

**Two Bishops Save the Day:
A World Champion's Favorite Studies**

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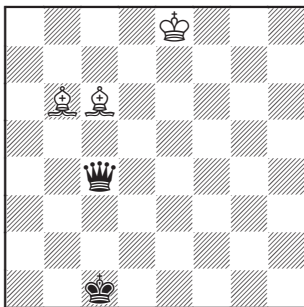
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A Pair of Long-Range Snipers

It's no secret that two bishops possess tremendous power, since they're able to control a lot of squares at once. Chess glossaries even have an entry on the "bishop pair advantage". A chess player who has this advantage usually attempts to open diagonals and break down the opposing king's position.

However, the bishop pair becomes especially strong in the endgame, when there are few pieces on the board. There are cases when even the formidable queen cannot break through the defenses of a bishop pair. Diagram I shows one of them.

No. I Training example

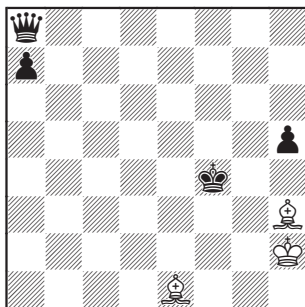


White to play and draw

After 1.♔d7! ♚a6 2.♔c7 ♚c2 3.♙c5 ♚c3
 4.♙b6 ♚c4 5.♙f2 ♚a5+ 6.♙b6, black cannot
 break through white's defenses. For instance: 6...
 ♚e5+ 7.♔b7 ♚e7+ 8.♔c8 ♚d6 9.♔b7 ♚b4
 10.♙c7 ♚e7 11.♔b6, draw.

But fortresses are not the only aspect in which
 bishops excel! The bishop pair often prevents
 the opponent from converting an overwhelming
 material advantage. Position II, taken from a
 Platov brothers' endgame study, serves as proof.

No. II
V. and M. Platov, 1905
 (position after black's 3rd move)



White to play and draw

1. ♖d2+! ♔e5. The king cannot move to the long light-squared diagonal because of the killing blow ♗g2+.

2. ♗c3+ ♔d6 3. ♗b4+ ♔c7 4. ♗a5+ ♔d6. After 4... ♖b8, the quiet 5. ♗g2! wins the queen.

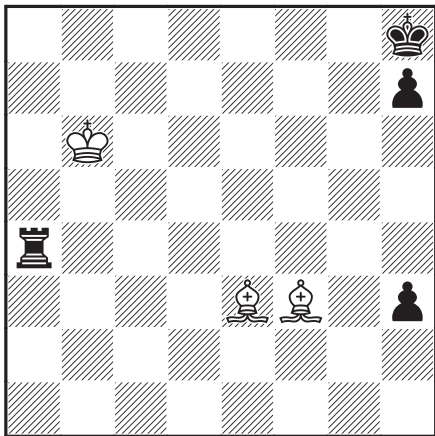
5. ♗b4+ ♔e5 6. ♗c3+. A positional draw.

This book features 100 instructive endgame studies where two white bishops successfully oppose various combinations of black pieces. As per tradition, the number of moves in the solutions is mostly not greater than six (seven in some rare cases). This allows experienced players to test their tactical prowess and calculation technique without a board.

Analyzing these diagrams will be beneficial for novices. The diversity of tactical ideas where two bishops show wonderful coordination and composure will surely help them in their chess growth.

Good luck in your hunt for the secrets of chess!

No. 4



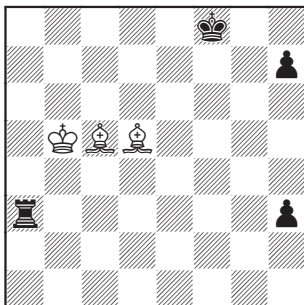
White to play and win

Black has no material problems, but his position is flawed...

1. ♔b5! Domination!

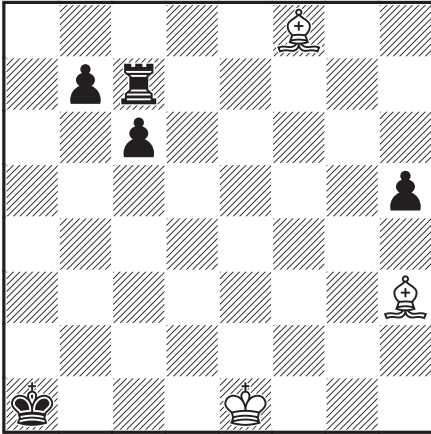
1... ♖a3. Other squares are also unsafe: 1... ♖h4 2. ♙g5! ♖d4 3. ♙f6+ ♔g8 4. ♙xd4; 1... ♖a2 2. ♙d4+ ♔g8 3. ♙d5+ or 1... ♖a1 2. ♙d4+ etc.

2. ♙d4+ ♔g8 3. ♙d5+ ♔f8 4. ♙c5+, and white wins the rook and the game.



Author L. Kubbel, 1911 (position after black's 3rd move)

No. 5



White to play and win