

Part Four

Endgames for Class “C” (1400–1599)

Contents

King and Pawn Endgames

King and Pawn vs. Lone King (A Quick Tussle for Opposition)

Sneaking into a Winning King and Pawn vs. King Position

King and Two Doubled Pawns vs. Lone King

Rook-Pawn (Stalemating the Stronger Side)

Entering the Square of the Pawn

Outside Passed Pawns

Minor Piece Endgames

Bishop and Wrong Colored Rook-Pawn vs. Lone King

Lone King vs. Knight and Rook-Pawn on the 6th or 7th

Bishops of Opposite Colors

Rook Endgames

The Lucena Position (The Sacred Key To All Rook Endings)

The Philidor Position (A Critical Defensive Stand!)

Passive Rook

Pure Philidor

Trap the Enemy King Away From the Action

Queen vs. King and Pawn

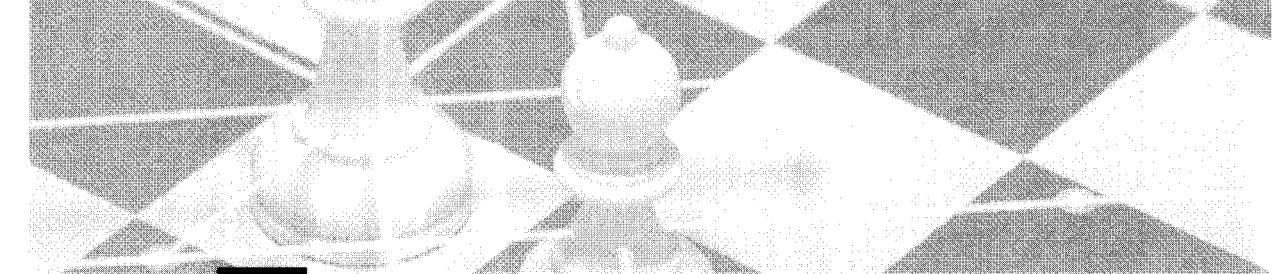
Queen vs. Pawn on 6th Rank

Queen vs. Pawn on 7th Rank

Summing Up

Tests and Solutions

Final Thoughts



The need to know endgames becomes a much higher priority once you reach the 1400-1599 range. In the United States, this rating group represents the average tournament player, and this means that you've probably become serious about moving up the ranks. To successfully do that, you'll need to expand your endgame arsenal and master a series of easy to learn but critically important positions and concepts. Now it's time to take it to another level, to digest ideas that might appear difficult and even profound, but will turn out to be easy to grasp and remember—once you put a little effort into it, of course!

This chapter is far larger than any other chapter in this book. Why? Because a quantum leap in endgame understanding is necessary if one wishes to be a solid class "C" player who has aspirations for advancement. Thus, here you'll hone the skills already acquired in this book, and come face to face for the first time with many of the most important "must know" positions and concepts in chess.

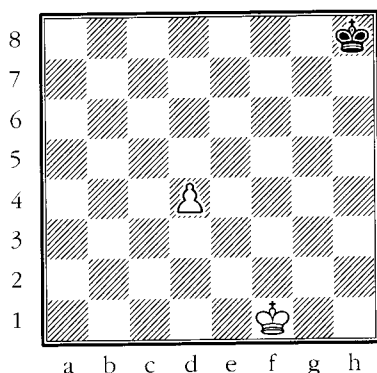
King and Pawn Endgames

Thus far we've mastered the Opposition and basic King and pawn vs. lone King theory—If you haven't mastered this material, stop (or this book will self-destruct!), go back to Part Three, and catch up! Now we'll hone the King and pawn skills you already possess, and give you some new, extremely useful, tools.

King and Pawn vs. Lone King (A Quick Tussle for Opposition)

King and pawn vs. lone King endgames are, for the most part, pretty simple affairs. In fact, a glance is usually enough to let you know who will own the Opposition and whether or not the defending side will be able to set up the basic drawing position. However, there are a few cases where some subtlety is demanded from one or both players.

Diagram 88



White to move

This position is actually quite confusing. If one follows our rules of Opposition with 1.Kf2—creating a rectangle whose connection points are on f2, f8, h8, and h2 and taking the Opposition—then the game will be drawn after 1...Kg7 2.Ke3 Kf6 when both 3.Kf4 and 3.Ke4 are met by 3...Ke6 with a basic draw. If

this doesn't make any sense, run, don't walk, to Part Three and read the section on Indirect Opposition again.

White failed to win this position because he wasn't able to get his King in front of his pawn.

So, tossing immediate thoughts of Opposition out the window, the only way to get white's King in front of its pawn is:

USEFUL ADVICE

If taking the Opposition fails to accomplish the goal of getting the King in front of its pawn, then it's useless to take the Opposition in the first place.

1.Ke2!

This advances the King *and* moves it away from the enemy monarch

1...Kg7

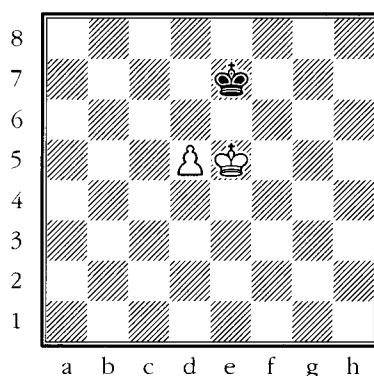
Black can take Indirect Opposition by 1...Kg8 but this leads to the exact same position as our main line after 2.Kd3Kf7 3.Kc4 Ke6 4.Kc5.

2.Kd3

Since black's King is on the kingside, White heads for the queenside so it can avoid a direct confrontation. As seen earlier, 2.Ke3?? Kf6 3.Ke4 Ke6 is an easy draw.

2...Kf6 3.Kc4 Ke6 4.Kc5 Kd7 5.Kd5 with a basic win for White, as seen in Part Three.

Diagram 89

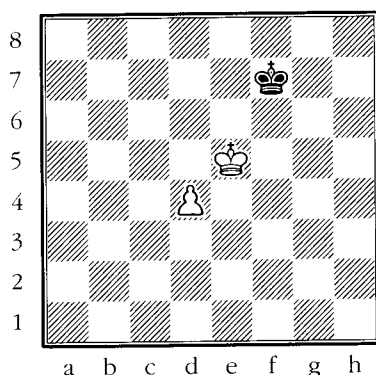


Black to move, draw

In Part Two we saw that, even though White has the Opposition, this position is dead drawn: 1...Kd7 2.d6 Kd8 (the ability to move straight back when the pawn hits the 6th rank is a critical one, as we'll see in diagram 90) 3.Ke6 Ke8 4.d7+ Kd8 5.Kd6 stalemate.

We’ve also learned that, when the stronger side’s King gets one square in front of its pawn (we’re taking it for granted that it’s a non rook-pawn), the result of the game depends on who has the Opposition.

Diagram 90

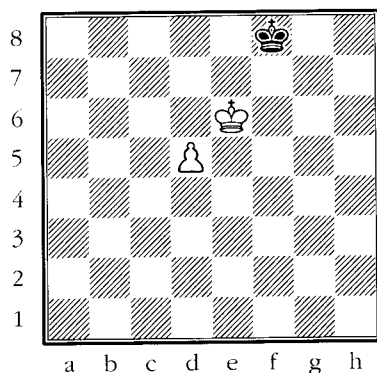


Black to move, draw

White to move wins easily by **Kd6**, but Black to move draws by taking the Opposition: **1...Ke7 2.d5 Kd7 3.d6 Kd8 4.Ke6 Ke8**, $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$.

This rule—if the stronger side’s King gets one square in front of its pawn the result of the game depends on who has the Opposition, illustrated in Part Three, Diagram 62—only flounders if the pawn is a rook-pawn, or if the pawn is on the 5th rank and its King is on the 6th.

Diagram 91



Black to move, White wins

Black to move seems to be okay since he can take the Opposition by **1...Ke8**. However, he’s actually dead lost since **2.d6 Kd8 3.d7** highlights the fact that he can’t move straight back (as in diagram 89). This means that Black should resign after **3...Kc7 4.Ke7**.

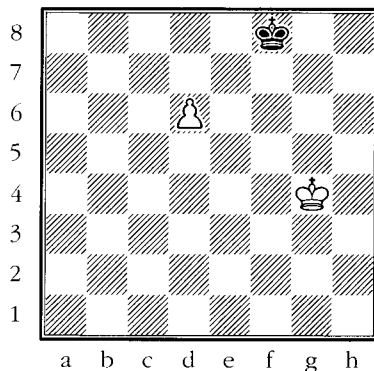
Our oft-repeated rule (i.e., if the stronger side's King gets one square in front of its pawn the result of the game depends on who has the Opposition), shockingly, turns out to have two exceptions! This can prove confusing to many players, so look at the differences between the last three examples (Again and again, if need be!) until you fully understand what has occurred. Once you've done this, we're ready for our next position.

RULE

If the stronger side's King gets one square in front of its pawn, the result of the game depends on who has the Opposition *unless* one of two exceptions are present:

- The game is drawn if the pawn is a rook-pawn;
- If a non rook-pawn is on the 5th rank and its King is on the 6th, taking the Opposition won't save the defender.

Diagram 92



White to move, wins

A quick look might make us believe that the position is drawn since Black will get the Opposition, but a closer examination proves that Black won't survive:

1.Kf5

White can't allow ...Ke8-d7 with a draw.

1...Kf7

Taking the Opposition and stopping white's King from advancing. So far, so good. But white's next move would quickly bring Black back to reality.

Of course, 1...Ke8 2.Ke6 Kd8 3.d7 is completely hopeless.

2.Ke5

And suddenly White pries the Opposition away from Black since 2...Kg7 (taking Diagonal Opposition) 3.Ke6 is game over.

2...Kf8

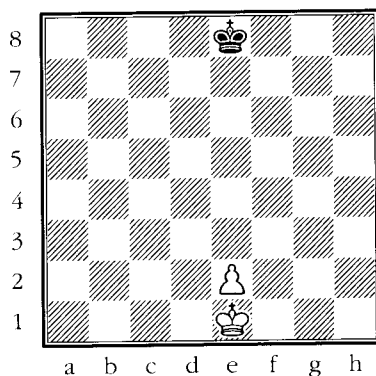
A good try that allows Black to hold his breath and pray for a miracle. 2...Ke8 3.Ke6 leads to our main line.

3.Kf6!

No miracles today! Of course, 3.Ke6?? lets Black take the Opposition back with 3...Ke8.

3...Ke8 4.Ke6 Kd8 5.d7 Kc7 6.Ke7, 1-0.

Diagram 93



White to move, wins

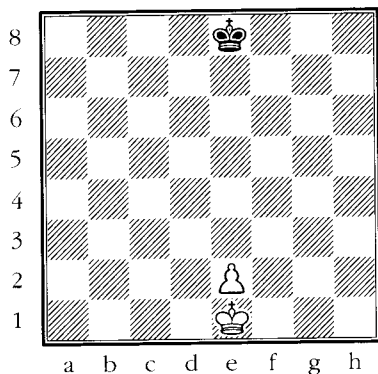
This position is easy since White to move wins by simply marching his King in front of his pawn:

1.Kd2 Kd8

1...Ke7 2.Ke3 Ke6 3.Ke4 leads to a basic win, as seen in Part Three (i.e., the stronger side always wins if his King gets two squares in front of his pawn, unless it's a rook-pawn).

2.Kd3 Kd7 3.Ke4 Ke6 4.e3! and White, with his King in front of his pawn *and* with the Opposition, will have no problem scoring the full point (if there *is* a problem, go back to Part Three and reread the material).

Diagram 94



Black to move, draw

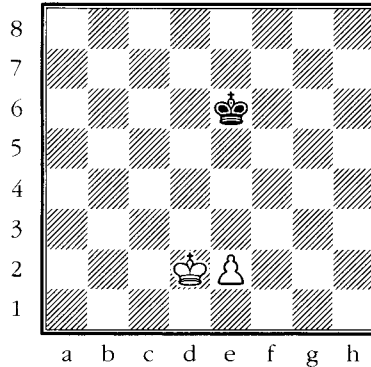
Black to move is quite another matter, and after some mutual finesses the game turns out to be drawn:

1...Ke7 2.Kd1!

What's this? Has White gone mad? Actually, White is setting a nice trap since he sees that the direct 2.Kd2 Ke6 3.Kd3 Kd5 4.Ke3 Ke5 is an easy draw.

2...Ke6 3.Kd2

Diagram 95



Black only has one saving move

Believe it or not, Black only has one way to draw!

3...Kd6!

Taking the Distant Opposition. Losing alternatives are:

➤ 3...Kf6?? (taking the Indirect Opposition) 4.Kd3 (and not 4.Ke3?? Ke5 with a draw) 4...Ke5 5.Ke3 and White wins (Banish yourself to Part Three if white's win isn't obvious to you after 5.Ke3.).

➤ 3...Ke5?? 4.Ke3, 1-0.

➤ 3...Kd5?? 4.Kd3 Ke5 5.Ke3, 1-0.

➤ 3...Kf5?? 4.Kd3 Ke5 5.Ke3, 1-0.

4.Kd3

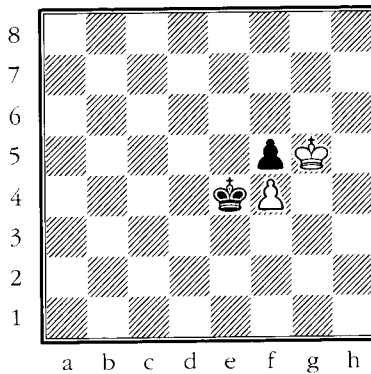
4.Ke3 Ke5 amounts to the same thing.

4...Kd5, $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$.

Sneaking into a Winning King and Pawn vs. King Position

By now you should know when a basic King and pawn vs. lone King position is lost or drawn. This knowledge allows you to correctly gauge more complex situations where the prospect of pawn exchanges forces you to decide whether the resulting position is favorable to your cause.

Diagram 96



Trébuchet: Whoever moves loses

This kind of position, which can occur with any set of pawns other than rook-pawns (with both Kings in front of their respective pawns), is known as a *Trébuchet*. There is not much to learn, since a glance will make things pretty clear: whoever moves is in zugzwang—he is forced to move away from the defense of his pawn, which will result in an obviously lost King and pawn vs. lone King situation. Thus, if White has the move:

1.Kh4 Kxf4

With black's King in front of his pawn, the win is easy.

2.Kh3 Kf3

Making sure that his King will have full control over the queening square on f1.

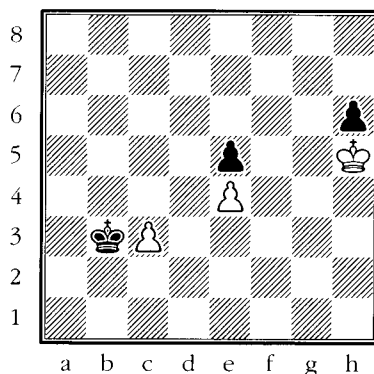
3.Kh2 f4 4.Kg1 Ke2 followed by ...f4-f3-f2-f1=Q.

Though this “base” position is easy to grasp, being conversant with it allows you an easy plan when faced with what seems to be a tough battle.

RULE

A Trébuchet situation is a dead loss to the player with the move.

Diagram 97



White to move, what's going on?

This is the kind of position that sends many players into a panic. Who is better? What in the world is going on? Is there anything to gasp onto that will enable us to make a quick and easy assessment? The idea of something definable which can help us understand the right path in seemingly tough positions is an important one, and we'll be searching for such "crutches" all through this book. In the present case, that crutch is our basic Trébuchet—after the c-pawn and h-pawn are taken, the result will depend on who can force the other into zugzwang via Trébuchet. Since black's King will be closer to the two center pawns (meaning that he can make first contact), White will end up a loser in the coming battle.

1.Kxh6 Kxc3 2.Kg5 Kd3!

The key move! The obvious 2...Kd4?? would be a game losing blunder since after 3.Kf5 Black would be on the sour side of the Trébuchet.

3.Kf5

Forced.

3...Kd4! and White must part with his pawn. He could resign here, but we'll continue: **4.Kg4 Kxe4 5.Kg3 Ke3** (Not letting white's King get in front of the pawn.) **6.Kg4 e4** (Avoiding the embarrassing 6...Kd2?? 7.Kf5, =) **7.Kg3 Kd2** followed by ...e4-e3-e2-e1=Q.

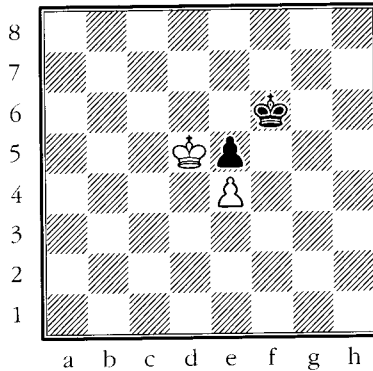
This example shows us that a firm grasp of the following rule can prove very useful indeed.

RULE

In a near (upcoming) Trébuchet position, the side whose King can make first contact with the enemy pawn can force a winning Trébuchet.

Though Trébuchets happen fairly often, far more common is the following type of situation:

Diagram 98



Can White win?

It doesn't matter who has the move since the e5-pawn falls in any case (White to move would play 1.Kd6). The real question is, can White win after he captures black's final pawn? Using your understanding of King and pawn vs. lone King, you should be able to ascertain that the game is drawn since Black can get a position where white's King is in front of his pawn (which is good for White), but Black can gain the Opposition (which is good for Black) and hold the game.

Let's give Black the first move:

1...Kf7!

The only way to draw! 1...Ke7?? loses to 2.Kxe5 (taking the Opposition!) 2...Kf7 (or 2...Kd7 3.Kf6) 3.Kd6 Ke8 (3...Kf6 4.e5+ Kf7 5.Kd7) 4.Ke6 (Continuing to use the Opposition to push black's King away from the queening square. White can also win by 4.e5 Kd8 5.e6 Ke8 6.e7 Kf7 7.Kd7, etc.) 4...Kd8 5.Kf7 Kd7 6.e5 and the pawn promotes.

2.Kxe5 Ke7!

Taking the Opposition and, as seen in Part Three, drawing easily.

3.Kd5 Kd7 4.e5 Ke7 5.e6 Ke8!

Black could still lose by 5...Kd8?? 6.Kd6 (Opposition) 6...Ke8 7.e7 Kf7 8.Kd7, etc.

6.Kd6 Kd8 7.e7+ Ke8 8.Ke6, $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$.

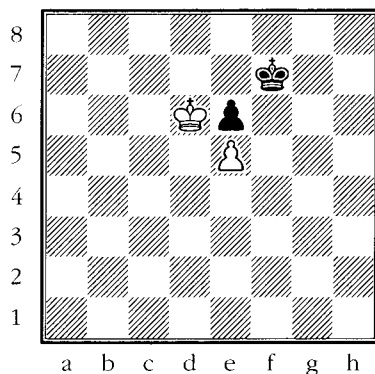
USEFUL ADVICE

You can often solve seemingly difficult situations by steering the game towards the many basic situations you have mastered.

REMEMBER

The ability to see whether or not you or your opponent can gain the Opposition in key moments is extremely important. Successful endgame play is impossible without this skill.

Diagram 99



Black to move

As in the previous position, White to move would still pick up the pawn by 1.Kd7, but we'll give Black the move here simply because it's more instructive to do so. Unfortunately for the second player, Black now loses, even though it appears he can get the Opposition.

1...Kf8

The best try, since it allows Black to take the Opposition after White devours the e6-pawn. There's no hope at all after 1...Ke8 2.Kxe6 Kf8 3.Kd7 when the pawn quickly turns into a Queen.

2.Kxe6 Ke8 3.Kd6 Kd8

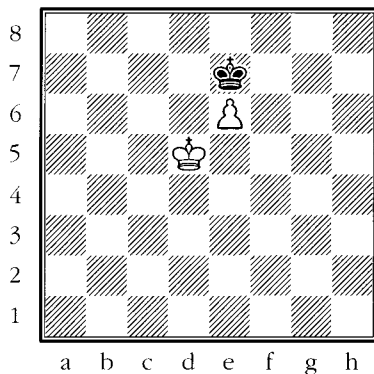
Doesn't Black have the Opposition?

4.e6

No, he doesn't! Suddenly Black is the one who must move.

4...Ke8 5.e7 and he's not able to use the "move the King straight back" rule since he's run out of board! After **5...Kf7 6.Kd7** the game would end quickly. What happened? It looked like Black should have drawn, but somehow he failed to do so!

Diagram 100



Black to move

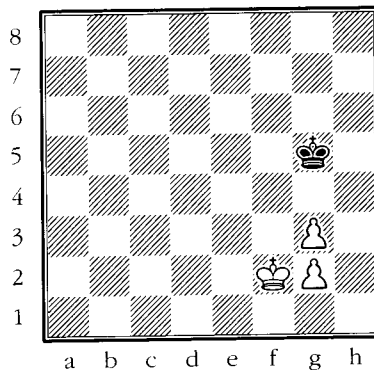
Diagram 100 should help to clarify black’s previous failure. In diagram 99, Black’s King was not able to step backwards after the pawn reached e6 and, as a result, he lost. Here though, Black draws easily since he *can* step backwards and take the Opposition at will: **1...Ke8 2.Kd6 Kd8 3.Kd5 Ke7 4.Ke5 Ke8 5.Kf6 Kf8 6.e7+ Ke8 7.Ke6** stalemate.

There is a bit of an optical illusion in diagram 99, so carefully compare the last two positions until the “why” and “how” becomes clear.

King and Two Doubled Pawns vs. Lone King

King and two (doubled) pawns vs. lone King always win unless the pawns can’t be properly defended, or unless they are rook-pawns. The defender’s only hope lies in winning one of the two pawns, or in tricking the opponent into some lucky stalemate. Thus, when you have this two-pawn advantage, be very careful to avoid stalemate by making sure the enemy King always has a legal move.

Diagram 101



RULE

If the pawns are healthy and not rook-pawns, King and two pawns vs. a lone King always wins.

White moves and wins, Black moves and draws

Black to move draws immediately by **1...Kg4** when the g3-pawn is lost. The resulting King and pawn vs. lone King position is hopelessly drawn (which, if you’re reading this section, you should be well aware of). White to move is a different story.

1.Kf3 Kf5 2.g4+ Kg5 3.Kg3

White does best to play this endgame as if it were a King and pawn vs. lone King situation. His extra pawn will come into effect later when a key tempo move is needed.

3...Kg6 4.Kf4 Kf6 5.g5+ Kg6 6.Kg4 Kg7 7.Kf5 Kf7 8.g6+ Kg7 9.Kg5 Kg8 10.Kf6 Kf8

Black, by following the drawing formula for a King and pawn vs. lone King position, has done the best he could. If White didn't have that extra g-pawn, then the game would now be drawn after 11.g7+ Kg8 12.Kg6. However, White *does* have that extra pawn, and this makes all the difference.

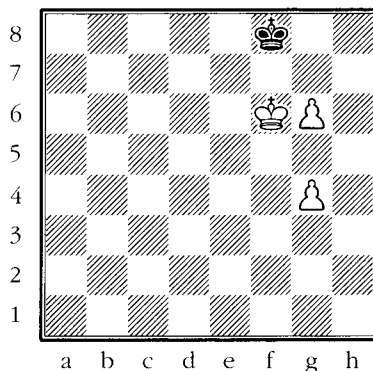
11.g7+ Kg8 12.g3

This move, in effect, says, "Excuse me, but could you kindly move your King away from the front of my pawn?"

12...Kh7 13.Kf7 and wins.

Okay, that seemed simple enough, but why didn't White push both his g-pawns down the board at the same time? The answer is that doing so would increase black's chances for a stalemate (as illustrated in the next example).

Diagram 102



White to move

In our previous example, White only touched his extra g-pawn at the end. However, he could have pushed both, which might have led to this position. White still wins, but he has to be careful!

1.g7+ Kg8 2.g5 Kh7 3.g8+!

Forced but adequate. Instead, 3.Kf7?? draws by immediate stalemate! Note how the advanced g5-pawn restricts the movement of the enemy King and thus turns into a traitor.

After 3.g8+, White forces a winning King and pawn vs. lone King position.

3...Kxg8 4.Kg6 Kh8 5.Kf7 Kh7 6.g6+ and wins.

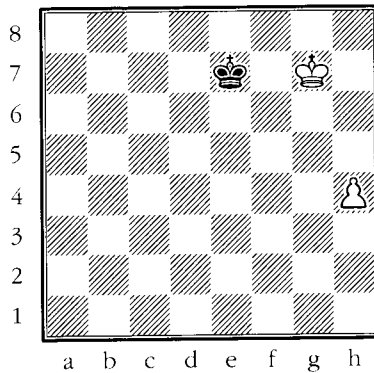
USEFUL ADVICE

When you possess King and two doubled pawns vs. lone King, don't push both pawns up the board together since that increases the weaker side's chances for a lucky stalemate.

Rook-Pawn (Stalemating the Stronger Side)

In general, in a King and pawn vs. lone King position, the weaker side loses if he can't get his King in front of the enemy pawn—if you can't block and stop the pawn from queening, then you're a goner! However, rook-pawns often allow all sorts of exceptions due to the fact that there isn't a file to the side of the pawn (which creates many odd stalemate possibilities).

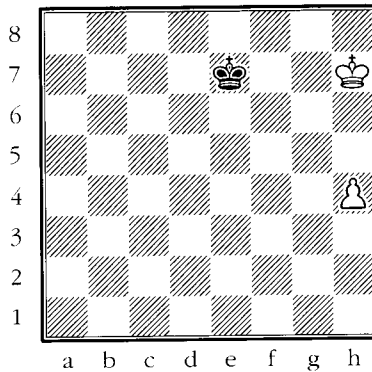
Diagram 103



White wins

If black's King stood on h8 and white's on h6, then the game would be an easy draw since the pawn won't ever be able to get past the blocking defensive King without giving stalemate. In the diagrammed position, though, the black King isn't blocking anything (in fact, white's King has a firm grasp on the critical h8-queening square) and has no way of stopping h4-h5-h6-h7-h8=Q. Thus, he might as well resign.

Diagram 104



Black to move, draw

If White had the move, he would simply play 1.Kg7 and force resignation. However, Black to move draws with either 1...Kf8 or 1...Kf7. Let's take a look:

1...Kf7

Keeping white's King cornered and thus forcing it to block its own pawn!

2.h5

Of course, 2.Kh8 Kg6 followed by ...Kh5 and ...Kxh4 ends things immediately.

2...Kf8

Actually, 2...Kf6 would also draw since 3.Kg8 Kg5 picks up the pawn, while 3.h6 Kf7 takes us back into safe territory. Careful though! In general the defender wants to keep his King on f8 and f7, which allows him to leap to g8 if allowed.

3.Kh8

By now you should know that the position after 3.Kg6 Kg8 is hopelessly drawn.

3...Kf7 4.h6 Kf8

Even faster is 4...Kg6 5.h7 Kf7 stalemate!

5.Kh7

White's King is caught in a net and can't clear a path for his pawn! You might have noticed that 5.h7 Kf7 led to immediate stalemate and a draw.

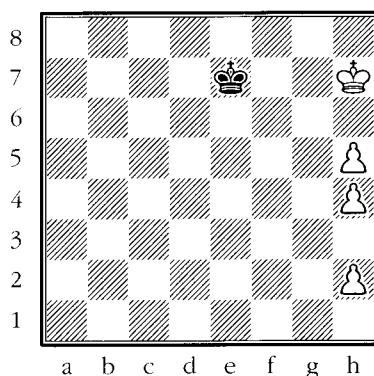
5...Kf7

Not letting the snared white King out of its cage!

6.Kh8 Kf8 7.h7 Kf7 stalemate. This is a rare example of the side with no pieces left stalemating the stronger side's King.

Taking the position in diagram 104 and adding a second or even third h-pawn has absolutely no effect on the result:

Diagram 105



Black to move, still a draw

This strange position is a dead draw, despite the fact that White is no less than three pawns ahead!

1...Kf7 2.h6 Kf8 3.Kh8

Just as useless is 3.Kg6 Kg8 when Black just moves his King back and forth between h8 and g8 until White finally stalemates him.

3...Kf7 4.h5 Kf8 5.h4 Kf7

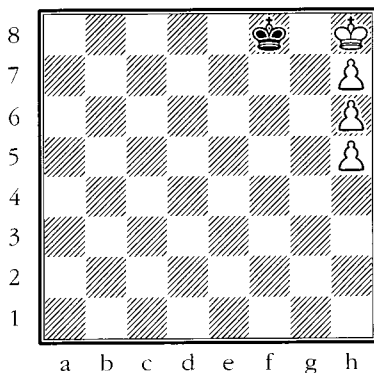
Notice black’s subtle defensive maneuvers.

6.Kh7 Kf8 7.Kh8

Again, 7.Kg6 Kg8 is nothing for White.

7...Kf7 8.h7 Kf8 9.h6 Kf7 10.h5 Kf8, stalemate! The final position deserves a diagram:

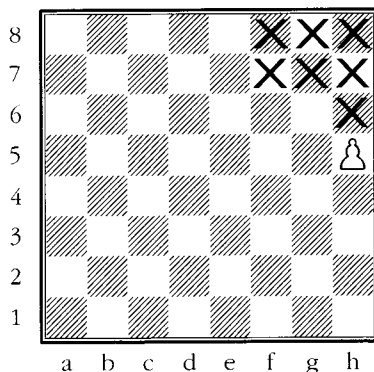
Diagram 106



White to move, stalemate

The position in diagram 106 should, once and for all, burn the lessons we’ve explored concerning rook-pawns deeply into your brain.

Diagram 107



“X” marks the spot!

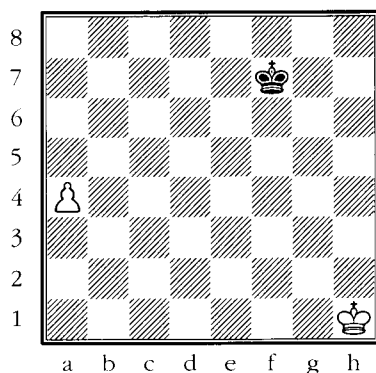
This diagram should make it easy to know whether or not a King and rook-pawn vs. lone King position is drawn. If the defender’s King stands on any of

the “X” squares the game will be a draw (the position of white’s King won’t change the result).

Entering the Square of the Pawn

When an enemy pawn is trying to outrace your King down the board, it’s always nice to be able to see with a glance if you (or your opponent) can draw. Sadly, most players feel that they must do the old “he goes there and I go there” routine for an endless series of moves to see if their King can make it back in time to stop an unescorted enemy pawn. Fortunately, there *is* an easier way!

Diagram 108



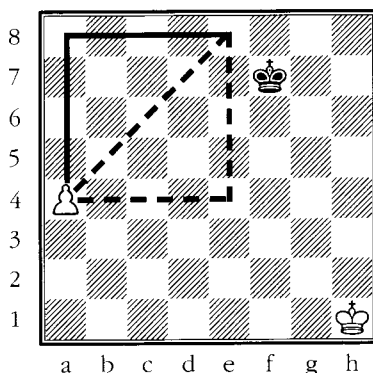
Black to move

This position (diagram 108), in which white’s King is far from the action, poses a simple question: Can black’s King stop (or even win) the enemy pawn? The game hangs in the balance—if the black King can stop the pawn, then the game is drawn, while the game is lost if the King can’t. The answer lies in a technique called the *Square of the Pawn*.

Diagram 109 shows the same position as the previous one, but now the normally invisible Square of the Pawn is drawn and clear for all to see. How does one create such a square? Here’s the trick (in the direction of the stalking King):

- Draw a diagonal extension from the pawn to the end of the board.
- Draw a rank extension from the side of the pawn to the file where the diagonal extension ended. In this case that would be the e-file since the diagonal extension ended at e8.
- Connect all the lines and you’ll get the square in the diagram.

Diagram 109

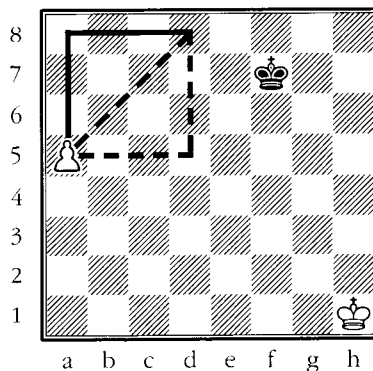
**RULE**

If black's King can step into this square, it will stop the pawn. If it can't, the pawn will run for a touchdown.

Black to move steps into the Square

Now we can see at a glance that black's King can indeed step into this square and thus stop the pawn. However, if it was White to move, 1.a5 is a winner because a new square would be created.

Diagram 110

**Black can't step into the Square**

Even if it's his move, Black can't step into this new square and thus can't stop the pawn.

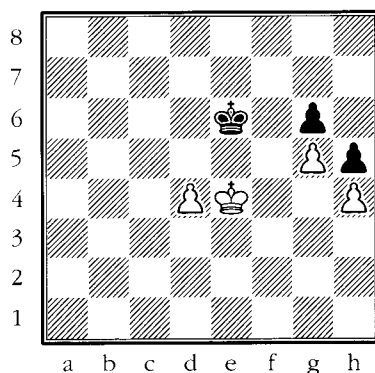
If all this seems confusing, think about it, try to move the King towards the pawn on your own board, and imagine the square shrinking each time the pawn moves. After a bit of time the whole Square of the Pawn idea will be an easy and natural part of your chess arsenal.

Outside Passed Pawns

In Part Three, we learned that many pawn endgames could be won by the Fox in the Chicken Coup technique. I didn't mention it then, but this is really just one example of the usefulness of an *Outside Passed Pawn*.

What is an Outside Passed Pawn? It's a passed pawn that stands to the side of the main sphere of battle. Such a pawn is usually a very valuable commodity since it can be far from the enemy King and thus pose a serious promotion threat, and/or it can force the defending King over to deal with it, leaving the embattled area (where most of the pawns reside) bereft of a defender.

Diagram 111



White wins

White easily wins this position (it doesn't matter who has the move) thanks to his outside passed d-pawn, which allows him to make use of the Chicken Coup idea.

1.d5+ Kd6 2.Kd4

Black's King is now forced to relinquish control over the key e5-square. Why is e5 so important? Because this is a steppingstone square that takes White closer to the tasty morsels on g6 and h5.

2...Kd7 3.Ke5 Ke7 4.d6+ Kf7

Black's last stand. He didn't fancy 4...Kd7 5.Kf6! (The key idea: White gives up his pawn—which was used as a diversion—so he can feast on the unprotected black army.) 5...Kxd6 6.Kxg6 followed by 7.Kxh5.

5.Kd5

Also good enough is 5.d7 Ke7 6.d8=Q+ Kxd8 7.Kf6 and all of black's pawns fall.

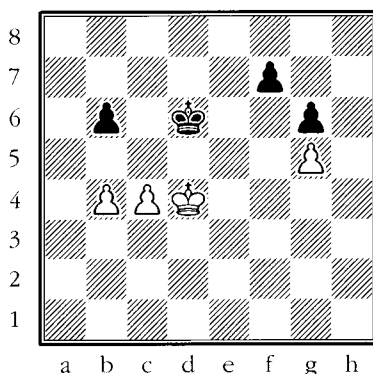
5...Kf8

On 5...Ke8 White would turn his d-pawn into a Queen by 6.Ke6 (taking the Opposition) 6...Kd8 7.d7 Kc7 8.Ke7.

6.Ke6 Ke8 7.Kf6, 1-0.

That was easy! But White started out with an extra pawn, so the result is hardly surprising. Can White use the Outside Passed Pawn in the same manner if material is even? Yes, he often can!

Diagram 112



White to move

This is a win for White for two reasons:

- He has the Outside Passed Pawn.
- Black's kingside majority is devalued since white's one kingside pawn freezes both black units.

1.c5+ bxc5 2.bxc5+ Ke6

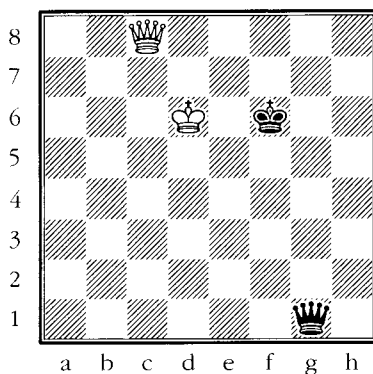
Trying desperately to turn his own majority into a passed pawn. The routine 2...Kc6 is offers no hope at all: 3.Ke5 (of course, 3.Kc4 Kc7 4.Kd5 with Ke5 and Kf6 to follow is also game over) 3...Kxc5 4.Kf6 Kd6 5.Kxf7, 1-0.

3.Kc4!

Clearly bad is 3.c6?? Kd6 4.c7 Kxc7 5.Ke5 Kd7 6.Kf6 Ke8.

However, isn't 3.Ke4 just as good? The answer is no, since Black could then create a passed pawn: 3...f5+ 4.gxf6 Kxf6 (and not 4...g5?? 5.c6 and one of white's pawns will soon turn into a Queen). After 4...Kxf6, black's King can step into the Square of white's c-pawn after 5.c6 Ke6. So, White should try: 5.Kd5 Ke7! (not falling for 5...g5?? 6.Kd6! when black's King can't approach the white pawn. This Opposition also has another, very evil, point: 6...g4 7.c6 g3 8.c7 g2 9.c8=Q g1=Q

Diagram 113

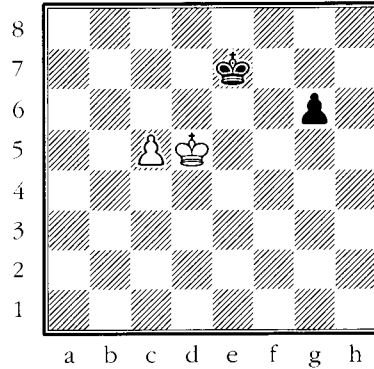


An Important Trick

This position illustrates an important trick: 10.Qf8+ when black's King is forced to step onto the fatal g-file. After 10...Kg5 11.Qg8+ the black Queen falls and with it the game.)

Let's go back to the position after 5...Ke7!

Diagram 114

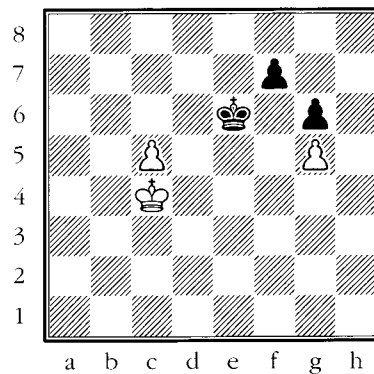


Black draws

6.Kc6 (This allows White to wrest control over the queening square on c8. Completely ineffective is 6.c6 when both 6...g5 or 6...Kd8 force a draw) 6...g5 (black's King can't help anymore, as shown by 6...Kd8?? 7.Kb7 g5 8.c6 g4 9.c7+, 1-0. Fortunately, black's own passed pawn manages to save the day.) 7.Kb7 g4 8.c6 g3 9.c7 g2 10.c8=Q g1=Q, 1/2-1/2.

It's clear that 3.Ke4 failed to get the job done and that white's King needs to be on the queenside where it can help its pawn rush for a touchdown. Hence the strength of 3.Kc4.

Diagram 115



Black to move, but White wins

3...f5 4.gxf6 e.p. Kxf6

Defeat comes even faster after 4...g5 5.c6 when black's King can't deal with both onrushing pawns.

5.Kb5!

White's pawn is farther advanced than black's, so he can afford taking time to use his King in the fight for the key c8-square. The immediate 5.c6?? lets black's King set up shop on c8 after 5...Ke7 6.Kb5 Kd8 7.Kb6 Kc8.

5...g5 6.c6 Ke7

It's now clear that the pure race via 6...g4 fails: 7.c7 g3 8.c8=Q g2 9.Qg4 and it's all over.

7.Kb6 g4

Or 7...Kd8 8.Kb7 when White has won the battle for c8.

8.c7 Kd7 9.Kb7, 1-0.

REMEMBER

An Outside Passed Pawn is a valuable endgame commodity. It can pose a serious promotion threat, and/or it can force the defending King over to deal with it, leaving the embattled area (where most of the pawns reside) bereft of a defender.



Minor Piece Endgames

Very few people study minor piece endgames, and this is certainly not the place to enter into the many complex situations that can occur when Bishops and Knights rule the board. However, the “C” class is an excellent place to dip your toes into shallow minor piece endgame waters. Don’t worry, it will be painless and very useful, since the few positions we will explore all turn up regularly and allow you to save many situations that, at first glance, seem completely hopeless.

Bishop and Wrong Colored Rook-Pawn vs. Lone King

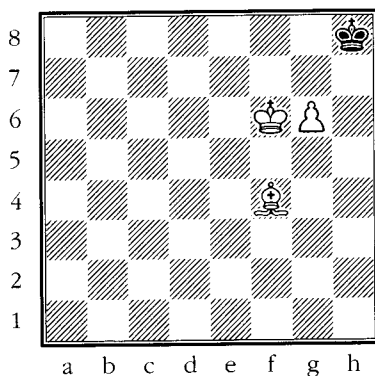
One of the most surprising and common “miracle-saves” features a position where White enjoys a Bishop and pawn vs. a lone King! This sounds like it should be resignable, yet it can be salvaged *if*:

- The pawn is a rook-pawn.
- The pawn’s queening square is a different color than its Bishop.
- The defender’s King can reach the queening square (or any of the squares touching the queening square).

This still sounds crazy, doesn’t it? Let’s take a look at a few Bishop and pawn vs. King positions and, before you know it, you’ll soon completely understand the dynamics behind the miracle save mentioned above.

Take a hard look at diagram 116. One would think that an extra Bishop and pawn should be child’s play, and here they would be right! White wins because the rules just listed are not all present—his pawn isn’t a rook-pawn.

Diagram 116



This doesn't qualify!

RULE

A Bishop and (safe) non rook-pawn vs. lone King is *always* a win (finally something makes sense!).

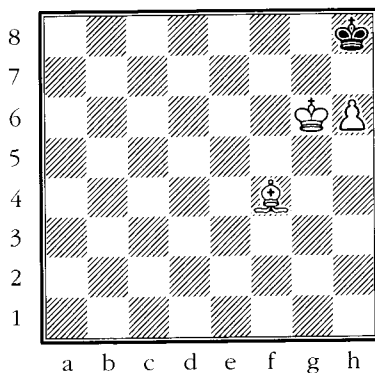
1.g7+ Kg8 2.Be5

Avoiding nasty tricks like 2.Kg6 stalemate or 2.Be3 Kh7 3.Kf7 stalemate (again!). Since the only way White can screw this up is to allow a stalemate or give away his pawn or Bishop, make sure you are safe from these pitfalls each time you move!

2...Kh7 3.Kf7 Kh6 4.g8=Q Kh5 5.Qg3 (quickest) 5...Kh6 6.Qg6 mate.

Okay, let's take a look at a position with a rook-pawn, since that is what makes this trick happen (though I have yet to prove it!).

Diagram 117



This doesn't qualify either!

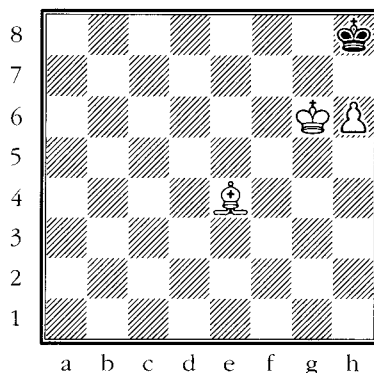
RULE

A Bishop and (safe) rook-pawn that queens on the same color as the Bishop is always a win!

This position also loses for Black (it doesn't matter who has the move), even though White is left with a rook-pawn. Do you see why black's defensive stance won't succeed? If you noticed that the pawn's queening square is the same square as the Bishop then you have a sharp eye. As a result, white's win is ridiculously easy via **1.Be5+** (alertly avoiding 1.h7 stalemate!) **1...Kg8 2.h7+ Kf8 3.h8=Q+**. As you can see, the fact that the Bishop can kick the defending King off of h8 is extremely important!

In our next position (the one I've been promising!), White doesn't have this luxury.

Diagram 118



Draw with anyone to move

Ah, this is more like it! All our Bishop and rook-pawn of the wrong color rules are finally present! Now Black draws easily since White just can't get that blasted King away from h8! Still don't believe it? Let's try:

1.Bf5

Okay, this is hardly a brain-shattering move, but 1.h7 is an immediate draw by stalemate, while 1.Bd5 is yet another way to stalemate black's King.

1...Kg8 2.h7+

Other tries also get nowhere. For example, 2.Be6+ Kh8 3.Kg5 Kh7 4.Be4+ Kh8 and White isn't making any progress.

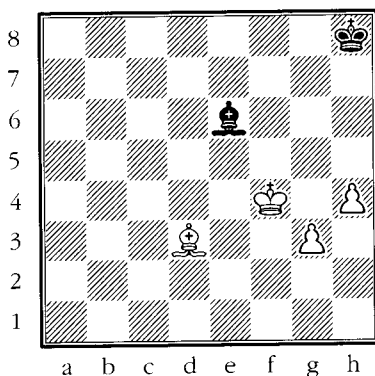
2...Kh8 3.Kg5 Kg7 and Black just moves back and forth between g7 and h8 until stalemate is delivered, White gives up his pawn, or the universe as we know it ceases to exist.

RULE

Bishop and rook-pawn (that queens on the opposite color as the Bishop) vs. lone enemy King is a draw.

Clearly, once you achieve this endgame, it's a no-brainer to draw. That means that the only hard part is creating it (if you were in trouble) or avoiding it (if you were winning). The rest plays itself. Here is an illustration of both these possibilities in one example:

Diagram 119



White to move

1.Ke5

Rushing the King to a dominating position is almost always a good idea in just about any kind of endgame. But do you have any idea how many people would decide to get their pawns rolling by 1.g4, only realizing their epic mistake when you spank them with the “bring them back to reality” move 1...Bxg4!. After 2.Kxg4 Kg7 Black can dance around the table, celebrating the fact that the game is a dead draw!

1...Bc8 2.Kf6

The King annexes even more ground before getting his pawns moving.

2...Bd7 3.Bf5 Be8

Of course, trading Bishops leads to a resignable King and two pawns vs. lone King endgame.

4.g4

Now this pawn can safely move up the board.

4...Kg8

A funny try is 4...Bh5, hoping for 5.gxh5?? when we have a draw even though Black is down a Bishop and two pawns! Fortunately for White, the simple 5.g5 keeps the win well in hand.

5.g5 Kh8 6.Bg4

Again White avoids the tempting but game-ruining 6.g6?? due to 6...Bxg6 with an immediate draw. Moving the Bishop to g4 prepares to safely advance the h-pawn.

6...Kg8 7.h5 Kh8 8.h6 Kg8 9.Be6+ Kh8

Or 9...Kf8 10.h7 followed by 11.h8=Q+.

10.Bf7 Bb5 11.g6, 1-0. The killing **12.g7+** will follow.

As you can see, it's imperative that you know of this trick so you can avoid it, and that you keep it in mind when things are going badly so you can salvage a half point when everyone else has counted you out!

Lone King vs. Knight and Rook-Pawn on the 6th or 7th

We've just seen an important instance where a Bishop and pawn can't beat a lone King. Surely the flexible Knight is immune from such anomalies? One would think that a Knight and (safe) pawn would always beat a lone King, but there is one important exception!

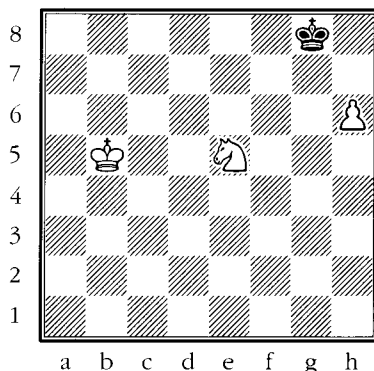
RULE

A Knight and a (safe) pawn vs. a lone King is always a win for the material advantage, except when the extra pawn is a rook-pawn and that rook-pawn is on the 7th rank.

We've seen that rook-pawns often create exceptions to otherwise ironclad rules, and this is yet another case of the "rook-pawn curse."

Our next example shows why the Knight and pawn win under normal circumstances (i.e., the pawn's not on the 7th rank).

Diagram 120



Black is doomed, even though he has the move

Even though white's King is in another time zone, Black has no chance at all in this position because the pawn can easily be protected by its Knight.

1...Kh7 2.Ng4!

And not 2.Nf7?? Kg6 3.Kc5 Kxf7 4.h7 Kg7, =.

USEFUL ADVICE

When you have to guard your pawn with your Knight in this kind of endgame, it's usually correct to defend the pawn from behind and not from the front or the side (as we saw in the note to White's 2nd move). Why? Because an undefended Knight on the side or front allows the defending King to capture it and still be in a position where the pawn can be stopped. Capturing a Knight that's behind its pawn allows the pawn to turn into a Queen.

2...Kg6 3.Kc5 Kh7

Of course, 3...Kg5 4.h7 leads to a new Queen for White.

4.Kd5 Kg6 5.Ke6 Kh7 6.Kf7 Kh8 7.Kg6

Be careful, 7.Nf6?? is a draw by stalemate!

7...Kg8 8.Ne5

Avoiding the tragic 8.h7+?? Kh8 when White has to give up his pawn (which is an immediate draw since a mate with King and Knight vs. lone King isn't possible) or allow stalemate.

USEFUL ADVICE

White wins these positions by taking control of the queening square with his Knight.

8...Kh8

Also elementary is 8...Kf8 9.h7 Ke7 10.h8=Q, etc.

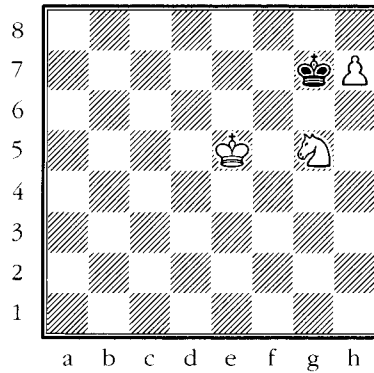
9.Nf7+

Chasing black's King off of the critical promotion square.

9...Kg8 10.h7+ Kf8 11.h8=Q+, 1-0.

It seems that the Knight's ability to control any colored square (unlike the Bishop's) assures the Knight and pawn victory over a lone King in all sane situations. However (as stated earlier) there is one trick situation that must be avoided (or played for, if you're the side in trouble).

Diagram 121



Black to move, draw

Here we have the miracle save that was promised in this section's introduction. Black's King controls the queening square and the rook-pawn is on the 7th rank. Incredibly, White has no way of making the annoying black King leave the h8 or g7 squares!

1...Kh8 2.Ke6

Or 2.Kf6 stalemate.

2...Kg7 3.Kf5 Kh8

Again, Black welcomes 4.Kf6 or 4.Kg6, since both lead to an immediate draw by stalemate.

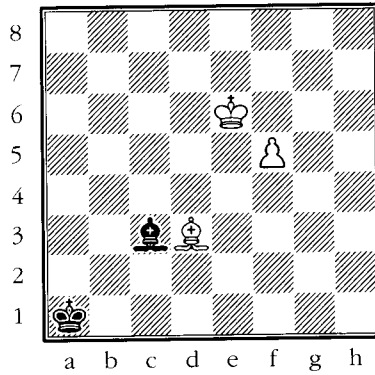
4.Kg4 Kg7 5.Kh5 Kh8 and again White can't approach the pawn via 6.Kg6 or 6.Kh6 since that would lead to immediate stalemate. The game is drawn since the pawn can't move, the Knight is stuck babysitting the pawn, and white's King can't touch its pawn without stalemating its evil counterpart.

Many players don't see this coming, so add it to your arsenal of emergency endgame weapons!

Bishops of Opposite Colors

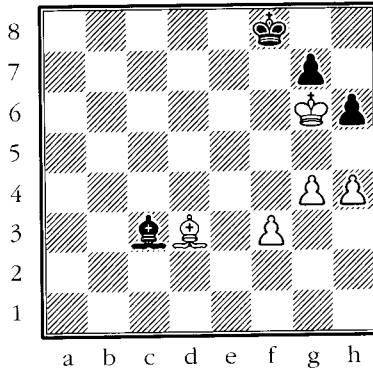
Tournament players love to bandy about the term "Bishops of opposite colors," though they often don't really know much about this interplay of minor pieces. In the middlegame, Bishops of opposite colors is thought to be an advantage for the attacker since one Bishop can't defend what the other attacks. However, in the endgame Bishops of opposite colors can give the defender serious drawing chances in positions that one would think are losing. For example, a one-pawn advantage is often inadequate to score the full point.

Diagram 122

**Hopelessly drawn**

Even though black's King is off on vacation, White has no chance whatsoever of winning this position since Black will just snap off the pawn if it ever moves to f6.

Diagram 123

**Another easy draw**

White enjoys a dominating King position and an extra pawn. Nevertheless, Black draws in mindless fashion by moving his Bishop back and forth along the a1-h8 diagonal, trading pawns whenever the opportunity presents itself, and finally giving up his Bishop for the final enemy pawn. Here's a sample of how play might proceed:

1.f4 Ba1 2.f5 Bb2 3.g5 hxg5 4.hxg5

Also useless is 4.h5 g4 5.f6 Bxf6 6.h6 gxh6 7.Kxf6 and though the Bishop has been lopped off, White has run out of pawns and can't win.

4...Ba1 5.Kh7

A tricky try. The immediate 5.f6 gxf6 6.gxf6 Bxf6 is an obvious draw.

5...Bb2 6.f6 gxf6

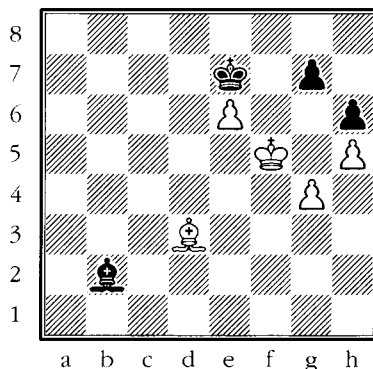
Black could also play 6...Bxf6! 7.gxf6 gxf6, =.

7.g6

Actually threatening to win by 8.g7+.

7...f5! 8.Bxf5 Ba1 with ...Ba1-b2-a1-b2, etc. to follow until White agrees to the draw out of sheer boredom.

Diagram 124

**Time to shake hands**

This position shows one of the main problems the stronger side faces when Bishops of opposite colors exists: the passed pawn on e6 is firmly blocked by black's King and white's light-squared Bishop is unable to influence anything on that color. Thus, it can't make the King step away from its blockade, nor can it attack black's kingside pawns!

Black draws by keeping his King planted on e7, and by keeping his Bishop on the a1-h8 diagonal. In this way, the passed pawn on e6 will never get anywhere, the h6-pawn is defended by the other pawn, and the g7-pawn is firmly (and permanently) guarded by its Bishop. Again, mindless "back and forth" action by ...Ba1-Bb2-Ba1-Bb2 is all it takes to split the point.

We'll continue our look at Bishops of opposite colors in Part Five.

USEFUL ADVICE

When you are in trouble, an excellent "last stand" strategy is to trade into a Bishops of opposite colors' position.



Rook Endgames

Most players feel helpless when they enter a Rook endgame. This is quite unfortunate since Rook endgames occur often—in fact, they are more common than any other kind of endgame.

One thing that keeps players from studying such endgames is their apparent complexity. Who can understand and/or memorize such things? Which endgames are important, and which ones are complete wastes of time?

Here we'll begin our Rook endgame education with two must know positions: The *Lucena Position* and the *Philidor Position*. Are they hard to understand? Do they take hours of effort to master? No, the basics of the Lucena and the Philidor can be completely assimilated in thirty minutes to an hour. In return, you'll find they occur remarkably often, and they will both serve as lifelong guideposts on how to handle all other, far more complex, Rook endgames.

The Lucena Position (The Sacred Key to All Rook Endings)

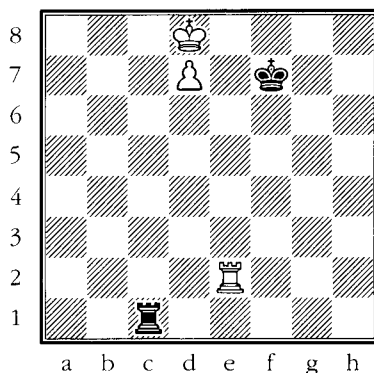
It's time to learn (yes, you will completely master this particular ending in the next few minutes!) the Holy Grail of Rook endings; the sacred key that allows you to know what to avoid when defending a pawn down Rook endgame, while also giving you the knowledge to know what to head for if you have the superior side.

USEFUL ADVICE

This is one of those bits of chess knowledge that *every* serious player *must* possess. It's that important.

The Lucena Position, first published in 1634 by Salvio (for some reason it wasn't in an earlier book by Lucena), is a simplified position where one side has a Rook and a non rook-pawn on the 7th rank (the King in front of its pawn), while the other side just has a Rook. The position in diagram 125 shows us the particulars.

Diagram 125



White to move

White wins no matter who has the move, though for clarity's sake we'll give White the move here. The key feature of the Lucena is the extra pawn on the 7th rank, one square away from turning into a Queen. Also, both Kings are joined in battle, with the white King in front of his pawn and the enemy King as close to the area of battle as possible. Clearly, White needs to do two things if he wants to win:

- Move his King off of d8 so he can push his pawn.
- Promote the pawn to a Queen.

Simple goals indeed, but is it really that easy? Of course not! The problem is that white's King is blocking his own pawn and, at the moment, the black King and Rook are preventing it from getting out of the way. Since the black Rook can't be budged, White must make the black King give ground.

The first way to try and accomplish this goal is: 1.Re7+? (Many players try this, but it simply doesn't get the job done.) 1...Kf8 (And not 1...Kf6?? 2.Ke8 followed by 3.d8=Q with an instant win.) 2.Re8+ Kf7 3.Re7+ Kf8. White is getting nowhere fast.

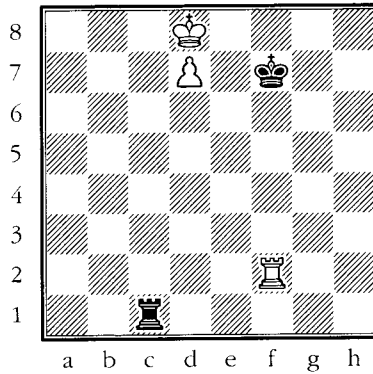
Since this fails, White should play:

1.Rf2+!

USEFUL ADVICE

Trapping the enemy King away from the action is almost always a good thing to do.

Diagram 126



Making black's King leave the scene of battle

This is far more to the point! Since 1...Ke6?? allows 2.Ke8 followed by 3.d8=Q, Black has to step to the side and give the white King room to wander.

1...Kg7

Now comes a key moment. Of the following moves, which one do you think is correct?

➤ **2.Ke8**

➤ **2.Ke7**

➤ **2.Rg2+**

➤ **2.Rf4**

Let's take a look at each choice (and *do* study the flaws of every move since it will help you acquire a clear understanding of what to avoid):

Wrong:

2.Ke8?

Threatening to promote the pawn.

2...Re1+ 3.Kd8 Rc1 and White hasn't made any progress at all.

Wrong:

2.Ke7?

Again threatening to promote the pawn. This is the move almost everyone tries!

2...Re1+ 3.Kd6

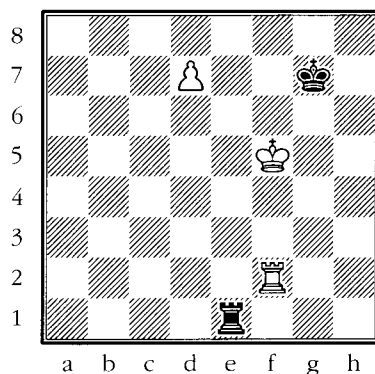
It seems the White King is at last free to roam. This is true, but its inability to support its pawn in the face of the upcoming relentless barrage of enemy checks makes the whole idea invalid.

3...Rd1+ 4.Ke6

And not 4.Ke5?? Rxd7, draw.

4...Re1+ 5.Kf5

Diagram 127



Not good enough

White's King is safe. Is he going to win?

5...Rd1

No, he's not! This Rook move brings White back to reality. The pawn can't safely advance, and it's threatened with capture. White has no choice but to defend with his King.

6.Ke6 Re1+ and White is again making no progress.

Wrong:

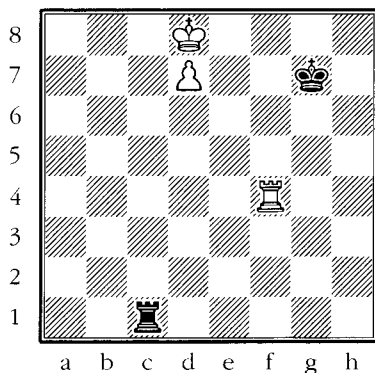
2.Rg2+?

This silly move helps Black by allowing him to move back to f7, once again rendering the white King immobile.

Thus, the *right* move for White is:

2.Rf4!

Diagram 128



A mysterious rook move

This certainly looks odd, doesn't it? However, the idea of using the Rook to shelter its King from upcoming checks makes sense. The legendary Nimzovich described this maneuver as "building a bridge."

RULE

The “Building a Bridge” maneuver is the winning idea in a Lucena Position.

Let’s see how it works:

2...Rc2

Black can’t improve his position so he marks time.

3.Ke7

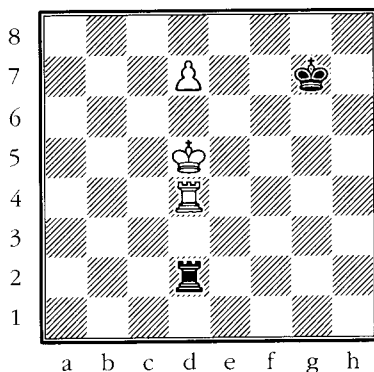
Only now should the white King leave the cover of the pawn. Since promotion is threatened, Black must go into checking mode.

3...Re2+ 4.Kd6 Rd2+ 5.Ke6

Don’t toss the win out the window with 5.Ke5?? Rxd7, draw.

5...Re2+ 6.Kd5 Rd2+ 7.Rd4!

Diagram 129



The “bridge” has been built

The bridge has been built and the pawn’s promotion to a Queen can no longer be prevented. Black resigns.

We can now sum up the winning ideas:

- Force the black King away from the action via Rf2+.
- Prepare to use your Rook as a check-blocking (“bridge-building”) agent with Rf4.
- Move your King away from the front of the pawn.
- Block the opponent’s desperate checks with the Rook, which effectively ends the game.

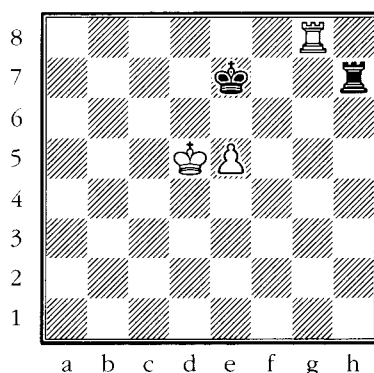
Congratulations! You have now mastered the Lucena Position.

The Philidor Position (A Critical Defensive Stand!)

Now that you've mastered the Lucena Position (You *did* master that position, didn't you?), we will take a look at something that's almost as important: the Philidor Position.

Okay, who can remember such strange names? Fair enough. Let's follow the old adage that says a picture is worth a thousand words.

Diagram 130



Draw

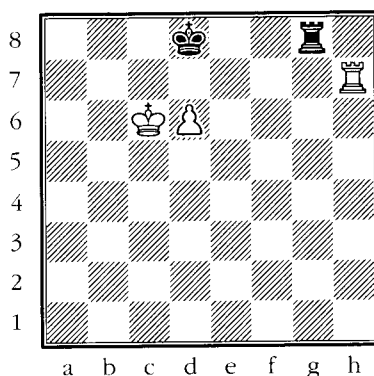
White's a pawn up, enjoys the superior King position, and apparently has the more active Rook. Though I just listed three serious plusses for White, this is a dead draw. However, people lose this kind of position every day, so you *must* know what you're doing. Fortunately, the drawing idea is very simple, and by the time you finish reading the material about the Philidor in Part Four, you'll be able to draw any grandmaster in the world with ease.

We'll return to the position in diagram 130 soon, but first let's take a look at some things that can go wrong for the defender.

Passive Rook

Though a Philidor Position should be drawn, things can turn ugly if the defender's Rook becomes passively placed, giving the stronger side free reign to do whatever he wishes to do.

Diagram 131

**USEFUL ADVICE**

The idea of swinging the Rook over to the other side is worth remembering since you'll be able to make use of it again and again during the course of your chess career.

Black's passive rook leads to his doom

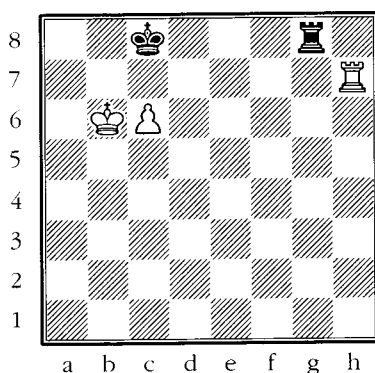
In diagram 131, White wins because black's Rook is stuck on his 1st rank (moving the Rook off the 1st rank allows Rh8+). Since black's Rook is a bystander and can't bother the white King, the first player can calmly play **1.Ra7!** when 2.Ra8+ can't be stopped. Black would then have to resign.

RULE

If you're defending a Philidor Position, don't allow your Rook to become passively placed!

Let's glance at another, equally hopeless, passive Rook position (diagram 132).

Diagram 132

**Different pawn, but Black's still dead**

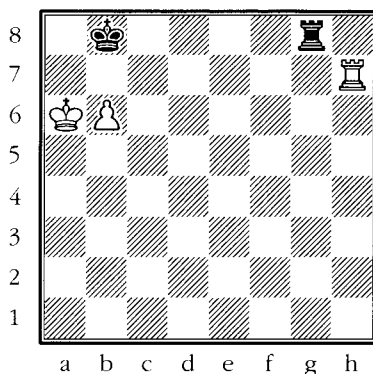
White scores the point by using that same “swing the Rook to the other side” technique: **1.Ra7 Kb8** (Not a happy choice, but 2.Ra8 mate had to be stopped. If 1...Kd8 2.Ra8+ picks up black's Rook.) **2.c7+ Kc8 3.Ra8+ Kd7 4.Rxg8** and Black might be well advised to resign and find something better to do with his time.

Sometimes, though, you can play horribly and still exit with your skin intact. In diagram 133, Black has allowed his Rook to become passive, but it doesn't matter because White can't win if he's left with a knight-pawn or rook-pawn.

Diagram 133

RULE

If your opponent's extra pawn is a knight-pawn or rook-pawn and your King is in front of it, you should effortlessly draw even if the lobotomy scar hasn't completely healed yet.



Black draws despite himself!

If only White could swing his Rook over to the file left of the a-file! Sadly, such a file doesn't exist. Because of this, White can't force a catastrophic back rank check (as occurred in diagram 131 after 1.Ra7) and, as a result, can't win the game: 1.Rb7+ Ka8 2.Ra7+ Kb8 and no progress can be made since 3.b7?? Rg6+ wins for Black!

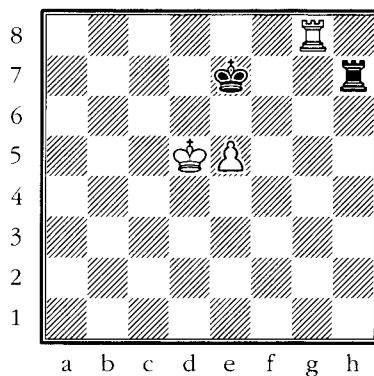
REMEMBER

These kinds of passive Rook positions are winning for the stronger side if the pawn (which is on the 6th rank) is a bishop-pawn, queen-pawn, or king-pawn (thanks to the possibility of swinging the Rook over to the other side). However, a knight-pawn or rook-pawn is hopelessly drawn, since this "swing the Rook over" maneuver is no longer possible.

Pure Philidor

Having taken a look at the key passive Rook positions, it's finally time to return to the position in diagram 130 (recreated for your viewing pleasure in diagram 134) and study a basic Philidor Position in all its glory.

Diagram 134



Black to move draws easily

Remember how I promised that you would be able to draw any grandmaster with ease from this position? I wasn't joking! The big idea here is to take away the whole 6th rank from the white King:

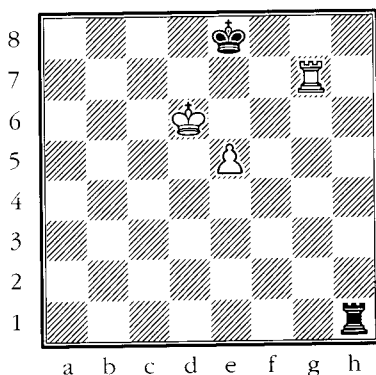
1...Rh6!

Believe it or not, this simple move ices the draw.

Black was aware that passive play failed due to our old “swinging Rook crouching check” trick: 1...Rf7 (“Why let White check our King?” is a common line of reasoning. But stopping such a check turns out to be unrealistic after ...) 2.Ra8! when Ra7+ can't be prevented.

But why didn't Black play for the active Rook by 1...Rh1 (threatening to check on d1)? Because after 2.Rg7+ Ke8 White has the strong 3.Kd6!.

Diagram 135



USEFUL ADVICE

The idea of blocking checks by using the pawn as cover is a big one, and Black must do his best to avoid this pitfall.

Not what Black wants!

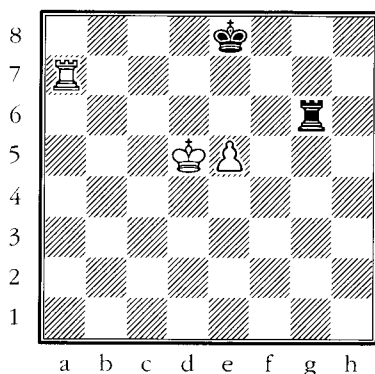
Suddenly Black can't maintain a cascade of checks since 3...Rh6+ runs into 4.e6 (using the pawn to block the check and threatening Rg8 mate) when 4...Rh8 leads to the lost passive Rook positions already discussed in diagrams 131 and 132. Also note that 3...Rd1+ fails to 4.Ke6 when the checks are over and Rg8+ is once again “on.”

By the way, the position in diagram 135 turns out to be drawn after all, but it's far from easy and is anything but “basic.” Look for a discussion of this in Part Seven, where Black faces his fears and survives against impossible odds. For our purpose (i.e., proving that the Philidor Position is an easy draw), we'll say that you would be smart to avoid the position in diagram 135.

Fortunately, playing 1...Rh6! (from diagram 134) makes life good (and easy!) again.

2.Rg7+ Ke8 3.Ra7 Rg6

Diagram 136



“You shall not pass!” shouts the black Rook to the white King

The “deep” defensive idea (also known as the *3rd Rank Defense*) is now clear. If left alone, Black will bravely play ...Rh6 and ...Rg6 until the cows come home (or wrist-cramp sets in). Of course, if Black lusts for adventure then he can toss in ...Rb6 (a “longer” and more flowery move), but it all amounts to the same thing: white’s King desperately wants to step forward but can’t due to the blocking power of the black Rook!

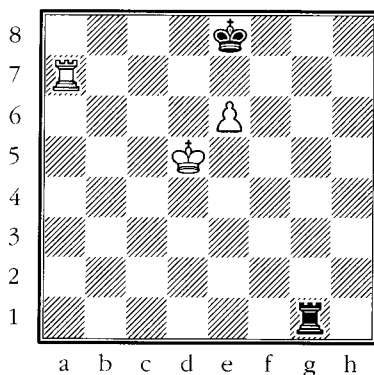
4.e6

Not what White wanted to play, but he has no other choices since 4.Ra8+ Ke7 makes Black happy. Now White threatens the strong Kd6 when black’s King will feel some serious heat.

4...Rg1!

Only now does this active move work. Since white’s King can’t hide behind his pawn any longer, the upcoming avalanche of checks makes the draw obvious.

Diagram 137



No cover for the white King

In diagram 135 White was able to use his pawn as cover. Here (in diagram 137) he cannot. You would be wise to compare the two positions!

5.Ra4

No better is 5.Kd6 Rd1+ 6.Ke5 Re1+ and White should be a good sport and shake hands.

5...Ke7

Also fine is 5...Rd1+ 6.Rd4 Rxd4+ 7.Kxd4 Ke7 8.Kd5 Ke8 9.Kd6 Kd8 10.e7+ Ke8 11.Ke6, draw.

6.Ra7+ Ke8 when White can't make any progress at all.

I strongly recommend that you ponder the ideas in this very common endgame. These themes will help you save games when down a pawn and win games when you possess that extra bit against an unschooled opponent.

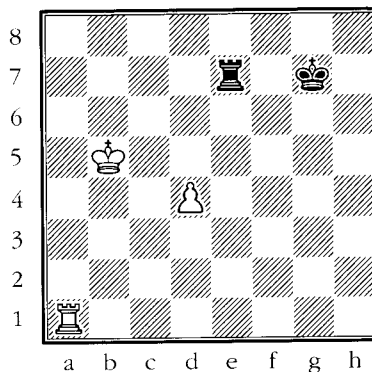
RULE

The defender's drawing plan in the Philidor Position is to use his Rook to block the stronger side's King from stepping onto the rank in front of the pawn. Go back and forth with the Rook until the pawn is pushed (destroying the enemy King's pawn cover). Then leap to the back rank (putting maximum distance between the defending Rook and enemy King) and begin checking like a berserk demon!

Trap The Enemy King Away From the Action

As we saw in our study of the Lucena Position, trapping the enemy King away from the action was an important idea in the winning process, *and* is also a key idea for the defender. The logic is easy to grasp: If a heated battle is raging on Hill One, and a portion of the enemy army is confined to Hill Two, then you simply have your opponent outnumbered!

Diagram 138



White to move

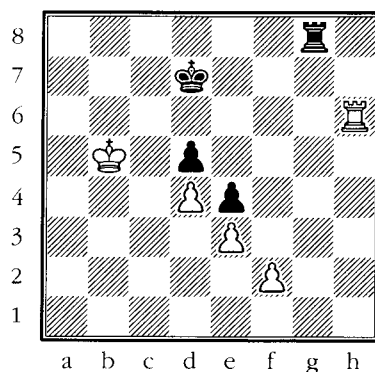
Thanks to the extra pawn and the fact that black's King is so far away, White is clearly winning the game. Black is still holding on to some small shred of hope, though. If he can get his King in front of the pawn he might (Ah, the joy of hope!) be able to create a Philidor Position. However, why should White allow Black to hold onto his dreams when he can immediately show black's helplessness by the simple **1.Rf1!** Suddenly black's King has no hope of taking part in the battle since **1...Rf7 2.Rxf7+** is a very easy win.

Our next example shows this "trapping the King away from the action" idea used defensively.

USEFUL ADVICE

Trapping the enemy King away from the action for either defensive or offensive reasons is often a very effective strategy.

Diagram 139



Black to move and draw

White to move would win by **1.Kc5** when the d5-pawn would fall: **1.Kc5 Rg5 2.Rd6+ Ke7 3.Rxd5**. However, Black to move saves the game by ...

1...Rc8!

Suddenly white's King can't join in the battle against d5.

2.Kb6

It's clear that **2.Rh7+ Kd6** only helps Black, while **2.Rh5 Kd6** has the same effect.

2...Rc2

Letting White know that his f2-pawn isn't a tower of strength either!

3.Rf6 Rc1

Black has no intention of giving up his control over the c-file! Without a King, White can't hope to win. Drawn.

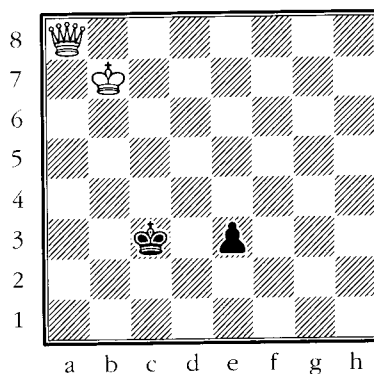
Queen vs. King and Pawn

This is a no-contest, especially if the stronger side's King—who we'll suppose is White—is close to the pawn. However, even if the white King is on the other end of the universe, a Queen can beat a King and pawn (occasional exceptions occur if the pawn is on the 7th rank) in two ways:

- The Queen lands on the queening square. Since the pawn then has no chance of promoting, the vacationing King can calmly walk back to the endangered area and eventually eat the pawn.
- The Queen forces the black King to step in front of its pawn. Since the pawn can't move for a moment, the white King can take a safe step closer to the pawn's position. This will be repeated until white's King joins with its Queen to pick off the pawn.

Queen vs. Pawn on 6th Rank

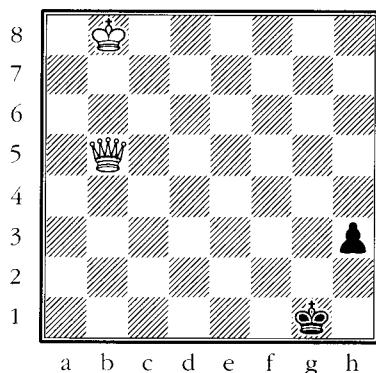
Diagram 140



White to move

White ends things quickly by permanently stopping black's pawn in its tracks. **1.Qa5+ Kd3 2.Qe1 e2 3.Kc6** and Black can't prevent White from marching his King to the pawn: **3...Ke3 4.Kc5 Kd3 5.Kd5 Ke3 6.Kc4 Kf3 7.Kd3** and the pawn is lost.

Diagram 141



White to move

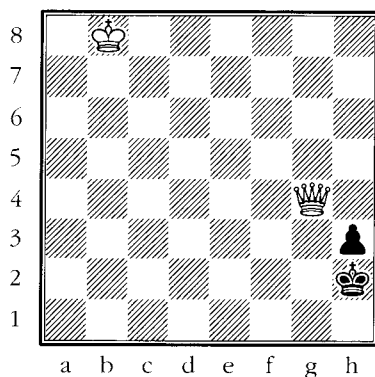
Rook-pawns often prove the exception to various general rules. In this case White doesn't want the pawn to get to the 7th rank (we'll discuss that in a moment), but he also can't get his Queen to h1, which would allow White to win as he did in the previous example.

However, he can win easily in the following manner:

1.Qg5+ Kh1

1...Kh2 blocks the pawn and let's White safely move his King closer to the action by 2.Kc7. It also allows White to instantly win the pawn by 2.Qg4, as seen at the end of our main line and in diagram 142.

Diagram 142



Black to move loses his pawn

The position in diagram 142 is white's main winning idea when a rook-pawn is on the 6th rank.

After 1...Kh1 (from diagram 141, which continued 1.Qg5+ Kh1), all of white's subsequent moves are geared towards creating the position in the diagram.

2.Qd5+! Kg1

2...Kh2 3.Qf3 wins the pawn.

3.Qd4+

Never giving Black a chance to push his pawn to h2.

3...Kh1

We already know that 3...Kh2 falls victim to 4.Qg4, 3while 3...Kf1 also loses to 4.Qf4+ Kg2 (4...Ke2 5.Qh2 is completely hopeless) 5.Qg4+ Kh2 6.Kc7, winning the pawn.

4.Qe4+

Forcing black's King to h2 or g1, both poor squares.

4...Kg1

4...Kh2 5.Qg4.

5.Qg4+ Kh2 6.Kc7 and Black is forced to jettison his pawn by 6...Kh1 7.Qxh3+ when the game is over.

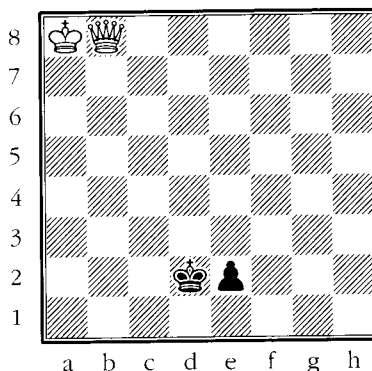
RULE

Lone Queen vs. King and pawn on the 6th rank is always a win for the Queen.

Queen vs. Pawn on the 7th Rank

Though I personally leapfrogged over the “C” class (jumping directly to class “B”), I must admit that I remember the first time I ever came into contact with this endgame. I was fourteen-years-old (with a 1600 rating) and a friend called and gave me the following position over the phone.

Diagram 143



White to Move

“White’s a Queen up!” I said.

“Yes, but I bet you can’t win it.”

I laughed at him, agreed on a fifty-cent wager, and proceeded to lose my money when I just couldn’t do it! Humiliated, I finally asked for the solution.

RULE

This endgame is won by maneuvering with the Queen so that black's King is forced to step in front of its pawn. Since the pawn can't move for a moment, the white King can take a safe step closer to the pawn's position. This will be repeated until white's King joins with its Queen to pick off the pawn.

1.Qb4+ Kd1

Otherwise White plays Qe1, forever stopping the pawn in its tracks.

2.Qd4+ Kc2 3.Qe3!

As a child, I wasn't able to find this endgame "key." The idea is to force black's King in front of his pawn, and then step a square closer to the action with the white King.

3...Kd1 4.Qd3+

Forcing Black to block his own pawn.

4...Ke1 5.Kb7

The first step of many towards black's pawn.

5...Kf2

Now White just has to repeat the same process again and again until his King helps win the pawn.

6.Qd2 Kf1

Again, 6...Kf3 7.Qe1 would be very easy for White.

7.Qf4+ Kg2 8.Qe3! Kf1 9.Qf3+ Ke1 10.Kc6 Kd2

Note that 10...Kd1 allows 11.Kd5 since the e-pawn is pinned.

11.Qf2 Kd1 12.Qd4+ Kc2 13.Qe3! Kd1 14.Qd3+ Ke1 15.Kd5 Kf2 16.Qd2 Kf1 17.Qf4+ Kg2 18.Qe3! Kf1 19.Qf3+ Ke1 20.Kd4

Now things end quickly since white's King is in striking range.

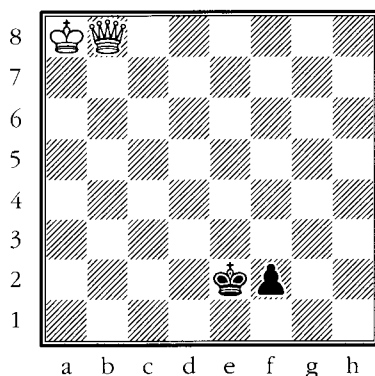
20...Kd2 21.Qd3+ Ke1 22.Ke3 Kf1 23.Qxe2+ Kg1 24.Kf3

And not 24.Qf2+ Kh1 25.Kf3?? stalemate. When the game seems ridiculously easy to win, don't get overconfident and overlook a stalemate!

24...Kh1 25.Qg2 mate.

Once I saw how it was done (we went over it several times) he made me set up another position.

Diagram 144



White to move

“I bet you can’t win this.”

Angry at the insult, I said, “What are you talking about? You just showed me how to do it! *Of course* I can win it!”

He was adamant. “I’ll bet you double or nothing you can’t.”

So we went at it again:

1.Qb5+ Ke1 2.Qe5+ Kd2 3.Qf4+ Ke2 4.Qe4+ Kd2 5.Qf3!

I was quite proud of myself since I had clearly mastered this winning idea. There was no question in my mind that I was going to win this bet!

5...Ke1 6.Qe3+ Kf1 7.Kb7

At this point I decided that enough was enough. “Okay, I think I’ve showed you that I know how to win it. Let’s end this farce!”

He just laughed and played...

7...Kg2 8.Qe2 Kg1 9.Qg4+ Kh2 10.Qf3 Kg1 11.Qg3+ Kh1!—Doh! I froze in my tracks! Suddenly I realized that the game was indeed a draw since 12.Qxf2 is a stalemate, while checks like 12.Qh3+ Kg1 simply repeat the position and never allow the white King to complete its long journey to the afflicted area.

RULE

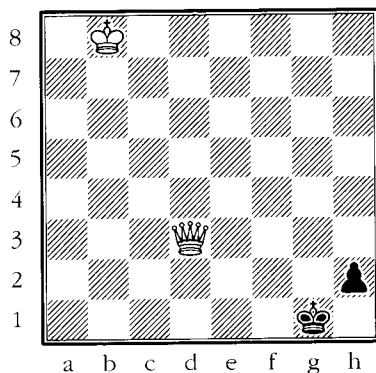
A b/g-pawn, e-pawn and d-pawn on the 7th all lose to a Queen.

RULE

A c/f-pawn on the 7th rank can draw against a Queen if the stronger side’s King is far away from the action.

What about a rook-pawn (a/h-pawn) on the 7th? We've seen how rook-pawns often prove the exception in many endgame positions, and this rook-pawn paranoia holds true here too.

Diagram 145



White to move, draw

Black's drawing idea in this endgame can be instantly grasped after 1.Qg3+ Kh1!, when the hoped for march of the White King (via 2.Kc7, for example) leads to an immediate stalemate and draw. Unfortunately for White, Queen checks also get nowhere: 2.Qe1+ Kg2 3.Qd5+ Kg1 (and not 3...Kg3?? 4.Qh1, winning) and the threat to promote the pawn means that white's King will never be able to help out. Thus the game's a draw.

RULE

A rook-pawn (a/h-pawn) on the 7th rank draws against a Queen if the stronger side's King is far from the action.

Summing Up

King and Pawn Endgames

- In general, in a king and pawn vs. lone King position, the weaker side loses if he can't get his King in front of the enemy pawn—if you can't block and stop the pawn from queening, then you're a goner! However, rook-pawns often allow all sorts of exceptions due to the fact that there isn't a file to the side of the pawn (which creates many odd stalemate possibilities).
- You can gauge the result of an upcoming Trébuchet position in this way: the side whose King can make first contact with the enemy pawn can force a winning Trébuchet.
- King and two (doubled) pawns vs. lone King always win unless the pawns can't be properly defended, or unless they are rook-pawns.
- You can calculate the square of a pawn by: drawing a diagonal extension from the pawn to the end of the board; drawing a line from the side of the pawn to the edge of the board; connecting all the lines. The defender's King can step into this square, it will stop the pawn. If it can't, the pawn will run for a touchdown.
- An Outside Passed Pawn is a passed pawn that stands to the side of the main sphere of battle. Such a pawn is usually a very valuable commodity since it can be far from the enemy King and thus pose a serious promotion threat, and/or it can force the defending King over to deal with it, leaving the embattled area (where most of the pawns reside) bereft of a defender.

Minor Piece Endgames

- A Bishop and (safe) pawn vs. a lone King sounds like it should be resignable, yet it can be salvaged *if*: the pawn is a rook-pawn; the pawn's queening square is a different color than its Bishop; the defender's King can reach the queening square (or any of the squares touching the queening square).
- A Knight and a (safe) pawn vs. a lone King is always a win for the material advantage, *except* when the extra pawn is a rook-pawn and

that rook-pawn is on the 7th rank. We've seen that rook-pawns often create exceptions to otherwise ironclad rules, and this is yet another case of the "rook-pawn curse."

- In the middlegame, Bishops of opposite colors is thought to be an advantage for the attacker since one Bishop can't defend what the other attacks. However, in the endgame Bishops of opposite colors can give the defender serious drawing chances in positions that one would think are losing.

Rook Endgames

- The Lucena Position is the Holy Grail of Rook endings; the sacred key that allows you to know what to avoid when defending a pawn down Rook endgame, while also giving you the knowledge to know what to head for if you have the superior side. The Lucena Position is a simplified position where one side has a Rook and a pawn (any pawn but a rook-pawn) on the 7th rank (the King in front of its pawn), while the other side just has a Rook.
- The Philidor Position is a Rook and pawn vs. Rook position where the defender's King is in front of the enemy pawn. In general, such a position is drawn.
- In a Rook and pawn endgame, it's important to not allow your Rook to become passively placed!
- In a Rook and pawn endgame, always trap the enemy King as far away from the action as possible by using your Rook to cut it off from a file or rank. The logic is easy to grasp: If a heated battle is raging on Hill One, and a portion of the enemy army is confined to Hill Two, then you simply have your opponent outnumbered!

Queen vs. King and Lone Pawn

- Queen vs. lone pawn is a no-contest, especially if the stronger side's King is close to the pawn. However, even if the stronger side's King is on the other end of the universe, a Queen can beat a King and pawn (occasional exceptions occur if the pawn is on the 7th rank) in two ways:
 - The Queen lands on the queening square. Since the pawn then has no chance of promoting, the vacationing King can

calmly walk back to the endangered area and eventually eat the pawn.

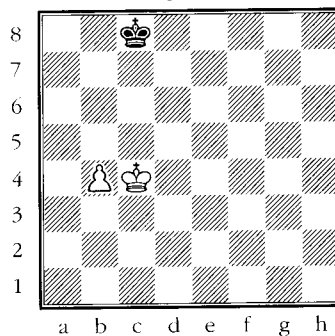
- The Queen forces the defending King to step in front of its pawn. Since the pawn can't move for a moment, the stronger side's King can take a safe step closer to the pawn's position. This will be repeated until the King joins with its Queen to pick off the pawn.

► Queen vs. pawn observations (with the stronger side's King far from the action): A Queen vs. any pawn on the 6th always wins for the Queen; A Queen vs. a knight-pawn, king-pawn, queen-pawn on the 7th wins for the Queen; A Queen vs. a bishop-pawn or rook-pawn on the 7th is a draw.

Tests and Solutions

TEST 1

Diagram 146

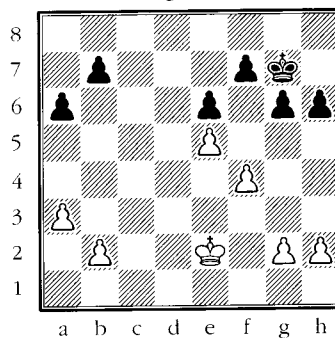


Black to move

Is White winning, or can Black save the game?

TEST 2

Diagram 147

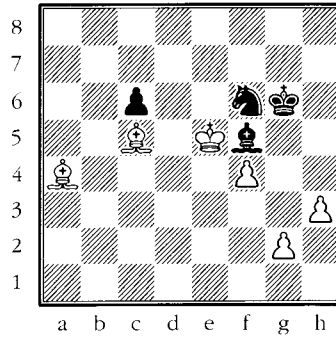


Black to move

Black played 1...g5 in this position. Is this a good move, or should he have preferred 1...Kf8?

TEST 3

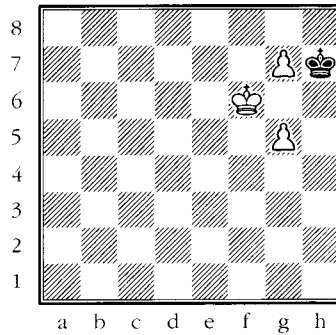
Diagram 148

**Black to move**

White has a dominating King, two active Bishops vs. a Bishop and Knight, and two extra pawns. Is it time to resign?

TEST 4

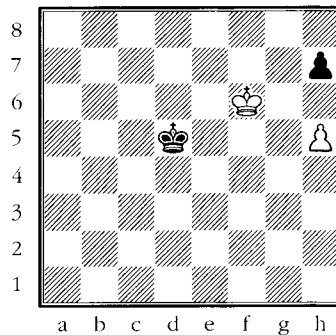
Diagram 149

**White to move**

What is white's best move?

TEST 5

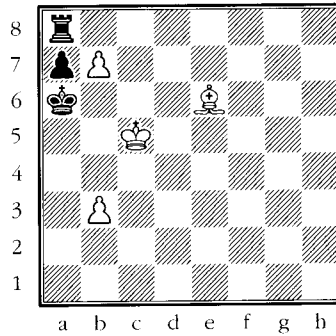
Diagram 150

**White to move**

Can White win this position?

TEST 6

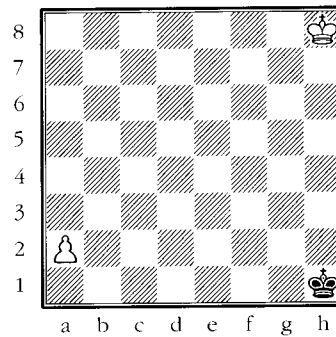
Diagram 151

**Black to move**

Black has a problem-like draw here that you're *not* expected to find (though have fun trying!). However, can you see the chess oddity that will allow Black to save himself? We're looking for an idea, not moves.

TEST 7

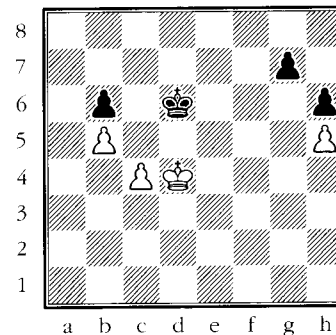
Diagram 152

**Black to move**

It's a race between black's King and the a-pawn. Can Black draw?

TEST 8

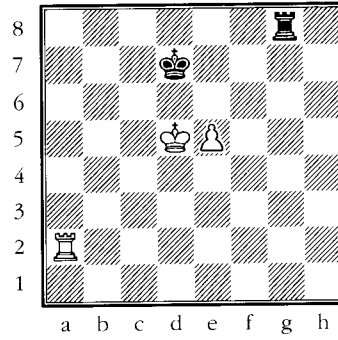
Diagram 153

**White to move**

White has the better King position, so he should be the one with all the chances. Can White win?

TEST 9

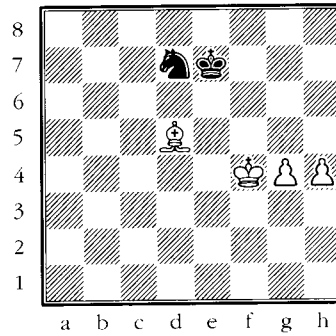
Diagram 154

**Black to move**

White threatens the unpleasant Ra7+. How can Black defend himself?

TEST 10

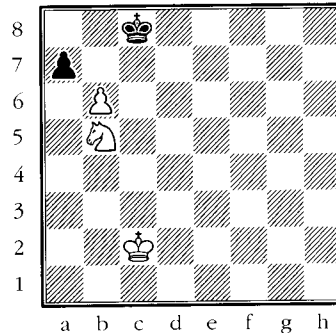
Diagram 155

**Black to move**

Is Black doomed?

TEST 11

Diagram 156

**White to move**

White's a Knight up and can capture the a7-pawn two different ways. Can he win?

TEST 12

Diagram 157

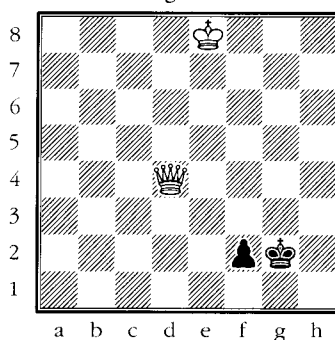
**White to move**

Diagram 158

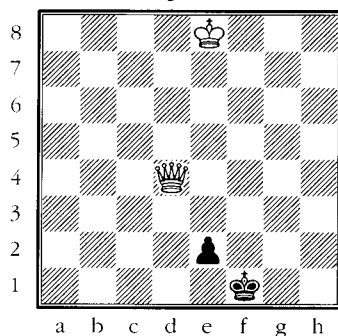
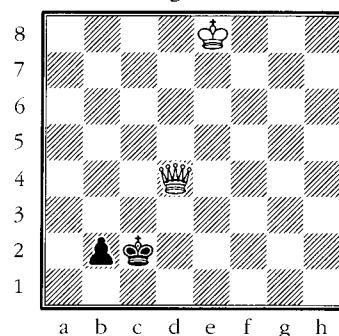
**White to move**

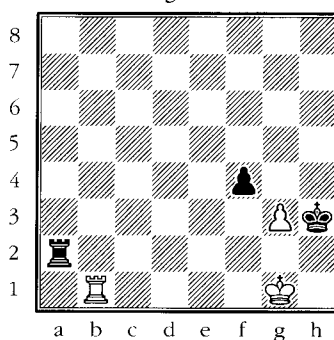
Diagram 159

**White to move**

Of these three diagrams (157, 158, and 159), which one (if any) is salvageable for Black (White has the move in each case)?

TEST 13

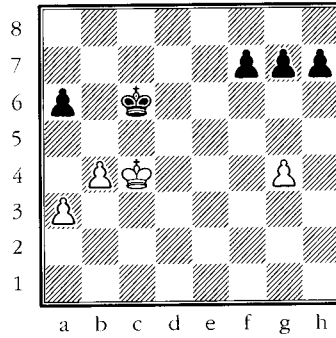
Diagram 160

**Black to move**

Black has four ways to play this position: 1...Kxg3, 1...fxg3, 1...Rg2+, and 1...f3. Do any of these choices win?

TEST 14

Diagram 161

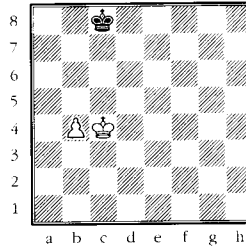
**Black to move**

Black is a pawn up and enjoys a three to two pawn majority on the kingside. Wanting to create a passed pawn, he played 1...g6. Is this a good move?

* * * * *

SOLUTION 1

Diagram 146

**Gligoric-Fischer, Yugoslavia 1959****Black to move**

Is White winning, or can Black save the game?

Black, who can't let White get the Opposition, and can't let white's King get two squares in front of its pawn, only has one move that draws:

1...Kb8!

This move sits back and waits for White to advance and give Black the Opposition. Other moves lose because White either gets the Opposition or is allowed to bring his King too far forward:

➤ 1...Kc7?? 2.Kc5 Kb7 3.Kb5 Kc7 4.Ka6, 1-0.

➤ 1...Kb7?? 2.Kb5, 1-0.

➤ 1...Kd7?? 2.Kb5, 1-0.

➤ 1...Kd8?? 2.Kb5 Kc7 3.Ka6, 1-0.

The game was agreed drawn after **1...Kb8** due to the following possibilities:

➤ 2.Kd5 Kb7 3.Kc5 Kc7 4.Kb5 Kb7 with a simple draw.

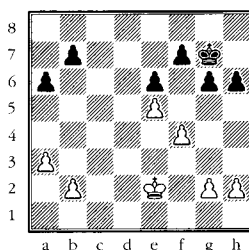
➤ 2.Kb5 Kb7, $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$.

➤ 2.Kc5 Kc7, $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$.

➤ 2.Kd4 Kb7 with a draw (and not 2...Kc7?? 3.Kc5 when White gets the Opposition and wins).

SOLUTION 2

Diagram 147



Schlechter-Tartakower, Carlsbad 1907

Black to move

Black played 1...g5 in this position. Is this a good move, or should he have preferred 1...Kf8?

1...g5??

This loses since it allows White an Outside Passed Pawn (1...Kf8 2.Kd3 Ke7 3.Kc4 Kd7 would have drawn.)

2.fxg5 hxg5 3.Kf3 Kg6 4.Kg4 f5+ 5.exf6 Kxf6

Though Black has a passed pawn, he's dead lost due to the fact that White can create a far more valuable Outside Passed Pawn by g3 and h4.

6.g3! a5 7.a4 e5 8.h4! gxh4 9.gxh4

This Outside Passed Pawn allows White to make use of our Fox in the Chicken Coup concept.

9...Kg6 10.b3 b6

10...e4 11.Kf4 is easy for White.

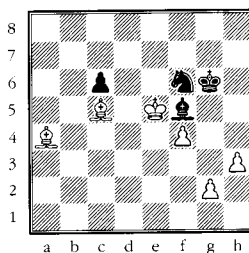
11.h5+ Kf6

11...Kh6 12.Kf5.

12.h6 Kg6 13.h7 Kxh7 14.Kf5, 1-0. White marches over and wins black's remaining pawns.

SOLUTION 3

Diagram 148

**Gereben - Najdorf, Budapest 1936****Black to move**

White has a dominating King, two active Bishops vs. a Bishop and Knight, and two extra pawns. Is it time to resign?

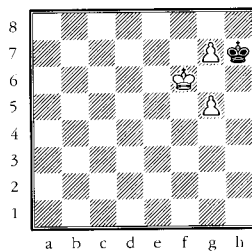
In the actual game, Black more or less gave up by playing 1...Nd7 2.g4 Bd7 3.f5+ and he went down in flames. Later Najdorf received some (unjust) criticism for missing a “saving” resource:

1...Nd7+ 2.Kd6 Nxc5 3.Kxc5 Bxh3 and now 4.gxh3 Kf5 draws since, after ...Kxf4, White will be left with a Bishop and wrong colored rook-pawn (5.Kd6 Kxf4 6.Bxc6 Kg5 7.Ke7 Kh6 8.Kf8 Kh7 and Black safely makes it to h8).

This example shows how a player must always be on the lookout for the Bishop and rook-pawn of the wrong color save. However, in this example White wins after 3...Bxh3 by 4.Bc2+!, which forces immediate resignation (4...Bf5 5.Bxf5+ Kxf5 6.g3).

SOLUTION 4

Diagram 149

**White to move**

What is white's best move?

White has made the mistake of pushing his doubled pawns down the board together. This actually hampers the winning process and now White only has one way to secure victory:

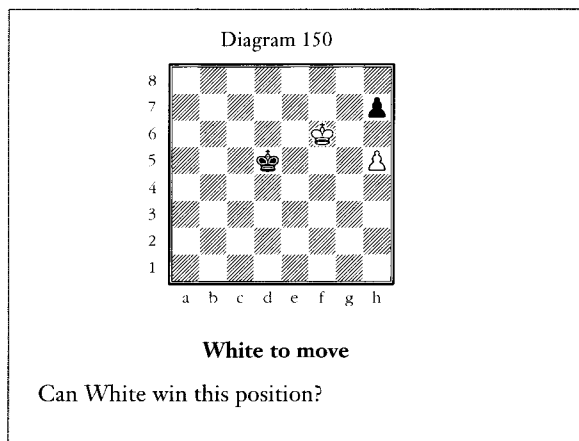
1.g8=Q+!

This allows White to grab the Opposition and reach a basic winning King and pawn vs. King position. Other moves throw the win away: 1.Kf7?? is an immediate stalemate, while 1.g6+?? Kg8 forces White to give up on g7-pawn and accept a basic draw.

1...Kxg8 2.Kg6!

And not 2.g6?? Kf8 3.g7+ Kg8 4.Kg6 stalemate.

2...Kh8 3.Kf7 Kh7 4.g6+ and the pawn queens.



No, Black draws. Though White wins the final black pawn, his King will end up trapped in the corner, or he'll allow the enemy King to take up residence on g8 or h8.

1.Kg7

On 1.h6 Black simply waits with 1...Kd6 when 2.Kg7 Ke7 3.Kxh7 Kf7 traps white's King and forces a draw after 4.Kh8 Kf8 and now 5.h7 is an instant stalemate, while 5.Kh7 Kf7 gets White nowhere.

1...Ke6 2.Kxh7

As in our note to move one, 2.h6 Ke7 3.Kxh7 Kf7 is also drawn.

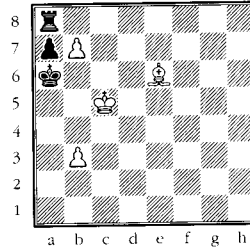
2...Kf7 3.Kh8 Kf8 4.Kh7 Kf7 5.h6 Kf8 6.Kg6

White gets nowhere with 6.Kh8 Kf7.

6...Kg8 and black's King can't be chased away from the front of white's pawn.

SOLUTION 6

Diagram 151

**Black to move****(A variation from a Pal Benko composition)**

Black has a problem-like draw here that you're not expected to find (though have fun trying!). However, can you see the chess oddity that will allow Black to save himself? We're looking for an idea, not moves.

1...Kxb7!

The only good move. Other moves lose:

1...Re8 2.Bc8 and White makes a new Queen.

1...Rb8 2.Kc6 Rxb7 (2...Ka5 3.Kc7 Rxb7+ 4.Kxb7 a6 5.Bc4 and Black loses his a-pawn) 3.Bc4+! (3.Bc8?? Ka5 4.Kxb7 Kb4 5.Be6 a5 followed by ...a4, =) 3...Rb5 (3...Ka5 4.Kxb7 and White wins the a-pawn and retains a b-pawn, which gives Black no hope) 4.Bxb5+ (and not 4.b4?? stalemate!) 4...Ka5 5.Kc5 a6 6.b4 mate.

The whole point of this chess problem (starting with the brilliant 1...Kxb7) is in the possibility of creating a rook-pawn draw. Did you notice that such a thing might be possible (even if you didn't quite see how)? If so, your intuitive grasp of patterns is very impressive!

2.Bd5+ Kb8 3.Be4!

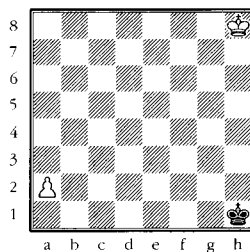
Forcing black's pawn to advance to a vulnerable square. The "obvious" 3.Bxa8 Kxa8 is an easy draw.

3...a5 4.Bxa8 a4!!, =. White is left with a basic rook-pawn draw after 5.bxa4 Kxa8.

Again, I didn't expect you to solve this problem, but trying to do so should ram home the idea that "salvation by rook-pawn" can occur from "out of the blue."

SOLUTION 7

Diagram 152

**Black to move**

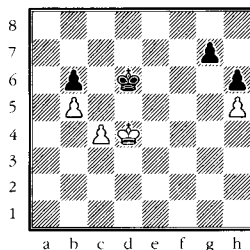
It's a race between black's King and the a-pawn. Can Black draw?

No, Black loses. Though it seems that 1...Kg2 steps into the square of white's pawn, this turns out to be an illusion since the pawn can leap two squares at once:

2.a4 Kf3 3.a5 Ke4 4.a6 Kd5 5.a7, 1-0.

SOLUTION 8

Diagram 153

**White to move**

White has the better King position, so he should be the one with all the chances. Can White win?

There are a couple things happening here. First, both pawn majorities seem frozen by a single enemy pawn. Second, even if White achieves a Chicken Coup infiltration, he'll be left with a rook-pawn.

However, it turns out that White can easily create a passed pawn, while Black can't. Once that is done, the race is on, with White winning by one move.

1.c5+!

A nice idea. It seems that White's losing a pawn, but that turns out to be an illusion.

1...bxc5+ 2.Kc4 Kc7

There's no hope in 2...g5 3.hxg6 e.p.

3.Kxc5 Kb7

Now the footrace begins. White needs to rush to the kingside, eat all the black pawns, and move his King to g7 before black's King can reach f8, f7, or f6.

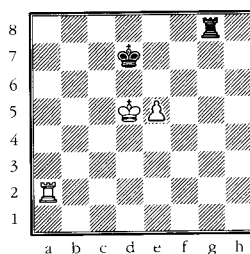
4.Kd6

Actually, White doesn't need to test his “foot speed” at all. An alternative way to victory is 4.b6 Kb8 5.Kc6 Kc8 6.b7+ Kb8 7.Kb6 g5 8.hxg6 e.p. h5 9.g7 h4 10.g8=Q mate.

4...Kb6 5.Ke6 Kxb5 6.Kf7 Kc6 7.Kxg7 Kd7 8.Kxh6 Ke7 9.Kg7, 1-0.

SOLUTION 9

Diagram 154

**Black to move**

White threatens the unpleasant Ra7+. How can Black defend himself?

If you thought you could draw by trading Rooks, you're wrong: 1...Rc8 2.Ra7+ Rc7?? 3.Rxc7+ Kxc7 4.Ke6! followed by Kf7 is an easy win for White. Instead, Black can effortlessly hold a half point by using the classic Philidor formula.

1...Rg6! 2.Ra7+ Ke8

Now white's King can't advance onto the 6th rank. Since Black can endlessly tread water by moving his Rook back and forth along that rank, White must eventually push his e-pawn.

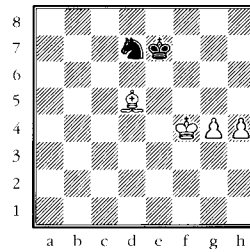
3.e6

Threatening to win by 4.Kd6.

3...Rg1! and the coming cascade of Rook-checks will make it clear that White has no chance whatsoever of winning.

SOLUTION 10

Diagram 155

**Black to move**

Is Black doomed?

Black can draw by giving up his Knight for the g-pawn and creating a miracle-save rook-pawn and wrong colored Bishop vs. lone King draw.

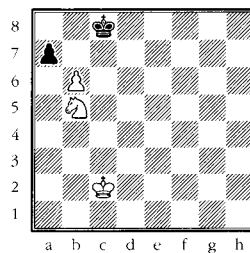
1...Nf6! 2.Bf3 Nxf4!

Taking it before g4-g5 can be played!

3.Bxf4 Kf6 4.h5 Kg7, 1/2-1/2.

SOLUTION 11

Diagram 156

**White too move**

White's a Knight up and can capture the a7-pawn two different ways. Can he win?

This is an easy position to blow. For example, 1.Nxa7+?? Kb7 leads to the loss of the b-pawn. Most tempting is 1.bxa7??, but if you had studied the earlier material you would know that the position after 1...Kb7 is dead drawn.

1.Nd6+!

The only way to secure victory.

1...Kb8 2.b7 Kc7 3.Kb3, 1-0. White wins by marching his King down the board: 3...Kb8 4.Kb4 Kc7 5.Kb5 Kb8 6.Ka6 Kc7 7.Kxa7, etc.

SOLUTION 12

Diagram 157

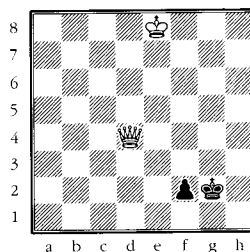
**White to move**

Diagram 158

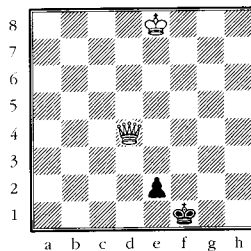
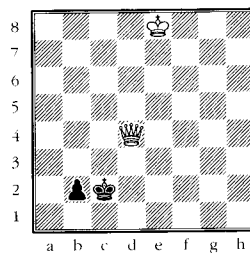
**White to move**

Diagram 159

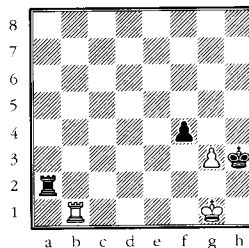
**White to move**

Of these three diagrams (157, 158, and 159), which one (if any) is salvageable for Black (White has the move in each case)?

Position one (diagram 157) is a forced draw, while the others are resignable. Look over the material in Part Four again if you didn't get this right.

SOLUTION 13

Diagram 160

**Black to move**

Black has four ways to play this position: 1...Kxg3, 1...fxg3, 1...Rg2+, and 1...f3. Do any of these choices win?

The only correct move is ...

1...Kxg3!

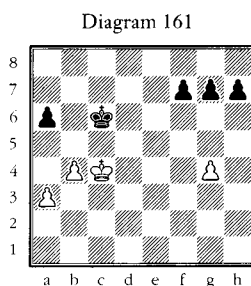
The other moves don't get the job done:

- 1...fxg3?? is a basic draw—a g-pawn can't win, even though white's Rook is passive.
- 1...Rg2+?? 2.Kf1 Kxg3 3.Rb3+ f3 4.Rb8 drawing since Black can't deal with the avalanche of checks to come.
- 1...f3?? 2.Rb8 and the upcoming long distance checks will assure White of the draw.

After 1...Kxg3, White can't activate his Rook (2.Rb8 Ra1+ mates) and also can't prevent Black from following up with 2...f3 with an easy theoretical win thanks to the passive state of white's Rook. An example:

2.Rb3+ (2.Kh1 f3 3.Rg1+ Kf2 is also easy for Black) 2...f3 3.Rb1 Rg2+ 4.Kf1 Rh2 5.Kg1 f2+ 6.Kf1 Rh1+, 0-1.

SOLUTION 14



ShadowMan36 – Absinthefan666, Internet Blitz
(3 minutes each) **Black to move**

Black is a pawn up and enjoys a three to one pawn majority on the kingside. Wanting to create a passed pawn, he played 1...g6. Is this a good move?

This example, which deserves careful study, is a mix of several things we've already learned (or should have already learned!): Opposition, Chicken Coup, Trébuchet, freezing a pawn majority, Square of the Pawn, and Outside Passed Pawns.

A student of mine, who had the black pieces, showed me this game because he was very curious about the resulting King and pawn ending. He's a pawn up and doing well, but the move he chose left me clutching my heart in convulsive agony.

1...g6??

Turning a win into a loss in one move! Instead, 1...h6 followed by 2...g6, 3...f6, and eventually ...h6-h5, would have won.

2.g5!

A super Deep Freeze! We looked at this idea in Part Three, where one pawn killed two. Here, though, we see one pawn killing three! Now White wins by:

- Turning his queenside majority into a passed pawn.
- Rushing his King to the kingside with drooling Chicken Coup desires.
- Eating black's kingside pawns while black's King deals with white's Outside Passer on the opposite wing.

2...Kb6 3.a4

The immediate 3.Kd5?? allows 3...Kb5 with a draw: 4.Kd4 Ka4 5.Kc4 Kxa3 6.Kc3 Ka2 7.Kc2 Ka3 8.Kc3 Ka4 9.Kc4 when black's King is permanently trapped on the a-file.

3...Kc6 4.a5!

Also sufficient is 4.b5+ axb5 5.axb5+ Kb6 6.Kb4 Kb7 7.Kc5 (Back to the old Fox in the Chicken Coup routine!) 7...Kc7 8.Kd5 Kb6 9.Ke5 Kxb5 10.Kf6 Kc5 11.Kxf7 Kd6 12.Kg7 Ke5 (or 12...Ke7 13.Kxh7 Kf7 14.Kh6 Kf8 15.Kxg6 Kg8 16.Kh6 Kh8 17.g6 Kg8 18.g7 Kf7 19.Kh7, 1-0.) 13.Kxh7 Kf5 14.Kh6 and White wins thanks to the wonders of Trébuchet!

With 4.a5, White creates an Outside Passed Pawn that's even further from the action than the one that would result from 4.b5+. Ultimately it doesn't make a difference in this particular game, but often a little detail like this (i.e., dragging the black King even farther from the action on the kingside) can be the only way to win.

4...Kd6

On 4...Kb7 5.Kd5 (taking the Diagonal Opposition) 5...Kc7 6.Kc5 Kb7 7.Kd6 White can win by going after a6, or continue with his Chicken Coup strategy and ravage black's kingside pawns: 7...Kb8 (Though Black takes the Opposition, it has no effect since it can't prevent his a-pawn from falling.) 8.Kc6 (8.Ke7 also ices the game) 8...Ka7 (Keeping the Opposition by 8...Kc8 is futile due to 9.Kb6 and 10.Kxa6) 9.Kc7 (retaking the Opposition and forcing black's King away from the protection of a6) 9...Ka8 10.Kb6 and it's all over.

5.b5

Wisely avoiding 5.Kd4 Kc6 6.Ke5?? (White could still win by 6.Kc4) 6...Kb5 7.Kf6 Kxb4 8.Kxf7 Kxa5 9.Kg7 Kb4 10.Kxh7 a5 11.Kxg6 a4 12.Kh7 a3 13.g6 a2 14.g7 a1=Q 15.g8=Q with a draw.

5...axb5+ 6.Kxb5 Kc7 7.Kc5

Time to go back to our “Chicken Coup” mentality!

7...Kb7 8.Kd6 Ka6 9.Ke7 Kxa5 10.Kxf7 Kb6 11.Kg7 Kc6 12.Kxh7 Kd7 13.Kxg6 Ke8 14.Kh7, 1-0. Black can't do anything about g5-g6-g7-g8=Q.



Final Thoughts

Wow! That was a lot of material! However, you now have an extremely solid endgame base that puts you far ahead of most of your competition, and even ahead of players a few hundred rating points higher than you that *should* have mastered these endgames long ago, but never got around to it.

Trust me when I tell you that the time you've spent learning everything in Part Four will likely prove to be the most rewarding study time of your chess life. You'll see the effects both in your newfound confidence, and in the results you gain against people who were once your equals, but now are not in your league once an endgame is reached.

Even if you decide that you have no desire to ever go past Part Four, do yourself a favor: if you don't view King and pawn vs. King positions as kid stuff, if any mention of the Square of the pawn and Outside Passed Pawns makes your eyes roll up into your head, if you have even a shred of doubt about how to handle the Lucena and Philidor positions, if the winning procedure in a Queen vs. pawn on the 7th situation is something you have to ponder, please go back and read Part Four again. Do so over and over until everything in it is muscle memory—your mind might go blank, but your hand will reach out and play these positions perfectly.