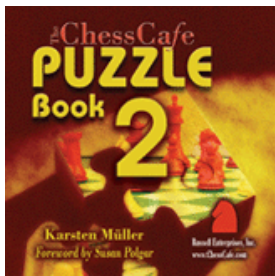




COLUMNISTS

Endgame Corner

Karsten Müller



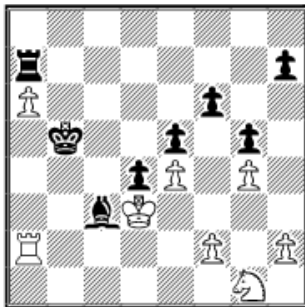
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The Fischer Endgame

Robert James Fischer passed away on January 17, 2008 in Iceland at the age of sixty-four. In the 1960s and at the beginning of the 1970s he managed to break the domination of the Soviet grandmasters and in 1972 he defeated Boris Spassky in the legendary Reykjavik world championship match. He had a strong will to win and good stamina; his opening preparation was thorough; his tactics sharp and last but not least his endgame technique superb. In this last respect he will especially be remembered for his endgames with rook and bishop vs. rook and knight. As I have already dealt with a few of his fine efforts in [September 2001](#), I have decided to take a closer look at his victory against the Armenian Tigran Petrosian. My analysis is based on Kasparov's in [My Great Predecessors Part IV](#), on Marin's in [Learn from the Legends](#) and Matanovic's in [Informator 12/11](#).

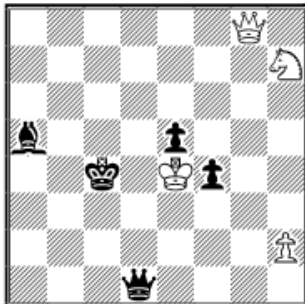
85.01 T.Petrosian – R.Fischer
Buenos Aires (6), 1971



Petrosian had to seal his move and faced an extremely difficult decision. It is very understandable that he decided not to alter the structure radically and sealed:

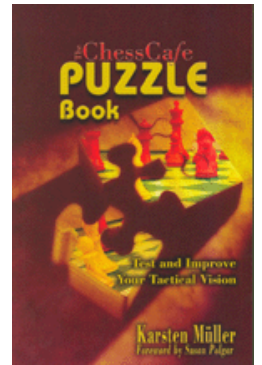
42.Ne2?

Yet in retrospect it seems that he had to use the moment more actively: 42.f4!!
gxf4 (42...exf4 43.Nf3 Rxa6 44.Rxa6 Kxa6 45.e5 fxe5 46.Nxg5 Ba5 47.Ke4 (47.Nxh7? Bd8 48.Ke4 (48.g5 f3 49.g6 f2 50.Ke2 Bh4 51.g7 d3+)) 48...d3 49.Kxd3 f3 50.Ke3 e4 51.Kf2 Kb5 52.Nf8 Bb6+ 53.Kg3 Kc4+) 47...Kb5 (47...Bd8 48.Nf7 Bc7 49.Ng5=) 48.Nxh7 Kc4 49.g5 d3 50.g6 d2 51.g7 d1Q 52.g8Q+

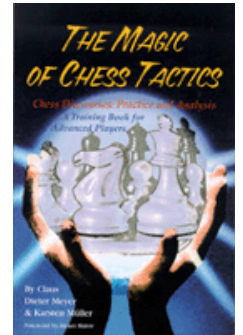


White's drawing chances should be real.) 43.g5! fxe5 44.Nf3

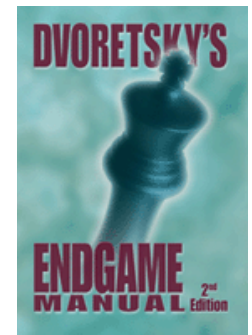
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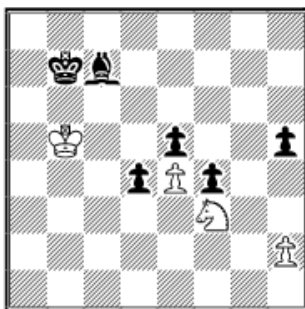
Amazing as it may seem Matanovic and Kasparov think that White's initiative compensates for the pawns and they seem to be right, e.g. 44...h5

A) 44...Rxa6 45.Rxa6 Kxa6 46.Nxg5 Ba5 (46...Bb4 47.Nf7 f3 48.Nxe5 f2 49.Ke2 Bd6 50.Nd3 Bxh2 51.Kxf2 Kb5 52.e5 Kc4 53.Kg2=) 47.Nxh7 f3 48.Nf6 f2 49.Ke2 Be1 50.Ng4 d3+ 51.Kf1=.

B) 44...g4 45.Nxe5 h5 46.Ng6= (Matanovic) 46...f3 47.e5 Be1 48.e6 f2 49.Ke2 d3+ 50.Kf1 d2 51.e7 Rxe7 52.Rxd2 Bxd2 53.Nxe7 Be3 54.Nd5 Ba7 55.Nf6=.

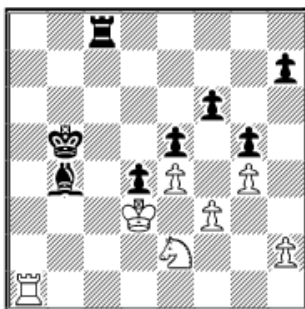
C) 44...h6 45.Nxe5 Rxa6 46.Rxa6 Kxa6 47.Ng4 f3 (47...h5 48.Nf6 f3 (48...h4 49.e5 f3 50.Ne4 g4 51.e6 Bb4 52.Kxd4=) 49.Nxh5 Kb5 50.e5 Kc6 51.Ke4 g4 52.Ng3 f2 53.e6 Kd6 54.Kf5 Ke7 55.Kxg4=) 48.e5 Kb6 49.e6 Kc7 50.Ke4 Kd6 51.Kxf3 Kxe6 (51...h5 52.Nf6 Kxe6 53.Nxh5 d3 54.Ng3 Bd4 55.h3 Bg1 56.Ne4=) 52.Nxh6 d3 53.Ke3 d2 54.Ke2 Ke5 55.Ng4+ Ke4 56.Ne3=.

45.Nxg5 Ba5 46.Nf3 Bc7 47.Rb2+ Kxa6 48.Kc4 Rb7 49.Rxb7 Kxb7 50.Kb5



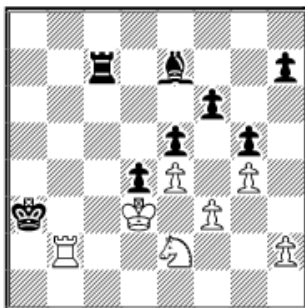
White's fortress seems to be watertight, e.g. 50...Bb8 51.h3 Bd6 52.Ne1=. Or can you find a way to break through?

42...Ba5 43.Rb2+ Kxa6 44.Rb1 Rc7 45. Rb2 Be1 46.f3 Ka5 47.Rc2 Rb7 48.Ra2 + Kb5 49.Rb2+ Bb4 50.Ra2 Rc7 51. Ra1 Rc8



52.Ra7

Waiting passively with 52.Ra2 is probably also insufficient, e.g. 52...Rc7 53.Ra1 Be7 54.Ra2 Kb4 55.Rb2+ Ka3 (Marin) and now:

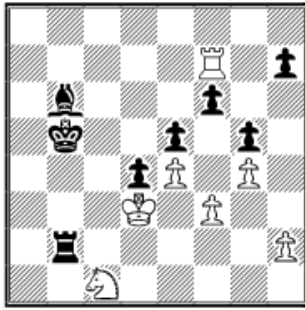


56.Rc2 Rb7 57.Nc1 Ka4 58.Ke2 Rb1 59. Rc4+

A) 59.h3 Kb5 60.Nd3 (60.Rc7 Rb2+ 61. Kd3 Be5 62.Rb7+ Bb6 63.Rf7 Kc5 64. Rf8 Bc7 65.Rc8 Kd6+) 60...Ra1 61.Rb2 + (61.Kd2 Bb4+→) 61...Kc4 62.Rc2+ Kb3 63.Rc7 Ra2+ 64.Kd1 (64.Kf1 Rd2- +) 64...Ba3 65.Ke1 Bb4+ 66.Kf1 Rd2+.

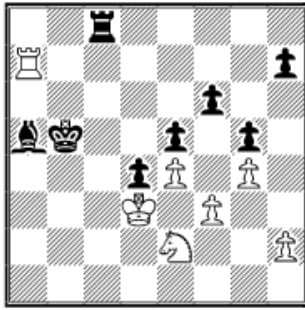
B) 59.Rc7 Rb2+ 60.Kd3 Bb4 61.Rc2 Ka3 62.Re2 Ba5 63.Rc2 Be1 64. Re2 (64.h3 Bb4 65.Re2 Bc3 66.Rc2 Be1+) 64...Bf2 65.Rc2 Be3 66. Rxb2 Kxb2 67.Ne2 Bf4 68.h3 Kb1+ zugzwang.

59...Kb5 60.Rc7 (60.Rc2 Ba3 61.Nd3 Rh1→) 60...Rb2+ 61.Kd3 Bc5 62.
Rb7+ Bb6 63.Rf7



63...Kc5! zugzwang 64.Rf8 (64.Rxf6
Ba5→) 64...Bc7→.

52...Ba5

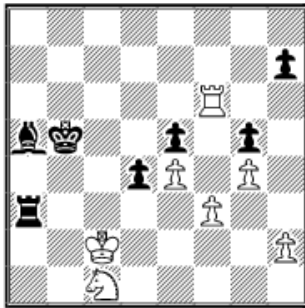


53.Rd7

53.Rxh7? is wrong, as the h-pawn is
insignificant: 53...Bb6 54.Kd2 Ra8 55.
Rb7 Ra3→.

53.Rf7!? was called for, as the f-pawn is
important. Black should probably protect
it by 53...Bd8!?. Black's winning
potential is very reduced after the direct

53...Bb6?! 54.Rxf6 Ra8 55.Nc1 Ra3+ 56.Ke2 Re3+ 57.Kd1 Ba5 58.Kc2
Ra3



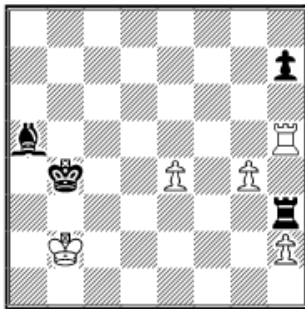
59.Re6!

A) 59.Nb3? Ra2+ 60.Kd3 (60.Kb1?
Rxx2 61.Nxa5 Kxa5 62.Rf5 d3 63.Rxe5
+ Kb4→) 60...Bb4 61.Nxd4+ exd4 62.
Kxd4 Rd2+ 63.Ke3 Rxx2→.

B) 59.Rf5? Kc4 60.Rxe5 Bc7→.

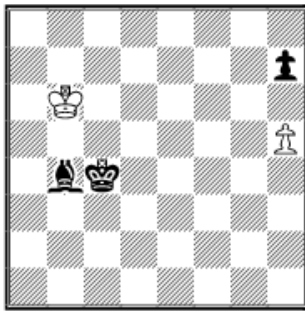
59...Bb4 (59...d3+ 60.Nxd3 Rc3+ 61.
Kb2 Rxd3 62.Rxe5+ Kb4 63.Rxx5 Rxx3

64.Rh5 (64.Rf5? Rh3 65.Rh5?

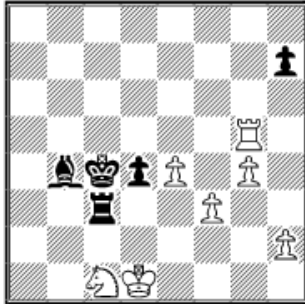


This loses surprisingly: 65...Rxx5 66.
gxx5 Kc4 67.Kc2 Kd4 68.e5 Kxe5 69.
Kd3 Kf4 70.Ke2 Bb6 71.Kf1 Kf3 72.h6
Bd4 73.h3 Be3 74.h4 Bf2 75.h5 Be3 76.
Ke1 Bxx6 77.Kf1 Be3 78.Ke1 Bc5 79.
Kd2 Bf2 80.Kd3 Be3 81.Kc2 Ke2 82.
Kc3 Bf2 83.Kc4 Kd2 84.Kb4 Bd4 85.
Kc4 Bc3 86.Kb3 Kd3 87.Ka3 Kc2 88.
Ka4 Bd2 89.Kb5 Kd3 90.Kc5 Bc3 91.
Kb5 Kd4 92.Ka4 Kc4 93.Ka3 Be5 94.
Ka2 Kc3 95.Ka3 Bd6+ 96.Ka4 Kc4 97.

Ka5 Bc5 98.Ka6 Bb4 99.Kb6



Finally White's king has been driven out of Rauser's drawing zone, so that 99...h6 wins.) 64...Rf7 65.Kc2 is also not completely clear.) 60.Rxe5+ Kc4 61. Rxe5 Rc3+ 62.Kd1

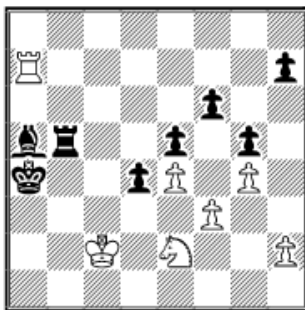


Black will win the knight with 62...Ba3, but it is far from clear, if he manages to win the game, as the bishop does not control the queening square of the h-pawn. (62...Rxf3? is met by 63.Rf5) 63. Ne2 Rd3+ 64.Kc2 (64.Ke1 Bb4+ 65.Kf1 Rd1+ 66.Kf2 Rd2 67.Rd5 d3 68.Rd4+ Kc5 69.Rd5+ Kc6 70.f4 Bc5+ 71.Ke1 Rxe2+ 72.Kd1 Rf2 73.Rxd3 Rxf4 74. Rh3 Rf7) 64...Rxf3 65.Rf5 Rb3 66.Nxd4 Rb2+ 67.Kd1 Kxd4 68.e5) 54.Ra7 Bb6

55.Ra2 and Black should win in the long run (compare the line 52.Ra2).

53...Bb6 54.Rd5+ Bc5 55.Nc1 Ka4 56.Rd7 Bb4 57.Ne2

57.Ra7+ Ba5 58.Ne2 Rb8 59.Kc2 Rb5 (Marin)

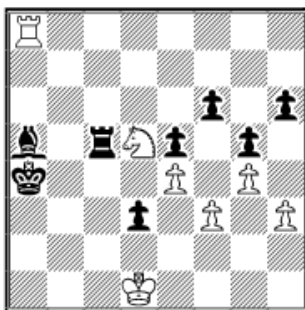


Black will penetrate slowly but surely on the queenside, e.g. 60.h3

A) 60.Nc1 Rc5+ 61.Kd1 Rc3+.

B) 60.Ra8 Ka3 61.Kd1 d3 62.Nc3 (62. Nc1 d2+ 62...Rc5 63.Nd5 Ka4 64. Nxf6 Rc7 65.Nd5 Rc2+.

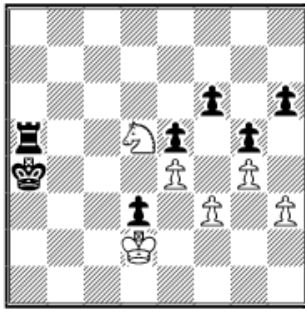
60...h6! puts White in zugzwang. The typical technique against a knight. (The direct 60...Rc5+?! 61.Kd3 Kb3 62.Rb7+ Bb4 63.Rb8 and 60...Ka3?! 61. Kd1 d3? 62.Nc3 Rb3 63.Kd2 Kb4 64.Nd5+ Kb5+ 65.Rxa5+ Kxa5 66. Nxf6 are not convincing.) 61.Ra8 (61.Ra6 Ka3 62.Nc1 Rb2+ 63.Kd1 Ka4 64.Rxf6 d3+ 61...Ka3 (61...d3+? 62.Kxd3 Rb3+ 63.Kc4 Rxf3 64.Rb8 Rxh3 65.Rb1 and White's activity gives him the draw.) 62.Kd1 d3 63. Nc3 Rc5 64.Nd5 Ka4



(64...d2? 65.Ke2 gives White a solid blockade.) 65.Rb8

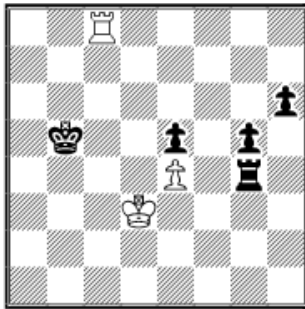
A) 65.Nxf6 Rc7 66.Rd8 Rc6+.

B) 65.Rxa5+ Rxa5 66.Kd2

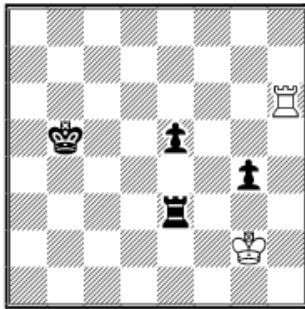


66...Kb3 and Black will break the blockade sooner or later. (But not 66... Rxd5? 67.exd5 Kb5 68.Kxd3 Kc5 69. Ke4 Kd6 70.Ke3 (70.Kf5? Kxd5 71. Kxf6 Kd4+) 70...Kxd5 71.Kd3= and Black's king cannot penetrate.) 67.Kxd3 Ra6 68.Nc7 Rc6 69.Nd5 Kb2 70.Kd2 Rc2+ 71.Kd3 Kc1 72.Nxf6 Rd2+ 73. Ke3 Kd1 74.Ng8 Rd6 75.Kf2 Re6 76. Ke3 Kc2+.

65...Rc2 66.Nb6+ Bxb6 67.Rxb6 Rf2 68.Rxf6 Kb4 69.Rc6 Rxf3 70.Kd2 Rxb3 71.Rc8 Rg3 72.Rc6 Kb5 73.Rc8 (73.Rxb6 Kc4 74.Ra6 Rg2+ 75. Ke3 d2+) 73...Rxb6 74.Kxd3



74...h5! great care is still required. (74... Rg3+? 75.Ke2 g4 76.Kf2 Rf3+ 77.Kg2 Rf4? 78.Re8 Rxe4 79.Rh8 Re3 80.Rxb6



This is surprisingly only drawn despite the two extra pawns.) 75.Re8 Rg3+ 76. Ke2 Kc5 77.Kf2 Rg4 78.Kf3 Rf4+ 79. Ke3 Kd6+.

57...Kb3 58.Rb7 Ra8 59.Rxb7

59.Nc1+ Kb2 60.Rxb4+ (60.Ne2 Ra3+ 61.Kc4 d3 62.Rxb4+ Kc2 63.Ng3 d2 64. Nf1 d1Q+) 60...Kxc1 61.Rb7 Rc8 62.

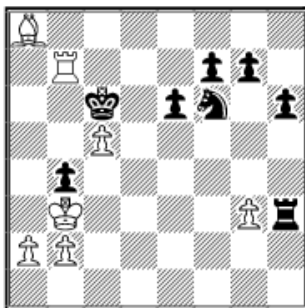
Rb3 Kd1 63.Rb1+ Rc1 64.Rb3 Rc3+.

59...Ra1 60.Nxd4+

A sad necessity, as Black's mating attack brings even higher dividends after 60.Ng3 Ra2 61.Nf1 Rf2+.

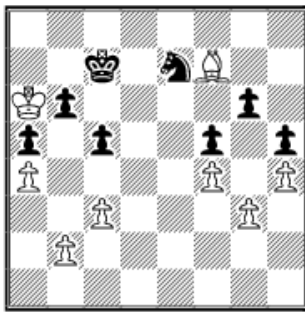
60...exd4 61.Kxd4 Rd1+ 62.Ke3 Bc5+ 63.Ke2 Rh1 64.h4 Kc4 65.h5 Rh2+ 66.Ke1 Kd3 0-1

Exercises (Solutions next month)



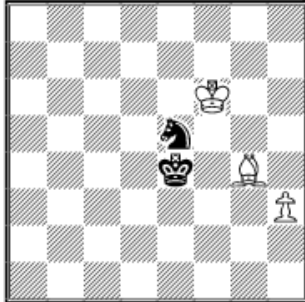
E85.01 R.Fischer – T.Petrosian
Bled 1961

Petrosian resigned after Fischer's next move. Can you find it?



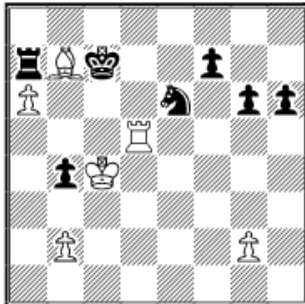
E85.02 R.Fischer – M.Taimanov
Vancouver 1971

How did Fischer break Black's resistance?



E85.03 R.Fischer – M.Taimanov
Vancouver 1971

Fischer found the only move to win. Can you do the same?



E85.04 R.Fischer – M.Taimanov
Palma de Mallorca 1970

To take the pawn or not to take the pawn that is the question.