38 h4 ♔g7



Now it is a “real zugzwang”, as White has run out of pawn moves.

39 ♔h1

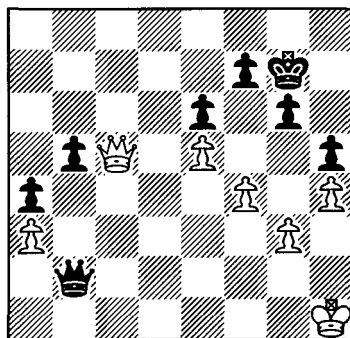
Or 39 ♜a2 ♜d1+ and the white queen is totally immobilized. There would be nothing to stop Black marching his king all the way into the heart

of the white position, e.g. f8-e7-d7-c6-c5-d4-e3!

39...♜f2

Now White must lose material.

40 ♜g1 ♜xb2 41 ♜c5



41...b4!

Such tactics occur frequently in queen endings. The black passed pawn will be decisive.

42 f5

A desperate attempt to create counterplay and chances of perpetual check. The other attempt to do so is 42 ♜e7 when Dvoretzky's 42...b3! (more accurate than the analogous line 42...bxa3 43 ♜f6+ ♔g8 44 ♜d8+ ♔h7 45 ♜e7 ♜b1+ 46 ♔h2 ♜f5 when White can still resist after 47 ♜xa3) 43 ♜f6+ ♔g8 44 ♜d8+ ♔h7 45 ♜e7 ♜b1+ 46 ♔h2 ♜f5 47 ♜b7 ♔g7 wins comfortably.

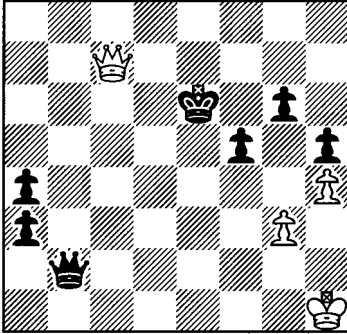
42...exf5 43 e6 bxa3! 44 exf7

44 e7 a2 and Black will promote with mate.

44...♔xf7 45 ♜c7+ ♔e6

White has managed to flush the enemy king out of his hiding place, but Black escapes the checks, by following

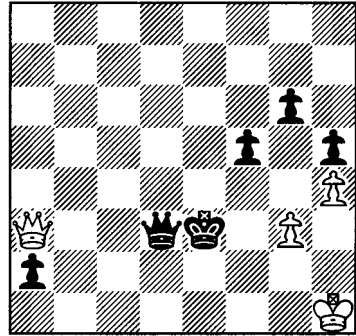
the same technique we saw in Botvinnik-Minev – he runs his king into the region of its opposite number, where upon the threat of a cross-check eventually causes White to run out of checks.



46 ♚c6+ ♔e5 47 ♚xa4
47 ♚c5+ ♔e4 48 ♚c4+ ♔f3 49 ♚d3+

♔f2 also sees the checks run out.

47...a2 48 ♚e8+ ♔d5 49 ♚d7+ ♔e4 50 ♚c6+ ♔e3 51 ♚c5+ ♚d4 52 ♚a3+ ♚d3 0-1



White loses the king and pawn ending after 53 ♚xa2 ♚f1+ 54 ♔h2 ♚f2+ 55 ♚xf2+ ♔xf2 56 ♔h3 ♔g1.

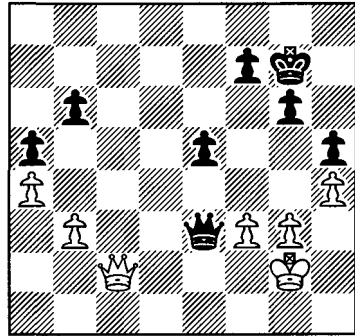
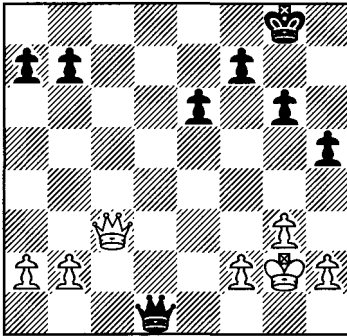
Game 35
H.Pillsbury-A.Burn
Vienna 1898

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♙g5 dxe4
5 ♘xe4 ♘bd7 6 ♘f3 ♙e7 7 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6
8 ♙d3 0-0 9 ♚e2 c5 10 dxc5 ♚a5+ 11 c3
♚xc5 12 0-0 ♘d8 13 ♚ad1 ♙d7 14 ♘e5
♙e8 15 ♚fe1 ♘d5 16 c4 ♚dd8 17 ♚f3
♚ac8 18 ♚h3 g6 19 ♚e3 ♘d7 20 ♙xe7
♚xe7 21 ♘g4 h5 22 ♘e5 ♘xe5 23 ♚xe5
♚xc4 24 ♚de1 ♚cd4 25 ♙c2 ♚f6 26 ♚g3
♚g4 27 ♚c3 ♙c6 28 g3 ♚gd4 29 ♚e3
♚g5 30 ♙e4 ♙xe4 31 ♚xe4 ♚xe4 32
♚xe4 ♚d1+ 33 ♚e1 ♚d2 34 ♚xd1
♚xd1+ 35 ♙g2

35...♚d5+ 36 f3 e5

There is no particular value in grabbing the a-pawn. After 36...♚xa2 37 ♚c8+ ♙h7 38 ♚xb7, Black would simply have exchanged a pair of pawns, without making any progress in solving his main technical problems. Burn instead leaves his queen on its powerful central post, and starts advancing his pawn majority.

37 h4 b6 38 a3 a5 39 a4 ♚c5 40 ♚d3
♙g7 41 b3 ♚d4 42 ♚c2 ♚e3



In this example, we see a case where the stronger side has an extra pawn, but not an outside majority. This poses special problems of conversion, since advancing the majority to create a passed pawn inevitably means exposing one's own king, and thus increasing the risk of perpetual check. Burn carries out the winning plan to perfection.

Black places his queen as actively as possible, attacking the pawn on f3, thereby tying White down to its defence.

43 ♚b2 ♙h6 44 ♚c2 ♙h7 45 ♚b2 ♙g8
46 ♚c2 ♙g7 47 ♚b2 ♙h7 48 ♚c2 ♙h6
49 ♚b2 ♙h7 50 ♚c2 ♙g7 51 ♚b2

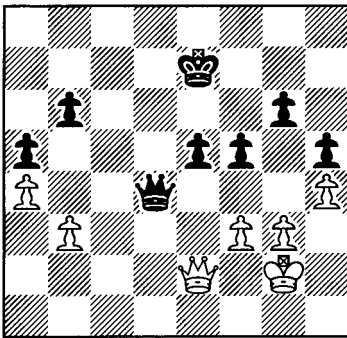
By my count, this is the third time the position has been reached (see after White's 43rd and 47th moves)! I

have not been able to find reference to this in any published source, including the tournament book, but I believe the explanation may lie in the wording of the rules at that time. The tournament book states that the tournament was played under the rules stipulated in Bilguer's *Handbuch*. The latter did contain a version of the threefold repetition rule, but unlike the modern version, there was no reference to a position occurring three times. Instead, the rule referred only to threefold repetition of the same moves or sequence of moves, so I assume that it was not open to Pillsbury to claim a draw here.

51... ♖d4 52 ♜c2 ♜c5 53 ♖d3 ♜c1 54 ♜b5 ♜c2+ 55 ♔f1 ♜c5 56 ♖d3 ♖d4 57 ♜c2 ♖d5 58 ♔g2 ♔f6

After a long bout of uncertain manoeuvring, during which Burn was trying to decide on a plan, he makes the first step towards further progress.

59 ♜c3 ♜c5 60 ♖d3 ♔e7 61 ♖d2 ♖d4 62 ♜e2 f5

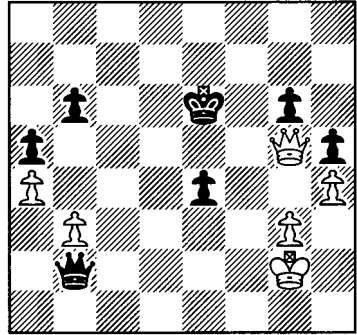


With his king now centralized, Black proceeds to establish his passed pawn.

63 ♜b5 e4 64 fxe4 fxe4 65 ♜g5+ ♔f7 66 ♜f4+ ♔e6

As usual in queen endings, centralization of Black's forces is the key to protecting his king from checks, when it steps into the open.

67 ♜g5 ♜b2+!

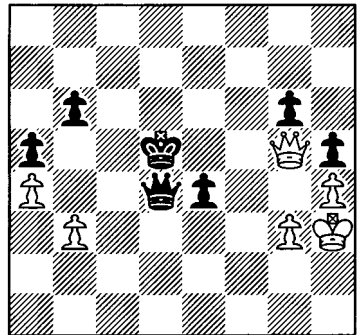


A useful intermediate check, driving the white king to an inferior square.

68 ♔h3

68 ♔g1 leaves the g3-pawn undefended. Pillsbury prefers to hide his king on h3, but this is soon exploited.

68... ♜f6 69 ♜e3 ♔d5 70 ♖d2+ ♖d4 71 ♜g5+



71... ♜e5! 72 ♜e3

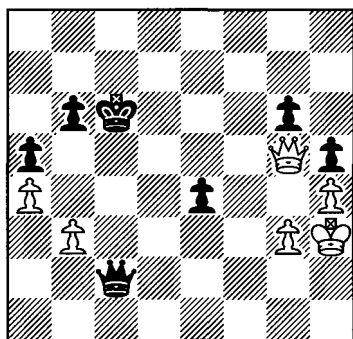
The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

Now we see the value of the white king having been lured to h3. After 72 ♖xg6? ♜e6+! forces a winning king and pawn ending.

72...♙c6 73 ♙g2 ♜b2+ 74 ♙h3 ♜c2

Now 75...♜d3 is the threat. White cannot defend passively, and must seek counterplay.

75 ♜g5



75...♜e2!

The point of Black's play. As Fine points out, the g6-pawn is not very important, because even after taking it, White does not have a passed pawn. It is much more valuable for Black to get his e-pawn going.

76 ♜xg6+ ♙c5 77 b4+

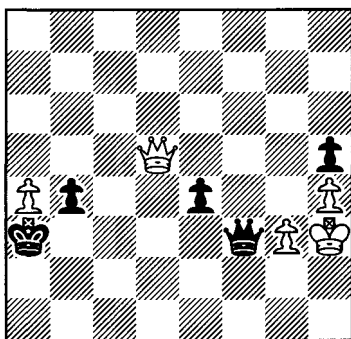
An ingenious, if desperate, attempt to create a passed pawn. Fine gives instead 77 ♜f5+ (77 g4 ♜f3+) ♙b4 78 g4 ♜xg4+ 79 ♜xg4 hxg4+ 80 ♙xg4 ♙c3! 81 h5 e3 82 h6 e2 83 h7 e1 ♜ 84 h8 ♜+ ♙xb3 85 ♜g8+ ♙a3! (85...♙xa4? 86 ♜a2+) and in this "second generation"

queen ending, Black will win the a-pawn, with a winning position.

77...axb4 78 ♜g5+ ♙d4 79 ♜f6+ ♙c4 80 ♜xb6

White has his passed pawn, but Black has two, both of which outpace the opponent's.

80...♜f3 81 ♜e6+ ♙c3 82 ♜e5+ ♙b3 83 ♜d5+ ♙a3!



Black neatly uses the white passed pawn as an "umbrella", to shelter his king from the checks.

84 ♙h2 b3 85 ♜c5+ ♙a2 86 a5 b2 87 ♜d5+ ♜b3 88 ♜d2

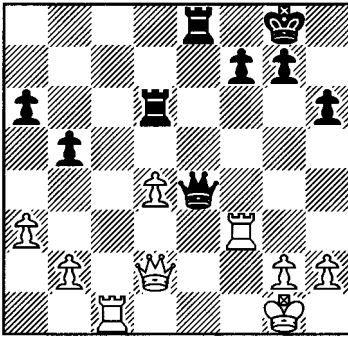
As in Botvinnik-Minev, pinning the passed pawn is a typical defensive device in queen endings, but it does not enable White to resist for long here.

88...♜d3 89 ♜f2 e3 90 ♜f7+ ♜b3 0-1

Splendid technique by Burn. He took some time making up his mind exactly how to approach the task, but once he formed his plan, he executed it with admirable clarity and accuracy.

Game 36
S. Webb-A. Miles
 British Championship, Morecambe 1975

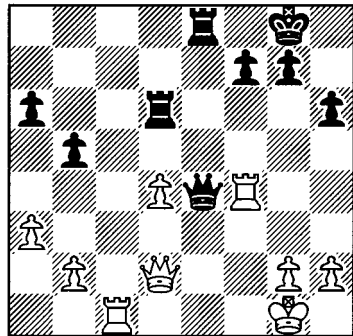
1 ♖f3 ♗f6 2 c4 c5 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 a6
 5 ♖c3 d5 6 e3 e5 7 ♗f3 e4 8 ♗d2 dxc4 9
 ♙xc4 b5 10 ♙e2 ♙b7 11 ♗b3 ♗c6 12 0-0
 ♙d6 13 ♗d4 ♗xd4 14 exd4 h6 15
 ♙e3 0-0 16 ♖c1 ♗d7 17 a3 ♖ad8 18
 ♗d2 ♗e6 19 f4 exf3 20 ♙xf3 ♙xf3 21
 ♖xf3 ♗e4 22 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 23 ♙f4 ♖fe8
 24 ♙xd6 ♖xd6



This is the first example we have seen in this book of a “heavy piece” ending, i.e. one with both queens and rooks on the board. Heavy piece endings are amongst the most concrete of all endings. The huge power of queen and rook, when combined, means that concrete variations tend to predominate over general planning, to a greater extent than in other endings. King safety is paramount in such endings. In this example, Black has a clear advantage, thanks to his superior pawn structure. As we have seen in some

other cases in this book, although the white d-pawn is passed, it is a clear weakness here, rather than a strength. As a result of its weakness, Black’s pieces are more active. A further advantage is that the white king is draughtier than its opposite number, and, as noted above, king safety is especially important with such powerful forces on the board.

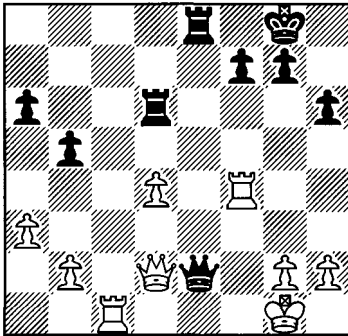
25 ♖f4



25 ♖d1 is the alternative, when Miles (annotating the game in *Chess*, March 1976) gives 25...♖ed8 26 ♖d3 (26 ♖f4? ♖xd4! 27 ♗xd4 ♖xd4 28 ♖xd4 ♗e1+ 29 ♖f1 ♗e3+) 26...♖d5, concluding that “...although White’s position may not yet be lost, it is very uncomfortable”. Amazingly, *Fritz 12* assesses the position as equal, but I know whose judgement I would trust in this instance! Nonetheless, this may well have

been White's best course, because his position is still very solid here, and Black must find a plan to increase his advantage.

25...♖e2



26 ♖f2

26 ♖xe2 ♖xe2 is a nasty double rook ending for White. After 27 ♖c8+ ♖h7 Miles continued his analysis with 28 ♖xf7 ♖xd4 29 ♖cc7 ♖d1+ 30 ♖f1 ♖dd2 when Black is winning. 28 ♖c7 is a better try, although 28...♖xb2 29 ♖xf7 ♖g6 30 g3 ♖b3 should still offer good winning chances, as Black establishes two connected passed pawns on the queenside.

26...♖g4

26...♖xd2 is another favourable double rook ending, but with White's king exposed, the text seems more logical.

27 ♖d1?!

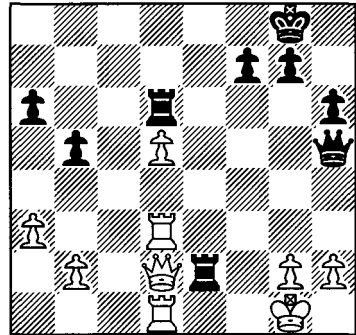
Miles gave this as a serious mistake, and recommended 27 ♖f4!, on the basis that White can meet 27...♖e2 by 28 ♖c8+ ♖xc8 29 ♖xe2. Now 29...♖c1+ 30 ♖f1 is nothing, but the computer

points out the strong move 29...g5! which forces the rook onto a bad square. After 30 ♖e4 ♖c1+ 31 ♖f2 ♖g7 White's position is uncomfortable, although he may well be holding with best play. Alternatively, Black can still answer 27 ♖f4 with 27...♖e2, settling for the favourable double rook ending.

27...♖e4! 28 d5 ♖e5 29 ♖f3 ♖h5!

With the threat of 29...♖exd5! 30 ♖xd5 ♖xd1+! forcing a winning king and pawn ending.

30 ♖d3 ♖e2



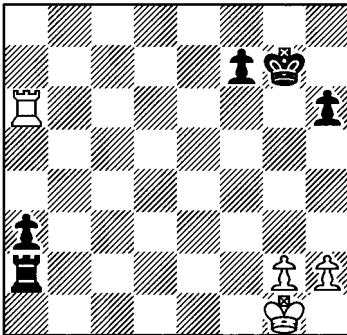
31 ♖c3

Miles mentioned 31 ♖f4 as "an unlikely defensive try". The intention is 31...♖g6 32 ♖f1, relying on the d-pawn for counter-chances. He further analysed 32...♖f6 33 ♖f3 ♖xg2+! 34 ♖xg2 ♖g4+ 35 ♖g3 ♖xf1 36 ♖xf1 ♖e4+ followed by 37...♖xd5, "with a probable win". 36 years later, the silicon beast is unable to improve on this analysis by Britain's first Grandmaster. Fine writes that queen and two extra pawns only beat two rooks "when the rooks are not united or when there are connected

passed pawns". Here, neither condition is met as yet, but the second can be, by careful play – ...h5, ...f6, ...♙f7, etc. Black has considerable freedom, because White is never threatening to trade both rooks for queen and pawn.

31...♙g6!

The best move, but as a further nice example of the tactical resources available in heavy piece endings, and the calculation skills needed to play them well, it is worth looking at another variation mentioned by Miles. That is 31...♙g6 32 ♖g3 ♗xd5!? which he rejected because of the spectacular counter-blow 33 ♙xg7+!! ♙xg7 (33...♙xg7 34 ♖xg6+ fxg6 35 ♗xd5 ♖xb2 36 ♗d7+ ♙f8 37 ♖a7 is almost the same ending as the main variation) 34 ♗xd5! ♖xb2 35 ♗d8+ ♙h7 36 ♖xg7+ ♙xg7 37 ♖a8 ♖a2 38 ♖xa6 b4 39 ♖b6 bxa3 40 ♖a6 with a theoretically drawn ending.



Once again, the only real difference between Miles' analysis and that of Fritz 12 is the former's greater ability to assess the final position; the computer thinks Black is winning!

32 ♖g3 ♗xg2+

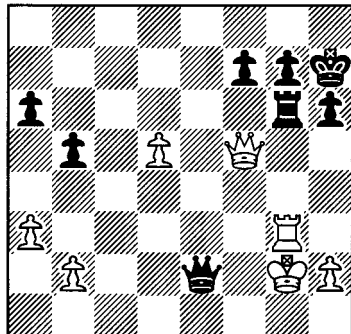
The other capture was 32...♖xb2 which, yet again, Miles analysed with great accuracy. Now 33 ♗d4? loses at once, after 33...♖xg3 34 hxg3 ♗e2 winning, whilst 33 ♗d3 ♖xg3 34 hxg3 ♗e2 35 ♗xe2 ♖xe2 36 d6 ♖e8 should also win for Black. Miles rejected the line because of 33 ♖e1! although he suspected Black is probably still winning after 33...♖xg3 34 hxg3 ♖a2!.

His reason for preferring the text is instructive from a practical viewpoint: "...I was beginning to worry about what the d-pawn might do if things went wrong. 32...♖xg2+ had the reassuring quality of exposing the white king to the extent that there would always be a perpetual if necessary". This is a comment worth noting – a sort of chessboard equivalent of the bridge-players' safety plays.

33 ♙xg2 ♗xd1 34 ♗c8+ ♙h7 35 ♗f5!

Simon Webb was well known as a resourceful player, and he finds the best chance to make life difficult.

35...♗e2+!



36 ♔g1?

But here he slips and misses the toughest defence. After 36 ♔h3, Miles' intention was 36...♚e7! holding back the d-pawn. He opined that the queen ending after 37 ♖xg6 fxg6 38 ♚d3 ♚d6 offers "good chances of success, although there is obviously a lot of play left in the position".



I have to admit that I remain unsure about the extent of Black's winning chances here. The d-pawn is very strong, and the threat of a white queen penetration to c6 or e6 ties down Black's king to a considerable extent. Two very strong GMs, whose opinions I asked (both only had time for a more or less instant reaction, so it would be unfair to name them) had differing views. One thought the position almost dead drawn, whereas the other suggested Black's winning chances were about the same as White's chances of drawing. Black has some scope to torture his opponent – he can bring his king to d8 and start pushing his king-side pawns – but I am still not sure that

it is easy to make real progress.

After the text, Miles wraps the game up with some more accurately-calculated play.

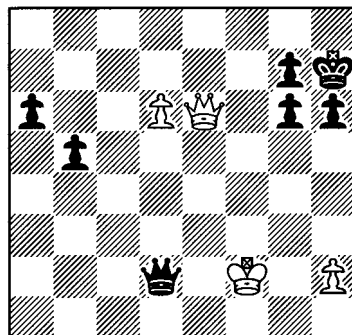
36...♚xb2 37 ♖xg6

After 37 ♚xf7 Miles intended simply 37...♚f6.

37...♚d4+!

Again the most accurate, preventing the white queen coming to d3, to support the d-pawn.

38 ♔g2 fxg6 39 ♚e6 ♚b2+ 40 ♔g1 ♚xa3 41 d6 ♚c1+ 42 ♔f2 ♚d2+ 0-1

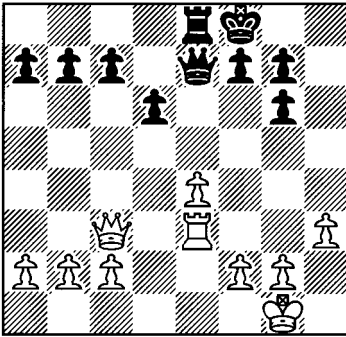


Here, the game was adjourned and White resigned without resuming, since after 43 ♔g3 b4 44 d7 b3 45 ♚e8 b2, Black makes a new queen after 46 d8♚♚xd8 47 ♚xd8 b1♚ and wins.

An instructive and excellently played heavy piece ending by Miles. The most notable feature of all is the depth and accuracy of his calculation. We have emphasized the importance of this aspect of endgame play in this book already, but it is especially true in heavy piece endings, with their much greater tactical content.

Game 37
C.Schlechter-Em.Lasker
 World Championship (Game 5), Germany/Austria 1910

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 ♖f6 4 0-0 d6 5
 d4 ♙d7 6 ♘c3 ♙e7 7 ♙g5 0-0 8 dxe5
 ♘xe5 9 ♙xd7 ♖fxd7 10 ♙xe7 ♘xf3+ 11
 ♗xf3 ♗xe7 12 ♘d5 ♗d8 13 ♖ad1 ♙e8
 14 ♖fe1 ♘b6 15 ♗c3 ♘xd5 16 ♗xd5
 ♙e6 17 ♖d3 ♗e7 18 ♙g3 ♙g6 19 ♙ee3
 ♙e8 20 h3 ♙f8 21 ♗xg6 hxg6



This game is perhaps a slightly surprising choice for this book, as Lasker outplays his opponent, and then blunders the game away! However, I have chosen it principally because it remains one of the best, and most instructive heavy piece endings in chess history. Even Lasker's blunder is instructive, in showing the dangers that can lurk in such endings. Before his blunder, despite a few inaccuracies on both sides, Lasker had given a marvellous demonstration of how to handle such positions, and I therefore believe that the game deserves its place in this volume.

In essence, the position is just equal. Material is level and both kings are fairly safe. Black has a doubled pawn, but it is in no way vulnerable to attack, and cannot really be considered to give White any advantage. Indeed, it is White's e4-pawn which is the nearest thing to a weak pawn in this position. Even though he has no advantage, Lasker plays on, and tries to find a way to work up some winning chances. This was Game 5 of his ten-game match against Schlechter, and all the first four had been drawn. Lasker was unused to such a close battle in his world championship matches, having won all previous matches comfortably, if not overwhelmingly, and he was doubtless impatient to make a dent in Schlechter's hitherto impenetrable armour.

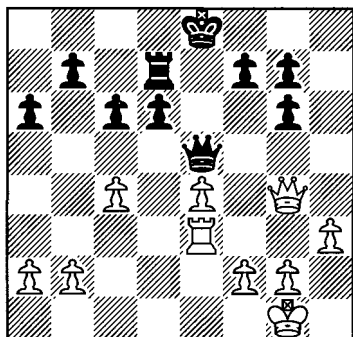
22 ♗b4 c6 23 ♗a3 a6 24 ♗b3 ♖d8 25 c4

Schlechter clearly believed the black pawn on d6 was a significant weakness and should be held back. However, the pawn is easily defended, and if anything, it is White's more extended structure that contains more potential weaknesses.

25... ♖d7 26 ♗d1 ♗e5 27 ♗g4 ♙e8

As will become clear, this is the start of a plan to create play on the queen-side, aiming to take advantage of

White's 25th move. To that end, Lasker brings his king over to the left flank, to take an active part in the battle. This is standard endgame technique, of course, but in heavy piece endings, one has to be especially careful with such action, as the king can become exposed.



28 ♖e2 ♔d8 29 ♗d2 ♕c7 30 a3 ♜e7 31 b4!?

Seeing the enemy king on the queenside, Schlechter starts a pawn storm on that wing, evidently believing that the king can prove vulnerable. However, he runs into an unexpected retort.

31...b5!?

Black seizes the initiative on the very sector of the board where White thought he was pressing.

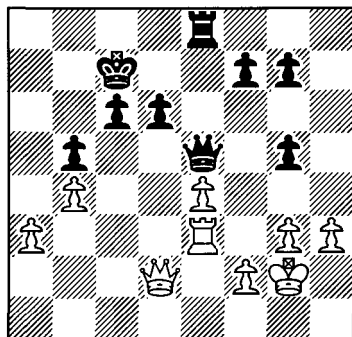
32 cxb5 axb5 33 g3 g5

Securing his queen against the thrust f2-f4.

34 ♕g2 ♜e8?!

I like the idea of this flexible move. The rook now has possibilities of swinging to either rook's file, to attack

the weakened white pawns on each. However, it may have been more prudent to have prepared the move with 34...f6 in order to avoid the possibility in the next note.



35 ♗d1

Here, White could have tried to exploit Black's last with 35 a4! (a possibility not analysed at this point by such commentators as Romanovsky, Dvoretzky or Kasparov) 35...bxa4 36 ♗a2 (attacking f7) 36...♜a8 37 ♗xf7+ ♕b6 38 ♗c4 with a sharp position, in which the black a-pawn is a definite trump, but the shakiness of his king position causes him plenty of anxiety. 39 ♜c3 is a threat, and after 38...♕b7 (38...♗b5? 39 ♗d4+) 39 ♜c3 ♜a6 (39...♗b5 40 ♗f7+ ♕b6 41 ♗d7 is again bad for Black) 40 ♜f3! threatens the very dangerous ♜f5. Fritz is very optimistic about White's position in this entire variation, probably not without good reason.

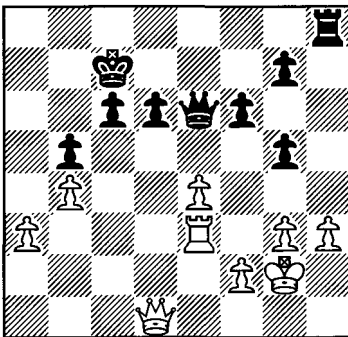
35...f6! 36 ♗b3

36 a4 was the consistent move, recommended by Tarrasch. However, the

Russian master Romanovsky (who subjected this whole ending to a detailed examination in his classic book *Mittelspiel*) then analyses 36...bxa4 37 ♖xa4 ♜b7 38 ♚a3? (my punctuation) 38...♞xe4+ 39 ♜h2 ♞d4! 40 ♞a6+ ♜c7 41 ♞a7+ ♞xa7 42 ♚xa7+ ♜b6 43 ♚xg7 ♚e4 and Black should win the endgame.

Kasparov's 38 ♞c2 is more sensible, although he claims that Black retains the advantage after 38...♚a8 (or 38...♞e6). *Fritz* is stubbornly unconvinced, much preferring White after the further moves 39 ♚c3 ♞b5 (39...♚a6? 40 b5!) 40 ♚d3. Possibly a verdict of "dynamic equality" is nearer the truth after 40...♚a1 41 ♜h2 ♜c7 42 ♞d2 ♞e5. It is a difficult position for both sides, where any error is likely to be fatal, but with best play it does not look to me as though either side can really claim to be better.

36...♞e6 37 ♞d1 ♚h8



38 g4

This weakening is forced, since the rook ending after 38 ♞g4 ♞xg4 39

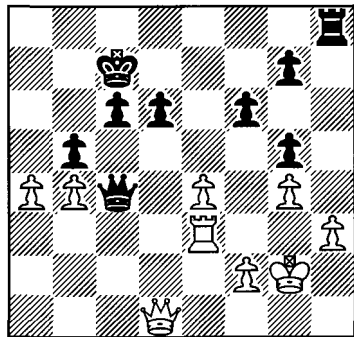
hxg4 favours Black; he has a weakness to attack on a3 and the possibility of the break ...c6-c5. This is the one big achievement of his queenside play – almost any rook ending is likely to be bad for White, so he needs to retain the queens and seek chances against Black's king.

38...♞c4

Romanovsky advocates 38...♚a8 here, to prevent White's next, but Kasparov sees no reason for this.

39 a4?!

Awarded an exclamation mark by Romanovsky, but a dubious sign by Kasparov. This time, I am with the latter. It appears that Schlechter panicked a bit here, and starting thrashing about unnecessarily, in search of counterplay. After the solid 39 ♞d2, it remains very difficult for Black to strengthen his position.

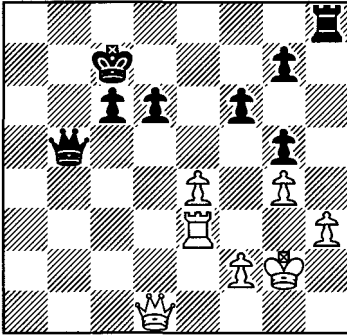


39...♞xb4?!

39...♚a8 was given as "no worse" by Romanovsky, who analyses 40 axb5 ♞xb5 41 ♞b3 (*Fritz* gets very optimistic about 41 ♚c3 but in fact, after

41...♖xb4! 42 ♖xc6+ ♕xc6 43 ♗d5+ ♕c7 44 ♗xa8 ♕d7 the position is just a draw) 41...♖a1!. However, the computer is probably correct that 39...♖b8! is the best move, taking aim at the b4-pawn. After 40 axb5 ♖xb5 41 ♗a1 ♕b7 42 ♗d1 ♗xb4 Black has won a pawn, although White retains chances against the exposed black king.

40 axb5 ♗xb5



41 ♖b3

41 ♗a1 ♖b8 42 ♗a2 d5 43 exd5 ♗xd5+ 44 ♗xd5 cxd5 is extremely good for Black. Once again, White needs to keep the queens on.

41...♗a6 42 ♗d4

With the threat of ♗b2 (or ♗b4) and ♖a3. However, 42 ♖b4 (Bologan) may be a stronger way to implement the same idea. White intends ♗b3 and ♖a4. Dvoretzky then analyses the repetition 42...♗a3 43 ♖b3 ♗a6 44 ♖b4 as best, a conclusion with which *Fritz* agrees.

42...♖e8! 43 ♖b1

43 ♗b4 c5 defends, whilst 43 ♗b2? ♖xe4 is simply bad for White.

43...♖e5!

The rook defends very well along the fourth rank.

44 ♗b4 ♗b5

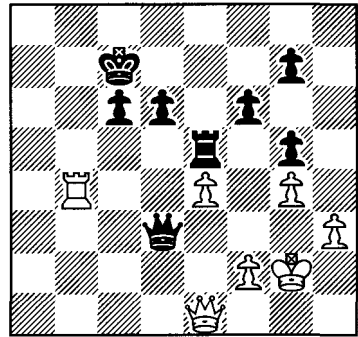
44...♖b5 runs into 45 ♗c4!

45 ♗e1 ♗d3?!

Kasparov points out that this is a missed opportunity, passed over by previous commentators. After 45...♗a4! Black is clearly better, as the queen ending after 46 ♖b4 ♗a5 47 ♗b1 ♖b5 48 ♖xb5 ♗xb5 should be winning for Black.

46 ♖b4!

Setting up a threat of ♗a1.

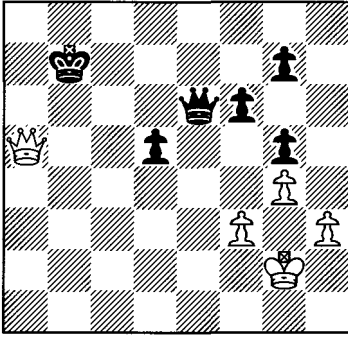


46...c5?!

This exposes the black king further and is extremely risky. A safer option was 46...♖b5. Romanovsky dismisses this with 47 ♖a4 ♖b1 48 ♗a5+ ♕d7 49 ♗f5+ drawing, but Black's 47th is far too cooperative, and both *Fritz 12* and Kasparov agree that after 47...♕d7! Black is much better.

Romanovsky instead recommended 46...♖a5, but suggested that maybe Lasker was unsure whether he was winning the queen ending after 47 ♖b3

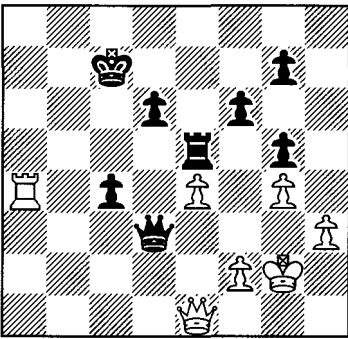
♖xb3 48 ♜xa5+ ♔b7 49 ♜d8 ♜e6 50 f3
d5 51 exd5 cxd5 52 ♜a5



52...♜d7 53 ♜b4+ ♔c7 54 ♜d4. Kasparov has fewer doubts, especially after 52...♜e2+! 53 ♔g3 ♜e5+ 54 ♔g2 d4 and I see no reason to argue with him.

47 ♖a4 c4

This is the point of Lasker's play. He is winning the e4-pawn.



48 ♜a1?!

Fritz prefers 48 ♜b4, which seems to guarantee sufficient counterplay, e.g. 48...♜xe4+ 49 ♔h2 ♖c5 50 ♖a7+ ♔c8 51 ♖xg7 and Black probably has nothing better than 51...♜e5+ 52 ♔g1 ♜a1+ 53 ♔h2 ♜e5+ with perpetual check.

48...♜xe4+ 49 ♔h2 ♖b5

Now 40...♜e5+ is a threat.

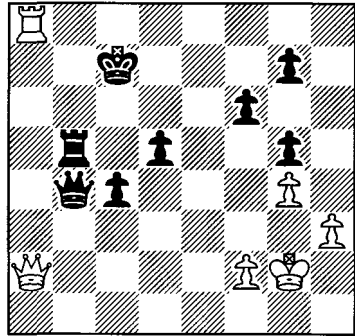
50 ♜a2!

Attacking both the c4- and g7-pawns.

50...♜e5+ 51 ♔g1 ♜e1+ 52 ♔h2 d5 53 ♖a8!

Schlechter's position is very bad, but his ingenious play shows the resources available in heavy piece endings. The point of the check on e1 was to cover the a5-square, so that after 53 ♖a7+ ♖b7 White does not have 54 ♜a5+. But the text threatens 54 ♜a7+.

53...♜b4 54 ♔g2



54...♜c5?!

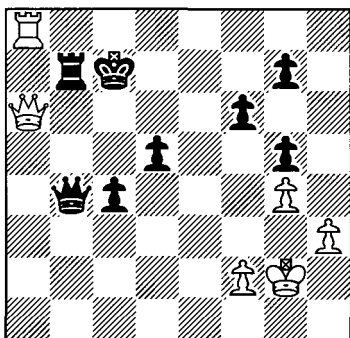
As Kasparov writes, over the decades this move has attracted dozens of question marks from the various commentators, who have almost unanimously labelled it the decisive mistake, but in fact this does not appear to be the case; it is Black's next move which actually loses the game.

There are three main alternatives:

a) 54...♖b8 55 ♜a7+! ♖b7 and now 56 ♜e3 ♜d6 was given as winning by

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

Lasker. But the computer's preference 56 ♖a6! appears to give White enough play for a draw, although for a definitive answer, one needs to leave a very powerful engine running for hours.



Kasparov claims to have done exactly this, and believes White is drawing, one of his variations going 56... ♖b6 57 ♖a3 ♖b4 58 ♖a6 ♖e1 59 ♜g8! (this rook switch is a key resource for White) 59... ♖e4+ 60 ♔h2 ♖e7 and now 61 ♔g2! (avoiding 61 ♖a5+ ♔d7 62 ♖xd5+? ♖d6+!) and Black cannot prevent ♖a5+.

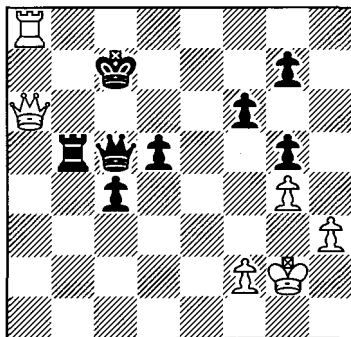
b) Schlechter recommended 54... ♜b7 but then 55 ♖a6! transposes to the lines just examined.

c) Dvoretzky's pupil Vadim Zvjaginsev came up with what the former describes as "the most solid solution": 54...c3 but after the strong reply 55 ♜e8! ♜b8 (or 55... ♜a5 56 ♖e2 "and White is OK" – Kasparov) 56 ♖a7+ ♜b7 57 ♖a8, White is holding.

The overall conclusion seems to be that Black was no longer winning the position at this point, although it re-

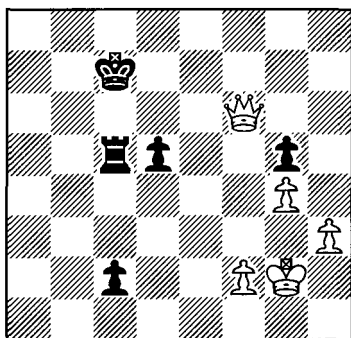
quires extremely complex analysis to establish this. It is scarcely any wonder that Lasker should have lost control of the complications, over the board, after such a hard fight.

55 ♖a6



55... ♜b8?

This move really does lose without a fight. Kasparov claims that Black can still draw in two ways, in both cases by sacrificing queen for rook, and relying on his passed c- and d-pawns. His first line is Lasker's 55...c3 when he analyses 56 ♜c8+ ♔d7 57 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 58 ♖b7+ ♔d6 59 ♖xg7 ♔c2 60 ♖xf6+ ♔c7,



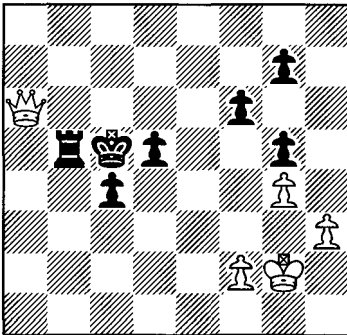
and White can make no progress.

However, Fritz 12's 56 ♖a7+! looks stronger and appears to win:

a) 56...♙b8 57 ♖xg7 c2 58 ♖g8+ ♙c7 59 ♖e6 ♙b7 (59...c1♖ 60 ♖g7+ forces mate) 60 ♖g7+ ♖c7 61 ♖xc7+ ♙xc7 62 ♖f7+ ♙b8 63 ♖g8+ ♙a7 64 ♖h7+ ♙a6 65 ♖xc2, winning.

b) 56...♖xa7 57 ♖xa7+ ♙d6 58 ♖xg7 (White has gained a vital tempo over the line with 56 ♖c8+, because the black rook is on b5 rather than c5) 58...♖c5 (58...c2? 59 ♖xf6+ wins after 59...♙d7 60 ♖f5+ or 59...♙c7 60 ♖c3+) 59 ♖xf6+ ♙d7 60 ♖xg5 c2 61 ♖c1 d4 62 ♙f3 and again White wins.

Kasparov's second drawing suggestion is Capablanca's recommendation 55...♖b6!. This does indeed seem to hold, e.g. 56 ♖c8+ ♙d6 57 ♖a6 (57 ♖f8+ ♙e5 58 ♖e8+ ♙d6 59 ♖d8+ ♖xd8 60 ♖xd8+ ♙c6 is another, very similar ending) 57...♖xa6 58 ♖xa6+ ♙c5,

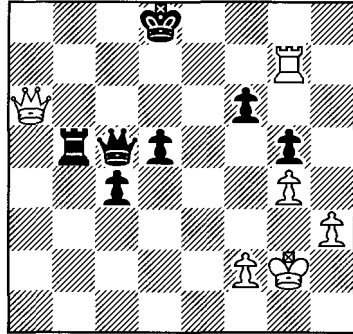


and despite the silicon monster's

optimism about White's position, it is not clear that he has anything more than perpetual check.

56 ♖a7+ ♙d8 57 ♖xg7

Now Black is being mated.

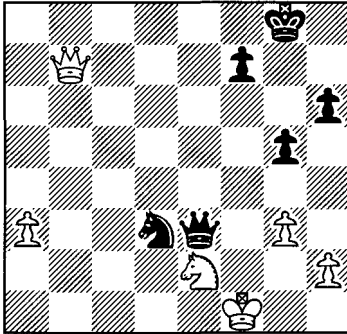


57...♖b6 58 ♖a3 ♙c8 1-0

Lasker resigned without waiting for 59 ♖f8+ ♖d8 60 ♖c5+.

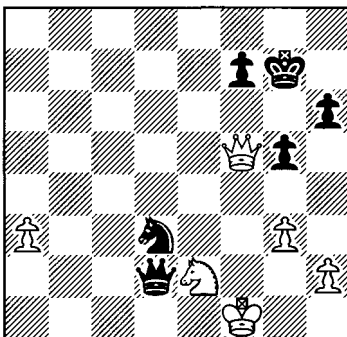
A monumental battle, just like the entire Lasker-Schlechter match, which was one of the finest world championship matches ever played. Despite the mistakes, inevitable in such a tense and complicated game, this remains one of the most instructive heavy piece endings one will ever see. Lasker's legendary ability to balance on a precipice enabled him to outplay Schlechter from an equal position, and eventually establish a position that he should have won, but for once, he slipped and over-balanced at the crucial moment.

41 ♚xb7 ♜d3



This was the sealed move, and Keres was able to analyse the next phase of the game in detail. He gives a full account of the analysis in his classic chapter in *The Art of the Middlegame*. The key to Black's win is the attack on the white king. If either of the pieces comes off, the white a-pawn will give him very strong counterplay, if not the advantage, so Black must use the attacking power of queen and knight together, to harass the exposed white king.

42 ♚c8+ ♖g7 43 ♚f5 ♚d2



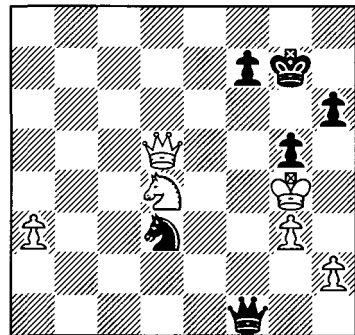
44 ♜d4

The only way to stay on the board, in the face of the threat of 44...♚e1+.

44...♚e1+ 45 ♖g2 ♚e3! 46 ♚d5!

There is no good square to which the knight can be removed, e.g. 46 ♜c6 ♚d2+ 47 ♖g1 (or 47 ♖h3 ♜f2+ 48 ♖g2 ♜g4+ 49 ♖h3 h5) 47...♚c1+ 48 ♚f1 ♚c5+! winning, or 46 ♜f3 ♚e2+, which soon forces mate.

46...♚f2+ 47 ♖h3 ♚f1+ 48 ♖g4



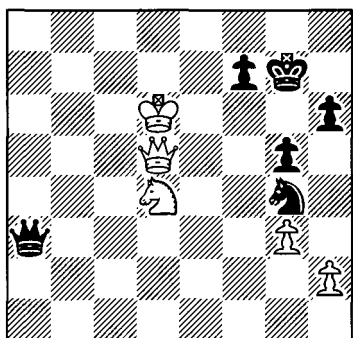
48...♜f2+!

Here, there is a very nasty trap, which Keres had fortunately spotted during his adjournment analysis. It looks as though Black can mate quickly with 48...h5+ 49 ♖xg5 ♚f6+ 50 ♖xh5 ♜e5 when there appears to be no defence. But now White has the shocker 51 ♚d6!! and it is he who is suddenly winning – a striking illustration of the tactical tricks which can be concealed in endgames with queens and other pieces in tandem.

49 ♖f5

49 ♖f3? loses at once after 49...♜d1+, and the white queen falls to a knight fork.

49...♔d3+ 50 ♖e5 ♘g4+ 51 ♔d6 ♚xa3+



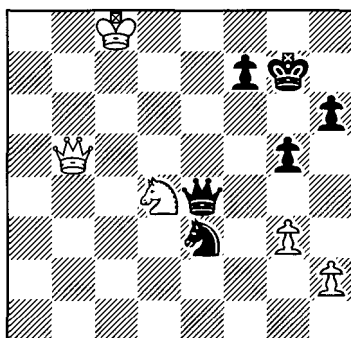
The computer confirms that both sides have played the best moves since adjournment. Despite his seemingly decisive attack, Black has not been able to wrap the game up with a quick mate or material win. Nonetheless, the elimination of the a-pawn is a big gain for Black, because it removes a major potential source of counterplay for the opponent. Even so, he still needs to play accurately to win. With only three pawns vs two, all on one side, both the knight and the queen endings will usually be drawn, *ceteris paribus*, so Black still needs to retain both pieces and use his initiative to increase his material gains.

52 ♖c7 ♚e7+ 53 ♖c8 ♘e3

53...♚e8+ 54 ♖b7 ♘xh2 is also possible, and should win, but Keres wrote that he preferred not to place his knight so far offside. The respite would allow White to set up some counter-chances with 55 ♘f5+ ♖g6 56 ♚d3 and although the computer allows us today to confirm that the discovered check is

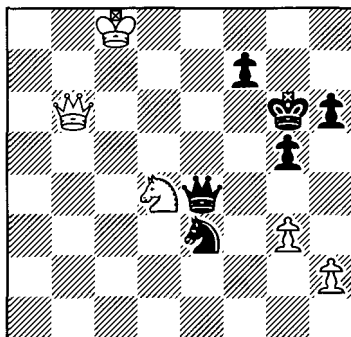
not a serious threat after 56...♚e5, it is understandable that Keres preferred not to enter such murky waters over the board.

54 ♚b5 ♚e4



We have seen in the pure queen endgames in this book that centralization of one's forces is a key method of reducing counterplay and protecting the stronger side's king. We see Keres employing the same technique here.

55 ♚b2 ♖g6 56 ♚b6+

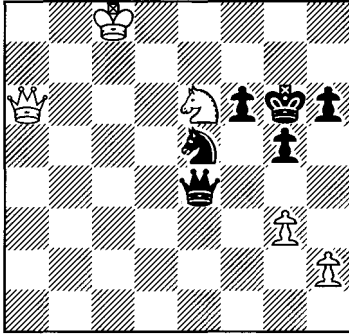


56...f6

Keres argued that 56...♖h5 was stronger, since the slight weakening of Black's pawn structure, which the text-

move involves, gives White additional counterplay. However, this does not seem to be a significant factor.

57 ♖e6 ♘c4 58 ♜a6 ♗e5



Once again, Black's centralized forces do an excellent job of protecting his king. 59...♜c6+, exchanging queens is also a threat.

59 ♗c7 ♜c2 60 ♜d6

Keres points out that 60 ♜e6 is refuted by 60...♜f5. With another pawn inevitably dropping, White has to seek counterplay, hence the text.

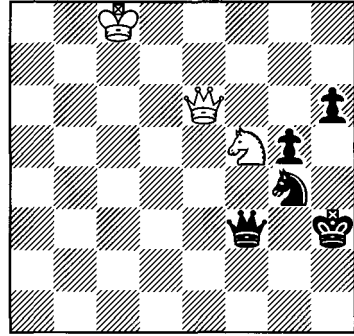
60...♜xh2 61 ♗d5 ♜f2

61...♜xg3 is also good, as is 61...♜h3+.

62 ♗b7 ♜xg3 63 ♜xf6+ ♗h5

Black's position is a technical win, but still requires some care.

64 ♜e6 ♗g4 65 ♗e7 ♜f3+ 66 ♗c8 ♗h4 67 ♗f5+ ♗h3



68 ♗d8

68 ♗xh6? ♜f8+ is one important point of Black's play.

68...h5 69 ♜g6 ♗e5 70 ♜e6 ♗g4 71 ♜g6 ♗e5 72 ♜e6 ♜d3+ 73 ♗d4+

Otherwise, Black exchanges queens by 73...♜d7+!

73...♗g4 74 ♜d5 ♗f2!

Covering h1 and getting ready to advance the pawns.

75 ♗c8 h4 76 ♜e5 ♜e4 77 ♜f6 ♜f4 78 ♗f5 ♗e4 79 ♜e6 ♜g4 0-1

Black will force off the queens after 80...♗g3.

A superbly played endgame by Keres. His extreme accuracy shows the resources that exist with queen and knight working together. They form a formidable attacking force, but require excellent tactical control to utilize effectively.

Chapter Seven

Rook and Minor Piece Endings

In this chapter, we look at various endings with rooks and minor pieces. In Game 39, we have one of the most famous practical endings of the last 50 years, and also one of considerable theoretical significance. It is a difficult ending to understand, but is well worth the effort. Together with his second at the event, Ulf Andersson, Timman managed to improve on established endgame theory at the time, and shorten the winning process, in an ending that was thought to take more than 50 moves to win.

Game 40 also sees an ending with an extra exchange, but here we have an extra pair of rooks on the board. Once again, the paucity of pawns makes the material advantage extremely difficult to realize, but Lasker manages it, with some extremely accurate play.

Game 41 is a classic example of rook

plus bishop versus rook plus knight. We saw one such example in the early part of the ending in Game 15. In general, rook and bishop cooperate well together, and are generally better than rook and knight, although there are also plenty of exceptions. The main one is when the knight manages to find a secure central outpost, and one of the main features of Lasker's deep play in Game 41 is how he manoeuvres early on to ensure that this does not become the case.

Game 42 is an ending with two rooks and bishop on each side, with the bishops being of opposite colours. The usual drawing tendency of opposite-coloured bishops is significantly diminished when there are other pieces on the board, and this game is an example of that. Despite equal material, Andersson wins a masterpiece, thanks to the superior pawn structure.

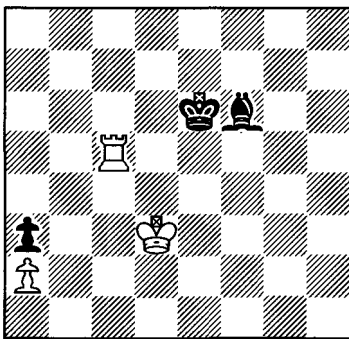
Game 39

J. Timman-D. Velimirovic

Interzonal, Rio de Janeiro 1979

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♖f3 c5 4 cxd5 exd5 5 g3 ♗c6 6 ♙g2 cxd4 7 ♗xd4 ♙c5 8 ♗xc6 bxc6 9 ♖c2 ♖e7 10 0-0 ♙d7 11 ♗c3 ♗f6 12 ♙g5 0-0 13 ♙xf6 gxf6 14 ♖ac1 ♙b6 15 e3 h5 16 h4 ♖h8 17 ♗e2 ♙g4 18 ♗f4 ♖ac8 19 ♙h3 ♙xh3 20 ♗xh3 ♖e5 21 ♗f4 ♖g8 22 ♖e2 ♖xg3+ 23 fxg3 ♙xe3+ 24 ♙g2 ♙xf4 25 ♖xe5 ♙xe5 26 b3 ♙g7 27 ♖fd1 ♖c7 28 ♖c2 ♙d6 29 b4 ♙xb4 30 ♖xd5 ♙g6 31 ♖d4 a5 32 g4 c5 33 gxh5+ ♖xh5 34 ♖d5+ ♖h6 35 ♖c4 a4 36 ♖f3 a3 37 ♖d6 ♖e7 38 ♖xf6+ ♙g7 39 ♖f5 ♖d7 40 ♖g5+ ♖f8 41 ♖g2 ♖d5 42 ♖e4 ♖h5 43 ♖f3 ♖e7 44 ♙g4 ♖h7 45 ♖f2 ♖g7+ 46 ♖f5 ♖h7 47 ♖f3 ♖f8 48 ♖h3 ♖h5+ 49 ♖e4 ♖e7 50 ♖f4 ♖f6 51 ♙g4 ♙g6 52 ♖f4 f5+ 53 ♖f3 ♖f6 54 ♖e2 ♖e5 55 ♖c4 ♖d5 56 ♖f4 ♖e5 57 ♖c4 ♖d5 58 ♖d3 ♙a5 59 ♖h1 ♙d8 60 ♖f1 ♙e7 61 ♖cf4 ♙xh4 62 ♖xf5+ ♖xf5 63 ♖xf5+ ♖e6 64 ♖xc5 ♙f6

Timman's chances of qualifying for the Candidates' tournament, became one of the most famous endgames of the past 50 years. It was played in the days of adjournments, and thanks to the schedule, Timman had the better part of a week to analyse the position and discover its secrets before resumption after the second adjournment. He was also fortunate enough to have as his second at this tournament the great Swedish endgame maestro Ulf Andersson, and between them the two GMs managed to make a significant contribution to endgame theory. The game caught the imagination of the chess-loving Dutch public, with even the mainstream Dutch newspapers devoting whole pages to the ending, with detailed analysis by GMs such as Donner!



This game, which was crucial for

With any pawn other than a rook's pawn, this material balance will usually be a fairly simple win, because at the right moment, White can sacrifice his rook for bishop and pawn, and win the resulting king and pawn vs king ending. However, with a rook's pawn, this is of course much more difficult to achieve, since unless the enemy king is far away, the king and rook's pawn vs king endgame will usually be drawn. This problem is exacerbated here, by

the fact that the white a-pawn is so far back. Effectively, to win the position, White's plan must be to drive the enemy king to the h-file, and cut him off. Then the white king returns to the queenside and arranges the sacrifice of rook for bishop and pawn. That is the theory, but in practice the ending is extremely subtle and difficult.

Timman has published pages and pages of analysis on the ending, and we will not be able to do more here than present the main ideas and variations. One notable aspect of the ending is that, according to the published theory of the time, the position was a theoretical win, but in many lines it took more than 50 moves. Timman and Andersson's lasting contribution was to find ways of shortening the winning process, so that even in the longest variation, White can sneak home just inside the 50-move limit.

65 ♖c6+ ♗e7

65...♗e5?? 66 ♖a6 would be one way to ensure that the ending did not make the textbooks!

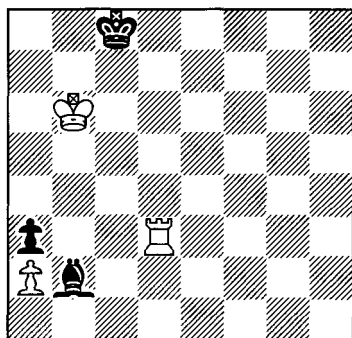
66 ♗e4 ♖b2 67 ♗d5 ♗f7 68 ♖e6

White gradually confines the black king and drives him towards the edge of the board.

68...♗g7 69 ♗e4 ♗f7 70 ♗f5 ♗f8 71 ♗g6 ♖c3 72 ♖a6 ♖b2 73 ♖a7 ♗e8 74 ♗f5 ♗f8

This move deserves comment. Logically, one might expect the black king to head for the a8-corner, but in reality, this corner is bad for him, because he is

driven quickly into zugzwang. A typical variation might be something like 74...♗d8 75 ♗e6 ♗c8 76 ♗d6 ♗b8 77 ♖h7 ♗c8 78 ♗c6 ♗b8 79 ♖d7 ♗c8 80 ♖d5 ♗b8 81 ♗b6 ♗c8 82 ♖d3



and Black is in zugzwang: 82...♖c1 83 ♖c3+, or 82...♗b8 83 ♖d8 mate. Because of this, he has to stay out of the a8 corner, whilst at the same time trying to avoid being forced onto the h-file.

75 ♗e6 ♗g8 76 ♖f7 ♖c3 77 ♖f3 ♖b2

At this point, the game was adjourned for the second time, and the analysis started.

78 ♗e7 ♗h7 79 ♖g3 ♗h6

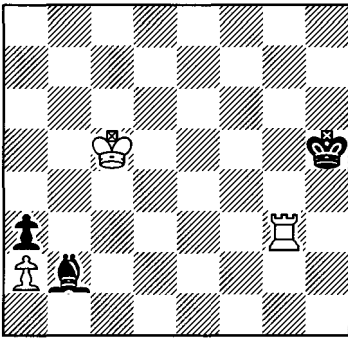
White has achieved his first aim, by confining the black king on the h-file, but he now has to find a way to get his own king back to the a-pawn, without releasing its opposite number. This requires a highly complicated manoeuvre, based on a variety of zugzwang positions.

80 ♗d6!

This was the first of the improvements found by Timman and Anders-

son. Established theory, as presented in Cheron's classic book, had given a much more indirect manoeuvre, starting 80 ♖e6 ♖h5 81 ♖f5 but which eventually takes an extra four moves to reach the position obtained after White's 84th move in the game.

80... ♖h5 81 ♖c5



Now White threatens simply 82 ♖b4, followed by 83 ♖xa3, so Black's next is forced.

81... ♖h4

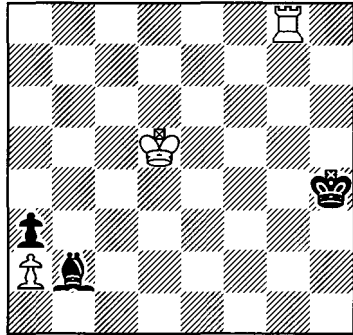
This stops the threat, since after a rook move along the third rank, the black king would come off the h-file, after which the sacrifice fails, e.g. 82 ♖d3 ♖g4 83 ♖b4 ♖f4 84 ♖xa3 ♖xa3+ 85 ♖xa3 ♖e5 86 ♖b4 ♖d6 and the black king is in time. Thus, White must keep the black king confined.

82 ♖g8 ♖e5

Timman points out that this is the most stubborn. After, for example, 82... ♖f6 there is 83 ♖g6 ♖e7+ (83... ♖b2 84 ♖b4 wins at once, e.g. 84... ♖c1 85 ♖b3 ♖b2 86 ♖g2 ♖c1 87 ♖c2 wins, or 84... ♖h5 85 ♖g3 and 86 ♖xa3) 84 ♖d5

♖h5 85 ♖g8 "and White would have gained several tempi" (Timman).

83 ♖d5 ♖b2

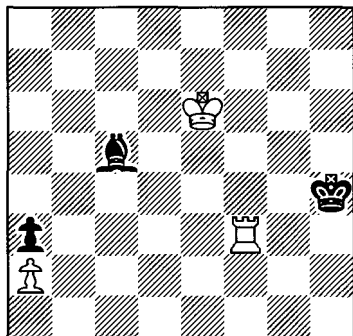


84 ♖c4

Once again, 85 ♖b4/♖b3 is threatened, when White cannot be prevented from sacrificing on a3.

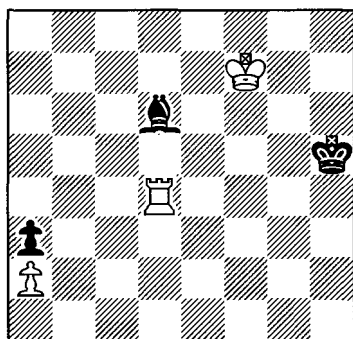
84... ♖f6

Black has to transfer his bishop to the a3-f8 diagonal. That has the advantage of having far more squares than the two available on the a3-c1 diagonal, but on the other hand, the bishop will now be undefended by the b-pawn, which allows various tactical ideas. Timman analyses 84... ♖e5 with the same basic idea as his main line, and gives fascinating variations showing the full measure of the improvements he and Andersson found on Cheron's analysis. The main line runs as follows: 85 ♖b3 ♖d6 86 ♖g6 ♖f8 87 ♖c4 ♖h5 88 ♖g8 ♖e7 89 ♖g2 ♖d6 90 ♖d5 ♖b4 91 ♖g3 (stopping the bishop returning to b2, via c3) 91... ♖h4 92 ♖b3 ♖f8 93 ♖f3 ♖e7 (now the only square, in view of 93... ♖b4? 94 ♖f4+) 94 ♖e6 ♖c5,



and now 95 ♖d3!! . Thus far, the line follows Cheron's analysis, but this last move was the big improvement found by Timman and Andersson. Cheron gave a very long and complicated (though beautiful) variation, which requires another 30 moves to win, but the text is quicker. Black now has only two moves that do not lose material:

a) 95...♗f8 96 ♖f6! (the bishop gradually runs out of squares) 96...♖h5 97 ♖d8 ♗b4 98 ♖d5+ ♖h6 99 ♖d3 ♖h5 100 ♖f5 ♖h6 101 ♖g3 ♗c5 102 ♖g4! ♖h5 103 ♖c4 ♗d6 104 ♖e6 ♗f8 105 ♖f7 ♗d6 106 ♖d4.

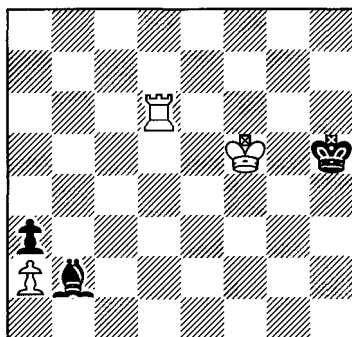


Finally, the bishop runs out of

squares. 106...♗c5 or 106...♗e5 lose the bishop to 107 ♖d5, whilst other bishop moves lose the pawn after 107 ♖d3.

b) The other option is 95...♖g4 but, as Cheron had found, this is a bad square for the black king. This is shown by 96 ♖c3 ♗f8 97 ♖c8 ♗h6 (forced, which is the reason why the king is so bad on g4 – 97...♗g7?? is impossible because of 98 ♖g8) 98 ♖c4+ ♖g5 (98...♖h5 99 ♖f5 ♗f8 100 ♖c8 ♗g7 101 ♖c1! wins the bishop after 101...♖h4 102 ♖h1+ ♖g3 103 ♖g1+) 99 ♖f7! and there is no defence to 100 ♖c3 (all this is analysis by Timman).

85 ♖g6 ♗g5 86 ♖d5 ♗c1 87 ♖e4 ♗b2 88 ♖f5 ♖h5 89 ♖d6



89...♖h4

Black's king is now forced down the board towards the h1 corner, in view of 89...♗c1? 90 ♖d1.

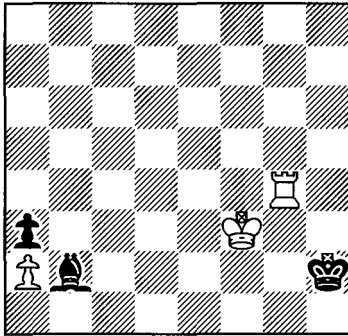
Cheron had analysed positions with the black king on h3/h2/h1, and shown them to be winning, although once again Timman and Andersson had speeded up his winning process.

90 ♖d3 ♗c1 91 ♖c3 ♗b2 92 ♖e3

Transferring the rook to e1.

92...♙c1 93 ♖e1 ♙d2

The main line is 93...♙b2 when 94 ♖g1 ♗h3 95 ♖f4 ♗h2 96 ♖g4 ♗h3 97 ♖f3 ♗h2 reaches the position Cheron had analysed.



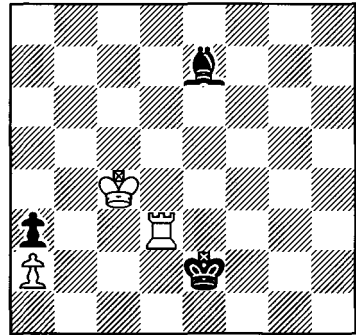
Timman now gives 98 ♗f2! (Cheron only considered 98 ♖h4+ ♗g1 99 ♖h3 when Black is in zugzwang and must move his bishop. White is then able to bring his king to e2-d1-c2 and prepare a winning sacrifice on a3, as Cheron shows, but in the present game this would have taken Timman perilously close to the 50-move rule. However, the text shortens the process considerably.) 98...♗h3 (Timman also analyses 98...♙f6 99 ♖g2+ ♗h1 100 ♖f1 ♙b2 101 ♖g3 ♗h2 102 ♖b3 with another, similar zugzwang. The continuation 102...♙c1 103 ♗e2 ♗g2 104 ♗d1 ♙b2 105 ♗c2 ♖f2 106 ♖xb2 leaves White some six moves faster than Cheron's line.) 99 ♖a4 Creating a similar zugzwang to that in Cheron's line, but here, the white rook is much better placed – it is already attacking a3, and

it does not get hit with tempo by Black's king. This all translates into several extra tempi for White. 99...♙c1 100 ♗e2 ♗g3 101 ♗d1 ♙b2 102 ♗c2 ♖f3 103 ♗b3 ♗e3 104 ♖xa3 and wins.

94 ♖h1+ ♗g3 95 ♖d1 ♙b4 96 ♖d3+ ♖f2

Forced, but now the king is cut off behind the pawn.

97 ♗e4 ♗e2 98 ♗d4 ♙c5+ 99 ♗c4 ♙e7



100 ♖h3 ♙d6 101 ♗b3 ♙f8 102 ♖h8 ♙d6

102...♙c5 103 ♖c8! forces the bishop to d6 anyway.

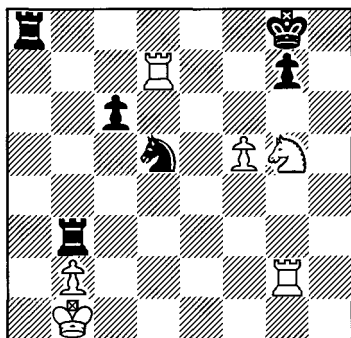
103 ♖a8 1-0

Now there is no defence to the sacrifice on a3, since the black king cannot step onto the d-file.

A magnificent achievement by Timman and his second, Andersson, and a lasting contribution to endgame theory. Of course, it was only possible because of adjournments, and there is no realistic prospect of a modern grandmaster achieving anything remotely similar in a practical game nowadays, with no adjournments and with increment time-limits.

Game 40
A. Alekhine-Em. Lasker
St Petersburg 1914

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙xc6
dxc6 5 ♘c3 f6 6 d4 exd4 7 ♗xd4 ♗xd4
8 ♘xd4 ♙d6 9 ♙e3 ♘e7 10 0-0-0 0-0 11
♘b3 ♘g6 12 ♙c5 ♙f4+ 13 ♚b1 ♖e8 14
♖he1 b6 15 ♙e3 ♙e5 16 ♙d4 ♘h4 17
♖g1 ♙e6 18 f4 ♙d6 19 ♙f2 ♘g6 20 f5
♙xb3 21 axb3 ♘f8 22 ♙xb6 ♙xh2 23
♖h1 cxb6 24 ♖xh2 b5 25 ♖e1 ♘d7 26
♘d1 a5 27 ♖h3 b4 28 ♘f2 ♘c5 29 ♖he3
a4 30 bxa4 ♘xa4 31 e5 fxe5 32 ♖xe5
♖eb8 33 ♘e4 b3 34 ♖e2 ♘b6 35 cxb3
♘d5 36 g4 h6 37 g5 hxg5 38 ♘xg5 ♘f6
39 ♖e7 ♖xb3 40 ♖g2 ♘d5 41 ♖d7



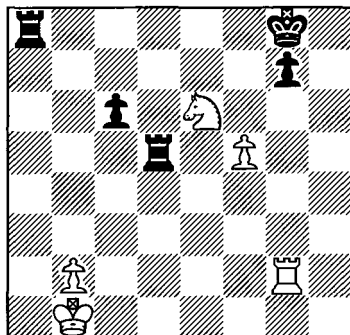
Thus far, this game has been a rather tense affair, in which Black has objectively had the worst of it. The play was greatly affected by the tournament situation. Lasker was involved in a big battle with Capablanca for overall tournament victory. After a slow start, Lasker had found himself trailing the Cuban significantly, and in order to

have any chance of catching him, he needed to win practically every game in the second half of the event. In the present game, he had therefore played in his typically provocative style, spurning straightforward equality in favour of stirring up complications, in the hope thereby of obtaining chances to outplay his opponent. We join the game just at the moment where Lasker's tactics have paid off, as White's last was a serious mistake which costs the exchange. However, that is only the start of the interest.

41...♖d3!! 42 ♖xd5

Surprisingly, this is forced. The threat was 42...♘c3+. Moving the rook away, e.g. 42 ♖b7, allows 42...♖d1+ 43 ♚c2 ♘e3+ picking up the other rook, whilst 42 ♚c1 walks into a snap mate after 42...♖a1+ 43 ♚c2 ♘b4 mate.

42...♖xd5 43 ♘e6

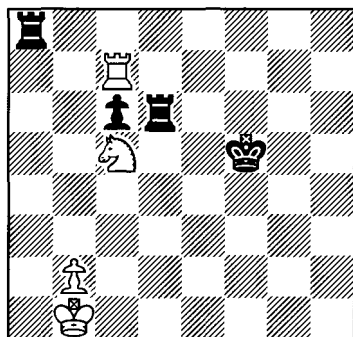


Despite his extra exchange, Black's game is extremely difficult to win, as he is losing the g-pawn, with the result that there will be only one pawn apiece. Fine points out that with an extra exchange, the most difficulties in winning often arise with two rooks vs rook and knight, because the latter pair of pieces can cover all the entry squares and make it very difficult for the stronger side's king to penetrate. With so few pawns left as well, the difficulties in winning are at their greatest.

43... ♖f7 44 ♖xg7+ ♖f6 45 ♖c7 ♖d6

Obviously, Black needs to hang onto his remaining pawn, at all costs.

46 ♗c5 ♖xf5



As Fine explains, so long as White retains his rook, there is little that Black can do, whereas once the rook comes off, the position is an easy win for Black. The latter's task is therefore to force the exchange of White's rook, which he does by a combination of mating threats and pins on the knight. With Alekhine defending stoutly, this proves a long process.

47 ♖f7+ ♖e5 48 ♖c2 ♖h6 49 ♗d3+ ♖d6
50 ♖f5 ♖b8 51 ♖c3 ♖c7

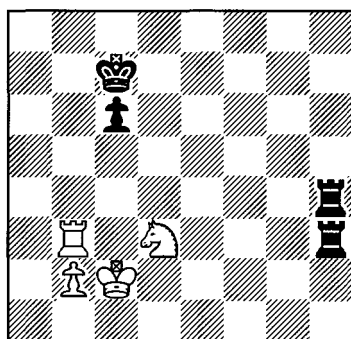
Black's king cannot really do anything active, because it is too vulnerable to checks, so instead it remains in the background, out of the way, and also takes on the job of guarding the c-pawn.

52 ♖f7+ ♖b6 53 ♖d7

Preventing Black from ganging up on the knight with ...♖d8 and ...♖h3.

53... ♖h3 54 ♖d4 ♖bh8 55 ♖b4+ ♖c7 56 ♖c2 ♖8h4 57 ♖b3

Now the rook has been forced into a rather awkward position.



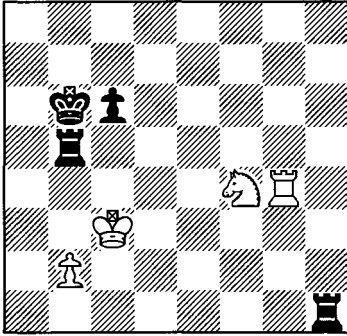
57... ♖h2+

Fine points out that 57...c5 was rather quicker: 58 ♖c3 (58 ♗xc5? ♖c4+ 59 ♖b1 ♖h1+) 58...♖d6 59 ♖a3 c4 60 ♖a6+ ♖d5 61 ♗c1 ♖h2+ 62 ♖b1 ♖h1 etc.

58 ♖c3 ♖4h3 59 ♖b4 ♖h5 60 ♖g4 ♖2h3
61 ♖c2 ♖d5 62 ♗f4 ♖c5+

62...♖d4?? 63 ♗e6+ would be unfortunate!

63 ♖b1 ♖h1+ 64 ♖a2 ♖a5+ 65 ♖b3 ♖b5+ 66 ♖c3 ♖b6



For the moment, Lasker continues to manoeuvre and probe, without making any real progress. This is a natural part of the practical playing of such an ending. The pressure of the clock, among other things, means that such an approach is frequently inevitable.

67 ♖d3 ♙h3 **68** ♚c2 ♙d5 **69** ♜b4+

69 ♘f4 ♙d4 would force the exchange of rooks at once, whilst 69 ♘f2 ♙h2 70 ♙f4 ♙g2 leaves White tied up.

69 ...♚c7 **70** ♜b3 ♙h2+

70...c5 is again possible here.

71 ♚c3 ♚d6 **72** ♙a3 ♙g2 **73** ♙a1 ♙g3 **74** ♙d1

Now the knight is pinned both ways, and Black can start to activate his king.

74 ...♚c7 **75** ♙d2 ♚b6 **76** ♙d1 ♚b5 **77** ♚c2

Conceding further ground, but after 77 ♙d2, Fine points out 77...♙c5+ 78 ♚b3 ♙cg5 and there is no defence against the exchange of rooks: 79 ♚c3 ♙g2 80 ♙d1 ♙g1 81 ♙d2 ♙5g2 etc.

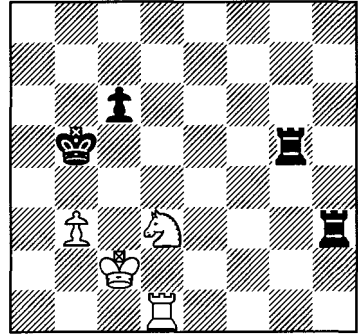
77 ...♚c4 **78** b3+ ♚b5 **79** ♙d2 ♙h3 **80** ♙d1 ♙h2+ **81** ♚c3 ♙d8

White is gradually running out of moves.

82 ♙g1 ♙h3 **83** ♙d1 ♙dh8

Again threatening the rook exchange by ...♙h1 and ...♙8h2.

84 ♙g1 ♙8h5 **85** ♚c2 ♙d5 **86** ♙d1 ♙g5



87 ♙d2?

This loses at once. Fine analyses the toughest defence as 87 ♙f1, after which he shows a win, as follows: 87...♙g2+ 88 ♚c3 ♙hh2 89 ♙c1 c5 90 ♘f4 ♙a2 91 ♘d3 ♙a3! (now c4 is a threat) 92 ♙b1 c4 93 ♘c1 ♚c5 94 ♙b2 (the exchange of rooks is now tactically permissible, because Black's last pawn would fall, but Black himself can now avoid it) 94...♙h3+ 95 ♚c2 c3 96 ♙b1 ♙a8! and there is no defence.

87 ...♙hg3

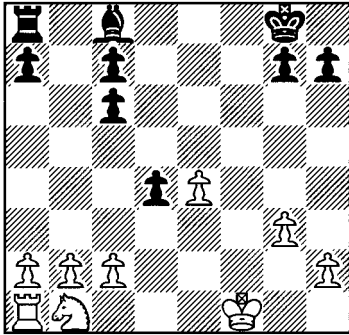
And finally there is no defence against the exchange of rooks.

88 ♘c1 **88** ...♙g2 **89** ♘e2 ♚b6 **0-1**

A fascinating endgame, which illustrates the difficulties that can lie in the way of converting an extra exchange, especially with few pawns remaining on the board.

Game 41
F. Marshall-Em. Lasker
 World Championship (Game 1), USA 1907

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♜c6 3 ♙b5 ♘f6 4 d4 exd4
 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 e5 ♘e4 7 ♘xd4 0-0 8 ♘f5
 d5 9 ♙xc6 bxc6 10 ♘xe7+ ♚xe7 11 ♖e1
 ♚h4 12 ♙e3 f6 13 f3 fxe5 14 fxe4 d4 15
 g3 ♚f6 16 ♙xd4 exd4 17 ♚f1 ♚xf1+ 18
 ♚xf1 ♖xf1+ 19 ♙xf1

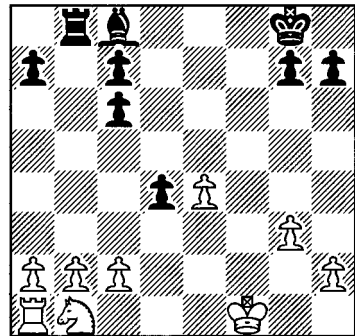


We have already seen one rook and bishop vs rook and knight ending in this book, Fischer-Taimanov (Game 15). As emphasized there, rook plus bishop are usually stronger on an open board, and with pawns on both flanks. Here, we have such a situation. As far as the pawn structures are concerned, here both sides have some defects. Black has doubled c-pawns, but White has three islands, and his e-pawn, although passed, is just a serious weakness.

I think 99% of players would have played one of the bishop checks here, followed by bringing the black rook to the f-file. However, as we have stated

elsewhere in this book, when discussing knight vs bishop positions, the inferiority of the knight is only an issue, even in open positions, if the knight lacks a good outpost. If it has a decent central square, on which it can entrench itself, it can be the equal of the bishop. In this position, given a couple of moves, White can bring his knight to the excellent square b3. From there, it would attack the d4-pawn, control c5 and potentially be able to jump to a5 in some situations. If White is given time to get his knight to b3, it would not be inferior to Black's bishop. For this reason, Lasker plays a much deeper series of moves than the obvious bishop check. He starts with:

19...♖b8!

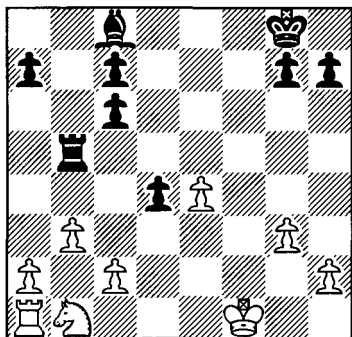


The first point of this move is to force the pawn advance...

20 b3

...after which the white knight is deprived of its excellent outpost! Admittedly, the knight has a square on c4, but that is no good, because a subsequent ... $\text{e} \times \text{c}4$ would shatter the white pawn structure.

20... $\text{b}5!$

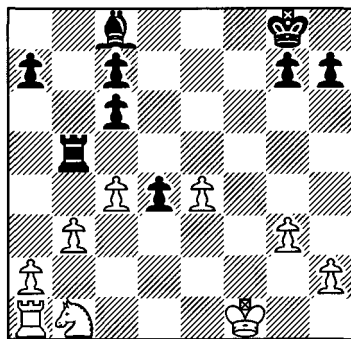


This is the second point of Lasker's last move. Although his bishop is undeveloped on c8, it is actually very well placed. It has two diagonals on which it can potentially jump out, so Lasker concentrates instead on activating his rook. What he has realized is that rooks do not depend solely on files for their activity – sometimes, they can operate very effectively on the ranks as well, as is the case here.

21 $\text{c}4!$

This transforms black's d-pawn into a powerful, protected passed pawn, but otherwise, there was an unpleasant threat of ... $\text{c}5$, tying White down to the defence of c2. However, Kasparov shows that 21 $\text{d}2$ should enable White to hold, e.g. 21... $\text{c}5$ 22 $\text{c}1$ and the tactical trick 22... $\text{a}6+$ 23 $\text{f}2$

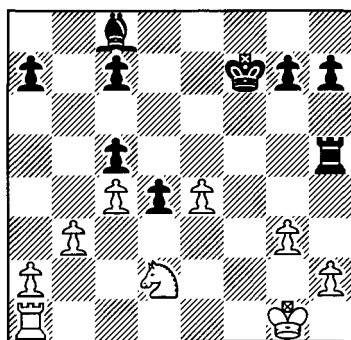
$\text{d}3$ nets a pawn, but a worthless one. After 24 $\text{f}3$ $\text{c}2+$ 25 $\text{c}2$ $\text{e} \times \text{c}2$ 26 $\text{d}4$ $\text{e} \times \text{e}4$ 27 $\text{e}6$ $\text{b}1$ 28 $\text{a}3$ $\text{a}2$ 29 $\text{c}5$, White is in no danger.



21... $\text{h}5$ 22 $\text{g}1$ $\text{c}5$

Now the d4-pawn is defended, and ... $\text{b}7$ becomes a possibility, attacking the weakness on e4.

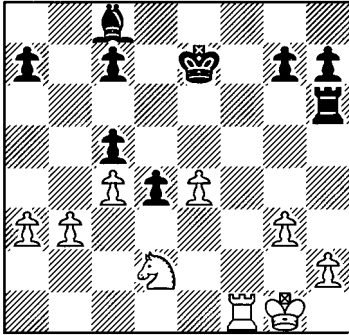
23 $\text{d}2$ $\text{f}7$



24 $\text{f}1+?$

This seems to be the losing move, wasting a tempo to drive the black king further towards the centre of the board. Immediate counterplay by 24 $\text{a}3$ was essential, when Shereshevsky showed that White should just be able

to hold, e.g. 24...a5 25 ♖b1 ♔e7 26 b4
axb4 27 axb4 cxb4 28 ♖xb4 etc.
24...♔e7 25 a3 ♖h6!



Once again, Lasker uses the ranks effectively. The fourth rank has now been closed, but the third rank is open, and his rook immediately seizes the opportunity to use it, so as to harass the white queenside pawns.

26 h4 ♖a6 27 ♖a1?!

In view of the fact that he ends up playing a3-a4 in a couple of moves anyway, he may as well have done so at once and saved a tempo, although it is not obvious that he can do anything useful with that tempo.

27...♗g4 28 ♔f2 ♔e6 29 a4 ♔e5

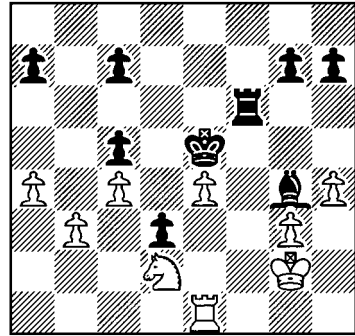
Now the king also occupies a superb outpost.

30 ♔g2

White has been driven into complete passivity.

30...♖f6 31 ♖e1 d3

With the white king cut off, there is nothing to stop its opposite number marching into the heart of the enemy position.



32 ♖f1

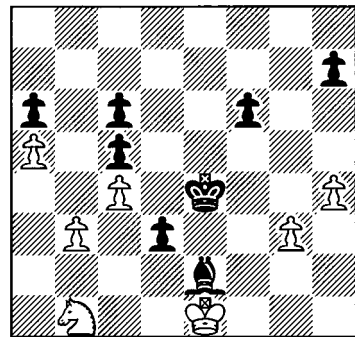
White's position is already quite lost, only ten moves after the start of the endgame proper.

32...♔d4 33 ♖xf6 gxf6 34 ♔f2 c6

The immediate 34...♔c3 35 ♔e3 and then a waiting pawn move was also possible. Either way, White's last defensive lines will be breached, thanks to zugzwang.

35 a5 a6 36 ♖b1 ♔xe4 37 ♔e1 ♗e2?!

37...♔e3 would have precluded the possibility in the next note.



38 ♖d2+

38 ♔d2 followed by ♖c3-a4 complicates Black's win – compared with the

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

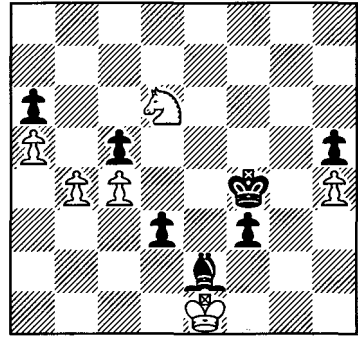
game, White gains several tempi. After 38...♙f3 39 ♖c3 f5 40 ♗a4 ♙xg3 41 ♗xc5 f4 42 ♗xa6 ♙g4! (42...f3? 43 ♖c5 ♙f4 44 ♗e6+ is far from clear) 43 ♖c5 ♙f5 44 a6 f3 45 ♗xd3! ♙xd3 46 a7 f2 47 a8♚ f1♚ 48 ♚xc6 ♙xh4 Black should be winning, but this is far less clear than the game continuation, in which Marshall goes down without a fight, and could have resigned considerably earlier.

38...♙e3 39 ♗b1 f5 40 ♗d2 h5 41 ♗b1

White still doesn't take the hint, so Lasker now removes the white kingside pawns. Marshall's last hope is to arrange ♗c3-a4xc5xa6, and try to promote his a-pawn, but providing Black does not permit his opponent several

successive moves, there is no chance of that ever happening.

41...♙f3 42 ♗c3 ♙xg3 43 ♗a4 f4



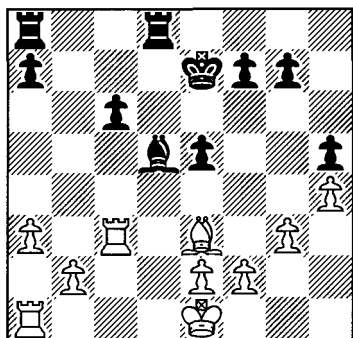
44 ♗xc5 f3 45 ♗e4+ ♙f4 46 ♗d6 c5 47 b4

Hope springs eternal...

47...cxb4 48 c5 b3 49 ♗c4 ♙g3 0-1

Game 42
U.Andersson-M.Stean
 Sao Paulo 1979

1 c4 ♖f6 2 ♗f3 c5 3 g3 d5 4 cxd5 ♗xd5
 5 ♙g2 ♗c6 6 d4 cxd4 7 ♗xd4 ♗db4 8
 ♗xc6 ♜xd1+ 9 ♚xd1 ♗xc6 10 ♙xc6+
 bxc6 11 ♗c3 e5 12 ♙e3 h5 13 h4 ♙b4
 14 ♗d2 ♙e7 15 ♜hc1 ♜d8+ 16 ♙e1 ♙e6
 17 a3 ♙xc3+ 18 ♜xc3 ♙d5



White's formal positional advantage is clear enough, and consists of the split black queenside pawns. However, with opposite-coloured bishops on the board, it is hard to believe that this advantage should prove sufficient for a win. In the absence of the rooks, there would of course be no winning chances at all, but with two pairs of rooks on the board, the drawing tendency of the opposite bishops is greatly reduced. Andersson gives a veritable tour de force of technique.

19 b4

As always, fixing weaknesses is crucial.

19...♜db8

A key tactical point of White's last move is that Black cannot get rid of the weak a-pawn by 19...a5? because of 20 bxa5 ♜xa5? 21 ♙b6. He will therefore have to remain with both queenside pawn weaknesses.

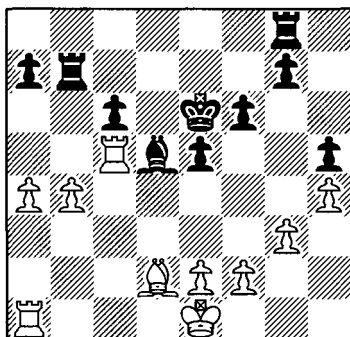
20 ♙d2 ♙e6

Once again, tactics prevent Black ridding himself of the a-pawn: 20...a5? 21 bxa5 ♜xa5 22 ♜e3 winning a pawn.

21 ♜c5 ♜b5 22 ♜cc1!

This is an important moment. As stated above, the more pieces remain on the board, the less great will be the drawing tendency of the opposite-coloured bishops. Andersson therefore keeps both rooks on.

22...f6 23 a4 ♜b7 24 ♜c5 ♜g8



25 f3!

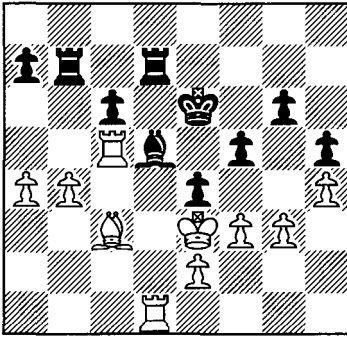
Black is seeking to establish counterplay on the kingside by ...g7-g5, so

White takes prophylactic measures against this. The text threatens to trap the enemy bishop after 26 e4, thus inducing the reply.

25...f5

At a stroke, Black's potential king-side counterplay has been eliminated.

26 ♖f2 ♜d8 27 ♙c3 e4 28 ♜d1 ♞dd7 29 ♙e3 g6



30 f4!?

An interesting choice. On the principle of "two weaknesses", White would normally try to keep the king-side open, so as to have the possibility of infiltrating with his king. However, this would mean his pieces being tied to the defence of the pawn on f3. Instead, Andersson closes the kingside, but thereby frees his hands to concentrate on the queenside weaknesses. His plan now is to transfer his king over to defend the b4-pawn, and then attack the a-pawn with all his might, bringing his rooks to a6 and a5, and placing the bishop on the g1-a7 diagonal.

30...♜d6 31 ♜b1 ♞dd7 32 ♙d4 ♖f7 33 ♜b2

As always, Andersson is in no hurry. Before the king can leave e3, he needs to ensure that Black has no dangerous discoveries with his bishop from d5 (e.g. 33 ♖d2? ♙a2), so Andersson removes his last piece from a white square.

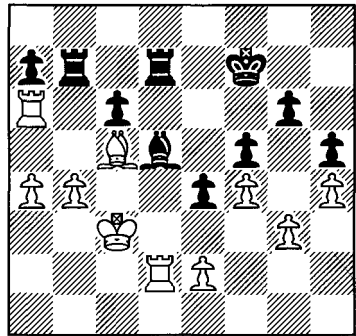
33...♙e6 34 ♖d2 ♖f7

Now 34...♙b3? just loses a pawn after 35 ♜xc6+ ♖f7 36 ♜xb3 ♞xd4+ 37 ♙e3, e.g. 37...♞dx b4 38 ♜xb4 ♜xb4 39 ♜c7+ ♙e6 40 ♜xa7 etc.

35 ♙c3 ♙e6

Black has no counterplay at all, and can only mark time.

36 ♜a5 ♖f7 37 ♜a6 ♞e7 38 ♙c5 ♞ed7 39 ♞d2



White now wishes to get his rook on d2 to a5, which involves playing the king to a3, moving the bishop to e3 or d4, and then playing ♜c2-c5-a5. With Black devoid of counterplay, White has time to execute such a manoeuvre.

39...♞bc7 40 ♙e3 ♞b7 41 ♙c5

Again we see the "repetition trick". White gains time on the clock and underlines Black's helplessness.

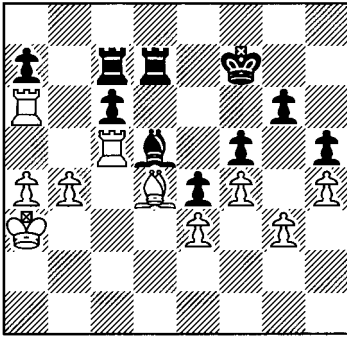
41...♖bc7 42 ♜c2 ♜b7 43 ♔b2 ♜dc7 44 ♔a3 ♜d7 45 e3

Getting another pawn off a light square and securing the post d4 for the bishop.

45...♜dc7 46 ♔d4

Now it is clear that the a7-pawn is doomed.

46...♜d7 47 ♜c5 ♜bc7



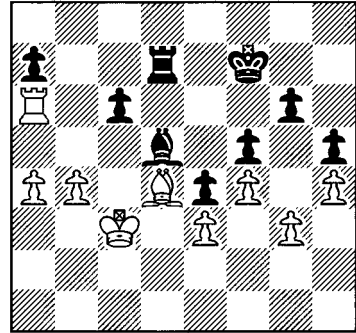
48 ♔b2!

Once again, a typical Andersson touch. There is nothing wrong with the immediate 48 ♜ca5, but nor is there any hurry to play this move. Consequently, Andersson just improves his king, by bringing it to the more central square c3. It has done its job on a3, by clearing the c-file for the rook to come to c5; now the king returns to a more central position.

48...♖b7 49 ♔c3 ♜b6

Black finally wearies of shuffling his rook to and fro along the seventh rank, and instead forces the exchange of a pair of rooks, but it is too late to make any difference.

50 ♜ca5 ♜xa6 51 ♜xa6



51...♔a2

Now he loses c6, but there was no defence anyway. White will just capture on a7 with the bishop, maintain his grip, and gradually advance the a-pawn.

52 ♜xc6 1-0

A superb piece of patient, systematic technique by Andersson. It is difficult to believe that the starting position of this ending is lost for Black, but even harder to pinpoint a clear or decisive error on his part!

Chapter Eight

Multi-Piece Endings

In this final chapter, we look at a selection of endgames where we have more than the usual 2-3 pieces on each side. The material involved varies, but most involve rooks and minor pieces, in some combination or other. All are united by general endgame principles – use of the king, creation of passed pawns, two weaknesses, do not hurry, etc.

Game 43 is one of the very first tournament games to demonstrate the superiority of the bishop pair over bishop and knight. With rooks also on the board, Steinitz gives a perfect illustration of how the stronger side should handle such positions, using his pawns to deny the knight a secure outpost in the centre. Game 44 is a masterly demonstration of the agility of knights, by one of the great, and unrecognized endgame specialists of the past-war era.

Game 45 is a masterpiece from the Petrosian-Botvinnik world championship match, and one which shows how rook plus knight can be more effective than rook plus bishop, when the knight

has a good, secure, central outpost. Game 46, however, shows the opposite side of the coin. There, Fischer shows the strength of the rook plus bishop combination. This game also features one of the most famous and instructive exchanging operations in all of chess literature.

Game 47 is another game in which an unexpected exchange holds the key to White's play. Paradoxically, bad bishops are often very effective defenders of weak pawns, and the key to success can therefore sometimes involve exchanging off the opponent's bad bishop, in order to expose his weaknesses. Game 47 is one of the great examples of this.

Endgame technique is something generally associated with older, more experienced players, but many of the great natural talents in chess have been outstanding technicians, even at a young age – Capablanca, Fischer and Karpov are the three examples that spring immediately to mind. Magnus Carlsen is another, and Game 48 is a

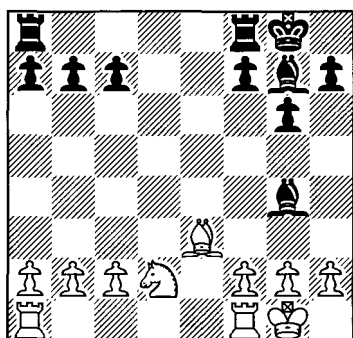
superb example of this, as the then 14-year old Norwegian wonder displays a maturity which belies his years.

Finally, we have two masterpieces from world championship matches. In

Game 49, Karpov gives another magnificent display of his prophylactic play, whilst Game 50 sees Kramnik saving his world title, with a fine positional squeeze in a must-win game.

Game 43
B.Englich-W.Steinitz
London 1883

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♗c6 3 ♘b5 g6 4 d4 exd4
5 ♗xd4 ♙g7 6 ♙e3 ♗f6 7 ♗c3 0-0 8 0-0
9 ♗e7 9 ♚d2 d5 10 exd5 ♗exd5 11 ♗xd5
12 ♙e2 ♗g4 13 ♙xg4 ♙xg4 14
15 ♗b3 ♚xd2 15 ♗xd2

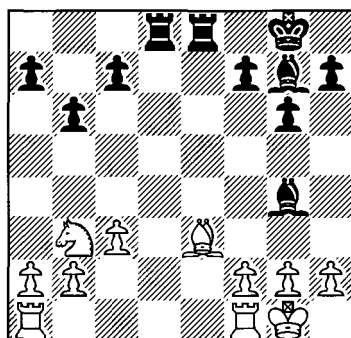


This ending is one of the very first, and still classic, examples of the exploitation of the bishop pair. Material is equal and the pawn structure symmetrical, yet the possession of the two bishops gives Black a clear positional advantage. The key point is that the white knight does not have a secure outpost in the centre. If it did, he would have chances to battle for equality, but as it is, he will be permanently on the defensive. The key strategic idea for Black is to use his pawns to drive the enemy knight out of the centre and prevent it finding a decent post. Steinitz carries out the plan to perfection.

15...♗ad8

Already a notable choice. There would be no sense at all in taking on b2, as after 15...♙xb2? 16 ♖ab1, White would regain the pawn and create counterplay with his active rook amongst the black queenside pawns. Black's positional advantage here is of a long-term, static sort, and so it makes no sense for him to rush things or allow unnecessary counterplay. Instead, it is all about slowly and methodically strengthening his position.

16 c3 ♖fe8 17 ♗b3 b6!



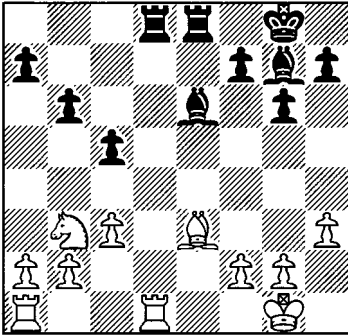
An absolutely typical move in such positions. Black begins the task of using his pawns to restrict the activity of the enemy knight, which is now deprived of the square c5.

18 h3 ♙e6 19 ♖fd1

The Russian endgame author Panchenko suggested 19 ♗d4 ♙d7 20

a4! fighting for counterplay, which is certainly a better chance than White's passive and stereotyped choice.

19...c5!

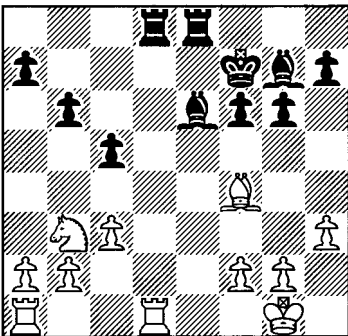


Continuing the job begun at move 17. Now the white knight cannot reach the centre via d4 and stands very passively on the b3-square.

20 ♖g5

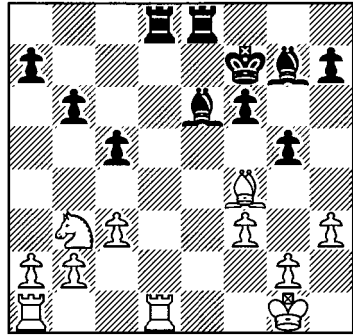
White hopes to induce Black to surrender the d-file by exchanging on d1, but Steinitz is not afraid to shut his dark-squared bishop in for the time being, to avoid this. The bishop will emerge into activity again later.

20...f6 21 ♖f4 ♗f7



As in almost all endgames, the black king has a part to play and Steinitz starts to centralize it. Note how he does not rush things – instead, he just concentrates on strengthening his position, bit by bit.

22 f3 g5



Once again, using his pawns to gain space and drive back the enemy minor pieces.

23 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 24 ♖e3 h6

This prepares to seize further central space by means of the advance ...f6-f5.

25 ♜e1 f5 26 f4

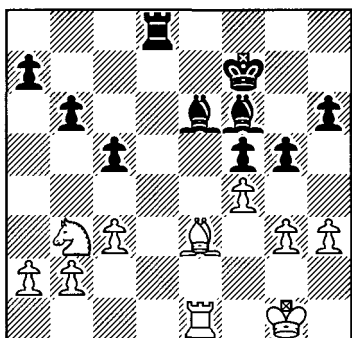
This is not a move White will have played with any enthusiasm, since it fixes a pawn on the same colour squares as his bishop. However, the alternative was to allow Black to advance his own pawn to f4, which would severely cramp the white position. It is a Hobson's Choice, but Englisch prefers to fight for space.

26...♖f6

Once again, Steinitz does not undertake anything precipitate, such as

exchanging on f4 (which would just weaken the black kingside pawns) or advancing to g4. In such positions, with the bishop pair and a space advantage, pawns often stand most effectively in a phalanx formation, side by side, so as to control the maximum amount of space. Steinitz just defends the g5-pawn and maintains that arrangement.

27 g3



27...a5!

Another absolutely typical space-gaining pawn advance. With the white a2-pawn now undefended, this gains in strength, since when the knight is attacked by ...a5-a4, it will be forced to retreat to c1, so as to defend a2. White is being remorselessly driven backwards.

28 ♖c1 a4 29 a3

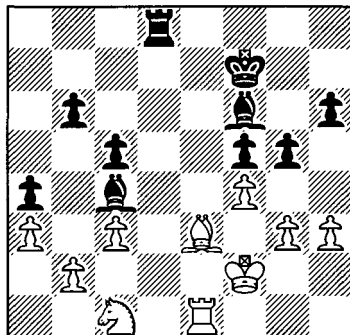
Another white pawn is fixed on a dark square, further hampering his bishop and weakening his light squares, but if he does not play this, his knight will be forever tied to the defence of a2. Note that the black king

now has a highly inviting route into the white queenside, via d5-c4-b3. The only piece that can stop this is the white knight, so now the possible exchange of one of the black bishops for that knight comes onto the agenda. This is an absolutely typical scenario for such endings – the bishop pair forces weaknesses, which only the knight can defend, thereby making its exchange a serious threat.

29...♗c4

Now the knight is effectively paralysed. White must constantly reckon on its being exchanged off, if it should move to e2, whereupon the weak white squares on the queenside could be subject to invasion.

30 ♖f2

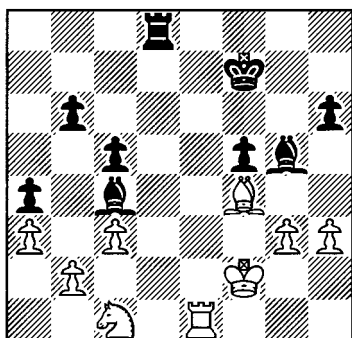


30...gxf4

With this move, Steinitz abandons his patient strengthening of the position, and goes over to a concrete course of action. In all endings, the moment comes when this is necessary, which is why the ability to calculate variations well is a crucial factor in successful

endgame play. However, while there is nothing at all objectively wrong with Steinitz' decision, it was not essential in this specific case. Another plan, suggested by Panchenko, was to carry on the process of gradual squeezing, by 30...♖d5. This defends the c5-pawn and so prepares the advance ...b5-b4, seeking to activate the dark-squared bishop down the long diagonal h8-a1.

31 ♖xf4 ♗g5

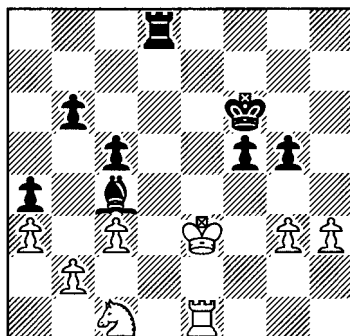


This is Steinitz' idea. He abandons the advantage of the two bishops, and instead transposes into an ending with rook and bishop vs rook and knight. Such positional transformations are a typical device in exploiting an advantage, and we will see other examples in this book. Many club players have a tendency to cling onto a particular advantage for dear life, whereas a strong master will often be seen to exchange one advantage for another.

32 ♗xg5 hxg5

Now Black has a potential passed pawn on the f-file, and a possible target on h3.

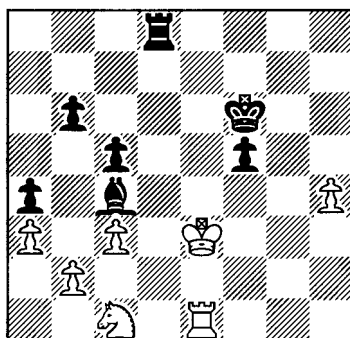
33 ♖e3 ♖f6



34 h4

White himself breaks the Gordian Knot, but his position is indefensible in any case. If he sits tight, Black can always arrange ...♖e5 and ...f4 himself, among other things.

34...gxf4 35 gxf4

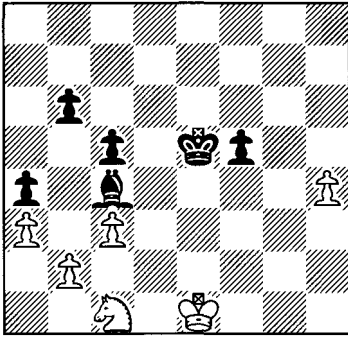


35...♖e8+

Steinitz calculates that he can exchange rooks and win the minor piece ending, thanks to his much more active king and the fact that his bishop dominates the knight. This is an example of the concrete play that I referred to earlier. Whereas most of the play hitherto

has been on general principles, with very little calculation, now it is all about calculating concrete variations.

36 ♖f2 ♜xe1 37 ♖xe1 ♕e5

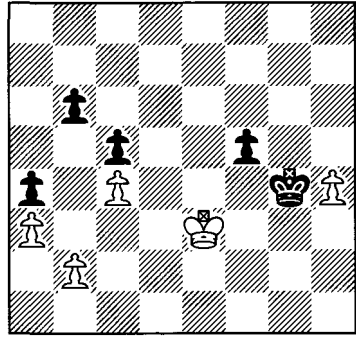


White's h4-pawn will be lost to the rampant black king, and to all intents and purposes we have a king and pawn ending, since the white knight is paralysed.

38 ♗e2

Desperation, but now Black liquidates completely.

38... ♗xe2 39 ♖xe2 ♖f4 40 c4 ♖g4 41 ♖e3



41... f4+!

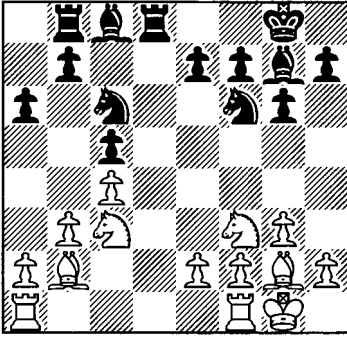
But not 41... ♖xh4?? 42 ♖f4. Care is always required!

42 ♖e4 f3 43 ♖e3 ♖g3 0-1

Black has no need of the enemy h-pawn, but just queens his own instead.

Game 44
G. Barcza-B. Soos
 Varna Olympiad 1962

1 ♖f3 ♘f6 2 g3 g6 3 b3 ♙g7 4 ♙b2 c5 5
 c4 ♘c6 6 ♙g2 0-0 7 0-0 d6 8 ♘c3 ♜b8 9
 d4 a6 10 dxc5 dxc5 11 ♜xd8 ♜xd8



The Hungarian grandmaster Gedeon Barcza is now largely forgotten, but in his day, he was the “grinder *par excellence*”, a sort of 1950s/60s version of Ulf Andersson. Famous for his ♖f3-g3-♙g2 systems, he liked nothing better than to exchange queens early and grind away in a long endgame. Harry Golombek is alleged to have said of him that “Barcza has the most varied opening repertoire of any grandmaster. He sometimes plays g3 on the first move, sometimes on the second, sometimes on the third, and occasionally not until the fourth move”, a joke Barcza himself was very proud of! Barcza was also especially fond of knights, and won many games by remarkably adept handling of his cavalry, this being one

of the best examples.

The early queen exchange looks like just a tedious exchanging operation, but is actually the start of a serious initiative.

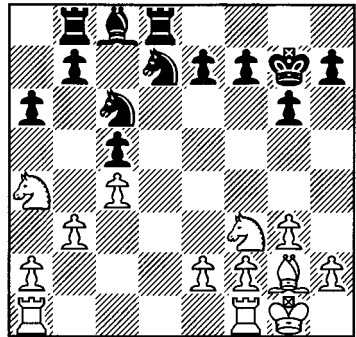
12 ♘a4!

This is why. Barcza has seen that Black has some difficulties defending his c5-pawn.

12...♘d7

12...b6 leaves the rook tied to defending b6, so that Black has trouble contesting the open file after 13 ♜ad1.

13 ♙xg7 ♜xg7



14 ♜ac1!

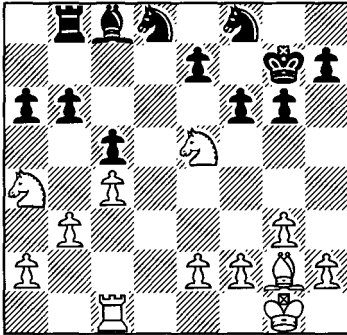
A neat piece of prophylaxis against Black’s ...b7-b5 advance. Now Black cannot get rid of the annoying knight on a4, which attacks his queenside and hampers the mobility of his pieces. Knights on the rim are not always dim, Dr Tarrasch notwithstanding!

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

14...b6 15 ♖fd1 ♜f8 16 ♙xd8 ♜xd8 17 ♜e5

Probing the c6-square.

17...f6



18 ♙d1! ♜f5 19 ♜d3 ♜d7?!

Soos takes radical measures to rid himself of the irritating knight, but his pieces end up awkwardly bunched on the d-file. Barcza suggested Black would do better to take on d3, although he did not give any variations. I assume that the idea was 19...♜xd3 20 ♙xd3 ♜de6, followed by ...b5.

20 ♜c3 ♜c6?!

A further inaccuracy. Barcza's recommendation was 20...♜c6 21 ♜f4 ♜xg2 22 ♙xg2 ♜c6, although then 23 ♜a4 threatens ♜d5. However, Fritz suggests the balance can be maintained by 23...♜b4 24 ♙d2 g5, which seems satisfactory for Black.

21 ♜f4!

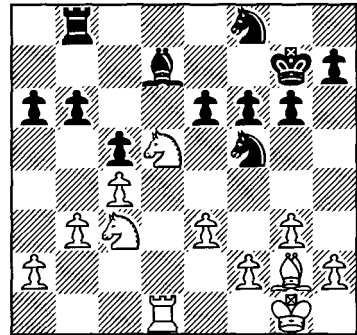
Now 22 ♙xd7 is the main threat.

21...♜d4 22 e3 ♜f5

22...♜de6? again walks into the tactic 23 ♙xd7!.

23 ♜fd5! e6

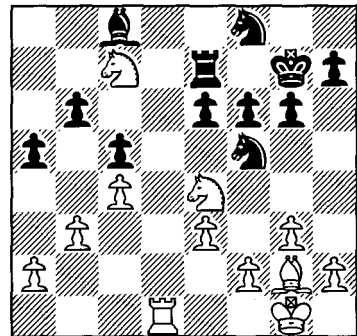
"Come into my parlour", said the spider to the fly...



24 ♜c7 a5 25 ♜a6! ♙e8

25...♙c8 is met by 26 ♜b7 driving the rook away, and securing c7 as an escape route for the knight.

26 ♜e4! ♜c8 27 ♜c7 ♙e7



28 ♜a8!!

An amazing concept. The knight jumps into the very corner of the board. Barcza's play in this game is very concrete and unprejudiced, and in that sense, bears some resemblance to computer play. The silicon machine would not hesitate to play a move such as 28 ♜a8, if it is effective, but for a human

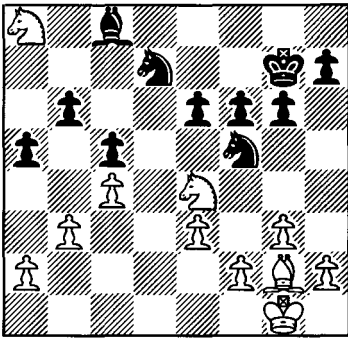
human player it requires a special effort to consider such a move. The point is that Black has serious trouble defending his b6-pawn.

28...♙d7

28...♙d7 loses the pawn after 29 ♖d6 ♗xd6 30 ♙xd6.

29 ♙xd7+ ♗xd7

But what now?



30 ♗c3!

Preventing Black's intended ...♙b7 and preparing to attack the b6-pawn again with ♗a4.

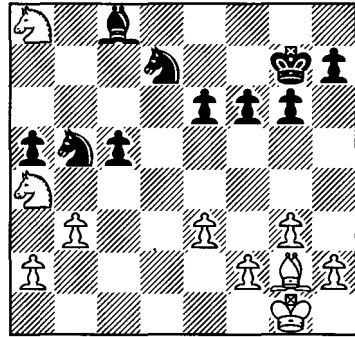
Barcza analyses 30 g4 ♙b7! 31 gxf5 ♙xa8 32 fxe6 ♗e5 33 ♗d6 ♙xg2 34 ♗xg2 ♗f8 35 ♗c8 ♗d3 36 ♗xb6 ♗e7! and suggests that, despite White's material advantage, the knight ending is hard to win. Black's knight is very active and threatens ...♗c1, and even after 37 ♗d5+ ♗xe6 38 ♗f3 ♗c1 39 ♗c3 ♗e5 the two Black queenside pawns hold White's three. Black's activity would give him drawing chances here.

30...♗d6 31 ♗a4

Barcza points out that winning the b-pawn by 31 ♙c6 ♗e5 32 ♙a4 is too

dangerous after 32...♙b7 33 ♗xb6 ♗f3+.

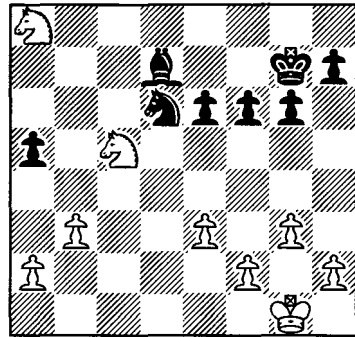
31...b5 32 cxb5 ♗xb5



33 ♙c6!

But now, finally, White will win a pawn, in more promising circumstances.

33...♗d6 34 ♙xd7 ♙xd7 35 ♗xc5



35...♙c6

Losing another pawn, but the theme of Black's bishop lacking squares is continued after 35...♙c6 36 ♗b6, when the knights once again display their awesome power. After 36...♗b7 (36...♗f7 37 ♗xc8 ♗xc8 38 ♗b7 wins another pawn) 37 ♗e4 (the bishop still

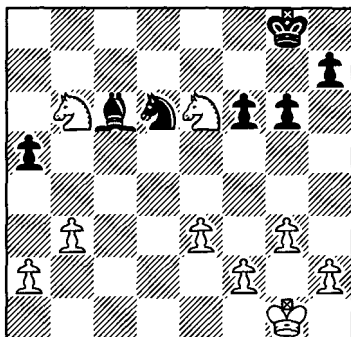
The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

has no squares!) 37...f5 38 ♖d2 ♖d6 39 ♗xc8 ♗xc8 40 ♖c4, the a5-pawn drops as well, and White is winning.

36 ♗xe6+! ♔g8

36...♗f7? is impossible because of 37 ♖d8+.

37 ♖b6

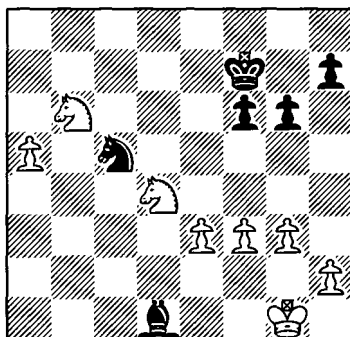


White's equine artistry has netted him two extra pawns and a winning endgame.

37...♗e4 38 ♖d4 ♗e8 39 ♖c4 a4 40 bxa4 ♗xa4 41 ♖b6 ♗d1 42 a4 ♖c5 43 a5 ♗f7 44 f3!

A neat final touch. White shuts off the bishop's path back into the game via g4. It is remarkable how, even at this late stage of the game, the black

bishop finds itself dominated by White's knights.



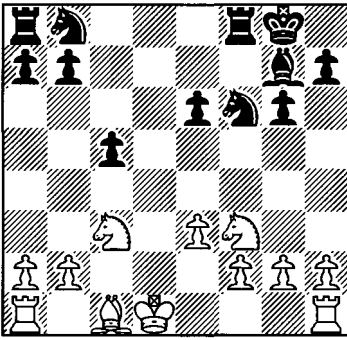
44...♗e8 45 ♖d5 f5 46 ♖c3 ♗a4 47 a6! 1-0

The final humiliation for Black's unfortunate prelate. The a-pawn costs the bishop his life.

A super game by Barcza, which shows the extreme agility of knights, even on an open board. It is a mistake to think that knights are only ever effective in closed positions. Even if, like me, you have not one word of Hungarian, I can strongly recommend Barcza's best games collection, which has some lovely games, including numerous fine endings.

Game 45
T. Petrosian-M. Botvinnik
 World Championship (Game 5), Moscow 1963

1 c4 g6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♗c3 d5 4 ♗f3 ♙g7 5
 e3 0-0 6 ♙e2 dxc4 7 ♙xc4 c5 8 d5 e6 9
 dxe6 ♖xd1+ 10 ♚xd1 ♙xe6 11 ♙xe6
 fxe6



Such an early queen exchange often presages a quick “grandmaster draw”, but that was not the case here. In fact, after the game, stories began to circulate that, during his pre-match preparation, Petrosian had predicted to his second that if this position arose, he would win it. Petrosian himself, however, was quick to scotch this rumour. Rather, he explained, he had merely told his second that the prospect of this endgame position arising should not deter him from choosing the quiet 5 e3 and 6 ♙e2 system in the opening.

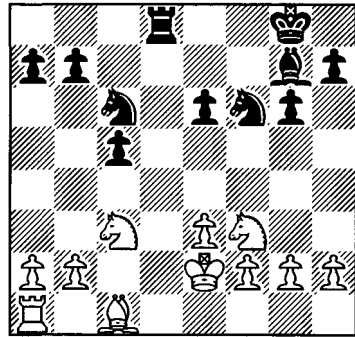
The assessment of the position is that White has a slight plus, thanks to his superior pawn formation. However, as Petrosian pointed out, that superior-

ity does not consist so much in any great vulnerability of the isolated pawn on e6. Instead, the main advantage it confers on White is the excellent outposts on e5 and/or e4, for his knights – the traditional “square in front of the isolated pawn”. We will see in the further course of the game that Petrosian makes excellent use of these squares.

12 ♚e2 ♗c6 13 ♖d1 ♖ad8?!

A small inaccuracy. Petrosian recommended the move 13...♗f7, immediately bringing the king into the centre, where it has a good square at e7.

14 ♖xd8 ♖xd8



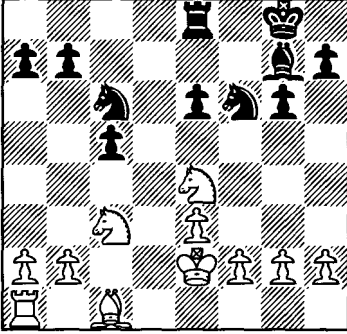
15 ♗g5!

Immediately taking advantage of Black’s slight imprecision. The knight attacks e6, stops the black king coming to f7 and also prepares to settle later on the key square e4.

15...♖e8

This is more or less obligatory, because the move 15...e5 would not be welcomed by the bishop on g7.

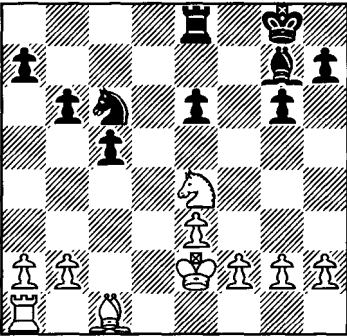
16 ♖ge4



16...♗xe4

Again, a very slight inaccuracy. Petrosian recommended 16...b6, so that after 17 ♗xf6+ ♔xf6 18 ♗e4 the bishop would have the option of retreating to e7.

17 ♗xe4 b6



18 ♖b1

The bishop on g7 has a fine diagonal, and causes White some short-term inconvenience, because of the pressure against b2. However, once White plays

b2-b3 and untangles his queenside pieces, the bishop will just be controlling an empty diagonal, and will not be as effective as it looks.

18...♗b4 19 ♔d2

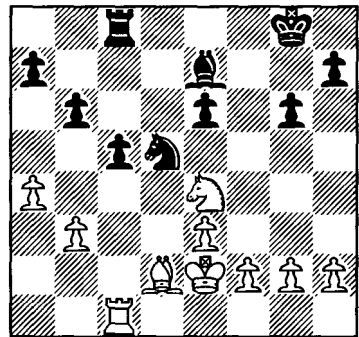
19 a4 would probably have transposed to the game, but Petrosian prefers to tempt his opponent with the a-pawn.

19...♗d5

Which temptation Black wisely resists. After 19...♗xa2? 20 ♖a1 ♗b4 21 ♔xb4 cxb4 22 ♖xa7 ♔xb2 23 ♖b7 White is clearly better.

20 a4 ♖c8 21 b3 ♔f8 22 ♖c1 ♔e7

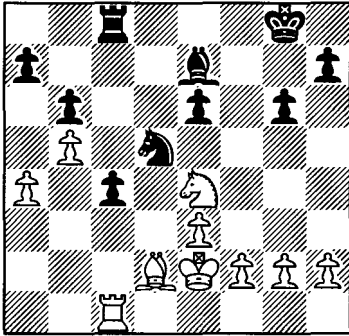
In view of what follows, the commentators almost unanimously condemned this move and recommended 22...♖c7, unpinning the c-pawn. However, Petrosian was not convinced, and argued that after 23 ♗g5 Black's position would not be easy. I suspect that he did not notice the computer's clever defence 23...♔h6 (intending 24 ♗xe6?! ♖e7 or 24 e4 ♗b4!) but even there White can retain an edge after 24 h4.



23 b4! c4

Practically forced, since he cannot really allow the exchange on c5, leaving Black with a weak isolated c-pawn. The real difficulty of Petrosian's 23rd move was in assessing the position after the text. The passed c-pawn looks quite dangerous, and Black's short-term initiative needs to be accurately calculated.

24 b5



24...♙f7?!

Rather than pursue any of the sharper alternatives, Botvinnik prefers a quiet life, but it soon becomes clear that he has underestimated the dangers of his position. Petrosian suggests several ways for Black to play more actively:

a) 24...♙a3 25 ♖c2 c3 26 ♙xc3 ♙b4 27 ♘d2 ♜c4 28 ♙xb4 ♜xe4 29 ♙d6 ♜xa4 30 f3 and White has a small advantage.

b) 24...c3 25 ♙xc3 ♙a3 (yet another idea is 25...♜c4 26 ♘d3 ♜xa4 27 ♙e5 again with a small edge for White) 26 ♜c2 ♜c4 27 ♘d3 ♜xa4 28 ♜a2 ♜xe4! 29 ♜xa3 ♘xc3 30 ♜xa7! ♙e5 31 ♘xc3

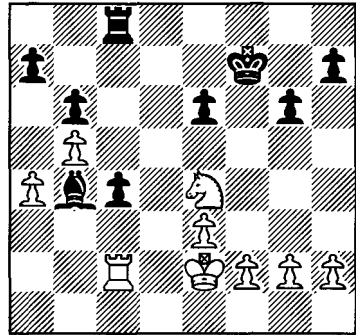
♜xb5. Here, too, White retains some advantage.

All of these variations had to be calculated and assessed by White, before he played his 23rd move. This is another example of the importance of calculation in endgames. Whilst schematic thinking and manoeuvring play an enormous part in endgame play, the accurate calculation of variations is also a *sine qua non* of being a good endgame player.

25 ♙c3!

The start of a strong regrouping plan, which Petrosian had also seen before move 23. First, the bishop blockades the c4-pawn. Then White intends to follow up with ♘d2, g2-g3 and e3-e4, driving the knight away from d5, after which the c4-pawn will prove indefensible.

25...♙a3 26 ♜c2 ♘xc3+ 27 ♜xc3 ♙b4 28 ♜c2



28...♙e7?

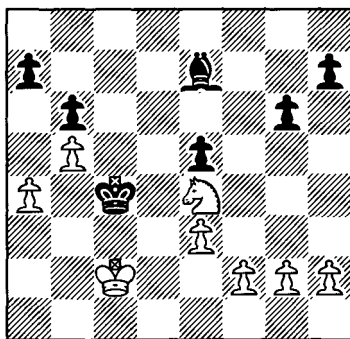
Black could have resisted more stubbornly with 28...e5, in order to free e6 for his king. After 29 ♘d2 c3 30 ♘e4

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

♙e6 31 f3, Tal claimed White was winning after 31...h6 32 ♖d3 ♜d8+ 33 ♜c4 ♜d2 34 ♖b3 ♜xc2 35 ♙xc2 ♙d5 36 ♙d3 c2 37 ♙xc2, and the king and pawn ending reached after 37...♙c4 38 ♜d2+ ♙xd2 39 ♙xd2 is winning for White, e.g. 39...♖b4 40 ♙d3 ♙xa4 41 ♙c4 and White simply creates a passed pawn on the kingside with f3-f4.

However, Petrosian suggested that Black could still continue to resist by avoiding exchanges: he proposed 31...♙a5 (threatening 32...♜c4) 32 ♙d3 ♜d8+ 33 ♜c4 ♜d2 34 ♖b3 ♜d3. This does indeed seem satisfactory for Black.

Petrosian's line suggests that White should not waste a tempo on the move 31 f3, which also weakens the e3-pawn, as seen at the end of Petrosian's line. I therefore looked at the immediate 31 ♙d3. Now c3 is hanging, so Black seems to have nothing better than 31...♜d8+ 32 ♜c4 ♜d2 33 ♖b3 ♜xc2 34 ♙xc2 ♙d5 35 ♙xc3+ ♙c4 36 ♜e4 ♙e7.



Here, White has more chances than in Petrosian's line, but I still doubt that

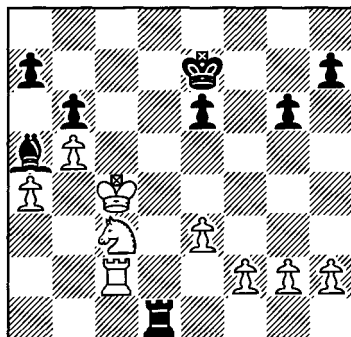
he is actually winning, since Black's king is so active.

The conclusion is that Botvinnik could still have obtained good drawing chances with 28...e5.

29 ♜d2 c3

29...♙xd2 30 ♙xd2 ♜d8+ (30...♙d6?! 31 ♜c3 ♙c5 32 ♜d2 is worse) 31 ♜c3 ♜d1 offers better chances, as also at move 33.

30 ♜e4 ♙a5 31 ♙d3 ♜d8+ 32 ♜c4 ♜d1 33 ♙xc3



33...♜h1?

The last hope of serious resistance was the rook ending after 33...♙xc3 34 ♙xc3.

34 ♜e4!

Much more effective than 34 h3.

34...♜xh2 35 ♙d4!

Suddenly, all of White remaining pieces are beautifully coordinated and centralized, whilst Black's scattered units make an abject impression.

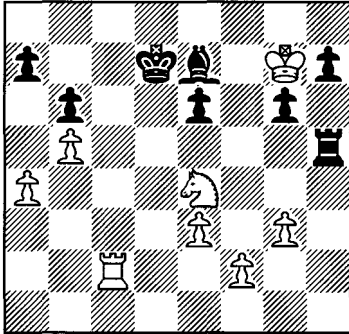
35...♙d7

He has to stop the rook reaching the c7-square.

36 g3

Petrosian chooses the most reliable path to victory. 36 g4 h5 would allow some counterplay.

36...♙b4 37 ♖e5 ♜h5+ 38 ♜f6 ♙e7+ 39 ♜g7



The white king has marched right into the heart of the enemy camp, where it proceeds to wreak havoc.

39...e5 40 ♜c6 ♜h1 41 ♜f7!

The sealed move, and the most accurate. Realizing that the bishop is ideally placed for the defence on e7, from

where it defends key squares such as d6, f6, g5, etc, Petrosian simply prepares to drive it away with ♜e6.

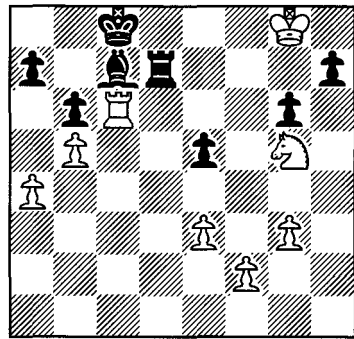
41...♜a1 42 ♜e6 ♙d8

Or 42...♙b4 43 ♜xe5 ♜xa4 44 ♘f6+ ♙d6 45 ♜d5+ ♜c7 46 ♜d4 and ♘d5 is curtains.

43 ♜d6+ ♜c8 44 ♜e8 ♙c7 45 ♜c6 ♜d1

45...♜xa4 46 ♘g5 wins a piece.

46 ♘g5 ♜d8+ 47 ♜f7 ♜d7+ 48 ♜g8 1-0



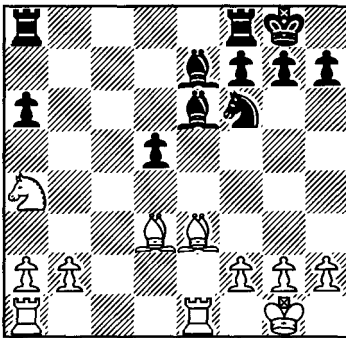
Black's position is collapsing. A beautifully elegant game by Petrosian.

Game 46

R.Fischer-T.Petrosian

Candidates Match (Game 7), Buenos Aires 1971

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 a6 5
 ♙d3 ♘c6 6 ♘xc6 bxc6 7 0-0 d5 8 c4 ♘f6
 9 cxd5 cxd5 10 exd5 exd5 11 ♘c3 ♙e7
 12 ♖a4+ ♗d7 13 ♚e1 ♗xa4 14 ♘xa4
 ♙e6 15 ♙e3 0-0

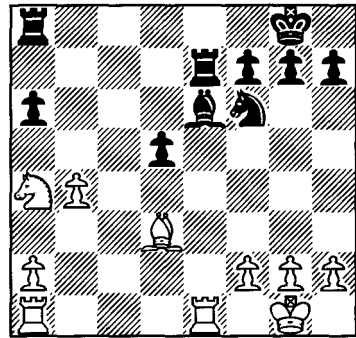


White has the advantage of the better pawn structure, Black having three pawn islands against two. It is true that the isolated d5-pawn is a passed pawn, which is usually an asset in the endgame, but here there are still many pieces on the board, and the d4-square is controlled by White. With inaccurate play on the latter's part, the d5-pawn could become a real asset for Black, but objectively it must at this stage be regarded as more of a liability. The other important aspect of the pawn structure is that White has a queenside majority, which potentially can yield an outside passed pawn.

16 ♙c5!

Much stronger than 16 ♘c5. In this position, the exchange of dark-squared bishops is clearly in White's favour, as it leaves Black with a relatively bad bishop, and assures White a superb outpost on c5 for his knight.

16...♚fe8 17 ♙xe7 ♗xe7 18 b4!



Another excellent move, and a key part of White's plan. The move has three points:

1. It sets White's majority in motion.
2. It secures control of c5 for the white knight.
3. It fixes Black's weak pawn on a6.

We have spoken many times in this book about the importance of fixing enemy weaknesses. The point here is that if Black ever tries to eliminate his a6-weakness by pushing the pawn to a5, White will have the reply b4-b5, establishing a strong passed pawn.

18...♚f8 19 ♘c5 ♙c8 20 f3

A useful little move, which “dominates” the black knight by controlling the squares e4 and g4, to which the knight might otherwise jump, and also lets the white king approach the centre. The king clearly has his eye on the key central blockading square d4.

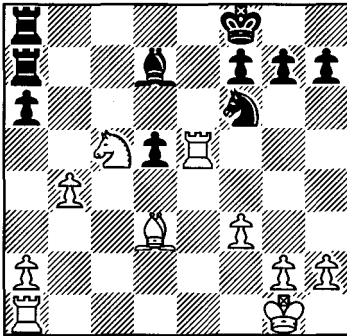
20...♖ea7?

20...♘d7 looks like a much better try, seeking to eliminate the powerful white knight on c5.

21 ♖e5

Putting further pressure on the black position, by attacking the pawn on d5, as well as making possible the doubling of rooks on the e-file.

21...♙d7



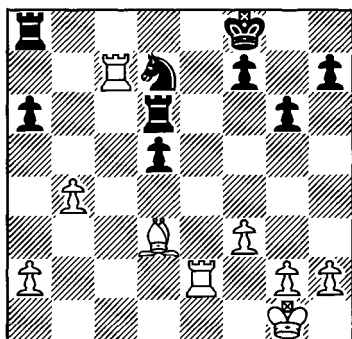
Black has defended the sixth rank, but now the enemy rook invades the seventh instead. 25 ♖e7 is threatened, so Black must take action against this.

24...♗d7

24...♞e8 loses the a6-pawn after 25 ♞xe8+ ♗xe8 26 ♞a7.

25 ♞e2 g6

25 ♟f5 was a threat.



26 ♗f2

As calm as you like. With Black tied in knots, but no immediate concrete tactical win available, Fischer simply strengthens his position further, bringing his king into the game.

26...h5 27 f4 h4 28 ♗f3

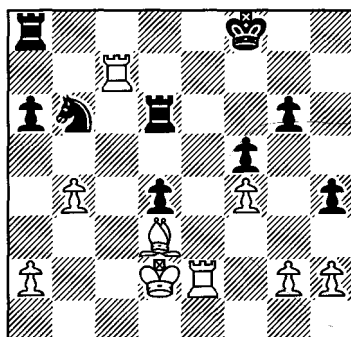
Now 29 ♗g4 is on the agenda, hence Black's next move.

28...f5 29 ♗e3 d4+

This allows the white bishop to transfer to c4, but Black could not afford to allow the white king to d4, when he would be practically move-bound.

30 ♗d2 ♗b6

It is hard to find a sensible move for Black. Now at least he has a threat of starting counterplay by 31...♗d5, but White has a move first.



31 ♞e7

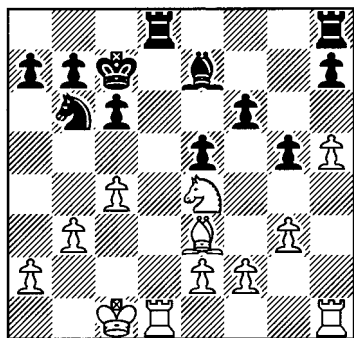
With the white rooks doubled on the seventh, the end is near.

31...♗d5 32 ♞f7+ ♗e8 33 ♞b7 ♗xb4 34 ♟c4 1-0

Black has even won a pawn, but he is helpless against the threat of 35 ♞h7.

Game 47
T. Petrosian-A. Bannik
 USSR Championship, Riga 1958

1 c4 e5 2 ♖c3 ♜c6 3 ♝f3 ♞f6 4 g3 d6 5
 d4 g6 6 dxe5 ♜xe5 7 ♜xe5 dxe5 8
 ♚xd8+ ♙xd8 9 ♙g5 ♙e7 10 0-0-0+ ♜d7
 11 h4 f6 12 ♙e3 c6 13 h5 g5 14 ♙h3
 ♜c7 15 ♜e4 ♜b6 16 ♙xc8 ♚axc8 17 b3
 ♚cd8

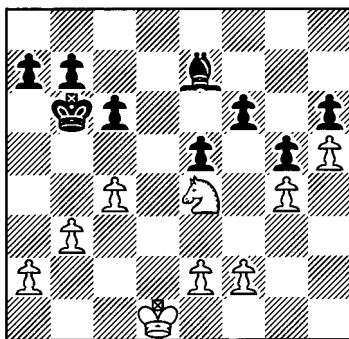


18 ♙c5!

This move is the single most striking of the game. With Black having what is clearly a bad bishop, obstructed by its own pawns, Petrosian actually exchanges it off! It might seem as though he has taken leave of his senses, but in fact, of course, it is an exceptionally deep decision.

The most obvious way for White to play this position is to exchange rooks, and bishop for knight, and so aim to reach an ending with knight versus the “bad bishop”. Let us assume that Black cooperates fully in allowing this: 18 ♚xd8 ♚xd8 19 ♚d1 ♚xd1+ 20 ♙xd1 h6

(Black could of course move his knight to c8, to avoid the further exchange, but we will assume he “comes quietly”) 21 ♙xb6+ ♙xb6 22 g4.

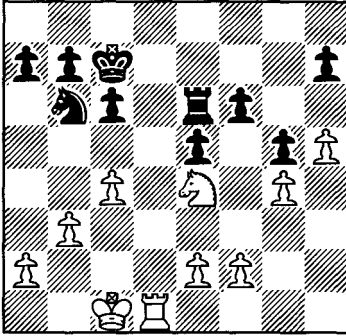


White has achieved his “dream” position. Black has the bad bishop, and White’s pieces have great squares on e4 and f5. So why did Petrosian not go in for this? The reason is because he considered that White has few, if any, chances of winning from here, the main problem being that bad bishops are very good defenders of weak pawns, whilst White has no way to break through. Black sticks his king on e6 and waits. Even if White gets his knight to f5 and king to e4, Black just drops his bishop back to f8 and marks time with his king. In Petrosian’s own words, “winning such a position would be very, very difficult, if not impossible”.

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

Instead, Petrosian chooses another plan entirely. Recognizing that Black's formally bad bishop is actually an effective defender of his weaknesses on f6 and h6, he exchanges it, so as to increase the vulnerability of these targets.

18...♖xd1+ 19 ♖xd1 ♗xc5 20 ♖xc5 ♖e8
21 ♖e4 ♖e6 22 g4

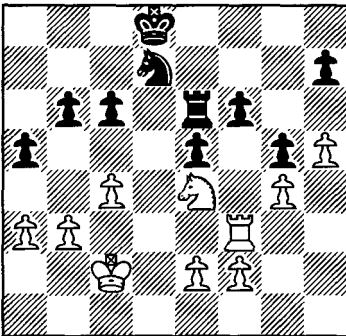


Already, we see the difference. In order to defend the f6-pawn, the black rook has had to take up a very awkward post on e6.

22...a5 23 ♖d3

Preparing to increase the pressure against f6 by means of ♖f3.

23...♖d7 24 ♖c2 b6 25 ♖f3 ♖d8 26 a3



26...c5?!

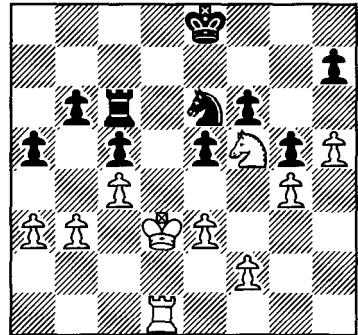
This is a big concession, weakening d5. Black wants to fight for space on the queenside, and also to free a square for his rook, after ...♖e7, but the price he pays is very high.

27 ♖c3 ♖e7 28 ♖d3 ♖c6 29 ♖d5 ♖f8 30
♖g3 ♖e6 31 ♖f5+ ♖e8 32 e3 ♖c7 33
♖d1 ♖e6

Black is totally passive, and can only wait.

34 ♖d3

Now the king takes up position on e4, permanently threatening to penetrate via the weakened d5-square.



34...♖c7 35 ♖e4 ♖c6 36 ♖d6+ ♖e7 37
♖f5+ ♖e8 38 ♖d6+ ♖e7 39 ♖f5+ ♖e8

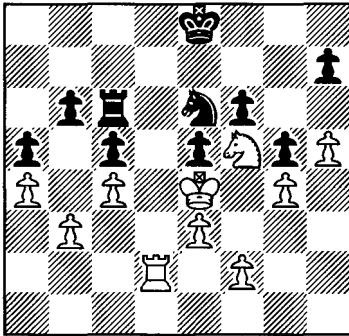
This repetition is a standard part of endgame technique. In this instance, it was probably chiefly motivated by gaining time on the clock and getting closer to the adjournment at move 40, when White would be able to analyse the position in the peace and quiet of home, and find the most accurate plan. Even so, such repetitions are also very handy psychologically, as a way of

showing the defender who is boss!

40 a4 ♖d8 **41** ♗h6 ♗e6 **42** ♗g8 ♗f8 **43** ♖d2!

Do not hurry! He only runs himself into trouble with the premature raid **43** ♗f5 ♗f7 **44** ♗h6+ ♗g7 and the white knight is trapped.

43...♗f7 **44** ♗h6+ ♗e8 **45** ♗f5 ♗e6



The last few moves have served much the same purpose, of economizing time on the clock and keeping the defender guessing as to how White will try to make progress. Now Petrosian shows his hand.

46 ♖d6!

Although the white rook looks more active than its opposite number, it does not have any way of penetrating the black position, whereas the black rook is an important defender of the potential penetration squares.

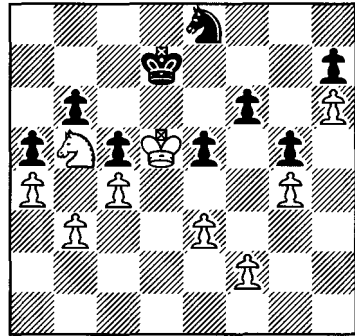
46...♖xd6 **47** ♗xd6+ ♗d7 **48** ♗b5 ♗g7

Stopping ♗f5. If he allows the king

into f5, then he finds himself in zugzwang after **48...♗f8** **49** ♗f5 ♗e7 **50** ♗c3 ♗d7 **51** ♗d5+ ♗f7 **52** e4 h6 **53** f3!.

49 h6 ♗e8 **50** ♗d5

Now Black is again in zugzwang and cannot avoid material loss.



50...f5 **51** ♗xe5 fxg4 **52** ♗c3

Keeping the white king in its dominating central position.

52...♗e7 **53** ♗e4 ♗f7 **54** ♗f5 g3 **55** fxg3 **g4** **56** ♗g5+ ♗g8 **57** ♗e6

The pawn on g4 is irrelevant.

57...♗c7+ **58** ♗d7 ♗a6 **59** e4

Now the e-pawn decides.

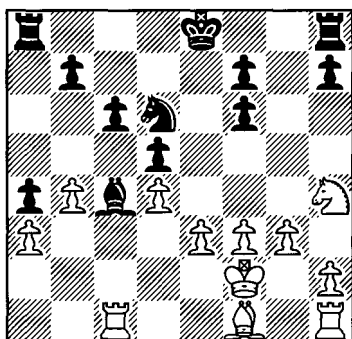
59...♗b4 **60** e5 ♗d3 **61** e6 **1-0**

A great technical display by Petrosian. The exchanging decision on move 18 is especially noteworthy. Most of Black's subsequent problems stemmed from the vulnerability of his weak pawns on f6 and h6, and this in turn was a direct result of losing his "bad" dark-squared bishop.

Game 48

M. Carlsen-Z. Azmaiparashvili
FIDE World Cup, Khanty Mansiysk 2005

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 cxd5 exd5
5 ♙g5 c6 6 e3 ♙f5 7 ♗f3 ♙g6 8 ♙xf6
♗xf6 9 ♗xf6 gxf6 10 ♘f3 ♘d7 11 ♘h4
♙b4 12 ♖c1 ♘b6 13 a3 ♙xc3+ 14 ♖xc3
♘c8 15 f3 ♘d6 16 g3 a5 17 b3 a4 18 b4
♙b1 19 ♖f2 ♙a2 20 ♖c1 ♙c4



This is quite a complex endgame; indeed, it could almost be called a queenless middlegame, given the number of pieces on the board. The principal feature which grabs one's eye is the weakened black kingside pawns. Black has well-placed pieces, and the possibility of tying White down somewhat to the defence of the a3-pawn. The pawn on e3 could also come under attack. Overall, White is somewhat better, because the black kingside pawns are the most serious weakness on the board, but it requires great technique to show this. Carlsen, despite being aged just 14 when this game was

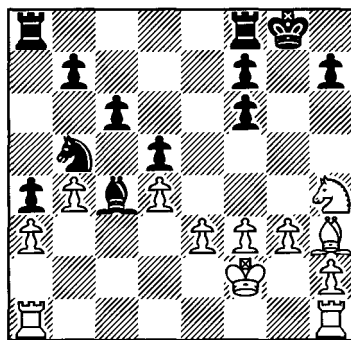
played, handles the position as well as any of the great endgame masters could have done, even in their prime.

21 ♙h3

White wants to avoid exchanging the enemy bishop, which, although apparently actively placed, is potentially bad, because the black queenside pawns are all on light squares.

21... ♘b5 22 ♖a1 0-0

In view of Black's 24th, 25th and 26th moves, castling turns out to be a loss of tempi, but with the white knight pointing at f5, Black cannot put his king on e7 at once.



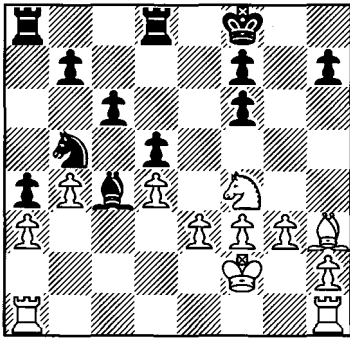
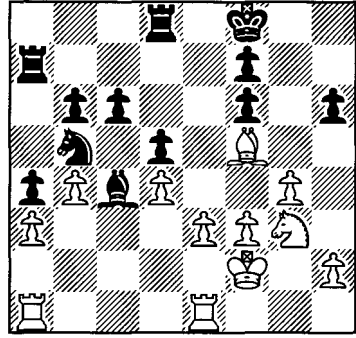
23 ♘g2!

An excellent choice. Most players would have automatically plonked the knight on the glorious-looking outpost on f5, but although the steed is optically impressive on that square, it does not actually attack Black's weaknesses.

I remember John Nunn once telling me that blockading isolated pawns was rather overrated, and that winning them was better! Magnus clearly agrees; his knight is on its way to h5, from where it will attack the f6-pawn, which is not easily defended.

23...♖fd8 24 ♖f4 ♔f8

The king heads back to e7, to defend the f6-pawn.



25 ♖f5 h6 26 ♖h5 ♔e7 27 g4!

Now the black kingside weaknesses are fixed. Note, too, that by forcing the black king to occupy e7, White has shielded his e3-pawn from pressure down the e-file.

27...b6

Black prepares the break ...c6-c5, in an attempt to loosen White's grip.

28 ♖he1 ♖a7 29 ♖g3!

The knight has done its job on h5. Now that the black pawn has advanced to h6, it is a bigger target than the f6-pawn, so Carlsen prepares to redeploy his knight to f5.

29...♔f8

Anticipating a later ♖f5+.

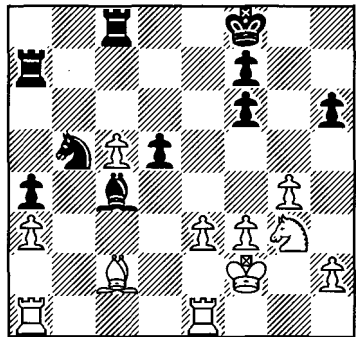
30 ♔c2!

In freeing the f5-square for the knight, the bishop also takes aim at the a4-pawn, tying Black's rook to its defence.

30...c5

Black makes his break, which opens some lines and gains his pieces a little more freedom. However, White's pieces can also exploit the newly opened lines, and Black now has further weaknesses at d5 and a4 (the latter becoming more vulnerable after the opening of the b-file).

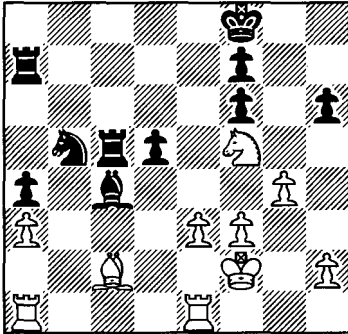
31 bxc5 bxc5 32 dxc5 ♖c8



33 ♖f5

The knight lands on f5 with much greater effect than would have been the case earlier. The h6-pawn is already doomed, but as it turns out, White already has bigger fish to fry.

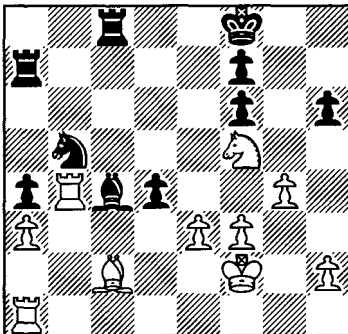
33...♖xc5



34 ♖eb1

See note to Black's 30th. The white rook makes use of the freshly opened b-file, and will attack the a4-pawn from b4.

34...♖c8 35 ♖b4 d4



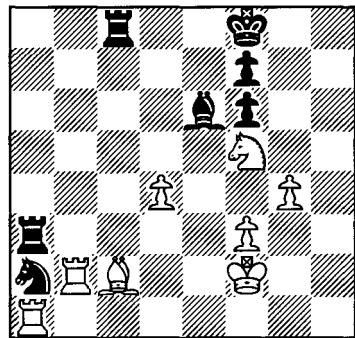
There is no value in passive defence, so Azmaiparashvili jettisons his d5-pawn, in order to activate his bishop.

36 exd4 ♙e6 37 ♙xa4 ♘c3 38 ♙c2

White has netted two extra pawns, and is objectively winning. As frequently happens in such cases, shedding material enables the defender to obtain some temporary activity, but Carlsen's tactical control is admirable. Once more, we see that "endgames always become concrete".

38...h5 39 h3 hxg4 40 hxg4 ♘a2 41 ♖b2 ♖xa3

Black has regained one of his pawns, but now Carlsen switches his rook to the other flank, to exploit another freshly opened file.



42 ♖h1!

Threatening no more and no less than mate in one, and so forcing the following exchange. It is rather nice how each time Black opens a file in this game, Carlsen immediately exploits it for his own rook!

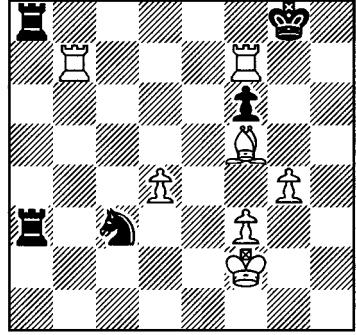
42...♙xf5 43 ♙xf5 ♖ca8 44 ♖b7!

Usually, when material ahead, the best advice is to trade pieces, but here that would be inappropriate. One thing that could potentially cause White technical problems in realizing his ma-

terial advantage is the “narrowness” of the position, i.e. the fact that the pawns are all concentrated within three files. Such a factor favours the knight (see Torre-Jakobsen), and so White should be a little careful about relying on routine simplification and the promotion of the d-pawn, with a line such as 44 ♖h8+ ♕e7 45 ♜xa8 ♜xa8. Instead, Carlsen uses the greater activity of his pieces to attack, and win more material. He threatens to double rooks on the seventh, and the f7-pawn is doomed.

44...♘c3 45 ♖h8+ ♕g7 46 ♖h7+ ♕g8 47 ♜xf7

The rest is easy.

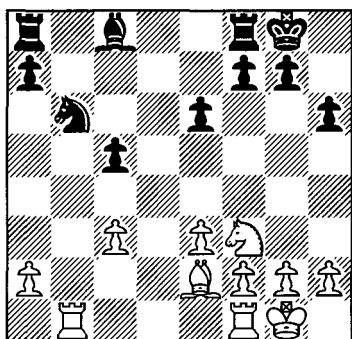


47...♜a2+ 48 ♕e3 ♜e8+ 49 ♕d3 ♘d1 50 ♜g7+ ♕h8 51 ♖h7+ ♕g8 52 ♜hg7+ ♕h8 53 ♖h7+ ♕g8 54 d5 ♜e3+ 55 ♕d4 1-0

A wonderfully mature performance by Carlsen.

Game 49
A.Karpov-G.Kasparov
World Championship (Game 27), Moscow 1984

1 ♖f3 d5 2 d4 ♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♙e7 5
 ♙g5 h6 6 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 7 e3 0-0 8 ♚c2 c5
 9 dxc5 dxc4 10 ♙xc4 ♚a5 11 0-0 ♙xc3
 12 ♚xc3 ♚xc3 13 bxc3 ♘d7 14 c6 bxc6
 15 ♚ab1 ♘b6 16 ♙e2 c5



This position looks extremely equal, but in fact, White has a small plus: he can attack the c5-pawn in short order and assume some initiative as a result. This should result in his pieces being a little more active than Black's. Even so, it is desperately hard to imagine White winning the position, against a world-class opponent, and without the aid of a crude mistake from the defender.

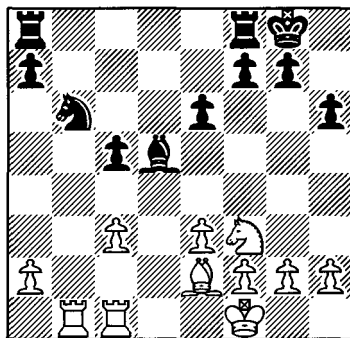
17 ♜fc1!

An extremely subtle move, which would not enter many players' heads. Karpov intends ♜b5, but at the moment, this runs into ...♙a6. The rook moves to free f1, so that White can play ♙f1, to defend the bishop on e2. The

question then is where should the rook move to? Most players would choose the open file, but Karpov understands that Black may start counterplay by attacking the c3-pawn with ...♘a4 or ...♘d5, so he overprotects the pawn, in anticipation.

17...♙b7 18 ♙f1 ♙d5

18...♙c6 would have prevented White's next, but then 19 ♘e5 is unpleasant, when the knight can attack the c5-pawn from d3.



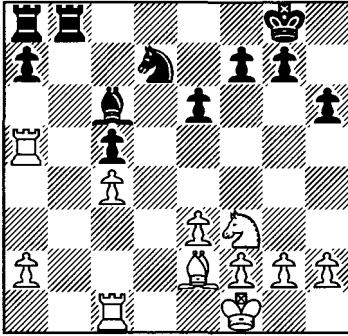
19 ♜b5! ♘d7

Now we see another reason why Karpov put his rook on c1 – after 19...♙xa2? 20 c4! the enemy bishop is lost!

20 ♚a5

White has achieved his first aim. His rook is now very active on a5, attacking both of Black's isolated pawns, and tying his pieces down to defence.

20...♖f8 21 c4 ♔c6



22 ♘e1!

The manner in which Karpov coordinates his pieces is beyond all praise. The knight heads for d3, from where it attacks the weakness on c5 and at the same time prevents the black rook taking up an active post in the white position, on b2 or (as we will see) b4. This is the true meaning of prophylaxis – it is about more than simply taking defensive measures against the enemy's threats, and instead involves finding ways to improve one's own position, whilst at the same time defeating the enemy's plans.

22...♞b4 23 ♔d1!

Another prophylactic manoeuvre. Karpov anticipates the threat of 23...♞a4, exchanging off White's active rook. Now nothing can stop the temporarily active black rook from being driven back by ♘d3.

23...♞b7 24 f3

24 ♘d3 ♞c7 indirectly defends the c5-pawn for the moment, because of the tactic 25 ♘xc5?? ♘xc5 26 ♞xc5

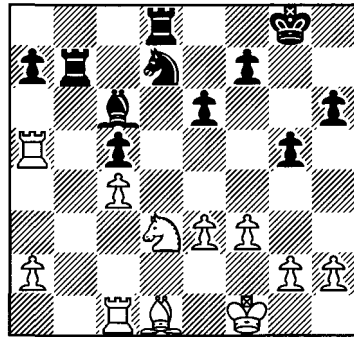
♔xg2+. Karpov calmly eliminates this possibility, whilst at the same time limiting the scope of the enemy bishop and freeing his own king from the defence of g2. The c5-pawn is not going anywhere.

24...♞d8

If he tries to defend the c-pawn with 24...♞c7 25 ♘d3 ♔b7, then 26 ♔a4 wins it anyway.

25 ♘d3 g5

Black seeks counterplay, by preparing ...g5-g4, to attack White's kingside structure and open the g-file.



26 ♔b3!

Another very typical Karpov move. If he takes the pawn at once, then after 26 ♘xc5 ♘xc5 27 ♞xc5 Black has the remarkable resource 27...♞b2!? 28 ♞xc6 ♞dd2 with surprisingly strong counterplay, despite the piece deficit. Rather than allow his opponent to fish in such murky waters, Karpov calmly seals up the b-file, before helping himself to the first fruits of his superb play.

26...♙f8 27 ♘xc5 ♘xc5 28 ♞xc5

Finally, White has won the c5-pawn,

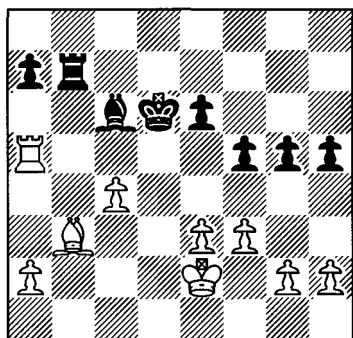
without allowing any active counterplay. The next stage is to consolidate and start on the process of converting his advantage.

28...♖d6 29 ♖e2 ♖e7 30 ♖d1

Exchanging pieces is generally a good idea when material up, especially when there is still plenty of material on the board.

30...♗xd1 31 ♖xd1 ♖d6 32 ♖a5 f5 33 ♖e2 h5

Black continues to seek active counterplay on the kingside.



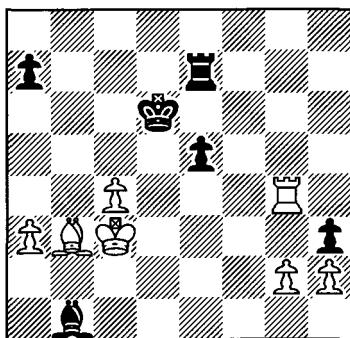
34 e4!?

Karpov immediately tries to take advantage of the weakening of the enemy kingside pawns. This move involves exchanging two pairs of pawns, which in principle is not necessarily to the stronger side's advantage. It also gives Black a passed pawn on the e-file, which may be a source of counterplay. On the other hand, at the end of the process, the black h-pawn will be vulnerable.

34...fxe4 35 fxe4 ♗xe4 36 ♖xg5 ♗f5 37 ♖e3

Panchenko suggests that White should fix the h5-pawn with 37 h4 but Karpov was presumably reluctant to give the enemy bishop a secure post on g4.

37...h4 38 ♖d4 e5+ 39 ♖c3 ♗b1 40 a3 ♗e7 41 ♖g4 h3



The game was adjourned around this point, and the remaining moves were influenced by overnight analysis.

42 g3 ♗e8

The passed pawn can be blockaded securely enough after 42...e4 43 ♗d1. Instead, Kasparov transfers his rook to the f-file, to invade via f2 or f1.

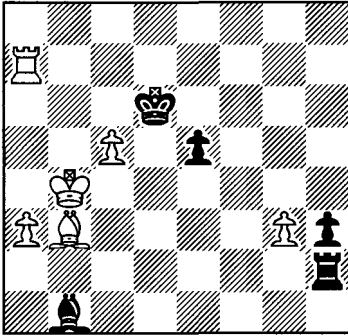
43 ♗g7

One might have expected Karpov to go after the h-pawn, so as to eliminate the counterplay this pawn might offer. Indeed, after 43 ♗h4 ♗f8 44 ♖xh3 ♗f3+ 45 ♖b2 it is not obvious how Black can exploit the temporary misplacing of White's rook. However, White's pieces have lost coordination, and his king is cut off, and Karpov's adjournment analysis had presumably convinced him that an easier win was to be had by cre-

ating another passed pawn of his own on the queenside, and playing actively.

43...♖f8 44 ♜xa7 ♖f2 45 ♔b4 ♜xh2 46 c5+

Now we can see the difference from the variation given in the last note. Here, all of White's pieces are excellently coordinated, supporting the passed c-pawn.



46...♔c6 47 ♙a4+ ♔d5 48 ♜d7+ ♔e4 49 c6

The path of the c-pawn has been cleared of obstacles, and the end is now not far away.

49...♜b2+ 50 ♔a5 ♜b8

50...h2 loses to 51 c7 h1♚ 52 ♙c6+.

51 c7 ♜c8 52 ♔b6 ♔e3

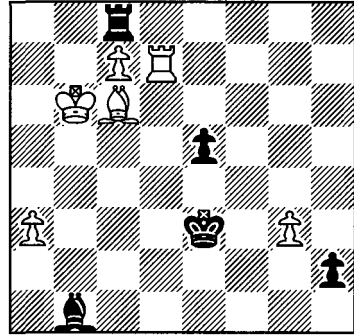
Threatening 52...h2, since the square h7 is no longer available to White's rook.

53 ♙c6!

Now the bishop takes over the task of covering the h-pawn, and the only

way to close its diagonal is to put a black unit on e4, which will give the white rook the h7-square again.

53...h2



54 g4!

Accuracy to the very end. After Karpov's phenomenal play, it would have been an absolute tragedy to have fallen into the trap 54 ♔b7 ♜h8 55 c8♚?? ♜xc8 56 ♔xc8 ♙f5 when Black draws, e.g. 57 ♙h1 e4! 58 a4 ♔f2 59 ♙xe4 ♙xe4 60 ♜d2+ ♔xg3 61 ♜xh2 ♔xh2.

54...♜h8 55 ♜d1 ♙a2 56 ♜e1+!

56 ♔b7 ♙e6 continues the resistance.

56...♔f4

If 56...♔f2 then simply 57 ♜xe5.

57 ♜e4+ ♔g3 58 ♜xe5 ♔xg4 59 ♜e2 1-0

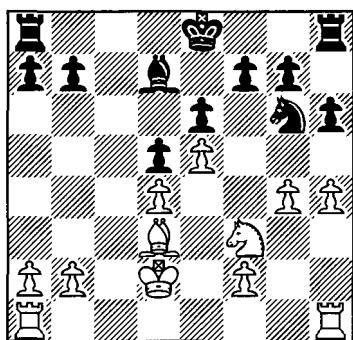
A really fantastic display by Karpov. It is hard to pinpoint any obvious mistake by Black, yet it is impossible to believe that the starting position was really lost for him.

Game 50

V.Kramnik-P.Leko

World Championship (Game 14), Brissago 2004

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♟f5 4 h4 h6 5 g4
 ♟d7 6 ♞d2 c5 7 dxc5 e6 8 ♞b3 ♟xc5 9
 ♞xc5 ♞a5+ 10 c3 ♞xc5 11 ♞f3 ♞e7 12
 ♟d3 ♞bc6 13 ♟e3 ♞a5 14 ♞d2 ♞g6 15
 ♟d4 ♞xd4 6 cxd4 ♞xd2+ 17 ♟xd2



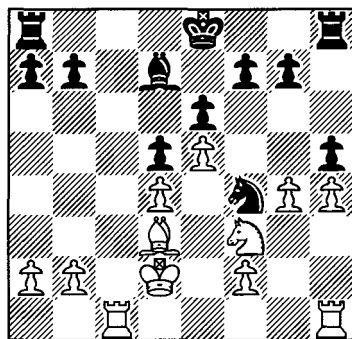
This game is something of a parallel to Botvinnik-Bronstein (Game 23). Here, too, the world championship was at stake, in the decisive game of the match. This was the 14th and last game (barely over half the number played in 1951!), and Kramnik trailed by a point, so he too needed to win this game to save his world championship title.

White has a small, but definite advantage, thanks to more space and the better bishop. However, the Black position is very solid and has no real weaknesses, so it will not be easy to break him down.

17... ♞f4 18 ♞ac1

18 ♟f1 is perhaps the reflex move, but Kramnik did not like the reply 18...h5. Besides, he saw no reason to fear the exchange on d3 – it leaves White with the traditional knight versus bad bishop.

18...h5



19 ♞hg1!

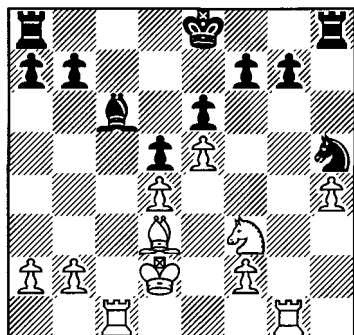
There is no value in blocking up the kingside with 19 g5. Kramnik's move activates the rook on the potentially open g-file.

19... ♟c6

19... ♞h3 20 ♞g3 ♞xf2 is met by 21 gxh5 when Black can hardly defend the g-pawn.

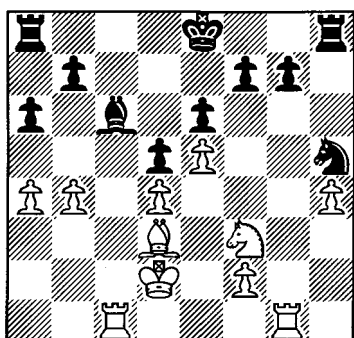
20 gxh5 ♞xh5

Structurally, White has acquired a weakness on the h-file, but on the other hand, the opening of lines on the kingside gives more dynamism to the position.



21 b4 a6 22 a4!

White starts seizing space on the other wing, classic two-front strategy.



22...♔d8?!

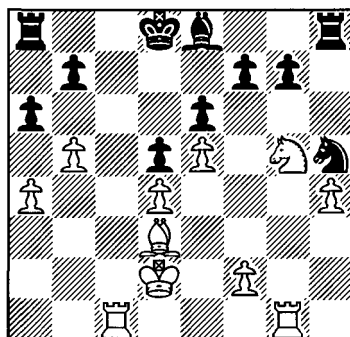
Annotating the game in *New in Chess 2004/8*, Kramnik suggested that this natural move may in fact be the decisive mistake. 22...♗a4 23 ♖c7 is obviously bad, but Kramnik recommended 22...♗e7! 23 b5 axb5 24 axb5 ♗d7 25 ♖c7 b6 when he could find no direct win. Black intends to challenge the rook with ...♞hc8, and 26 ♞b7 is nothing after 26...♞hb8. It is strange that allowing the rook into c7 should prove to be better than keeping it out,

but it appears that this may be the case.

23 ♖g5

This is the difference. The f7-square is now vulnerable.

23...♗e8 24 b5



The point of White's play is to answer 24...axb5 with 25 ♗xb5!. As we discussed in the context of Petrosian-Bannik, bad bishops are often effective defenders of weaknesses, and the key to success frequently involves exchanging off the bad bishop, so as to expose the weaknesses. That is the case here. Once the bishop on e8 is removed, Black finds it harder to cover f7 satisfactorily. Kramnik gives, as a sample variation, the line 25...♞f8 26 ♗xe8 ♗xe8 27 ♞c7 ♞xa4 28 ♞b1 ♞xd4+ 29 ♗e3 ♞c4 30 ♞cxb7 ♞c3+ 31 ♗d2 ♞c8 32 ♞a7 and White will double rooks on the seventh, with a mating attack. Note how in this line Black is so badly tied down to the defence of f7 once his bishop is gone.

24...♖f4 25 b6!

Now there is no way to prevent a

rook invasion at c7, and Black's position is objectively lost.

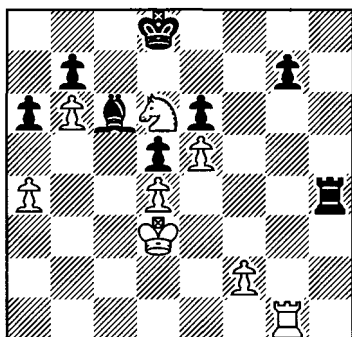
25...♖xd3 26 ♔xd3 ♜c8

Black eliminates one enemy rook, but the other will replace it.

27 ♜xc8+ ♔xc8 28 ♜c1+ ♙c6 29 ♖xf7 ♜xh4 30 ♖d6+ ♔d8

30...♙d7 allows the tactic 31 ♖xb7! after which the white b-pawn will prove unstoppable.

31 ♜g1



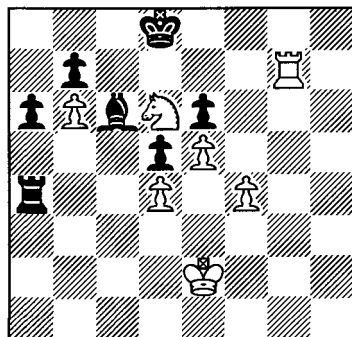
31...♜h3+

Passive defence by 31...♜h7 will inevitably lose, e.g. 32 a5 ♔e7 33 ♜g6 and White can prepare a breakthrough with f4-f5 at his leisure.

32 ♔e2 ♜a3 33 ♜xg7

Kramnik pointed out that if Black starts checking, the white king can march into the heart of Black's position, via f4-g5-f6 etc.

33...♜xa4 34 f4!



34...♜a2+

34...♜d4 35 f5 exf5 36 e6 threatens mate in one.

35 ♔f3 ♜a3+ 36 ♔g4 ♜d3

36...♜a1 leads to a lost rook and pawn endgame after 37 ♖xb7+ ♙xb7 38 ♜xb7 ♜g1+ 39 ♔h5.

37 f5 ♜xd4+ 38 ♔g5 exf5 39 ♔f6 ♜g4 40 ♜c7 ♜h4 41 ♖f7+ 1-0

A fine technical squeeze by Kramnik, played in conditions of enormous tension.

Index of Games

Alatortsev-Chekhover, USSR Championship, Tbilisi 1937	118
Alekhine-Capablanca, World Ch'ship, Buenos Aires 1927	113
Alekhine-Lasker, St Petersburg 1914	190
Andersson-Miles, Tilburg 1981	141
Andersson-Stean, Sao Paulo 1979	197
Averbakh-Furman, USSR Championship, Odessa 1960	43
Barcza-Soos, Varna Olympiad 1962	207
Botvinnik-Bronstein, World Championship, Moscow 1951	107
Botvinnik-Fischer, Varna Olympiad 1962	145
Botvinnik-Minev, Amsterdam Olympiad 1954	158
Botvinnik-Smyslov, World Championship, Moscow 1957	97
Brinckmann-Rubinstein, Budapest 1929	18
Capablanca-Tartakower, New York 1924	131
Carlsen-Azmaiparashvili, FIDE World Cup, Khanty Mansiysk 2005	222
Cohn-Rubinstein, St Petersburg 1909	14
Englisch-Steinitz, London 1883	202
Fischer-Petrosian, Candidates Match, Buenos Aires 1971	216
Fischer-Taimanov, Candidates Match, Vancouver 1971	68
Flohr-Botvinnik, Moscow/Leningrad 1933	101
Flohr-Capablanca, Moscow 1935	86
Flohr-Vidmar, Nottingham 1936	137
Henneberger-Nimzowitsch, Swiss Ch'ship, Winterthur 1931	79

The Greatest Ever Chess Endgames

Karpov-Kasparov, World Championship, Moscow 1984	226
Karpov-Kasparov, World Championship, Moscow 1984	90
Korchnoi-Karpov, World Championship, Baguio City 1978	151
Kotov-Botvinnik, USSR Championship, Moscow 1955	52
Kramnik-Leko, World Championship, Brissago 2004	230
Kramnik-Shirov, Tal Memorial, Moscow 2007	35
Kurajica-Karpov, Skopje 1976	56
Larsen-Polugaevsky, Le Havre 1966	46
Lasker-Nimzowitsch, Zürich 1934	31
Marshall-Lasker, World Championship, USA 1907	193
Marshall-Maroczy, Ostend 1905	163
Petrosian-Bannik, USSR Championship, Riga 1958	219
Petrosian-Botvinnik, World Championship, Moscow 1963	211
Pillsbury-Burn, Vienna 1898	166
Pillsbury-Gunsberg, Hastings 1895	29
Plater-Botvinnik, Chigorin Memorial, Moscow 1947	65
Randviir-Keres, Parnu 1947	21
Reti-Rubinstein, Gothenburg 1920	62
Schlechter-Lasker, World Ch'ship, Germany/Austria 1910	173
Schlechter-Rubinstein, San Sebastian 1912	124
Smyslov-Tal, USSR Championship, Moscow 1969	82
Spielmann-Rubinstein, St Petersburg 1909	126
Tal-Keres, Candidates T'ment, Bled/Zagreb/Belgrade 1959	180
Timman-Velimirovic, Interzonal, Rio de Janeiro 1979	185
Torre-Jakobsen, Amsterdam 1973	74
Webb-Miles, British Championship, Morecambe 1975	169
Yanofsky-Pinkus, Ventnor City 1942	40
Znosko Borovsky-Seitz, Nice 1931	25

The Greatest Ever chess endgames

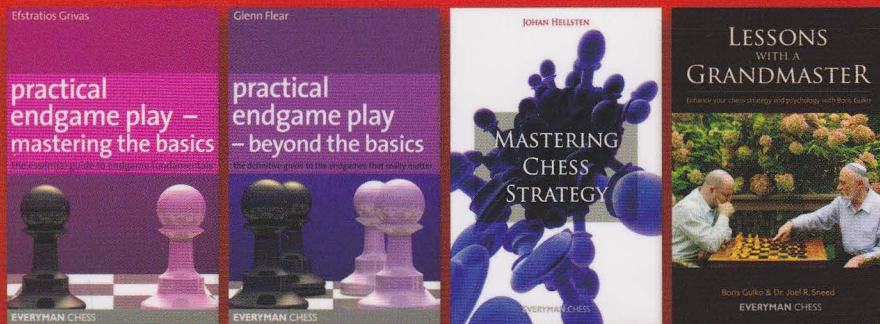
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