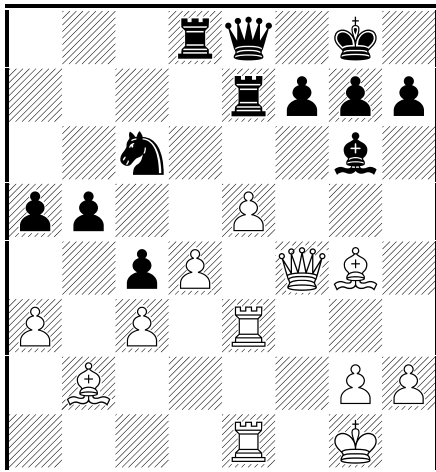


Boris Avrukh: Exchange sacrifice

Reshevsky : Petrosian, Zuerich 1953



25...Re6!

Somehow in my mind this position is associated with Petrosian creation, exchange sacrifice has been always one of his "trademarks". In my article I would like to give some fresh examples , connected with exchange sacrifice.

Hammer : Edouard, England 2014

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dc4 3.e4 b5!?

A very rare move, which considered to be pretty dubious, but Romain is one of the most advanced theoreticans and he comes up with amazing new idea, that involves exchange sacrifice. I have to admit, that this seems to me one of the earliest possible exchange sacrifices I ever saw.

4.a4 c6 5.ab5 cb5 6.Nc3

Black has no comfortable way to defend b5–pawn, while 6...b4 leads to almost lost position after 7.Nb5.

6...a6!?

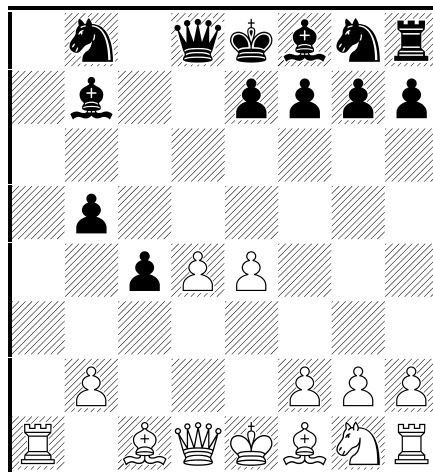
Amazing exchange sacrifice, the whole concept resembles already well-known idea in Chebanenko system 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3

Nf6 4.Nc3 a6 5.Bg5 dc4 6.a4 h6 7.Bh4 b5! 8.ab5 cb5 9.Nb5 ab5 10.Ra8 Bb7 etc., but here it looks like much better version for White.

7.Nb5

White has to accept the challenge, as otherwise Black will continue 7...Bb7 and White will have not an easy task to prove his compensation.

7...ab5 8.Ra8 Bb7 9.Ra1



9...e6!

Unbelievable after exchange sacrifice Black follows up with calm developing move, since capturing central pawn doesn't really work in view of 9...Be4?! 10.f3 Bd5 11.b3 and White gets a clear edge and initiative.

10.Be2?!

Most probably critical continuation should be 10.f3 Nc6 11.Ne2! (In case of 11.Be3 Bb4 12.Kf2 f5! Black obtains interesting counterplay.) 11...Na5 12.Nc3! Bb4 (12...Nb3? 13.Nb5 Na1 14.Bc4+–) 13.Be3 Ne7 14.Be2 Nb3 15.Rb1 Black compensation most hardly sufficient, although he still keeps definite activity after 15...Ba5 16.0–0 Bc6 17.Qe1 0–0 18.Rd1 f5.

10...Nf6 11.Nf3

11.f3 allows Black to seize initiative by means of 11...Nc6 12.Be3 Bb4 13.Kf2 Na5.

11...Ne4 12.0–0 Qd5?!

Black has already achieved good compensation, but last move is serious inaccuracy. 12...Nc6 would allow Black comfortable game.

13.Ne1?!

White missed nice 13.Ra7!, as mentioned by Edouard in CBM 160. White rook move prevents Black from playing Nc6 and he is ready to develop initiative by playing Ne5 following by Bf3.

13...Nc6 14.Nc2

Later on this position has been occurred in another game, where White opted for 14.Be3 Bd6 15.Bf3 0-0 16.g3 f5 and Black has got a full compensation for the exchange, Genzling : Donchenko, Nancy 2014.

14...Bd6?!

Serious inaccuracy. 14...Be7 would be more accurate, A big difference to compare with 14...Bd6 is that Black able to castle right away 15.Bf3 0-0 etc.

15.Bf3 Bb8

Black couldn't play 15...0-0? in view of 16.Ne3 Qd4 17.Be4+-.

16.Re1 f5 17.Be4 fe4 18.Qg4 0-0 19.Qe4 Qe4 20.Re4

It's clear, that something wrong went for Black over last moves, but surprisingly Black retains some activity.

20...e5! 21.de5?!

This only helps Black, while after 21.d5! Ne7 22.Ne3 Black would face a difficult fight for the draw.

21...Be5 22.Rb1

Stronger would have been 22.Re1! Bf6 23.Rd1, retaining better chances.

22...Bf6 23.Re2?!

White slowly starts to lose control over position. The prophylactic 23.Re6!? against Bc8 was a better move.

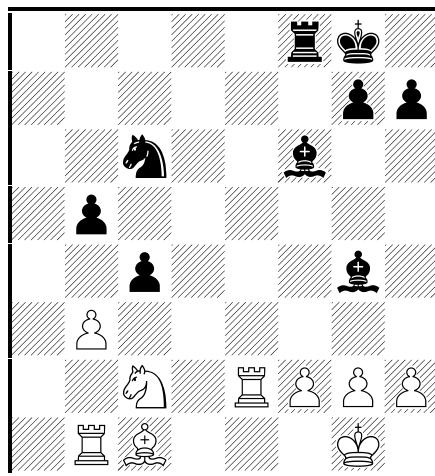
23...Bc8!

Black light-squared bishop is heading for b1-h7 diagonal with a lot of power.

24.b3

Trying to free the queenside. 24.Be3! was the most precise defence (Edouard).

24...Bg4!



25.Kf1

Just a panic, in his comments Edouard suggested a right way to defend White position: 25.f3 Bf5 26.Be3! (26.bc4? Nd4-+) 26...Bd3 27.Rf2 Nb4 28.Nb4 Bb1 29.bc4 bc4 30.Rf1 Bg6 would be slightly worse for White, but should hold a draw without much problems after 31.Nd5.

25...c3

An interesting alternative would have been 25...Bf5!? 26.Be3 Nb4 as it was correctly mentioned by Romain, now after 27.Nb4 Bb1 28.bc4 bc4 29.Re1 Bg6 30.Nd5 Black will have 30...Bd3 31.Kg1 Bb2 with advantage.

26.Be3 Ra8 27.Bc5 Ra2 28.f3?

Now White lost. 28.Re8 was the only way to hold 28...Kf7 29.Rf8 Kg6 30.Rc1!

28...Bf5-+ 29.Rc1 Bd3 30.b4

30.Kf2 Be2 31.Ke2 Na5-+]

30...Bg5! 0:1.

Steinberg : Arlinsky, Israel 2014

This game has been played during last Israeli Championship. White player was one of my most talented students. I was following this game online and his exchange sacrifice really shocked me. I remember myself checking the game a few times, in order to understand, how he managed to blunder

exchange at so early stage, however slowly I started to realize, that it might be sacrifice with long-term compensation.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 Na5 10.Bc2 Bb7 11.d4 Nc4 12.b3 Nb6 13.Nbd2 Nfd7

Not the most popular line in Ruy Lopez, but still this position has been occurred many times on practice. White comes up with new and aggressive plan.

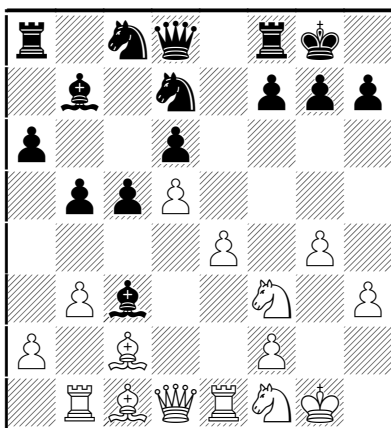
14.g4!?

14.Nf1 has been played in most of the games.

14...ed4 15.cd4 c5 16.d5 Bf6

Thematic idea for Black in this line.

17.Rb1 Nc8 18.Nf1 Bc3



19.Ng3!?

A surprising idea, White didn't get even a pawn for exchange, but his play on the kingside is easy to develop, while Black will have a hard time to find adequate counterplay. I would rather expect another version of exchange sacrifice. 19.Re3 b4 20.Rc3 bc3 21.Qd3 a5 22.Qc3 f6, but maybe here it's much easier for Black to develop counterplay on the queenside.

19...Be1 20.Ne1

A very serious investigation required in this position in order to evaluate objectively White exchange sacrifice. One thing is very clear, White play is much more simple,

while Black counterplay is under serious question.

20...Ne7 21.f4 Nb6

Black knight is hardly doing anything on b6, a better try would have been. 21...a5 22.Nf3 a4 (22...f6 23.f5 Ne5 24.g5 looks interesting for White.) 23.ba4 Qc7!? trying to seize counterplay on the queenside. (23...b4?! 24.a3!).

22.Nf3 Ng6 23.Bb2

Nice trick.

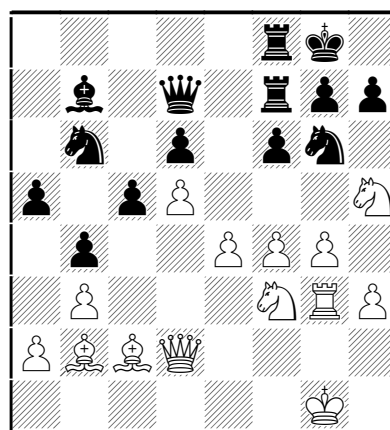
23...f6

White f4-pawn is untouchable (23...Nf4 24.Qd2 Ng6 25.Bg7 with winning attack.

24.Qd2 Rc8 25.Rf1 b4 26.Nh5

White slowly improves his position regrouping his forces for g4-g5 break.

26...Rc7 27.Rf2 Rcf7 28.Rg2 Qd7 29.Rg3 a5



30.g5!

Decisive break through White dark-squared bishop decides the game.

30...f5 31.ef5?

Missing 31.Bg7! Rg7 32.Nf6 Rf6 33.gf6+—winning.

31...Rf5 32.Bg7 Nd5 33.Bf8 Kf8 34.Nf6 Qe6 35.Bf5 Qf5 36.Qe1 Nf6 37.gf6 Qe4 38.Qe4 Be4 39.Nd2 Bc2 40.Nc4 Kf7

41.Nd6 Kf6 42.Rg5 Nf4 43.Rc5 Bb1

44.Ra5 Ne2 45.Kf2 Nc1 46.a3 Nb3 47.Rb5 ba3 48.Rb3 a2 49.Ra3 Ke5 50.Nb5

1:0.

Aronian : Agdestein, Stavanger 2014

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.g3 Ba6 5.b3 Bb7 6.Bg2 Bb4 7.Bd2 a5 8.Nc3 0-0 9.0-0 d6 10.Qc2 Nbd7 11.Rfe1 Bc3 12.Bc3 Be4 13.Qb2 c6

Maybe slightly passive, but very solid line for Black.

14.Rac1 h6 15.Bf1 b5 16.Bd2 bc4 17.bc4 Re8 18.Red1 Qc7 19.Qa3 c5 20.dc5 dc5 21.Ne1

With interesting play Aronian has managed to seize some pressure on Black position, however he still remains very solid.

21...Bb7 22.f3 e5 23.e4

After this move White can hardly hope to benefit from his bishop's pair, since positions is getting pretty closed. Stronger would have been 23.Rb1! e4 24.f4, then White would keep some edge.

23...Nf8 24.Ng2

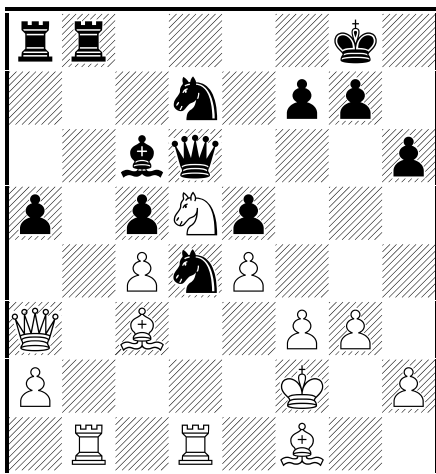
24.Nd3 Ne6 25.Kf2 Nd7.

24...Ne6 25.Ne3 Nd4

Black has no problems with such a powerful knight on d4.

26.Nd5 Qd6 27.Kg2 Nd7 28.Rb1 Reb8

29.Kf2?! Bc6 30.Bc3



30...Rb4!!

Beautiful exchange sacrifice, which stops all White ideas on the queenside.

31.Bb4?

White shouldn't accept the sacrifice, accurate 31.Bd3 would retain balanced position.

31...ab4 32.Qb2 Bd5

Worthy of consideration 32...f5!?

33.cd5

33.ed5 Nb6 is even worse for White.

33...Nb6

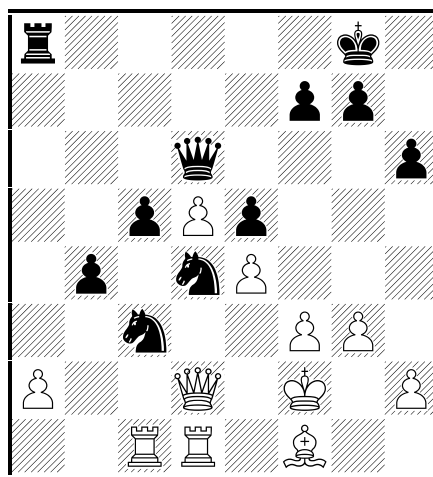
Black has full control all over the board.

34.Rbc1 Na4

Again 34...f5 was an interesting alternative.

35.Qd2 Nc3?!

This allows White to sacrifice exchange back equalising the game. Here we have one of those examples where Black knight was more valuable than White rook. Calm 35...Qf6! 36.Be2 g5! would keep a lot of pressure on White position.



36.Rc3 bc3 37.Qc3 Ra2 38.Rd2 Rd2

39.Qd2 Qb6 40.Bc4 g5 41.Kg2 1/2.

Avrukh : Sakaev, Belgrade 1999

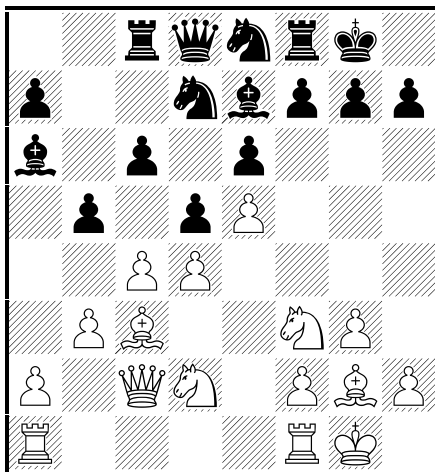
Finally I would like to pick one of the games from career, where I have managed to carry out nice exchange sacrifice.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.g3 Ba6 5.b3 Bb4 6.Bd2 Be7 7.Bg2 c6 8.Bc3 d5 9.Nbd2 Nbd7 10.Qc2 0-0 11.e4 Rc8 12.0-0 b5

This thematic move was like a novelty for me during the game, although it's occurred twice before. 12...c5 was the only move,

which I studied before. Objectively Black last move probably dubious, as he almost forces White to go for exchange sacrifice, that appears to be very promising. Black best idea should be 12...c5. Here is the old stem game: 13.ed5 ed5 14.Rfe1 Re8 15.Rad1 Qc7 16.Ba1 dc4 17.Nc4 Bb7 (17...cd4 18.Nd4,) 18.Nce5 cd4 19.Qc7 Rc7 20.Nd4 Ne5 21.Nb5 Rc5 22.Re5 Bg2 23.Kg2 Rc2=, Andrianov : Korolev, corr. 1987.

13.e5 Ne8



14.c5!

The only way to fight for advantage. Unfortunately I was not the first one, who invented this idea, but I have found it over the board.

14...b4

Certainly if black not accept white's sacrifice, he will get a strategically lost position.

15.Bb4 Bf1 16.Bf1

For the exchange White has got a nice space advantage and possibility to develop his play both on queenside and kingside.

16...a5

A good move, otherwise White might have considered placing the bishop on a6 following by advance of his queenside pawns, while Nc7 strongly met by Ba5.

A previous game has been continued

16...Rb8 17.Bc3 and here 17.Qc3, with idea Ba5 deserved attention.

17.Bc3 Ra8

Black prepares to activate his passive knight via c7-square. Still premature 17...f6 18.ef6 Rf6 (18...Bf6? 19.Bh3±) 19.Re1 g6 20.Ng5 Ng7 21.h4 and e6-pawn is serious weakness.

18.Bd3 g6

Probably more safe for Black would be 18...h6. Still White keeps promising position after 19.Nf1 Nc7 20.Ne3.

19.Re1 Ng7

Right square for the knight, where he also protects the e6-square, after coming f7-f6. 19...Nc7?! would allow White to seize initiative easily with 20.h4!

20.a3

My feeling was, that Black is well-prepared for kingside play, therefore I decided to start with queenside action.

20...Qc7 21.b4 ab4 22.ab4 f6

Understandable decision to get some play. A passive defense 22...Rfb8 23.Nb3 Bd8 24.Na5 Qc8 25.h4 doesn't promise Black an easy life.

23.ef6 Bf6

Other recaptures don't promise Black a relief as well: 23...Rf6 24.Ng5! or 23...Nf6 24.Ne5 Nd7 25.Ng4! in both cases White has better game.

24.Nb3

Heading for a5.

24...Rfe8?

This natural move looks like almost decisive mistake. Black is unable to get e6-e5 working, therefore his set-up appears to be very passive and White can easily continue to improve his position.

24...Rf7 - Doubling rooks along f-file would have been Black best option. After 25.Re2 Raf8 26.b5 cb5 27.Bb5 White retains better chances, but Black pretty much into the game.

25.Na5

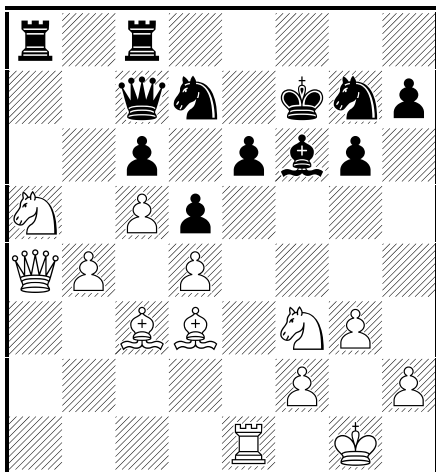
Now Black is in trouble.

25...Kf7

Obviously doesn't work 25...e5 26.de5 Be5
27.Ne5 Ne5 28.Re5 Re5 29.Be5 Qe5 30.Nc6
Qf6 31.b5±.

26.Qa4 Rec8

26...Rac8! loses right away to 27.Ba6!+–.



27.Bd2!

Nice idea white bishop is heading for f4.

27...Nf5

Again doesn't work 27...e5? 28.de5 Ne5
29.Ne5 Be5 30.Qc6!±.

28.Bf4 Qa7

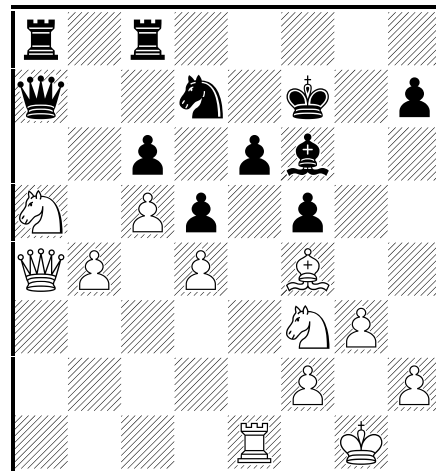
Doesn't change much 28...Qd8 29.Bf5! ef5
(or 29...gf5 30.Qd1 and Black cannot defend
against two threats Nb7–d6 and Ng5
following up by Qh5 with crushing attack.)
30.Qb3! and again Black cannot defend
against both Nb7 and Nc6 following up by
Qd5.

29.Bf5

Not a bad idea, but immediate 29.Qd1 would
have been much stronger.

29...gf5?

This recapture significantly eases White
task, however after correct 29...ef5 30.Bg5
Qc7 31.Kg2! White would slowly improve
his position, while Black is pretty much tied.
White shouldn't rush with 31.Bf6 Kf6
32.Ne5 Ne5 33.de5 Kg7 34.e6 Qe7! and
Black holds.



30.Qd1!

A decisive switch to the kingside, Black is
unable to bring back his defensive forces
from queenside.

30...Nf8 31.Be5 Bd8

31...Ng6 32.Bf6 Kf6 33.h4!, just hopeless
for Black.

32.Bd6

Freeing e5–square for the knight.

32...Ba5

32...Ng6 loses after 33.Ne5! Ne5 34.Qh5
Ng6 35.Qh7 Kf6 36.Be5; 32...Bf6 doesn't
help as well: 33.Bf8 Rf8 34.Ne5 Be5
35.Nc6+–.

33.ba5

Black is absolutely hopeless against White
dark squares invasion.

33...Qa5 34.Qc1! Qa3 35.Ne5

Black resigned in view of 35.Ne5 Kg8
(35...Ke8 36.Qh6) 36.Qg5 with mate.

1:0.

Jovan Petronic: King + Rook + pawn vs King + Bishop

Concept

Historically, this ending was analyzed as early as 1750 by Domenico Ercole del Rio, in 1777 by François-André Danican Philidor, to name a couple only. It also served as a source of inspiration to composers of endgame studies - Luigi Centurini, Josef Vancura, Pal Benko, and many others. The very interesting endgame features a huge and more often than not - a decisive material advantage for the attacker (+3 in relative piece value), and yet both in theory (which assumes best play by both sides), as well as in practice at all levels, we continue to witness not only wins, but also draws for the defending side.

A number of winning positions require a significant level of chess mastery and dedicated thinking time, to be brought to its natural end without fail, while the defending side needs to be aware of as many as possible known and documented exceptional draw positions and endeavour never to give up as long as there is still reasonable play remaining.

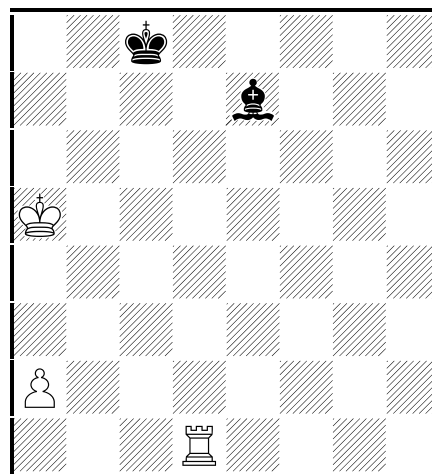
A simple but effective classification may go as follows: Pawn on Rook's files, Pawn on Knight's files, Pawn on Bishop's files, and Pawn on central files. A further sub-classification would sort these depending on the pawn's starting rank position (1st to 7th) at start of the endgame.

With regard to transition from the middlegame and looking back onto the opening, the endgame can't be linked to any specific ie opening code, as they occur in basically all, ranging from A00-E99.

In practice, the endgame is seen with chess games using all time controls: standard chess, rapid chess, and blitz chess, and thus cannot be connected with any specific one of them.

The game fragments limited selection will feature annotated games of high-titled and high-rated players using all time controls, with Chessbase Mega Database 2014 as the original games source.

Shirov : Grischuk, Wijk aan Zee 2011



Black to play, White to win.

53...Bh4!

Black could have immediately went for the a8-square, as White cannot achieve a checkmating pattern, with the Rook not being able to control Black Bishop's both checking diagonals. For example: 53...Kb8! 54.Kb6 Bg5 (or 54...Bh4) 55.Re1 Bd8!; 53...Bg5! as opposed to 53... Bh4 would theoretically leave Black with more options as the Black Bishop is with more available squares. 53...Kc7 54.Kb5!+-.

54.Rf1!

Limiting the mobility of the Bishop will be a key strategy in the relatively long winning process. A straight-forward plan, starting by cutting off the Black King along the b-file, followed by advancing the a-pawn, would somewhat unexpectedly lead to a draw position. For example: 54.Rb1 Kc7 55.Ka6 Bf2 56.a4 Be3 57.a5?? Kc8!= (or 57...Bf2!=; 57...Bd4?? would run into a discovered attack on the c4-square, allowing White to turn the tables and win: 58.Kb5!+- ...Kb7

59.Kc4+–) ...58.Kb5 Kb7! (or 58...Kb8=) 59.Re1 Bd4! (or 59...Bf2!=) 60.Re7 Ka8! (or 60...Kb8!=) 61.a6 Bf2!= White is unable to move the Black King out of the corner. The remaining pawn sacrifice, with an idea to create checkmating threats, leads only to an easily defendable K+R vs K+B endgame: (or 61...Bg1!=; or 61...Kb8!=) 62.a7 Ba7! Black must of course capture the pawn immediately. 63.Ka6 Bb8!=.

54...Bg5 55.Rf3!

Further limiting the mobility of Bishop.

55...Kb7 56.Kb5!

56.a4 would be less precise due to: 56...Kc6! and Black can hope to survive longer.

56...Bd8 57.Rf7

A direct approach was relatively simpler: 57.a4! Bc7 58.a5! Be5 59.a6! Ka8 (59...Kb8 60.Rf8! Ka7 61.Rf7! transposes into 61.Rf7!) 60.Rf8! Ka7 (or 60...Bb8 61.Re8! Ka7 62.Re7! Ka8 63.Kb6+–) 61.Rf7! Ka8 62.a7! Bd4 63.Ka6!+– A key decisive position to remember.

57...Bc7! 58.Rd7

58.a4 Kb8! 59.a5 Be5! ... 60.a6?? Bd4!=. A key draw position to remember.

58...Kb8 59.Ka6

White is following one winning scheme, starting off with manoueuvering the King to a6.

59...Bh2 60.Rb7!

A critical position to remember.

60...Ka8!

60...Kc8 61.Kb6!+–. Another relatively easy to remember winning plan, involves bringing the King over to a8 (via a7–square), followed by manoueuvering the Rook to the c-file, cutting off the Black King one line further, after which Ka8–b7 allows the a-pawn to decisively advance. For example: 61.Ka7 Bg1 62.Ka8 Bf2 63.a4 Be1 64.Rb1! Bd2 65.Rb2! Be1 66.Rc2! Kd7 67.Kb7!+–) ...61...Bg1 62.Kc6! Bd4 63.a4! Bc3 64.a5!+– ...Ba5 65.Ra7+–.

61.a4! Bg3 62.a5! Bf2 63.Rf7! Bc5!

The most stubborn defence is keeping the Bishop as active as possible, multitasking.

63...Bg3 64.Kb6!+– ...Bh2 65.Ra7! Kb8 66.Rg7! The threat of checkmate on g8 prevents Black from activating the Bishop, allowing White to decisively advance the pawn. 66...Ka8 67.a6!+–.

64.Rf5!

Preparing to force the Bishop off the a7–g1 long diagonal, which allows White to move the King out of the way of the pawn.

64...Bd6

64...Ba7 65.Rf8! Bb8 66.Kb5+– ...Kb7 67.a6! Ka8 68.Re8! Ka7 69.Re7! Ka8 70.Kb6! Bg3 71.a7 Bf2 72.Ka6+–.

65.Kb6! Bb8 66.Rf7! Bh2! 67.Ra7! Kb8™

68.Rg7! Ka8 69.a6! Be5! 70.Ra7

70.Rd7 with the same idea as in the game, would probably have ended the game one move faster.

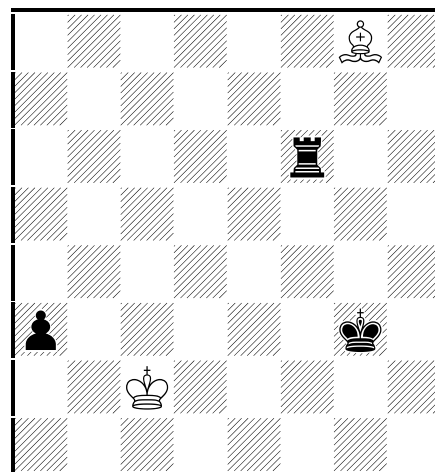
70...Kb8 71.Rd7! Ka8 72.a7! Bd4 73.Ka6 Bb6!?

A last trick, unfortunately for Black, too much an obvious one to fall for.

74.Re7!

74.Kb6??= would be careless, ending in a stalemate.; 74.Re7! ...Bd8! 75.Rg7 (75.Rf7 Be7! 76.Rg7+–) 75...Bc7! 76.Rg8+–. **1:0.**

Malakhov : Ni Hua, Sochi 2009



White to play, Black to draw.

With the a-pawn far advanced on its own, drawing chances for the defending side

increase. Precise play is still required, however.

81.Kb3!

Or 81.Kb1!=. A waiting move such as: 81.Bd5?? would fail miserably after Black's reply, which cuts off the White King on the b-file, with an easy follow-up win:

81...Rb6!-+.

81...Ra6 82.Ka2 Kf4 83.Bh7 Ke3 84.Bb1?!

A dubious positioning of the Bishop is the source of White later getting a losing position.

84...Kd4 85.Kb3?

Only two moves were still saving White:

85.Bc2!=; 85.Bh7=; 85.Bf5? Kc3!-+.

85...Rb6-+ 86.Ka2 Rb2!

Or 86...Kc3!-+ ...87.Bh7 Rb2! 88.Ka1 Rg2!-+.

87.Ka1 Kc3?

Losing the winning advantage! Decisive was first improving the Rook's position, followed by King attack: 87...Re2!-+ ...88.Bh7 Re8! 89.Bg6 Re7! 90.Ka2 (90.Bf5 Kc3-+)

90...Kc3!-+.

88.Bg6?

88.Ba2!= was the only saving move here, preventing the attacking King from reaching the important b3 square, from which it can create checkmating threats in cooperation with the Rook. Black cannot improve to win, with best play by both sides.

88...Rf2! 89.Bh7 Rf6?

Again, losing the winning advantage! We already know that correct was: 89...Rg2!-+ ...90.Bf5 Re2! 91.Bg6 Re7! ... 92... Kb3 -+.

92.Bb1 Re1! 93.Ka2 Re2 94.Ka3 Re8!-+.

90.Bg8!= Kb4 91.Ka2!

91.Kb1!=; 91.Bd5!=.

91...Rf8 92.Be6!

92.Bd5!=.

92...Rf2 93.Ka1

93.Kb1=.

93...Kc5!? 94.Bg8!

94.Bb3!=; 94.Kb1!=.

94...Kd6 95.Bc4 Ke5!? 96.Bg8!

96.Bb3!=; 96.Kb1!=.

96...Rf8! 97.Bc4!

97.Bb3!=.

97...Kd4 98.Be6!

98.Bb3!=; 98.Ba2? Rf1!-+ ...99.Bb1 Kc3-+.

98...Re8 99.Bf7!

99.Bb3!=.

99...Rf8 100.Be6!

100.Bb3!=.

100...Kc3 101.Ka2!

101.Bd5!=; 101.Kb1!=.

101...Kb4 102.Ka1!

102.Bd5!=; 102.Kb1!=.

102...Rh8 103.Bf7! Rf8 104.Be6!

104.Bd5!=.

104...Rf6 105.Bg8!

105.Bd5!=.

105...Rd6 106.Ka2!

106.Bf7!=; 106.Kb1!=.

106...Rd2 107.Ka1

107.Kb1=.

107...Kc3 108.Bf7!

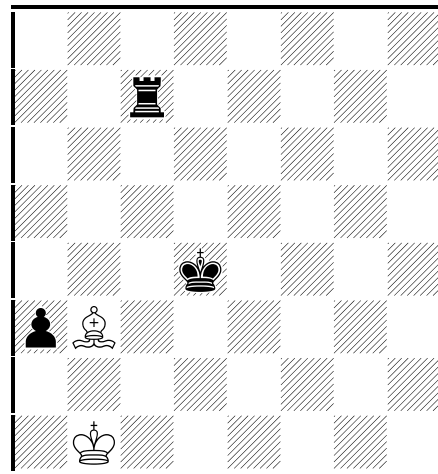
108.Be6!=; 108.Kb1!=.

108...Rb2 109.Bg8 Kc2 110.Bh7! Kc1

111.Bg8

White's defence from move 86 onwards was flawless. ½.

Navara : Fedorovsky, Germany 2011



White to play, Black to draw.

Bishop's defense along the a2-g8 diagonal guarantees White a draw, with best play by both sides. When the Bishop is not attacked,

White's King may move along the first rank (a1–b1).

88.Ka2

88.Be6=; 88.Bg8=; 88.Ka1=; 88.Ba2=.

88...Kc3 89.Bg8

89.Be6=; 89.Bd5=.

89...Rg7 90.Be6

90.Bd5=.

90...Rg2 91.Ka1

91.Kb1=.

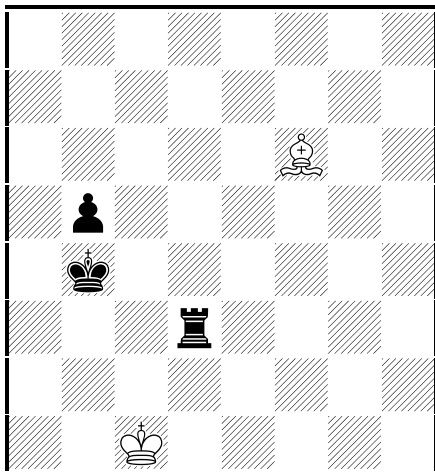
91...Rh2 92.Bg8

92.Bf7=; 92.Bd5=; 92.Kb1=.

92...Rg2

92...Rg2 93.Bf7= (93.Be6=; 93.Bd5=; but not 93.Ba2? A careless move, with other relatively many options, will lead to defeat, with best play. 93...Rg1! The refutation of the awkwardly placed opponent's King and Bishop. Black can now achieve a simple winning setup, with the King reaching the critical b3–square, with the Black Rook already on the 2nd rank. 94.Bb1 Kb4 95.Ka2 Rg2! 96.Ka1 Kb3–+). ½.

Schmaltz : Kasparov, ICC 1998



White to play, Black to win.]

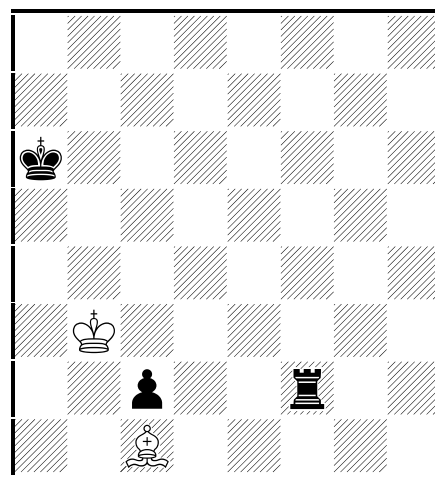
73.Kc2 Kc4 74.Be7 b4??

Ooops. 74...Rf3!–+ is more efficient than the usual Rook move furthest away (Rh3), as it additionally limits the mobility of the Bishop (f8–square). ...75.Bd6 Rf2 76.Kb1 b4

77.Kc1 (77.Be7? loses quickly to the simple checkmating attack starting with: 77...Kc3–+) 77...Kc3! (77...b3? would unnecessarily complicate the winning technique. 78.Be5! Kd3 79.Kb1 b2! An important idea to remember. Black timely sacrifices the pawn, after if captured, with a winning K+R vs K+B endgame. 80.Bb2 (80.Bg7 Rf7! best and simplest idea to remember. The Rook transfers to the b-file, allowing the King to begin its approach to the b3–square. White's Kb1–a2 defence will then not be effective, due to Black's Queen promotion. 81.Be5 Rb7! 82.Bf6 Kc4! 83.Be5 Kb3! 84.Bb2 Rh7–+) 80...Rf1! 81.Ka2 (81.Bc1? Kc3–+) 81...Kc2! 82.Be5 (82.Ka3 Rf3! 83.Ka2 Rf8–+) 82...Rf5 83.Bc7! The most stubborn defence nevertheless easily loses, with the Rook positions itself to deliver checkmate. 83...Rf7 84.Bb6! Rf6 85.Ba5 Ra6–+) 78.Be5 Kb3! 79.Bg7 (if 79.Bd6 temporarily preventing the Black King from manouevering to the a2–square. 79...Rf5! 80.Be7 Kc3! forces a quick resignation.) 79...Ka2!–+ followed by the decisive pawn advance.

75.Bb4!= Kb4? 76.Kd3 ½.

Short : Acs, Budapest 2003



White to play, Black to draw.

68.Kc3

White prepares one of the defenses against the pawn, encirclement and capture.

68.Kb2=; 68.Bb2=.

68...Kb5 69.Bd2

69.Bb2=; 69.Kb3=.

69...Rg2 70.Kc2=

The resulting K+R vs K+B is a draw, with best play by both sides. 70.Kd3=; 70.Bc1=.

70...Kc4 71.Kc1!

71.Kd1?? would be rather careless, due to 71...Kd3-+.

71...Kd3 72.Bb4

Keeping the Bishop on the a5–e1 diagonal prevents Black from setting up direct checkmate threats with the Kings in opposition. 72.Ba5=.

72...Ra2! 73.Kb1!

The only move to draw, but quite an easy one to find. 73.Bd6 Rc2! 74.Kb1 (74.Kd1 Rc6! 75.Be5 Re6! 76.Bc7 Re7! 77.Bd6 Rd7!–+ All pieces on the d-file resemble a study-like position! White is in zugzwang.)

74...Kc3!–+ With the transfer to b3–square and the White King locked inside an inferior corner, Black secures a winning setup.

73...Rc2! 74.Be1

74.Bf8?? Allowing the Black King to pass to b3 would result in a loss. 74...Kc3!–+

...75.Bc5 Kb3 76.Bb6 Rc8 77.Ba7 Ra8!

78.Bb6 Ra6! 79.Be3 Re6 80.Bd2 Rf6–+.

74...Re2 75.Ba5 Re5

Black has managed to chase away the Bishop from the a5–e1 diagonal, still, it is not enough to win.

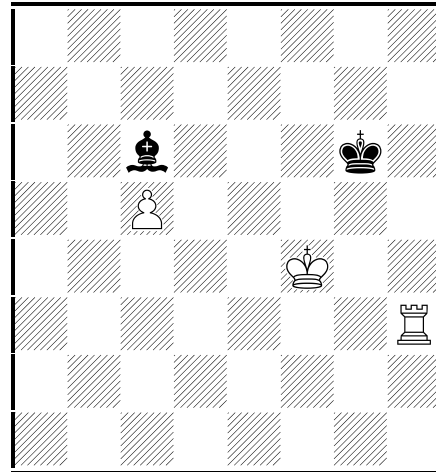
76.Bd8!

76.Bc7!=.

76...Rb5

A well played endgame by both Grand Masters ended here with a draw agreement. Without mistakes and with subtle attacking and defending moves, as much as the positions were allowing. 76...Rb5 77.Kc1= (77.Ka2=; 77.Ka1?? The illogical Ka1 (willingly placing the King in the corner of their friendly Bishop colour loses. 77...Rb8! 78.Bc7 Rc8 79.Bd6 Kc2 80.Ka2 Ra8 81.Ba3 Ra7–+) ½.

Nepomniachtchi : Grischuk, Riga 2013



Black to play, White to win.

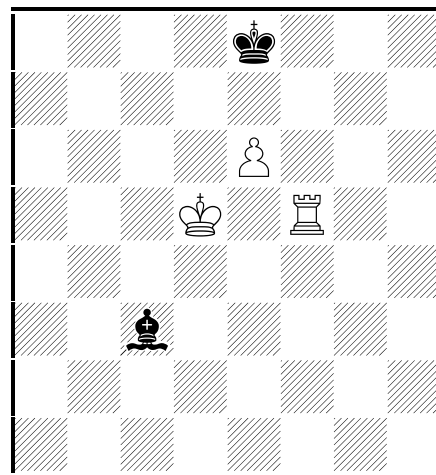
Black, left without any counterplay, is without even a slightest chance of hoping to draw. The game ends quickly after White's prep to advance the pawn.

59...Kf7 60.Ke5 Ke7 61.Rh7!

A useful guideline (but not a rule) in the endgame is to always give a Rook check which pushes the defending King backwards or sideways.

61...Kd8 62.Kd6 1:0.

Wojtaszek : Malakhov, Jurmala 2013



Black to play, White to win.

144...Bb4

144...Bd2. Generally, if faced with no direct one-two-move threats, keeping the Bishop at least two lines (or files) behind the attacking King is often the most resilient defense.

145.Rh5 Ba3 146.Rh8 Ke7 147.Rh7 Ke8 148.Rb7 Bc1 149.e7??

How to win? 149.Rc7!+- ...Ba3 (149...Bf4 150.Rc4! Bg3 151.Rg4! Bh2 152.Rg8 Ke7 153.Rg7! Ke8 154.e7!+- ...Kd7 155.Rg2! The Rook will transfer with a tempo to the pawn's promotion file, forcing defending King's blockade on the promotion square, allowing the decisive White's King's advance. 155...Bf4 156.Re2 Ke8 157.Ke6+-) 150.Rc3! Bb4 151.Rc4! Ba3 152.Ra4! Demonstrating the superiority of the Rook vs Bishop. The Bishop has no satisfactory move which does not lose quickly. 152...Bf8 (152...Be7 153.Ra8 Bd8 154.Kd6+-; 152...Bb2 153.Kd6+-; 152...Bc1 153.Kd6+-) 153.Ra8 Ke7 154.Rf8! Kf8 155.Kd6 Ke8 156.e7+-.

149...Kf7=

Black's only good move (different from "only (legal) move") leads to a draw, with best play, which did not happen in this game excerpt. White's pawn advance to the 7th rank fails. A draw position to remember!

150.Kd6

150.Ra7 offering Black to err more easily, with unique moves saving the game. 150...Bg5 151.Kd6 Bh4!=. The only move to draw, with best play. 151...Bf6?? loses to any piece pawn promotion, ie: 152.e8Q! Ke8™ 153.Ke6!+- The tempo on the Bishop is decisive in setting up a checkmate threat. ...152.Kd7 Be7!= transposing into the game.

150...Ba3!

150...Bg5!= preventing White's winning threat Kd6-d7.

151.Kd7!? Be7 152.Rb1 Ba3 153.Rf1 Kg6 154.Ke6 Kg5

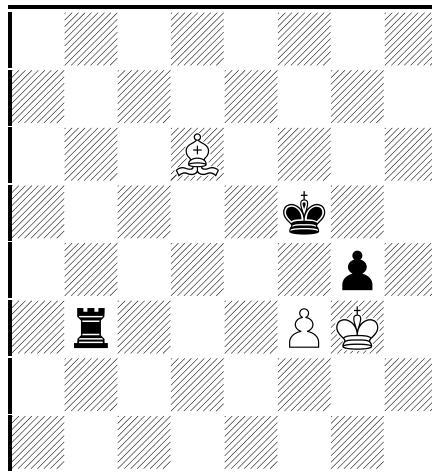
Black runs with King ideally to the "drawing corner" at h1.

155.Ke5 Bb2 156.Ke4 Bc3 157.Rf3 Bb2 158.Rf5 Kg6

158...Kg4= also draws with best play. White can prevent Black from reaching h1-square, which is however not enough to win the game. ...159.Rf2 Bc3 160.Rg2 Kh3 161.Kf3 Kh4!=.

159.Kf4 Bf6 160.Rb5 Bd4 ½.

Miladinovic : Beliavsky, Ohrid 2001



Black to play and win.

Original few comments described this endgame as a "dead draw". This is almost never the case, precise defense is more than necessary, and especially with faster time controls or standard time controls quick-play finishes. Additionally, Black missed his chance to triumph, with best play. When faced with a decision, we generally consider only the most obvious and visible information. In this position the options/candidate moves for Black were capturing the f3-pawn with the pawn or with the Rook.

99...gf3??

A draw endgame to remember. 99...Rf3!-+ Why Black is winning here, we shall soon determine. ...100.Kg2 Rd3 101.Bc7 Kg5! An excellent positions of the Black King, preparing entry via any of both sides of the pawn. 102.Be5 Rd5! 103.Bc7 Rd2! 104.Kg3 Rd3! 105.Kg2 Kh4! Let's examine White's defense by keeping the Bishop on the b8-h2

diagonal: 106.Be5 (After 106.Bb6 Black can win in the following way: 106...Rd2 107.Kg1 g3 (107...Kg3 also works. ...108.Kf1 Rb2 109.Bc5 Kf3-+) 108.Be3 Re2! 109.Bc5 Kg4 110.Bb6 Kf3 111.Ba5 g2 112.Bb6 (112.Bb4 Rb2-+) 112...Re1 113.Kh2 Rh1#) 106...g3 107.Bc7 Kg4 108.Be5 Rd2 109.Kg1 Kf3-+ (or 109...Kh3 -+).

100.Bc5!

Once learned, White's defending plan becomes relatively simple, yet caution must always be exercised.

1. Keep the Bishop flexible (!) on the a7-g1 diagonal, keeping an eye on not allowing the Black King to occupy the g3-square, and
2. Keep the King directly in front of the pawn.

100.Kf2!=

100...Ke4!

An obvious, yet tricky move, after which White must play an only one to save the game.

101.Kf2!

White has now completed the main defensive setup described above. 101.Ba7?? would allow Black to prevent White's King from getting directly in front of the pawn. 101...Rb2!-+ ...102.Bf2 Ra2 103.Bc5 Rg2! 104.Kh3 Kd3-+.

101...Rc3 102.Ba7

102.Bb6=.

102...Rc7 103.Bb6!

103.Bb8?? loses easily to for example: 103...Rd7! 104.Bg3 Rd2! 105.Kf1 (105.Ke1 Ke3 106.Bf4 Kf4 107.Kd2 Kg3-+) 105...Ke3-+.

103...Rc2 104.Kf1!

The extravagant and very bad 104.Ke1?? fails to: 104...Kf4! when 105.Kf1 is too late: 105...Kg3!-+ and the Bishop's check on c7 will not work.; 104.Kg1?? loses as well: 104...Kf4! 105.Bf2 Rc1! 106.Kh2 Ke4 107.Bb6 Kd3 108.Kg3 Ke2-+.

104...Rc6

104...f2!? 105.Kg2!= is another draw position to remember. (105.Bf2?? Kf3!-+).

105.Ba7! Ra6 106.Bc5! Kf4 107.Bd4!

107.Kf2=; or 107.Kg1?=. The question mark being for complicating the above guideline on how to play this endgame.

107...Ra4 108.Bc5

108.Bb6=.

108...Rc4 109.Ba7!

109.Bb6?? Rc1! (but not 109...Kg3?? allowing 110.Bf2!=) 110.Kf2 Rc2! 111.Kf1 Kg3-+.

109...Rb4 110.Bc5! Rb5! 111.Bd4!

The only saving move!

111.Ba7?? fails to: 111...Rb1! 112.Kf2 Rb2! 113.Kf1 Kg3-+ and the poorly placed Bishop on the rim is dim (or grim)!

111...Kg4 112.Kf2 Rb4 113.Bc5! Rb2

114.Kf1! Rc2 115.Ba7

115.Bd4=; but not: 115.Bb6?? Kg3-+.

115...Rb2 116.Bc5

116.Bd4=.

116...Rb5 117.Bd4!

But not 117.Be3?? Rb1! 118.Kf2 Rb2!

119.Kf1 Kg3-+.

117...Kf4 118.Kf2 Rd5 119.Bb6 Rd7

120.Be3 Kg4 121.Bb6 Rb7 122.Bc5

122.Bd4=.

122...Rb5 123.Bd4! Rh5 124.Bb6 Rh2

125.Kf1!

But not 125.Kg1?? Rc2!-+ ...126.Bd4 Kg3! 127.Be5 Kh3! 128.Bd4 (128.Kf1 f2-+) 128...f2!-+. An another important position to remember. The pawn "sacrifice" works, Black is winning. ...129.Kf1 (...129.Bf2 Rc1-+) 129...Kg3-+.

125...f2!?

125...Kh3 126.Bc5 Rc2 127.Bd4 f2

128.Bf2!=.

126.Ke2!

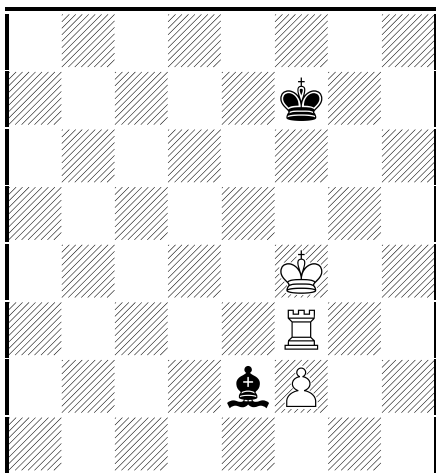
126.Bf2?? Kf3-+.

126...Kg3 127.Bc5!

Black cannot make progress relevant for a GM vs GM encounter.

127.Bc7?? Kg2-+. ½.

Vitiugov : Morozevich, Reggio Emilia 2012



Black to play, White to win.]

65...Bf3?

Why surrender by transposing into an immediately lost pawn endgame, when there exist reachable in practice draw positions if not with best play?

For example: 65...Kf6 ...66.Rb3 Bd1 67.Rb6 Kf7 68.Ke5 Bc2 69.f4 Bd3 70.f5 Bc2 71.f6 Bd3 72.Rb7 Kf8 ...73.Rd7?? Bc4!= One of the c- and f-pawn draw positions to remember, both if attacker or defender in the K+R+P vs K+B endgame. ...74.f7!? Kg7=.

66.Kf3 Kf6 67.Kf4 1:0.

Karsten Müller: Endings with Rook against Bishop and Knight

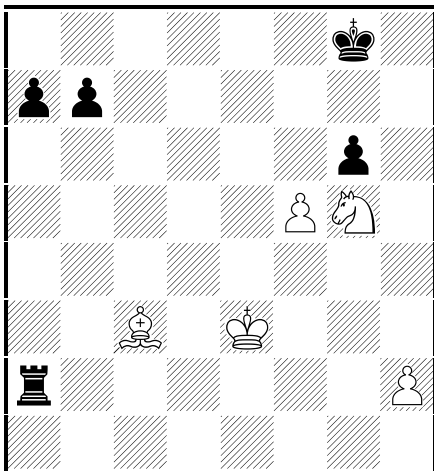
The fascinating fight between a rook and the duo bishop and knight has many faces. The following list shall help you:

- 1) The minor pieces want to get control to have time for the slow maneuvers of the knight. The winning process is often slow and logical step by step.
- 2) The rook wants activity and dynamics to profit from its quickness and long range power. It does not like passivity at all.
- 3) When more pieces are on the board then the rook usually welcomes exchanges. The reasons for this is that the board gets more open so that the rook is more mobile, further pieces can easier cooperate with the minor pieces and they compensate in a way for the slowness of the knight.
- 4) Both sides profit enormously from a dangerous friendly passed pawn.

A) *The minor pieces have the advantage.*

I want to start with a dangerous friendly passed pawn.

Nyback : Kulaots, Jurmala 2012



37.f6!

The f-pawn will decide the day. After 37.fg6? Rh2 38.Kf4 Rg2 39.Kf5 Rf2 40.Ke6 Rg2= White can not win as the rook can not be controlled.

37...Ra3

37...Rh2? runs into 38.f7 Kf8 39.Bb4 Kg7 40.f8Q#.

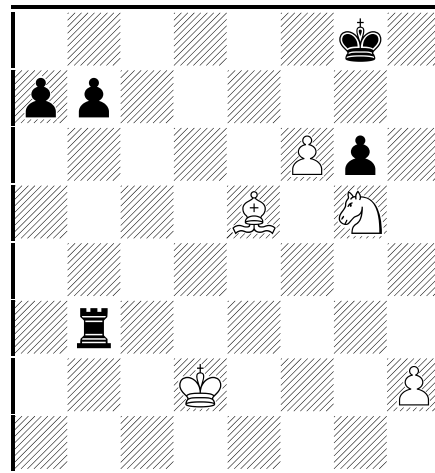
38.Kd2!?

Nyback wants to win with his f-pawn supported by bishop and knight. 38.Kd4 is also possible due to 38...a5 39.Be1 Ra1 40.Bg3 Rf1 41.f7 Rf7 42.Nf7 Kf7 and the bishop is able to deal with the problems on both wings in time: 43.Kc4 a4 44.Kb4 b5 45.Bf4 Ke6 46.Bc1 Kf5 47.Kb5 Kg4 48.Ka4 Kh3 49.Bf4+–.

38...Rb3

38...Ra2 does not help: 39.Ke1 Ra4 (39...a5 40.f7 Kf8 41.Be5+– and the rook can not prevent Bd6+.) 40.Be5 Ra6 41.Kd2 Kf8 42.Kc3 Rc6 43.Kd4 a5 44.Kd5 a4 45.Bb2 Rf6 46.Bf6+–; 38...Rc3?! 39.Kc3 a5 40.Kc4 a4 41.Kd5 a3 42.Ke6 a2 43.Ke7 a1Q 44.f7 Kg7 45.f8Q#.

39.Be5 Rb6



40.Kd3

The arrival of White's king on d5 will decide the day.

40...Rc6

40...a5 41.Kc4 a4 42.f7 Kf8 43.Kc5 Rc6 44.Kd5 a3 45.Ne6 Kf7 46.Nd8 Ke7 47.Nc6

bc6 48.Kc4+–.

41.Ke4 a5 42.Kd5 a4 43.Bd6 Rc8

White is too quick after 43...Rd6?! 44.Kd6 a3 45.Ke7 a2 46.f7 Kg7 47.f8Q#.

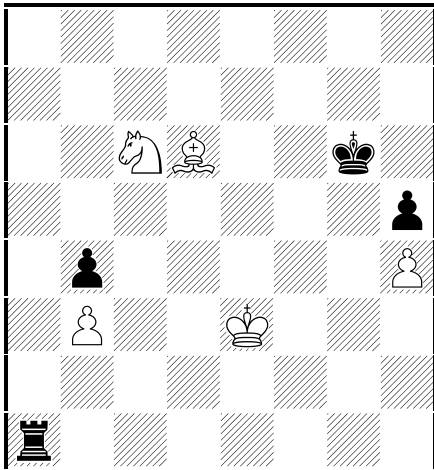
44.f7 Kg7 45.f8Q Rf8 46.Ne6!

Nyback's point. The direct 46.Bf8? Kf8 47.Ne4 is only drawn as the knight is too short legged to fight on both wings, e.g. 47...a3 48.Nc3 Kf7 49.Ke5 b5 50.Na2 (50.Nb5?? a2 even loses.) 50...Kg7 51.Kd5 Kh6=.

46...Kf7 47.Nf8 g5 48.Ke5 Ke8 49.Kf5 1:0.

In the next example careful maneuvering is called for:

Carlsen : Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2012



53.Kd4!

White must keep both pawns as 53.Nb4? Rb1 and 53.Bb4? Rh1 54.Be7 Rh3 55.Kf4 Rb3 are insufficient.

53...Rg1

53...Rh1!? is slightly more tenacious, but does not save the game as the minor pieces will outmaneuver the rook sooner or later, e.g. 54.Be7 Rh3 55.Ne5 Kf5 56.Nd3 Rg3 57.Kc4 Rg4 58.Kb5 Rg3 59.Nc5 Rg4 60.Bd8 Rd4 61.Bg5 Rg4 62.Be7 Rg7 (62...Rd4!? 63.Ka4 Kg6 64.Bg5 Rg4 65.Nd3 Kf5 66.Nf2 Rd4 67.Kb5 Ke5 68.Kc5 Rd7 69.Kb4 Kd4 70.Nd1 Rb7 71.Ka3 Kd3 72.Kb2 Rf7 73.Ne3 Rf2 74.Ka3 Rf8. So far analysis by

Stohl in ChessBase Magazin 147, who also quotes Shipov. I suggest now to continue with 75.b4 when White should be winning in the long run, e.g. 75...Kc3 76.Ka4 Ra8 77.Kb5 Rb8 78.Kc5 Rc8 79.Kd6 Kb4 80.Nd5 Kb5 81.Nf6 Rh8 82.Ke6 Kc6 83.Kf7+–) 63.Bd8 (63.Bg5? allows the blow 63...Rg5! when Black is just in time: 64.hg5 h4 65.Ne4 h3 66.Nf2 h2 67.Kb4 Kg5 68.Kc3 Kf4 69.Kd2 Kf3 70.Ke1 Ke3=) 63...Rg8 (63...Rg4 64.Nb7 Ke6 65.Na5 Rg8 66.Nc6 Rg7 67.Bg5 Rb7 68.Ka6 Rc7 69.Kb6 Rc8 70.Kb5 Kd6 71.Ne7 Rb8 72.Kc4 Ke6 73.Nd5 Rc8 74.Kd4 Rb8 75.Nf4 Kf5 76.Kc4 Kg4 77.Nd5+–) 64.Nb7 Ke6 65.Kc5!

Keeping control is more important than the pawn as (the greedy 65.Kb4? spoils it: 65...Kd7 66.Kb5 Kc8 67.Ka6 Rg7 68.Nc5 Rg6 69.Bb6 Rg4=) 65...Kd7 66.Bg5 Ke6 67.Nd6 Ke5 68.Nc4 Ke4 69.Kb4+–.

54.Kc5!

Magnus Carlsen navigates his king skilfully. 54.Kc4?? Rg4=.

54...Kf5

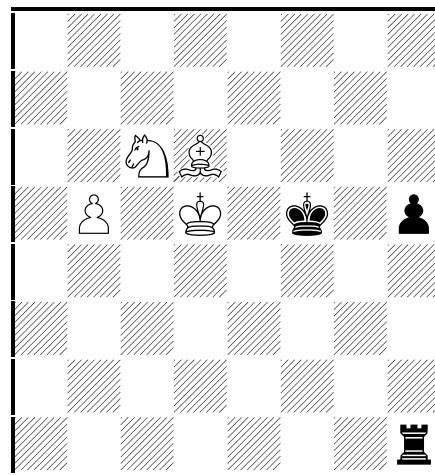
54...Rg4? 55.Ne5+–; 54...Rh1 55.Be7+–.

55.Nb4 Rc1 56.Kd4 Re1 57.Nc6 Re4

58.Kd5!

Bodycheck!

58...Rh4 59.b4 Rh1 60.b5 Rb1



61.Nd4!

The knight plays on both wings. 61.Nb4?

allows Black to defend, e.g. 61...Rd1 62.Kc6 (62.Kc5 Rc1 63.Kd4 Rd1 64.Nd3 Ke6 65.Bg3 Kd7=) 62...Ke6 63.Bc5 h4 64.b6 h3 65.b7 h2 66.b8Q h1Q=.

61...Kg4

61...Kf6 62.Kc6 Rc1 63.Bc5 h4 64.b6 h3 65.Nf3 Kf5 66.b7 Rb1 67.Bb6+–.

62.Kc6 Rc1 63.Kd7 Rb1 64.Kc7 h4 65.b6 Kh3

65...h3 66.b7 Rc1 67.Kd7 Rb1 68.b8Q Rb8 69.Bb8+–.

66.b7 Kg2

66...Rc1 does not help as the minor pieces can always create barriers: 67.Nc6 Rb1 68.b8Q Rb8 69.Kb8 Kg2 70.Ne5 Kg3 (70...h3 71.Ng4+–) 71.Ng6 Kg4 72.Kc7 h3 73.Bh2 Kf3 74.Nf4+–.

67.Nf5 h3 68.Nh4

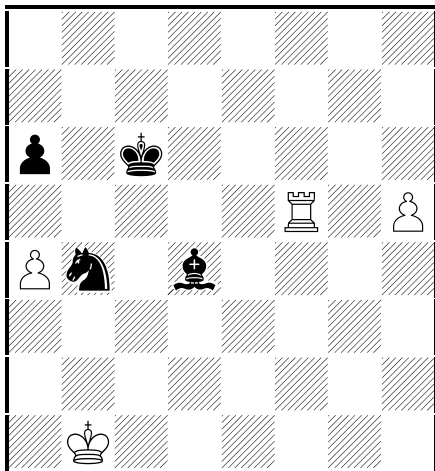
And Aronian resigned due to

68...Kg1 69.b8Q Rb8 70.Kb8 h2 71.Nf3 Kg2 72.Nh2+– 1:0.

B) The rook has the advantage

Again I want to start with a dangerous passed pawn:

Li Shilong : Broekmeulen, Dieren 2006



41...Nd3?

Now the rook can outfox the minor pieces in the long run. White can not win after

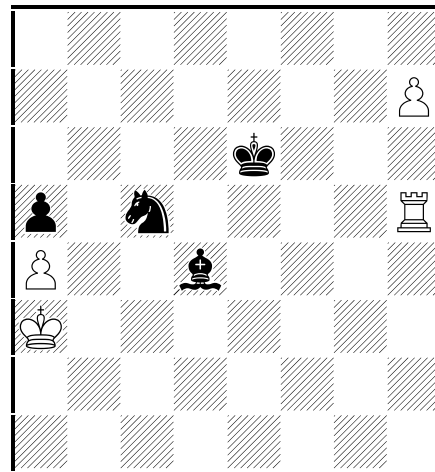
41...Nd5! 42.h6 Nf6 43.Ra5 Kb7 44.Rg5 Kc6 45.Kc2 Kd6 46.Kd3 Be5 47.Kc4 Ke6 and Black's centralised army can deal with the problems on both wings, e.g. 48.Rg7 (48.Kb4 Bf4 49.Rg6 Bd2 50.Kc4 Kf5 51.h7 Nh7 52.Ra6 Nf6=) 48...Bf4 49.h7 Nh7 50.Rh7 a5 51.Kb5 Bd2=.

42.h6 Nc5 43.Ka2 Kd6

43...Na4?! is refuted by 44.Rf4 Nc3 45.Kb3 Nb5 (45...Be5 46.Rc4 Kd6 47.Rc3 Bc3 48.Kc3+–) 46.Rd4 Nd4 47.Kb2+–.

44.Ka3 Ke6 45.Rh5 Nd7?!

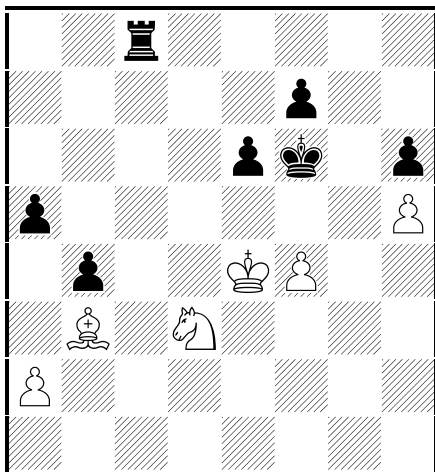
One sample line after 45...a5 runs 46.h7 Kd6



47.Rf5 (However, not 47.h8Q? Bh8 48.Rh8 Kc6=) 47...Bc3 48.Rf8 Kc7 49.Ra8 Kb6 50.Rc8 Bd4 51.Rb8 Kc7 52.Rb5 Nb7 53.Kb3 Kc6 54.Kc2 Kc7 55.Kd3 Bh8 56.Rg5 Ba1 57.Rg1 Bh8 58.Rg8 Ba1 59.Kc4 Nd6 60.Kc5 Nf7 61.Ra8 Kb7 62.Ra5 Ng5 63.Rb5 Ka7 64.Kc6 Nh7 65.Rb7+–.
46.h7 Bh8 47.Rg5 Ne5 48.Rg8 Nf7 49.Kb4 Kf6 50.Ka5 Bg7 51.Ka6 Kg6 52.h8Q Nh8 53.Kb7 Nf7 54.Kc7
 54.a5 Nd6 55.Kc6 Nf5 56.Rg7 Kg7 57.a6 Ne7 58.Kb7+–.
54...Ng5 55.a5 Ne6 56.Kb6 Nf4 57.a6 Kf7 58.Rg7 Kg7 59.a7 Nd5 60.Kb7
1:0.

Xiu Deshun : Lenderman, Ningbo 2013

Further winning techniques of the rook are breaking blockading set ups by zugzwang or by creating new passed pawns:



44...Rc3!

This puts White in zugzwang, which breaks the first blockade.

45.Kd4

45.Ke3 Kf5 46.Kd4 allows Black's king to invade with 46...Kg4 47.Bd1 Kh4.

45...Kf5 46.Ne5

The alternatives also look shaky, e.g. 46.Ke3 Kg4 47.Bd1 Kh4; 46.Bd1 Ra3 47.Bb3 a4 48.Bc4 Rc3 49.Nb4 Rh3 50.Bb5 a3 51.Be8 Rh5 52.Bf7 Rh4.

46...Kf4?!

46...Rh3! was more precise, e.g. 47.Nf7 Rh5 48.Nd8 (48.Ne5 Rh3 49.Nd3 h5 50.Nc5 Rc3 51.Be6 Kf4) 48...Rh2 49.Ne6 (49.Ke3 a4 50.Ba4 Ra2; 49.Kd3 h5 50.Be6 Kf4 51.Nc6 h4 52.Na5 Ke5 53.Bc8 Kd6 54.Nc4 Kc7 55.Bf5 Ra2) 49...h5 50.Nc5 Kf4 and Black has better winning chances than in the game.

47.Nf7 Rc6 48.Ba4?

The resulting blockade will not hold. The surprising 48.Nh8!! was a better chance to fight as the winning potential is very reduced after 48...Kg5 49.Nf7 Kh5 50.Ne5 Rc1 51.Be6.

48...e5! 49.Kd5

49.Ne5? Rd6+.

49...Rf6 50.Nd6 Rf8 51.Bc2

51.Bc6 Rg8 52.Kc5 Rg1 53.Kb5 Ra1 54.Bd5 Rd1 55.Kc5 a4+.

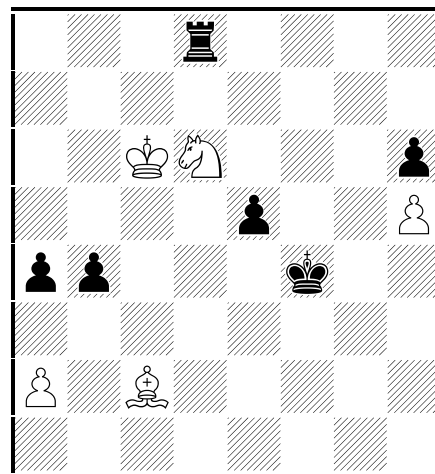
51...Ra8

The rook must be activated again later, so the direct 51...Rg8!? is more precise, e.g. 52.Bg6 a4 53.Kc4 b3 54.ab3 a3 55.Kc3 e4 56.Ne4 Ra8+.

52.Kc5 Rd8 53.Kc6?!

The defense 53.Bg6 is more tenacious, but will not hold in the long run, e.g. 53...a4 54.Nb5 b3 55.ab3 ab3 56.Kc4 b2 57.Nc3 Ke3 58.Kb3 (58.Nb1 e4 59.Kc3 Rb8 60.Kc2 Kf3 61.Nd2 Kf4 62.Be4 b1Q 63.Nb1 Ke4+) 58...Kd2 59.Nb1 Kc1 60.Nc3 Rb8 61.Ka2 (61.Kc4 Rf8 62.Kd5 Rf3 63.Na2 Kd2 64.Ke5 Rf1 65.Nb4 b1Q 66.Bb1 Rb1+) 61...Rb4 62.Ka3 Rb6 63.Ka2 Rf6 64.Be4 (64.Kb3 Rf3 65.Kc4 Rh3 66.Kb4 Re3 67.Kc4 e4 68.Be4 Re4 69.Ne4 b1Q+) 64...Rf1 65.Bg6 Rf3 66.Nb5 Rf2 67.Bb1 e4+ 53.Kd5 Rg8+ also wins in the long run. However, not 53...e4? 54.Be4 Rd6 55.Kd6 Ke4 as the pawn ending is only drawn: 56.Kc5 Ke5 57.Kb5 Kd5 58.Ka5 Kc5=.

53...a4!?



This time Lenderman breaks the blockade forcefully. The prosaic 53...Rg8 wins as well: 54.Kb5 Rg2 55.Bb3 e4 56.Ka5 e3+.

54.Ba4 e4 55.Kc5

55.Ne4 Ke4 56.Kc5 Rd5 57.Kb4 Rh5
58.Bc6 Kd4 59.a4 Rh2 60.a5 Rb2 61.Ka3
Rb1 62.Bf3 Kc5 63.Ka2 Rb5–+.

55...e3 56.Bb5

56.Bd1 Ra8 57.Kb4 Ra2 58.Nf7 Rd2–+
(Even 58...e2?! wins as the knight can not
escape after 59.Be2 Re2 60.Nh6 due to
60...Re7! 61.Ng8 Rg7 62.Nf6 Ke5 63.Ne8
Re7–+).

56...Ra8 57.Nc4

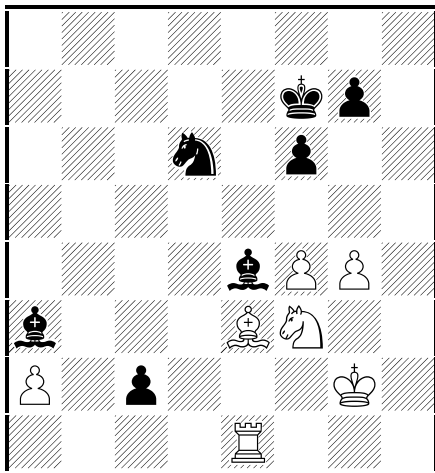
57.Bc4 is met by 57...Ra2 58.Ba2 e2 59.Kb4
e1Q 60.Kb5 Qd2–+.

**57...e2 58.Nb2 Ra2 59.Nd3 Ke3 60.Kb4
Ra1 61.Kc5 Rh1 62.Nf4 e1Q 63.Ng2 Kf2
64.Ne1 Rh5 0:1.**

C) The rook welcomes exchanges

When more pieces are on the board the rook
usually wants to exchange pieces. In the
following example I want to start a bit earlier
as the relevant positions are in the variations:

Hausner : Müller, Hamburg 1990



Black has enough compensation for the
exchange but not more.

45...Bb4

But not 45...Nc4? 46.Bc1 Bc1 47.Rc1 Nd2
due to 48.Rc2! Nf3 49.Rc7 and only White
can harbor hopes to win as his rook is very
strong on the open board.

46.Re2 Bd3 47.Nd4?

47.Re1 is forced.

47...Nc4 48.Bc1!

After 48.Nc2? Bc2 again rook against two
minor pieces is on the board, but this time
White is lost as Black profits enormously
from the presence of the bishops.

48...Bc3 49.Nb5

This time 49.Rc2? Bd4–+ is a completely
trivial win.

49...Be2

49...Bb2? 50.Re1!+–.

**50.Nc3 Bg4 51.Nd5 Be6 52.Nb4 Bf5 53.Kf2
Be4 54.Na6 Ke6 55.Nc5 Kd5 56.Nb3**

56.Ne4? Ke4 57.Ke2 Kd4–+.

**56...Bf5 57.Ke2 Bg6 58.Nd2 Nb6 59.Nf1
Kd4 60.Bb2 Ke4 61.Bc1 Kd4 62.Bb2 Ke4
63.Bc1 Bh5 64.Kf2?**

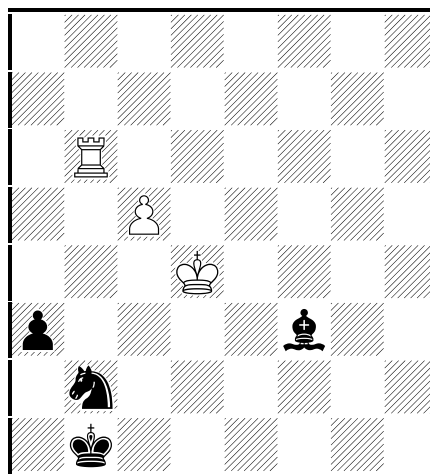
64.Kd2 was forced, but Black keeps winning
chances after 64...Kf4.

**64...Kd3! 65.Ne3 Bf7 66.a3 Na4 67.Ng2
Nc5 68.Ne1 Kc3 69.Ke3 Bg6 70.Bd2 Kb2
71.Nc2 Bc2–+**

And Black won after some further moves
0:1.

Exercises

Kotainy : Nisipeanu, Baden Baden 2012



How did White rescue himself?

61.Kc3!

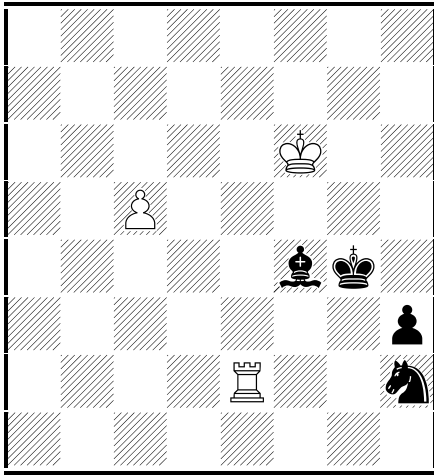
This retreat paralyses Black. 61.c6? rushes too much due to 61...a2 62.c7 Bg4 63.Ra6 a1Q 64.Ra1 Ka1 65.Kc5 Na4 66.Kc6 Bc8! –+.

61...Bd5 62.c6 Bc6

62...a2?! 63.Rb2 Kc1=.

63.Rc6 a2 64.Ra6 Na4 65.Ra4 a1Q 66.Ra1 Ka1 ½.

Sagit : Gajewski, Stockholm 2011



What is White's highest priority?

81.Re4!

The only way to draw. After 81.c6? the two pieces always manage to coordinate:

81...Kf3 82.Re1 (82.Rd2 Nf1 83.Rd7 h2

84.Rh7 Ne3 85.Ke6 Kg2 86.Kd7 Nd5

87.Rg7 Bg3–+) 82...Ng4 83.Ke7 Ne3

84.Kd7 Nd5 85.Rf1 Kg3 86.Rd1 h2 87.Rb1

Kg2 88.Rb2 Kh3 89.Rb3 Bg3 90.Rb1 Kg2

91.Rb2 Bf2 92.Rb1 Bg1 93.Rb2 Kf3 94.c7

Nc7 95.Rh2 Bh2–+.

81...Kf3 82.Kf5?

Now White's rook is outnumbered and outgunned. The direct sacrifice 82.Rf4! leads to a drawn pawn race: 82...Kf4 83.c6 Ng4 84.Ke6 Domination! 84...h2 85.c7 h1Q 86.c8Q Qe4 87.Kd6=.

82...Bg3! 83.Re7

83.c6 is met by 83...Nf1! 84.Rh4 (84.Rc4 Ne3–+) 84...Ne3 (84...Bh4 wins as well, e.g. 85.c7 h2 86.c8Q Ng3 (86...h1Q?? 87.Qb7

Ke2 88.Qh1 Ng3 89.Kg4 Nh1 90.Kh4=)

87.Ke5 h1Q–+) 85.Ke6 h2 86.Rh3 Kg2

87.Rg3 Kg3 88.c7 h1Q 89.c8Q Qh3–+.

83...Ng4 84.Rh7 h2 85.c6 Ne3 86.Ke6 Kg2 87.Kd7

87.c7 is met by 87...Bc7 88.Rc7 h1Q–+.

87...Nd5!

The knight establishes a blockade and makes the numerical superiority of Black's army felt. Of course not 87...h1Q?? 88.Rh1 Kh1

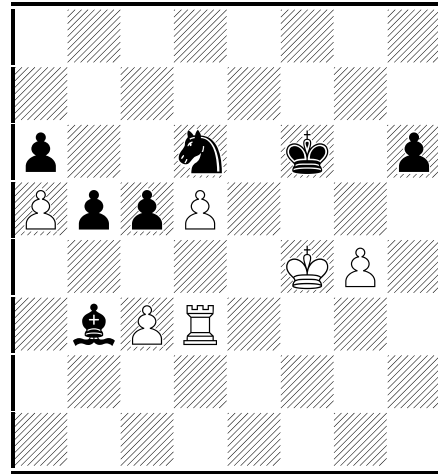
89.c7 Nd5 90.c8Q Nb6 91.Kd8 Nc8

92.Kc8=.

92.Kc8=.

88.Ke6 Nc7 0:1.

Kamsky : Anand, Sanghi Nagar 1994



How to use White's rook?

49.Re3!

White's rook must be activated. 49.Rh3? Nf7

50.Rh5 (50.d6 Ke6–+; 50.Rd3 Ng5 51.Rd2

Bc4 52.Rd1 Nf7 53.Rd2 Ke7–+) 50...Ke7

51.Rf5 Ba2 52.Ke3 b4 53.cb4 cb4 54.Kd4

Nd6 55.Rf2 (55.Rf4 Nb5 56.Kd3 b3–+)

55...b3 56.Rb2 Kd7 57.Kc5 Ne4 58.Kd4 Nf6

59.Rd2 Kd6 60.Rh2 Ng4 61.Re2 Ne5 62.Rf2

h5 63.Rf6 Kd7 64.Ke5 b2–+; 49.Rd2? Bc4

50.Rd1 Nf7 51.d6 Ke6 52.d7 Ke7 53.Ke4

Be6–+.

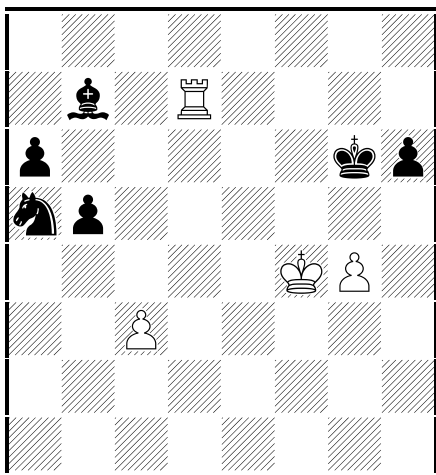
49...Bd5 50.Re5 Bb7

50...Bg2 51.Rc5 Nc4 52.Rh5 Kg6 53.Rh2

Bd5 54.Re2 Na5 55.Rd2 Be6 56.Rd6=.

51.Rc5 Nc4 52.Rc7 Na5 53.Rh7 Kg6

54.Rd7



White's active rook can not be defeated.

54...Bc8 55.Rd8 Be6

55...Bb7 56.Rd6 Kg7 57.Rd7=.

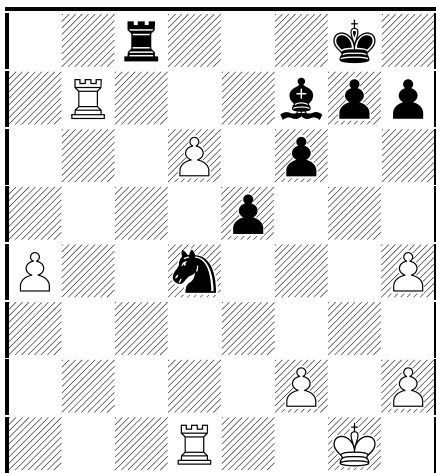
56.Rd6 Kf6 57.Ra6 Nc4 58.Rc6 Ne5

59.Rb6

And a draw was agreed. One sample line runs:

59...Ng4 60.Rb5 Nf2 61.Rh5 Kg6 62.Rb5 h5 63.Rb6 Kf7 64.Re6 Ke6 65.Kg5 ½.

Aronian : Anand, Morelia/Linares 2007



Find White's best winning chance!

35.Rdb1!

The rook should be activated! After 35.d7?

Black can defend with 35...Rd8 36.Rdb1 Kf8 37.Rb8 Ke7=.

35...Rf8

35...Nf3 36.Kh1 Be6 (36...Bd5 37.Rb8+)

37.d7 Bd7 38.Rd7 h5 39.Kg2 Nh4 40.Kf1

+–.

36.Rb8?

This is too slow. The direct 36.d7 is called for: 36...Be6 (36...Nf3 37.Kh1 Bd5

38.Rb8+)

37.R1b6 Bf5 38.a5 Ne6 39.a6

Nc5 40.Rc7 Nd7 41.Rbb7 Ra8 42.a7 Kf7

43.Rb8 Ra7 44.Ra7+–.

36...Be8?

Anand returns the favor. 36...Nb3! was the

last chance to fight, e.g. 37.Rf8 Kf8 38.a5

Bd5 39.a6 Ke8 40.a7 Nd4 41.Rb8 Kd7

42.a8Q Ba8 43.Ra8 Kd6 and it is not clear, if

Black's fortress can be taken.

37.a5 Nf3

37...Bb5 38.R8b5 Nb5 39.Rb5 Kf7 40.Rb7

Ke6 41.d7 Kd6 42.a6 Kc6 43.h5 f5 44.Kf1

Ra8 45.Ke2 Rf8 46.Kd3 Ra8 47.Kc4 Rd8

48.f4 e4 49.Kd4 Kd6 50.Rb5+–.

38.Kf1 Nd2 39.Ke1 Nb1 40.a6 Bc6 41.a7

Kf7 42.d7 Ke7 43.Rf8 Kd7 44.a8Q

Even 44.Rf7!? Ke6 45.Rg7 Na3 46.Rh7 Nc2

47.Kd2 Nd4 48.h5 wins as the two passed

rook's pawns are too dangerous.

44...Ba8 45.Ra8 h5?!

45...g6 is more tenacious, but White wins in

the long run, e.g. 46.Ra7 Ke6 47.Rh7 Nc3

48.h5 gh5 49.Rh5+–.

46.Ra7 Ke6 47.Rg7 Kf5?! 48.Rg3

And Black resigned as his knight is trapped.

1:0.