

Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual

**by
Mark Dvoretsky**

Sixth Edition

Revised by Karsten Müller & Alex Fishbein

Foreword by Magnus Carlsen



**2025
Russell Enterprises, Inc.
Milford, CT USA**

Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual

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Mark Dvoretsky

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Leonid Dvoretsky

Edited by Karsten Müller and Alex Fishbein

ISBN: 978-1-963885-10-1 (softcover, print)

ISBN: 978-1-963885-14-9 (hardcover, print)

ISBN: 978-1-963885-11-8 (eBook)

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Published by:

Russell Enterprises, LLC

P.O. Box 332

Portsmouth, NH 03802 USA

<http://www.russell-enterprises.com>

info@russell-enterprises.com

Cover design by Fierce Ponies

Printed in the United States of America



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Mark Dvoretzky

From the Author

(First Edition)

Endgame theory is not a complicated subject to study!

All one needs is thorough knowledge of a limited number of “precise” positions (as a rule, elementary ones) plus some of the most important principles, evaluations, and standard techniques. The question is, how to select the most important material from the thousands of endings analyzed in various handbooks? That is why this book was written: it offers the basic information you need as the foundation of your own personal endgame theory.

As long ago as 1970, when I was just a young chess master and a student at Moscow University, I was unexpectedly invited to give some endgame lectures to the chess faculty of the Moscow High School for Sports. It was then that I had to think about what exactly a practical chess player must study. I defined sound methods of studying endgame theory (from the point of view of logic, rather obvious ones) and prepared examples of the most important types of endgames (pawn, rook-and-pawn endgames, and those with opposite-color bishops). I also prepared a series of lectures on the general principles of endgame play. By the way, the main ideas of that series became (with my permission) the basis of the popular book *Endgame Strategy* by Mikhail Shereshevsky (I recommend that book to my readers).

Later on, these materials, continually corrected and enlarged, were used in teaching numerous apprentices. They proved to be universal and useful for players of widely different levels: from ordinary amateurs to the world’s leading grandmasters. My work with grandmasters, some of them belonging to the world’s Top Ten, have convinced me that almost none of them had studied chess endings systematically. They either did not know or did not remember many important endgame positions and ideas, which can be absorbed even by those of relatively modest chess experience. As a result, even among grandmasters, grave errors occur even in elementary situations: you will find plenty of examples in this book. Some grandmasters asked me to help them, and our studies resulted usually in a substantial improvement of their tournament achievements. Two weeks of intensive study were usually more than enough to eliminate the gaps in their endgame education.

So, what will you find in this book?

Precise positions

This is our term for concrete positions – positions with a minimum number of pawns, which should be memorized and which will serve as guideposts again and again in your games.

The hardest part of preparing this book was deciding which positions to include and which to leave out. This required rejection of many examples that were intrinsically interesting and even instructive, but of little practical value. Common sense dictates that effort should be commensurate to the expected benefit. Human memory is limited, so there is no sense in filling it up with rarely-seen positions that will probably never occur in our actual games. One should study relatively few positions, the most important and most probable, but study and understand them perfectly. One should not remember long and perplexing analyses. We may never have an opportunity to reproduce them in our games, and we will certainly forget them sooner or later. Our basic theoretical knowledge must be easy to remember and comprehend. Some complicated

positions are also important, but we may absorb their general evaluations and basic ideas, plus perhaps a few of their most important lines only.

The positions that I consider part of the basic endgame knowledge system are shown by diagrams and comments in blue print. [Text which had appeared in blue in prior editions is now highlighted with a light gray background in the sixth edition.] If the explanatory notes are too complicated or less important the print is black; these positions are also useful but there is not much sense in committing them to memory.

Endgame ideas

These represent, of course, the most significant part of endgame theory. Study of certain endgame types can be almost fully reduced to absorbing ideas (general principles, standard methods and evaluations) rather than to memorizing precise positions.

When discussing precise positions, we will certainly point out the endgame ideas in them. But many standard ideas transcend any particular precise position. These ideas should be absorbed with the help of schemata – very simple positions where a technique or a tool works in a distilled form and our attention is not distracted by any analysis of side lines. Over the course of time we may forget the precise shape of a schema but will still remember the technique. Another method of absorbing endgame ideas is to study practical games or compositions where the ideas have occurred in the most attractive form.

The schemata and the most instructive endgames are represented by color diagrams as well. Plus, important rules, recommendations and names of the important tools are given in ***bold italics***.

As I am sure you realize, the choice of the ideas and precise positions included in this system of basic endgame knowledge is, to some extent, a subjective matter. Other authors might have made slightly different choices. Nevertheless I strongly recommend that you not ignore the blue text: it is very important. However you of course are free to examine it critically, and to enrich it with the other ideas in this book (those in black print), as well as with examples you already know, from other books or your own games.

Retention of the material

This book would have been rather thin if it included only a laconic list of positions and ideas related to the obligatory minimum of endgame knowledge. As you see, this is not so.

Firstly, the notes are definitely not laconic, after all, this is a manual, not a handbook. In a handbook, a solution of a position is all one needs; in a manual, it should be explained how one can discover the correct solution, which ideas are involved.

Second, in chess (as in any other sphere of human activity), a confident retention of theory cannot be accomplished solely by looking at one example: one must also get some practical training with it. For this purpose, additional examples (those with black diagrams and print) will be helpful.

You will see instructive examples where the basic theoretical knowledge you have just studied is applied in a practical situation. The connection between the theory and the practical case will not always be direct and obvious. It is not always easy to notice familiar theoretical shapes in a complicated position, and to determine which ideas should be applied in this concrete case. On the other hand, a position may resemble theory very much but some unobvious details exist; one should discover them and find how this difference influences the course of the fight and its final outcome.

Some practical endings are introduced by the heading “Tragicomedy.” These are examples of serious errors committed by various players (sometimes extremely strong ones). The point is not to laugh at them: you know that there are spots even on the sun. These cases are simply excellent warnings against ignoring endgame theory. Additionally, experience shows that these cases tend to be very well remembered by the student, and are therefore very helpful in absorbing and retaining endgame ideas.

Practical training, by which I mean solving appropriate exercises, is essential. You will find a large number and wide variety of exercises in this book, from easy to very difficult. Some solutions are given directly after the exercises, other are placed in the special chapter that concludes the book.

Some exercises do not involve a search for a single correct solution. They are designed for solving in the playing mode, when a series of contingent decisions is required. The best result can be achieved if a friend or coach assists you by referring to the book. But you can also play through the example without assistance, choosing moves for one side and taking the answering moves from the text of the book.

Of course, one need not study all these examples, nor must one solve all the exercises. But still, if you do, your knowledge of the basic theory will be more sound and reliable. Also, self-training develops one’s ability to calculate lines deeply and precisely; this skill is essential for every player.

Analysis

When working on the manuscript, in addition to the large volume of material I had collected myself, I also – quite naturally – used endgame books by other authors. Checking their analysis, I found that an amazingly high number of endings, including many widely known and used in book after book, are analyzed badly and evaluated wrongly. In those cases I went deeper than the concept of the endgame manual required. I felt I had to do it. As I wrote above, studying endgame theory is not a very labor-intensive process, but analysis of a particular endgame, or practical play under time restriction in a tournament, can be a much more sophisticated and complicated matter. Therefore, my readers will find corrected versions of many *interesting endgame analyses, plus some entirely new analyses that are important for endgame theory.*

Presentation of the material

The material here is presented mainly in a traditional manner, classified according to the material relationships on the board. First pawn endings are analyzed, then those with minor pieces, then rook-and-pawn, etc. But this method is not followed too strictly. For example, the queen-versus- pawns section is in chapter 1, to demonstrate immediately what can arise in some sharp pawn endings.

In the chapter on pawn endings, you will meet some terms and techniques (such as “corresponding squares,” “breakthrough,” “shouldering” etc.) that are important for many kinds of endgame. Some of these techniques are illustrated by additional examples with more pieces on the board; as the book continues, we may refer to these cases again.

Some chapters (for example, those on pawn and rook-and-pawn endings) are quite long while others are rather short. Chapter length does not reflect the relative importance of a kind of endgame; rather it has to do with the richness of ideas and number of precise positions required for full understanding.

The final chapter deals with the most general principles, rules and methods of endgame play, such as king’s activity, zugzwang, the fortress etc. Of course, these themes appear earlier in the book, but a review of already familiar ideas improves both understanding and retention.

What this book does not contain

Obviously, one cannot embrace the infinite. I have already described how the book's material has been selected. Now about other limitations.

My own formal definition of "endgame" is: the stage of a chess game when at least one side has no more than one piece (in addition to the king). Positions with more pieces are not discussed here (except for cases when the "extra" pieces are exchanged).

Our subject is endgame theory. Some problems of chess psychology that belong to "general endgame techniques" are beyond our discussion. Interested readers may turn to the aforementioned *Endgame Strategy* by Shereshevsky, or to *Technique for the Tournament Player*, a book by this writer and Yusupov.

Special signs and symbols

The role of the blue text in this book has already been explained. Now the time has come to explain special signs and symbols.

To the left of diagrams, you will find important information. First of all, the indication of who is on move: "W" means White and "B" Black.

If a question mark is shown, the position can be used as an exercise. Most often, there is no special explanation of what is expected from the reader – he must make a correct decision on his own, because in an actual game nobody will tell you whether you should play for a draw or for a win, calculate a lot or simply make a natural move. Sometimes, however, a certain hint is included in a verbal question.

Exercises with solutions that are given separately, at the end of the book, have two sets of numbers beside the diagrams. For example, diagram 1-14, the 14th diagram of chapter 1, also has the designation the information given in the 1/1, meaning it is the first such exercise of chapter 1.

The combination "B?/Play" means that the position is designed for replaying, and that you are to take the black pieces.

Beside some black diagrams, the symbol "\$" appears. This indicates that the position and the idea behind it have theoretical value, though less compared to those from basic theory.

Many years ago, the publication *Chess Informant* developed a system of symbols to describe the evaluation of a position or move. This system is widely used now and, with minimal changes, is applied in this book, too.

Finally, a work of this scope cannot be produced by a single individual. I am grateful to many others for their assistance during the many stages of producing this book. I would like to thank Artur Yusupov and Jacob Aagaard for their encouragement and eventual contributions; Karsten Müller for his help proof-reading the text and checking the accuracy of variations; Taylor Kingston for his assistance editing the final version of the text; Jim Marfia and Valery Murakhveri for their translations of the original Russian text; Harold van der Heijden for his assistance checking sources; and Hanon Russell, the publisher, for coordinating the efforts of all concerned.

This book is an improved and expanded version of the German-language edition, and in that regard, it is also appropriate to thank Ulrich Dirr, who provided invaluable assistance in the preparation of the German edition and Jürgen Daniel, its publisher. Without their fine work, it would have been significantly more difficult to bring out this English-language edition.

Mark Dvoretsky
Moscow
September 2003

Introduction to the Sixth Edition

An eternal classic

With the untimely passing in 2016 of the great Russian trainer and author Mark Dvoretsky, the question of how his *Endgame Manual* should be continued was raised. The book has been recognized worldwide as one of the classics of chess literature, and any change to it requires adherence to the author's unique method of presentation. At the same time, endgame theory has expanded in the last decade, and new examples have enriched the trove of chess practice.

Just before he left us, Dvoretsky had begun to compile a list of revisions for a possible fifth edition and had sent the list to the publisher. When I (Karsten Müller) was offered the opportunity to supervise that revision, it was an offer I could not refuse. I was quite familiar with the book's exceptional content; I use it regularly with my students. When Mark Dvoretsky was working on the first edition in 2001 and 2002, I was asked to assist by cross-checking his analysis.

For the fifth edition, published in 2020, American grandmaster Alex Fishbein was asked to fill this role. He put my suggestions under the analytical microscope, added a couple of his own discoveries, and reorganized some of the newer and more complicated theory to make it more accessible to the reader. A student of Dvoretsky in the 1990s, Alex Fishbein tried to make the changes and additions stylistically similar to what Dvoretsky would have wanted. Your editors have kept the same roles and general philosophy for this edition.

What is new in the sixth edition?

We are indebted to many readers for finding inaccuracies in the previous edition and bringing them to our attention. Most revisions in this new edition did not significantly affect the narrative or the evaluation of critical positions, but in some complicated cases they did. We happily observe that chess is not yet a solved game, and that some endings are hard to assess even with the computer.

For this edition, we added some theoretical and practical material, prioritizing topics where we often see players go astray. Some typical motifs in ♖+♙ vs ♗+♙ endings have been synthesized into one section. We also added some new exercises and included some recent examples from the games of top players.

We would like to mention Artur Yusupov's work, already published in the latest German edition. Dvoretsky's great disciple and colleague corrected the theory of a ♔+2♙ vs ♗+3♙ position that had been previously regarded as drawn and made several other important contributions. We also thank Zoran Petronijevic for his work in clarifying several of the deeper endings.

We would like to additionally credit Jacob Aagaard, Erwin L'Ami, Anish Giri, Jack Jeffrey, Yakov Konoval, Michael Taktikos, Vincent Keymer, Vardan Pogosyan, David Kramarley, and Chessable followers for their contributions to this or earlier editions. Mitch Fishbein offered ideas of what new topics to add and helped review the changes. We cannot properly thank everyone, of course.

Time heals all endgame wounds

In 2025, *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* is not only a training book, but also a bridge from a different era in chess to the modern time. The first edition of this manual was written before six-piece tablebases. People felt proud when they could correct or refine the analysis of famous authors of the past. Many games were played with adjournments. Nowadays, young players probably do not know how adjournments worked. And by the time our games reach positions like you will see in this book, we are playing on increment. Faced with such time pressure, even the strongest players in the world today make much cruder mistakes than what Mark Dvoretsky called “tragicomedies.”

Dvoretsky would probably write the book differently if he were writing the first edition today. But would it be a better book? We don't think so. Yes, Mark had very high expectations for his readers. But there is nothing wrong with setting a high bar for yourself – under the one condition, however – that you do not regard it a crisis if you do not live up to those standards. The amount of “tragicomic” play that Mark refers to in his book should give you a sense of perspective for your own chess progress, while keeping your sights set high.

To preserve the flavor of the book, we have kept the “human touch.” These days, phrases like “the position is unclear” and “I do not see a draw here” are sadly starting to disappear from game annotations. Yet that is how people always thought, and it is how they think now. If you see a certain duality in the text between evaluations such as $+ -$ or $- +$ and more imprecise feelings sometimes expressed by the author, it is by design.

We have kept Mark Dvoretsky's original introduction, written in 2003, in which he explains his approach to studying the endgame. We have removed other introductions and forewords that appeared over the years. But for this sixth edition, we are especially proud to add a new foreword by the sixteenth world champion, Magnus Carlsen.

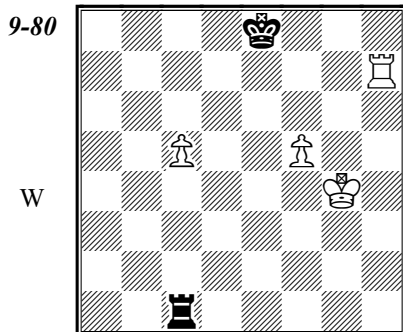
Finally, there is no better way to close than quoting grandmaster Artur Yusupov, considered by many to be Dvoretsky's most successful student: “I am sure that those who study this work carefully will not only play the endgame better, but overall their play will improve. One of the secrets of the Russian chess school is now before you, dear reader!”

Karsten Müller, Hamburg
Alex Fishbein, Spring Hill
April 2025

although 5...♖a8 6 ♖a5 ♖d4 7 ♜f5 ♜c4 8 ♜e6 ♜b4 9 ♖a1 ♜c5! is also sufficient for a draw (rather than 9...♜b5? 10 ♜d6 ♜b6 11 ♜b1+!), e.g., 10 ♜d7 ♜b6 11 ♜b1+ ♜c5! 12 ♜b7 ♜h8=

2 ♜e3 ♜d6 3 ♜d4 ♜d7 4 ♜c4 ♜c6 5 ♜b4 ♜e5 6 ♜c1+ ♜b6 7 ♜c4 Black resigned.

Larsen – Torre
Leningrad izt 1973



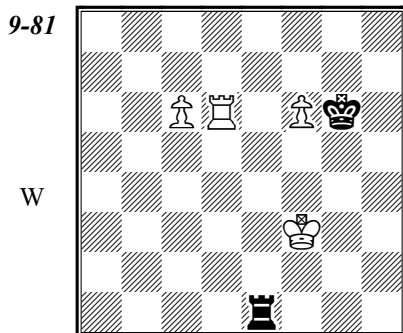
A natural method of exploiting two extra pawns is a transition to theoretically winning positions with one extra pawn.

This method could be applied here: 1 ♜g5! ♜xc5 2 ♜g6 ♖ ♜h8+. White has a simple win because the black king is on the long side.

1 ♜c7?! ♜d8 2 ♜c6 ♜d7 3 ♜d6+ ♜e7 4 f6??

After 4 ♜e6+! ♜f7 5 c6 ♜f1 6 ♜g5 ♜f2 7 ♜d6, Black would have had no alternative but to resign. 4 ♜d5+- was also good.

4...♜f7 5 c6 ♜g6! 6 ♜f3 ♜e1!=



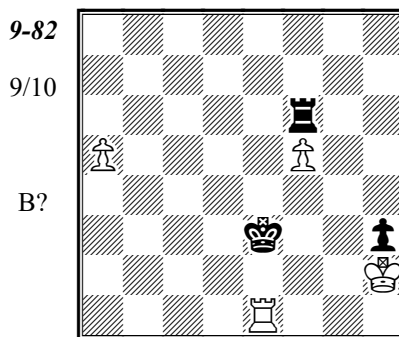
The rook cuts the hostile king off from both pawns. White cannot strengthen his position.

7 ♜f4 ♜e2 8 ♜d5 ♜c2

8...♜xf6? is erroneous: 9 ♜c5 ♜e8 10 ♜f5+! ♜g6 (10...♜e7 11 ♜e5+ ♜f7 12 ♜xe8 ♜xe8 13 ♜e5+-) 11 ♜e5! ♜c8 12 ♜e6+ ♜f7 13 ♜e5+-

9 ♜d6 ♜e2 10 f7+ ♜xf7 11 ♜f5 ♜e7 12 ♜d7+ ♜e8 13 ♜f6 ♜e1 14 ♜d5 ♜c1 15 ♜d6 ♜f1+ 16 ♜e6 ♜e1+ 17 ♜d5 ♜d1+ 18 ♜c5 ♜xd6 19 ♜xd6 ♜d8
Draw.

Exercises



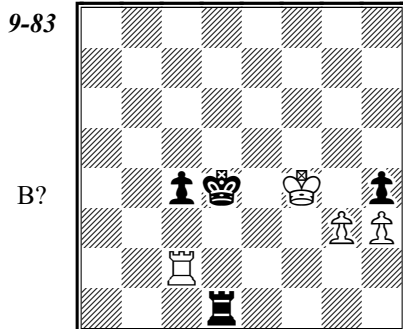
A Far-Advanced Passed Pawn

Transition to a Rook vs. Pawn Endgame

It often happens that a passed pawn is so strong that the opponent must inevitably give a rook away for it. In such cases, one should take into account and know well the methods we have learned from studying rook versus pawns endgames.

Black's actions in the following endgame were based on two typical methods: shouldering and cutting off the king.

Yusupov – Tseshkovsky
Moscow tt 1981



On the straightforward 1...hg? (1...♔d3? 2 ♕f2! or 2 ♖g2! has the same consequences) 2 ♕×g3 ♔d3 3 ♖a2 c3 4 h4 c2 5 ♕×c2 ♕×c2 White, of course, cannot play 6 h5?? ♔d4!, but 6 ♕g4? ♔d3 7 h5 ♕e4 8 ♕g5 ♕e5 9 ♕g6 ♕e6 10 h6 ♖g1+ also loses. It is shoulderbasting that helps here: 6 ♕f4! ♔d3 7 h5 ♖h1 8 ♕g5 ♕e4 9 h6 ♕e5 10 ♕g6 ♕e6 11 ♕g7! (rather than 11 h7? ♖g1+ 12 ♕h6 ♕f7 13 h8♔+ ♕f6 14 ♕h7 ♖g2⊖ →) 11...♕e7 (11...♖g1+ 12 ♕f8) 12 h7 ♖g1+ 13 ♕h8!=

Deliberating over his next move, Tseshkovsky recognized White's defensive plan and found the way to prevent its realization.

1...♖f1+!! 2 ♕g4 hg

Now, after 3 ♕×g3 ♔d3 4 ♖a2 c3 5 h4 c2 6 ♖×c2 ♕×c2, the white king cannot go to f4, and White loses.

3 ♔d2+ ♕e3 4 ♖g2

4 ♖c2 ♖f4+! 5 ♕×g3 ♔d4 6 h4 ♔d3 changes nothing.

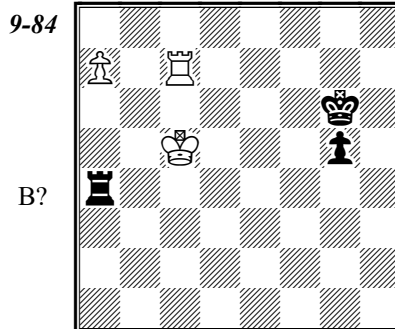
4...♖f4+!

White could hold after 4...c3? 5 ♖×g3+ ♔d4 6 ♖g2 ♔d3 7 h4 (compared with the line 3 ♕×g3 ♔d3 he would have an extra tempo). Alas, Black wins easily by means of cutting the king off along the fourth rank.

5 ♕×g3 c3 6 h4 ♔c4 7 ♔c2 ♕d3 8 ♖c1 c2 9 h5 ♕d2 10 ♖h1 c1♕ 11 ♖×c1 ♕×c1! White resigned.

The most important method in sharp endings with a far-advanced passed pawn is *interference* ("building a bridge"). It occurs, together with other useful techniques, in the following example.

Balashov – Dvoretsky
USSR ch tt, Moscow 1967*



The main threat is by no means ♕c5-b6-b7 – in that case the king will certainly be late when coming back to fight against the black pawn. White is planning 2 ♕b5! followed by the interference: ♖c6+ and ♖a6. If 1...♕f5? then again 2 ♕b5! ♖a1 (2...♖×a7 3 ♖×a7 g4 4 ♕c4 ♕e4 5 ♖g7 ♕f3 6 ♔d3 g3 7 ♖f7+ and 8 ♕e2) 3 ♖c5+! ♕f4 4 ♖c4+ and 5 ♖a4, or 3...♕f6 4 ♖c6+ and 5 ♖a6.

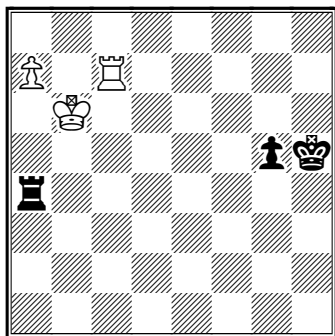
Every tempo counts in such situations. Black holds by means of *driving the king away by vertical checks*. The king should be driven as far as possible from the g-pawn.

1...♖a1! 2 ♕b6 ♖b1+! 3 ♕c6 ♖a1 4 ♕b7 ♖b1+ (the immediate 4...♕f5 is also sufficient for a draw) **5 ♕c8 ♖a1 6 ♕b8 ♕f5=**

Another method of preventing the threat of interference, 1...♕h5? looks less attractive: the king on the h-file will be unable to shoulder his counterpart. In reality, this move loses, and its eventual consequences are quite instructive:

2 ♕b6 (Δ 3 ♖c8)

9-85



B

2...♖a1

2...g4 is very bad in view of 3 ♖c5+ and 4 ♖a5 (a bridge again). The same method decides if 2...♖b4+ 3 ♖a5 ♖b1 4 ♖c4!

After 2...♖h4, White can apply another typical method: **deflection** of the rook, namely 3 ♖c4+ ♖xc4 4 a8♖. However, after 4...♖f4, a theoretically drawn position arises (we will study this sort of ending later in the book). Therefore the interference method should also be applied here: 3 ♖b5! ♖a1 4 ♖c4+ and 5 ♖a4.

3 ♖c8!

3 ♖c5? ♖xa7 is erroneous: the rook is placed badly on the fifth rank, and even more, it stands in the way of the white king.

3...♖xa7

Equivalent is 3...g4 (or 3...♖g4) 4 a8♖

♖xa8 5 ♖xa8.

4 ♖xa7 ♖g4

Or 4...g4 5 ♖b6 g3 6 ♖g8! (6 ♖c5?

♖g4!)=) 6...♖h4 7 ♖c5 ♖h3 8 ♖d4 g2 9 ♖e3 ♖h2 10 ♖f2+-

5 ♖b6 ♖f3 6 ♖f8+!

A familiar method: *zwischenenschach* for gaining a tempo

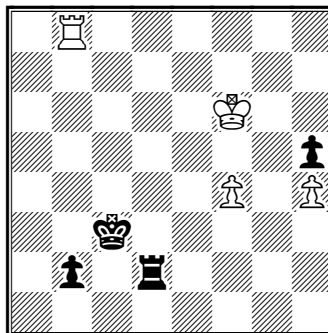
6...♖e3 7 ♖g8! ♖f4 8 ♖c5 g4 9 ♖d4 ♖f3 10 ♖d3 g3 11 ♖f8+ ♖g2 12 ♖e2+-

Tragicomedies

Peters – Browne

USA ch, South Bend 1981

9-86



W?

Keeping the previous example in mind, we can easily find the correct solution; it is based upon driving the king away by vertical checks: 1 ♖c8+! ♖d3 2 ♖b8 (2 ♖d8+) 2...♖c2 3 ♖c8+! ♖d1 4 ♖b8 ♖c1 5 f5 (5 ♖g6) 5...b1♖ 6 ♖xb1+ ♖xb1 7 ♖g6=

1 f5?

White fails to tackle a relatively simple problem. The attempt to set another pawn in motion also loses: 1 ♖g6? ♖d1 2 ♖xb2 ♖xb2 3 ♖xh5 ♖c3 4 ♖g6 ♖d4 5 h5 ♖d5 6 f5 (6 h6 ♖e6) 6...♖d6 7 h6 (7 f6 ♖e6+-) 7...♖e7 8 h7 ♖g1+ 9 ♖h6 ♖f7 10 h8♖+ ♖f6 11 ♖h7 ♖xf5 12 ♖f7 ♖f6+-

1...♖d1 2 ♖xb2 (2 ♖g6 b1♖ 3 ♖xb1 ♖xb1 is the same) **2...♖xb2**

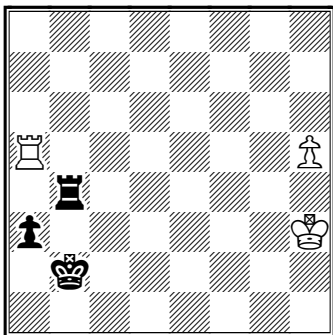
In the 1 ♖c8+! line, the same position occurs, but with the king on b1, one square farther. This tempo turns out to be decisive.

3 ♖g6 ♖c3 4 ♖xh5 ♖d4 5 ♖g6 ♖e5 6 h5 ♖g1+ 7 ♖f7 ♖xf5 8 h6 ♖a1 9 h7 ♖a7+ 10 ♖g8 ♖g6 White resigned.

Tarrasch – Blümich Breslau 1925

9-87

W



Tarrasch resigned! He saw that his king was cut off from his own pawn along the fourth rank, while the attempt to advance the pawn, **1 h6**, would have been met by **1...♖b6 2 ♜h5 a2 3 h7 ♜b8** (and, if **4 ♜a5**, then **4...a1♙ 5 ♜x a1 ♙x a1 6 ♙g4 ♜h8--**).

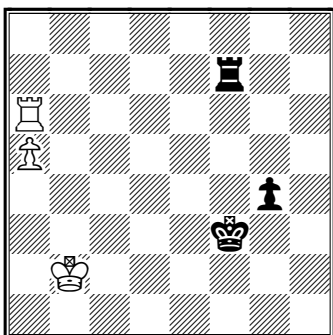
The grandmaster had completely forgotten the possibility of deflecting the black rook from the eighth rank: **4 ♜b5+! ♜x b5 5 h8♙+ =**

Exercises

9-88

9/11

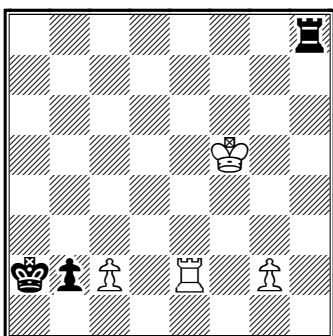
B?



9-89

9/12

W?

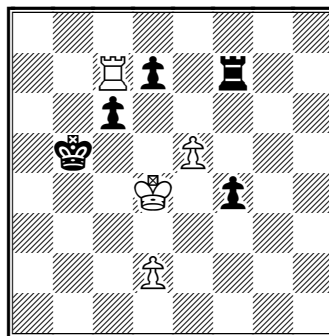


9-90

9/13

W?

Play



Rook and Pawn vs Rook and Pawn

Books on chess endings contain many interesting and instructive rook endings with a single pawn on each side. We have already studied some typical methods that are characteristic of this material in the previous section of the book. Here we will show more examples and also cover some structures we have not yet seen.

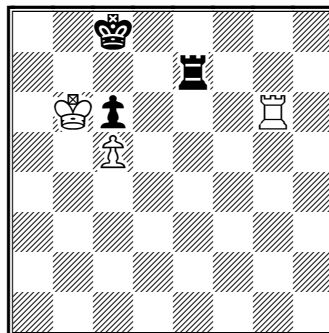
Blocked Pawns

Good knowledge of the rook and pawn vs rook endgame is required here. The role of the kings in the following examples should be studied in detail:

Burn – Spielmann San Sebastian 1911

9-91

W?



The game continued with **1 ♜xc6+?** This capture violates the endgame principle “do not rush.” Black reached the Philidor position: **1...♙b8! (1...♙d8? 2 ♜h6+-) 2 ♜h6 ♜b7+! 3**

♖c6 ♖c7+ 4 ♖d6 ♖b7 5 ♖h8 ♖c6+! 6 ♖d5
♖g6 7 ♖h7+ ♖c8 Draw.

White must first displace the opposing king with **1 ♖g8+! ♖d7 2 ♖b7!** and Black is defenseless.

2...♖h7

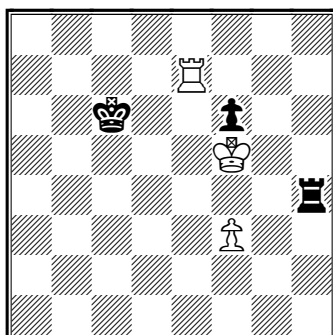
No matter what Black tries, White will win the pawn and the game, as the black king is stuck on the long side of the pawn. For example, 2...♖e1 3 ♖g7+ ♖d8 4 ♖xc6 ♖e6+ 5 ♖b7 ♖e1 6 ♖g8+ ♖d7 7 c6+ +-.

3 ♖c8 ♖h6 4 ♖c7+ ♖d8 5 ♖xc6 ♖h7+ 6 ♖b8 ♖h5 7 ♖c7 ♖h1 8 c6 ♖c1 9 ♖d7+ ♖e8 10 ♖b7+—

The next example is more difficult:

Karjakin – Volokitin Istanbul ol 2012

9-92



1 ♖e4!

Once again, the goal is to keep the black king from stopping the white pawn. White gains a tempo and cuts off the king. Other moves fail:

1 ♖f7? ♖d6 2 ♖xf6 ♖f4+! 3 ♖g6 ♖xf7 4 ♖xf7 ♖e5=;

1 ♖e3? ♖d6 2 ♖xf6 ♖f4+ 3 ♖g5 ♖f8!=

1...♖h8

Black cannot trade rooks because of fe, and other moves also lose:

1...♖h6 2 ♖e6 ♖h8 (2...♖c5 3 f4 ♖g6 4 f5 ♖h6 5 ♖f7+-) 3 ♖c4+ ♖b5 4 ♖c1 ♖e8+ 5 ♖f5 ♖f8 6 f4 ♖b6 7 ♖g6 f5 8 ♖c2 (zugzwang) 8...♖b5 9 ♖c7 ♖b6 10 ♖f7 ♖g8+ 11 ♖xf5 ♖c6 12 ♖e6+-

1...♖h3 2 f4 ♖d5 3 ♖a4 ♖h6 4 ♖a6+-

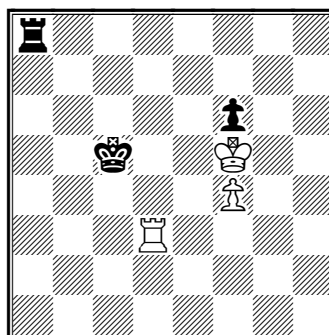
2 ♖d4 ♖c5 3 ♖d3 ♖a8

3...♖h3 does not help: 4 ♖xf6 ♖c4 5 ♖a3 ♖b4 6 ♖e3 ♖c4 7 ♖f5 ♖d4 8 ♖e4+ ♖d5 9 ♖e5+ ♖d6 10 f4 ♖h8 11 ♖g6+-

4 f4

Here it is still too early to take the pawn: 4 ♖xf6? ♖c4 5 ♖e3 ♖f8+ 6 ♖g5 ♖d4

9-93



4...♖a4

The passive 4...♖f8 also loses: 5 ♖e6 f5 6 ♖d5+ ♖c6 7 ♖xf5 ♖e8+ 8 ♖f7 ♖e4 9 ♖f6+ ♖d5 10 ♖g6+-

5 ♖d7 ♖c6 6 ♖f7 ♖d6 7 ♖xf6+ ♖e7 8 ♖g6 ♖a1 9 ♖f7+ ♖e8 10 f5 ♖g1+

10...♖a6+ is met by 11 ♖g7+-, but not 11 f6?? ♖a1 and White's king has no shelter from the checks.

11 ♖f6 ♖f1 12 ♖a7 ♖f2 13 ♖a8+ ♖d7 14 ♖f8!

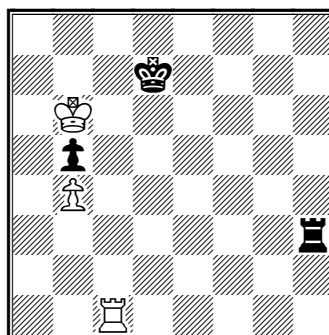
The black king is on the wrong side of the pawn.

14...♖h2 15 ♖g7 ♖g2+ 16 ♖f7 ♖a2 17 f6 ♖a7 18 ♖e8 ♖a6 19 ♖e1 Black resigned.

Tragicomedies

Gligoric – Fischer Belgrade ct 1959

9-94



1...♖h8?

The 15-year-old Bobby Fischer was spending only a few seconds per move, as he later admitted. 1...♖h5 draws easily: 2 ♖c5 ♖xc5 3 ♖xc5 ♖c7=.

2 ♖xb5?

Returning the favor. As we have seen, the pawn should be taken carefully in such situations. White wins with 2 ♖c7+! ♖d6 3 ♖c6+ ♖d7 4 ♖xb5 ♖b8+ 5 ♖b6 ♖h8 6 ♖b7+ ♖c8 7 ♖a6 ♖h6+ 8 ♖a7, as Fischer pointed out in *My Sixty Memorable Games*.

2...♖b8+! (the frontal defense saves Black) 3 ♖a4 ♖a8+! 4 ♖b3 ♖c8 5 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 6 ♖c4 ♖b8! Draw.

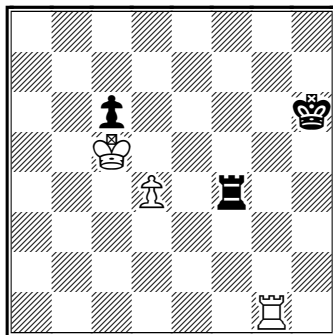
Pawns on Adjacent Files

These endings display a drawing tendency, but with the king far away, the defending side has to be careful. It becomes a question of whether the defending king can approach quickly enough.

Graf – Kovacevic,B

Warsaw 2005

9-95



B?

1...♖e4?

Allowing White to win a crucial tempo by invading with his rook. He needed to restrict the white rook to a more passive position with 1...♖h7! 2 ♖d1 (2 ♖e1 ♖g7 3 ♖e6 ♖f7 4 ♖xc6 ♖e7=) 2...♖f6!=

2 ♖g8! ♖h7

The attempt to transfer the rook back with 2...♖f4!? also does not save Black: 3 ♖d8! ♖g7 4 ♖xc6 ♖f7 5 ♖c7! ♖e7 6 ♖d6 ♖f8 7

♖d7+ ♖f6 8 ♖c6! ♖c8+ 9 ♖c7 ♖a8 10 d5 ♖a6+ 11 ♖c5 ♖a5+ 12 ♖d6 ♖a6+ 13 ♖c6 ♖a7 14 ♖c5 ♖f5 15 ♖c1 ♖a6+ 16 ♖c7 ♖e5 17 d6 ♖a7+ 18 ♖b6 ♖d7 19 ♖c5 ♖d8 20 ♖e1+ +-

3 ♖d8! ♖g7

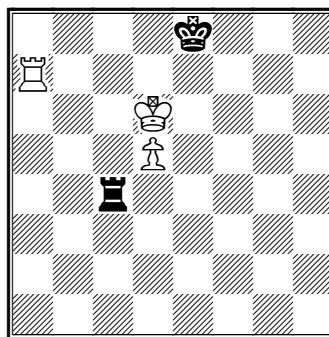
The white rook now not only defends the d4-pawn but also creates threats: if 3...♖e6 4 ♖d6+-.

4 ♖xc6 ♖f7

Now White must play 5 ♖c7! ♖e7 6 ♖d6, which wins: 6...♖h4 7 d5 ♖d4 8 ♖e6+ ♖f7 9 ♖d6 ♖a4 10 ♖e1+-

In the game, he rushed with 5 d5? ♖e7 6 ♖d7+ ♖e8 7 ♖a7 ♖c4+ 8 ♖d6

9-96



B?

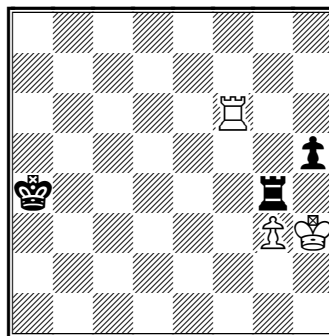
and here Black must use the Karstedt method we have seen before: 8...♖d4! 9 ♖a8+ ♖f7 10 ♖d8 ♖a4! 11 ♖c8 (11 ♖c7 ♖a7+ 12 ♖b6 ♖e7=) 11...♖d4! 12 ♖c6 ♖e7!=

Instead, he missed his chance and lost after 8...♖b4? 9 ♖a8+ ♖f7 10 ♖c7 ♖c4+ 11 ♖d7 ♖d4 12 d6 ♖d1 13 ♖a2 ♖f1 14 ♖d8 ♖e1 15 d7 ♖f1 16 ♖c2 ♖a1 17 ♖c7 ♖a7+ 18 ♖d6 ♖a6+ 19 ♖c6 Black resigned.

Exercises

9-97

9/14



B?