



## The Bishop Pair

### Part 2

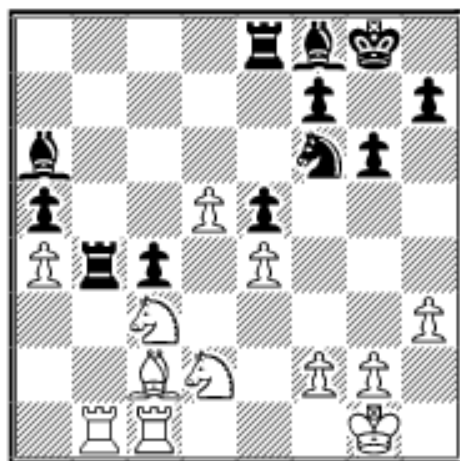
COLUMNISTS

## Endgame Corner

Karsten Müller



In my last column of the year I want to deal with two bishops vs two knights. The knights have one principle advantage over the bishops: they can attack one square twice. Nevertheless the bishops are superior in the majority of cases. John Watson gives the following figure in *Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy* on page 149f based on the ChessBase MEGABASE 1997: the bishops scored 63% in the pure ending with even pawns. The first example is no exception:

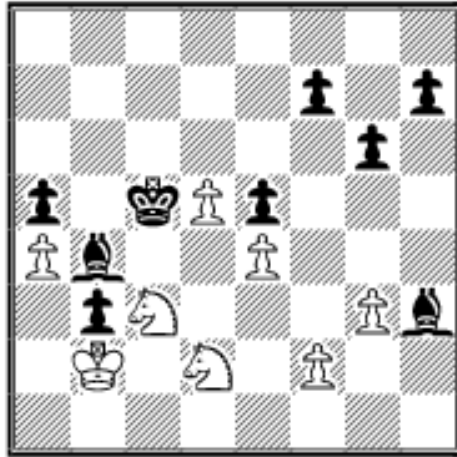


**12.01 C.Sandipan (2446) - E.Vladimirov (2598) Penta Media GM Kelamabakkam IND 2000**

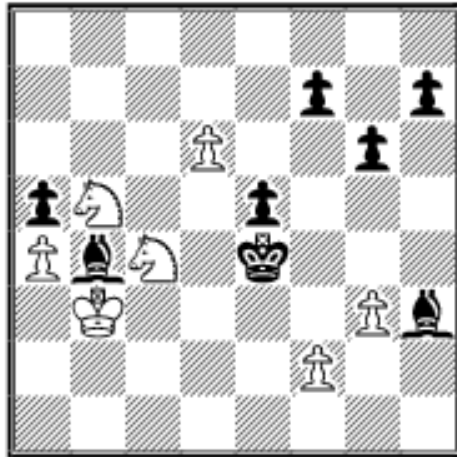
I start earlier as Vladimirov's play is quite instructive:

**32...Reb8 33.Nf1 Bc5 34.Ng3 Nd7 35.Nge2 Bd6 36.Na2 Rb2 37.Rxb2 Rxb2 38.Nac3 Nc5**

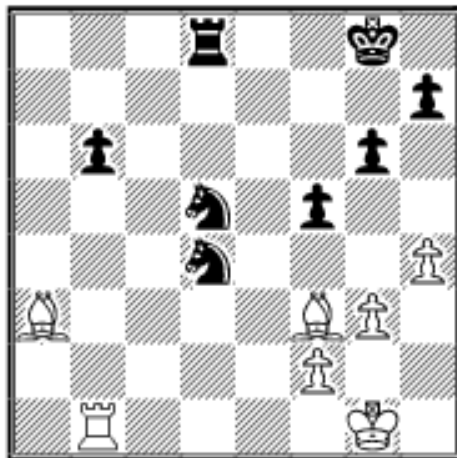
**39.Nd1 Rb4 40.Ndc3** now Black's last unit - his majesty himself - enters the fight on the queenside: **40...Kf8 41.Rb1 Ke7 42.Nc1 Kd7 43.N1a2 Rxb1+ 44.Nxb1 Nb3 45.Nac3 Bb4 46.Kf1 Kd6 47.Ke2 Kc5 48.Kd1 Bc8 49.Bxb3 cxb3 50.Kc1 Ba6 51.Kb2 Bf1 52.g3 Bxh3 53.Nd2**



Black's king has become too active and White is lost:  
**53...Bg2! 54.Kxb3 54.Nxb3+ Kc4 55.Nd1 Kd3—+ 54...Kd4 55.Nb5+ Kd3 56.Nc4 Kxe4 57.d6 Bh3**



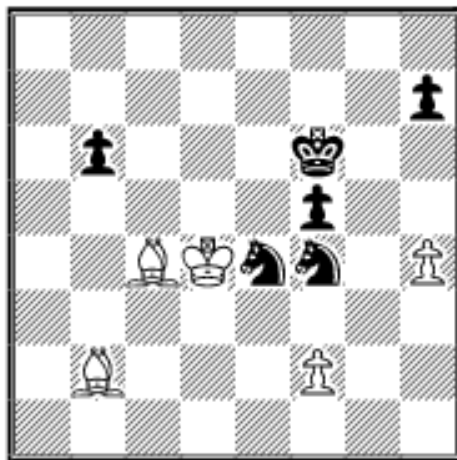
White's counterplay with the d-pawn comes too late: **58.Nb6 58.g4 Bxg4 59.Nc3+ Kd4 60.Nb5+ Kc5 61.Nxe5 Be6+ 62.Kb2 Kd5 63.d7 Be7—+ 58...Be6+! 59.Kc2 Bc5 60.Na8 Bxf2 61.Nac7 Bf5 0–1**



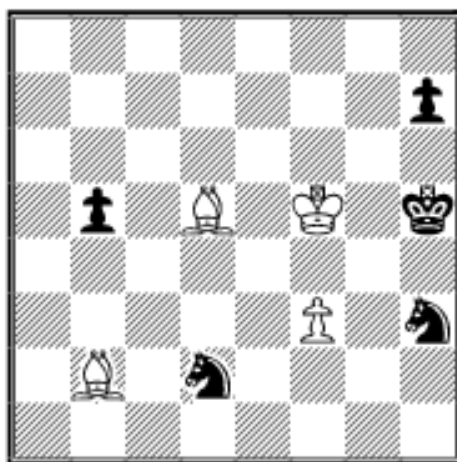
**12.02 A. Rustemov (2620) - I. Sokolov (2659) Dos Hermanas Internet KO ICC Internet 2001**

Rustemov plays on despite his pawn deficit. A brave decision!  
**35.Bh1!?** Fritz naturally prefers **35.Bxd5+ Rxd5 36.Rxb6** with total equality **35...Ne2+ 36.Kf1**

**Nec3 37.Rb3 Ne4 38.Rd3 Rd7 (38...Kf7!?) 39.g4 Ndf6 40.Rxd7 Nxd7 41.gxf5 gxf5 42.Ke2 Kf7 43.Ke3 Ndf6 44.Bf3 Ke6 45.Be2 Nd5+ 46.Kd4 Nf4?! 47.Bc4+ Kf6 48.Bb2**



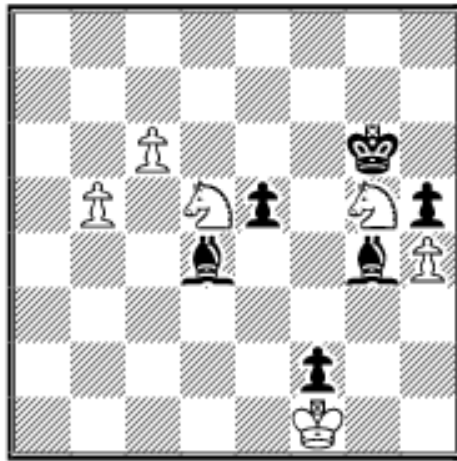
Black has to be careful now as the bishops form a powerful attacking force **48...Kg6?! Of course not 48...Nxf2??** 49.Ke3+---, but 48...Ng2 was called for. **49.Ke5 Nh3 50.f3 Nd2 51.Bd5 b5 52.h5+ Kxh5 53.Kxf5**



Now Sokolov has to defend very well to hold on **53...Kh4?! 53...Ng1 54.f4 Ne2= 54.Bc3 Nc4?** The decisive error. 54...Nf1! was the only move to save Black's skin, e.g., 55.Be1+ Kh5 56.Bf7+ Kh6 57.Be8 Ne3+ 58.Kf6 Nf4 59.Bxb5 Kh5 60.Bd2 Kh4 61.Ke5 Ng6+ 62.Ke4 Ng2=. 54...Nxf3?

55.Bxf3 is lost for Black as the pawnless endgame 2 bishops vs knight is always won. **55.Be1+ Kh5 56.Bf7+ Kh6 57.Kf6 Ng5** 57...Nf4 loses due to 58.Bxc4 Nh5+ (58...bxc4 59.Bd2 Kh5 60.Bxf4 Kh4 61.Bg5+ Kg3 62.f4 Kg4 63.f5 c3 64.Bh6 c2 65.Ke6+-) 59.Kf7 bxc4 60.Bd2+-- **58.Be8 Nxf3?** allows a nice mate. But even after 58...Nd6 59.Bc6 Ngf7 60.Bb4+- Black is completely tied down. **59.Bb4 Nce5 60.Bf8# 1-0**

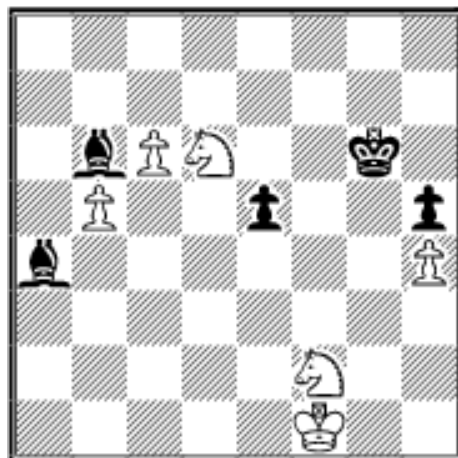
But the bishops do not always win:



### 12.03 Zaw Win Lay (2633) - J.Ehlvest (2622) Japfa Classic Bali 2000

Ehlvest played too optimistically and even lost the game: **51...Kh6?** 51...e4! was called for: 52.Nf4+ Kf5 53.Ne2 Bb6 54.Ng3+ Kf4 55.N3xe4 Ke3 56.Nxf2 Be2+ 57.Kg2

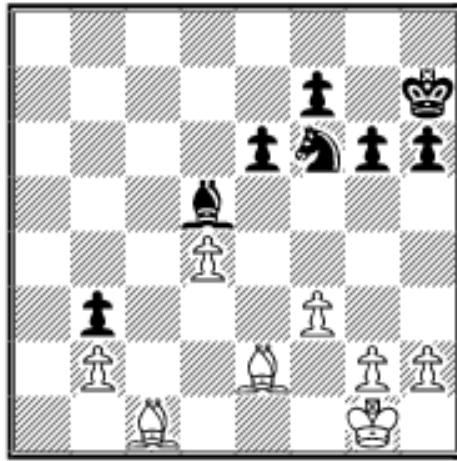
Bxb5 58.Nfe4 Bxc6 59.Kh3= **52.Nf6! Bd1?** 52...Bf5! was a better chance to fight on although White is clearly better after 53.Nfe4 Kg7 54.Nxf2 Kf6 55.Ke2 Bb6 56.Nfe4+. Of course not 52...Bb6? 53.Nxg4+ hxg4 54.Ne6+- **53.Nfe4?!** makes the win very complicated. 53.c7? surprisingly only leads to a draw: 53...Bc2! 54.Nf7+ Kg7 55.Nxh5+ Kxf7 56.Ng3 Bd3+ 57.Ne2 Bf5 58.Nxd4 exd4 59.Kxf2 (59.b6 Bc8 60.Kxf2 Kg6 61.Ke2 Ba6+ 62.Kd2 Kh5=) 59...Ke7 60.b6 Kd7 61.h5 Kc6 62.h6 Kb7 63.Ke2 d3+ 64.Kd2 Bh7=, but 53.Ng8+! wins on the spot: 53...Kg6 (53...Kg7 54.Ne6+ Kxg8 55.Nxd4+-) 54.Ne7+ Kf6 55.Nd5+ Kg6 56.Ne6 Ba7 57.b6+- **53...Ba4** 53...Bb3 54.Nd2 Bc2 55.Kg2 Be3 56.Nf7+ Kh7 (56...Kg7 57.Nd6+-) 57.Nd6 Bb6 58.N6c4+- **54.Nf7+ Kg6 55.Nfd6 Bb6 56.Nxf2**



**56...Kf6?** 56...Bc7! was a tougher defence. But White is winning nevertheless. One sample line runs: 57.Nfe4 Bc2 58.Ke2 Bb3 59.Ne8 Bc4+ 60.Kf3 Bxb5 61.Nxc7 Bxc6 62.Ke3 Kf5 63.Nf2+- **57.c7! Bxc7 58.Ne8+ Ke7 59.Nxc7 Kd7 60.b6 Kc6?! 60...Bb3 61.Ke2 Kc6 62.Ne8 Kxb6**

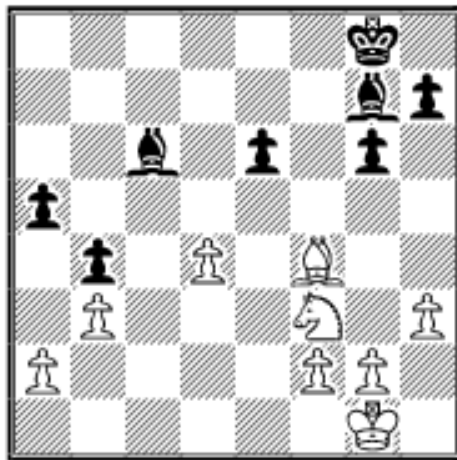
63.Nd3+- **61.Nd5 Bb3 62.Nd3** and Ehlvest resigned due to





**12.05 J.Nilssen (2333) -  
E.Gausel (2520) Nordic  
Championships Bergen 2001**

**36...Nd7 37.Kf2 Nb6 38.Ke3  
Bc6 39.Ba6 g5 40.Kd3 f5  
41.Kc3 Bd5 42.Kb4 Kg6  
43.Bb5 Kf6 44.Kc5 Nc8  
45.Bc4 Ne7 46.Bxd5 Nxd5  
47.Kc4 Ke7 48.Kxb3 Kd6  
49.Kc4 Kc6 50.Bd2 Nb6+ 51.Kd3 Kd5 52.h4 Nc4  
53.hxg5 hxg5 54.Bc3 f4 55.b3 Nd6 56.Ba5 Nf5 57.Bd8  
Nxd4 58.Bxg5 Nxb3 59.Bxf4 Nd4 60.Bg5 e5 61.Be3 Nf5  
62.Bf2 Nd6 63.Ke2 Nf5 64.g4 Ne7 65.Be3 Ng6 66.Bg5  
Ke6 67.Kf2 Kd5 68.Bc1 Ke6 69.Kg3 Kf6 70.Bh6 Ke6  
71.Bg5 Kd6 72.Kf2 Ke6 73.Ke3 Kd5 74.Kd3 Nf8 75.Kc3  
Ne6 76.Be3 Nf8 1/2-1/2**

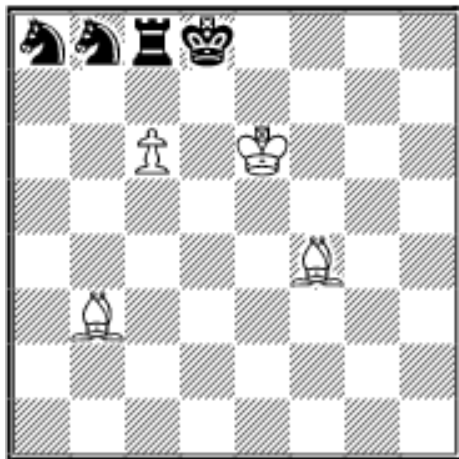


**12.06 F.Christenson (2218) -  
E.Gausel (2520) ch-NOR  
Kristiansund 2001**

**38.Bc7 a4 39.Bd6 axb3  
40.axb3 Bd5 41.Bxb4 Bxb3  
42.Bd6 Bd5 43.Be5 Bxf3  
44.gxf3 Bf8 45.Kf1 Kf7 46.f4  
Be7 47.Ke2 Bb4 48.Ke3 Be7  
49.Ke4 Bb4 50.Kf3 Be7  
51.Kg3 Bd8 52.Kf3 Be7 53.Ke4 Bb4 54.Bc7 Be7 55.Bb6  
Bd6 56.Bd8 Bb8 57.f3 1/2-1/2**

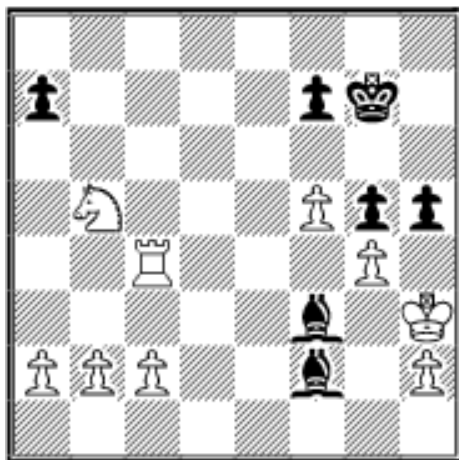
**Exercises (Solutions next month)**





**E12.04 G.Kasparyan *Revista Romana de Sah* 1978, 1st hon. mention**

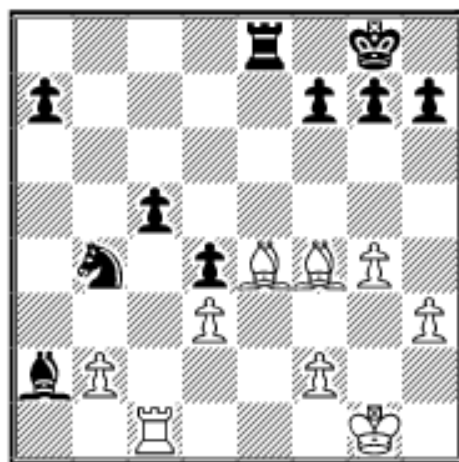
White to move and draw.



**E12.05 M.Bier - E.Flechsig Leipzig 1879**

Black is to move. Which of the following is true:

- A) Black is better, the only real question is whether he can convert his advantage.
- B) Black can force a draw.
- C) White is better.



**E12.06 R.Fischer (2785) - B.Spassky (2560) Sveti Stefan/Belgrade match 1992**

How to assess the position with White to move?

**Solutions to last month exercises**



**E11.01 V.Kramnik (2740) -  
V.Topalov (2725) Novgorod  
1997**

Kramnik won very quickly:  
**40.Bc4!** aiming at Black's  
Achilles' heel, the knight on f7.  
After other moves, Black can  
fight on, e.g., 40.Rd7? Rxd7  
41.cxd7 Ke7; 40.Bd8? Nxd8

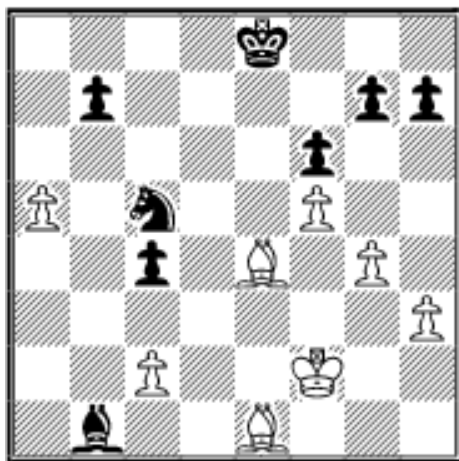
41.Rxd8 Bc7; 40.Bb4? Re8 41.Rd7 Rb8 and 40.Rc1? Bc7  
**40...f4** (40...Nd6 41.Bd8! Nxc4 42.Rd7+- (Huzman in  
CBM 60); 40...Bc7 41.Bb4+- look at the powerful white  
bishops!; 40...Re8 41.c7 Rc8 42.Rd7 Nd6 43.Ba6+-)  
**41.Rd7 1-0**



**E11.02 V.Anand (2794) -  
V.Kramnik (2797) Mainz  
Chess Classics Champions  
duel 2001**

Kramnik turned the tables with  
**25...g3!! 26.Nf1 26.fxg3 Bc5+**  
27.Rd4 Bxd4+ 28.Bxd4 Rd8—+  
**26...gxf2+ 27.Kh2 27.Kg2**  
Rg8+ 28.Kf3 Bxc4 29.Ba3

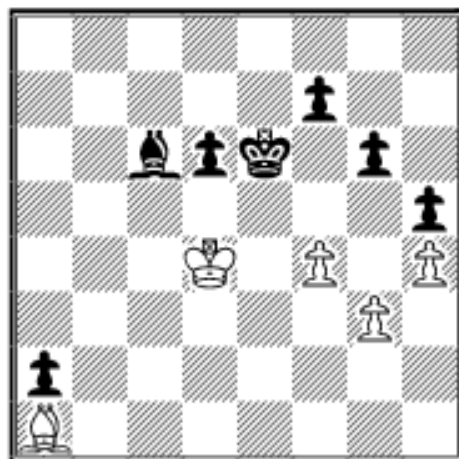
Bxa3 30.Rxg8 Bxf1 31.Kxf2 Bc4—+ **27...Bxc4 0-1**



**E11.03 V.Anand (2725) -  
J.Lautier (2645) London PCA-  
Intel GP 1995**

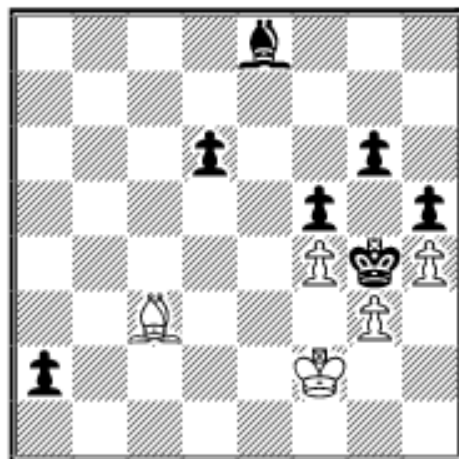
The following motif is worth remembering: **34.Bxb7!! Kd7**  
34...Nxb7? 35.a6 Kd7 36.a7+-  
**35.Bb4 Kc7** The bishop is still  
poisoned: 35...Nxb7 36.a6 Kc7  
37.a7+- as the unfortunate

knight hinders his own king. **36.Bd5 Na6 37.c3 37.Bf8 g6**  
38.g5 wins as well. **37...Nxb4 38.cxb4 c3 39.Ke3 Kd6**  
**40.Bf3 40.a6 Kxd5 41.a7+- 40...h5 41.a6 1-0**



**E11.04 K.Bischoff (2533) -  
A.Khalifman (2690)  
Bundesliga 2000/01 Plauen-  
Porz**

Alexander Khalifman  
demonstrated superb technique:  
**52...Kf5 53.Ke3 Kg4 54.Kf2 f5**  
**55.Bb2 Be8 56.Bc3**



and now dealt the decisive  
blow: **56...g5!!** Bischoff  
resigned as he can't prevent the  
creation of a third black passed  
pawn, destroying his fortress:  
**57.fxg5 57.hxg5 h4 58.gxh4**  
Kxf4 59.Bf6 Ke4 60.Ba1 d5  
61.Bb2 Bh5 62.Ba1 d4 63.Bb2  
f4+- **57...f4 58.gxf4 Kxh4**  
**59.Kf3 59.Bf6 Kg4+- 59...Bg6**

**60.Bf6 Kh3+-**

Sources:

*Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy*, John Watson, GAMBIT 1998.

*ChessBase MEGABASE 2000*

*No Regrets*, Fischer-Spassky 1992, Yasser Seirawan and George Stefanovic, ICE, Seattle 1992

*The Complete Studies of Genrikh Kasparyan*, John Roycroft ed., Russell Enterprises 1997

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