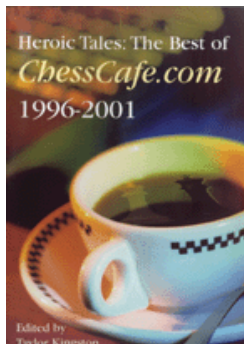




SKITTLES ROOM



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Bruce Pandolfini first began teaching chess in 1972 at a time when a whole class of educators arose to meet the demands for chess instruction because of the Fischer boom. From 1972 until 1977 he averaged fifty teaching periods a week and about a third of his lessons focused on the endgame.

A number of structured courses given at various universities and institutions forced him to spell out his ideas more concretely and the material developed for these courses, "modified by a legion of experience from private lessons and seminars, constitutes the bulk of material" in his new book [Endgame Workshop](#).

The result is thirty lessons, spanning 251 pages, that introduce the basic endgame concepts, such as elementary mates, the opposition, critical squares, and pawn promotion, as well as providing experienced players with deeper insights into more complex endgame matters. He writes, "that most of what appears here has been fashioned for real people with real problems about chess problems."

Excerpt: Endgame Workshop

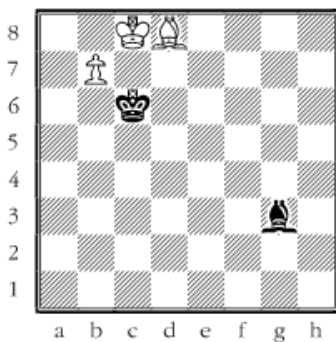
by Bruce Pandolfini

Lesson 27: Minor pieces and pawn vs. minor pieces

Minor piece and pawn vs. minor piece

At this point we're ready to move to another set of endings, where minor pieces confront each other, but one side has a single extra pawn.

447) White wins

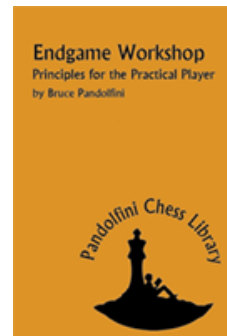


First step: force the black bishop off the b8-h2 diagonal

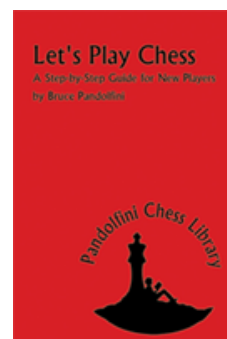
In Diagram 447, which is a familiar position analyzed famously by Centurini, White has a dangerous knight-pawn on the seventh rank. Black's bishop discourages it from queening, with the black king helping out by preventing White from blocking the critical b8-h2 diagonal at c7. It's also to be noted that the kings stand in direct opposition. In the first part of the solution White finds a way to drive Black's bishop off the b8-h2 diagonal, beginning with **1. Bh4!**. Without doubt, this sacrificial offer can be turned down, and must be, but the tactic gains time to transfer White's bishop to the a7-g1 diagonal. After **1...Bh2 2. Bf2 Bf4** (or to another safe place on the b8-h2 diagonal) **3. Ba7! Bh2 4. Bb8**, and now Black must surrender the critical diagonal. Fortunately for Black White's bishop blocks the promotion square. This means that Black will have one free move to maneuver the bishop to another defensive diagonal, namely the short diagonal, a7-b8. There follows **4...Bg1**, and after **5. Bg3** (for instance) **5...Ba7**, White has the deflective sacrifice **6. Bf2!**, and the pawn will queen shortly. If the shortest defensive diagonal (here, a7-b8) were one square longer, the black bishop would be able to avoid the deadend and still keep b8 guarded. Alas, such a square doesn't exist and White wins.

448) White wins

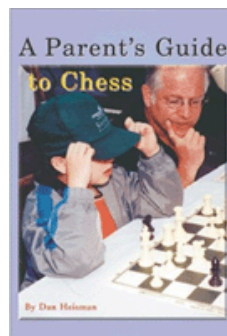
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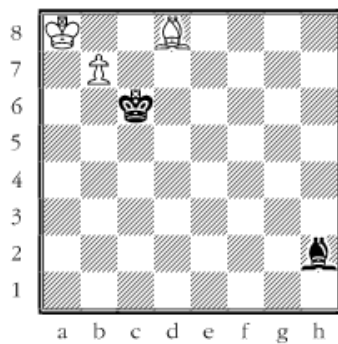
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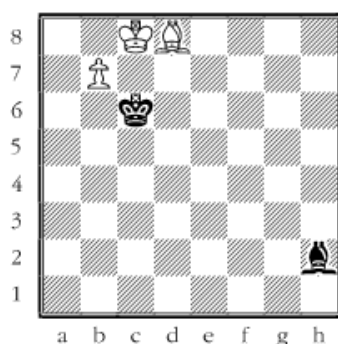
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White already guards a7

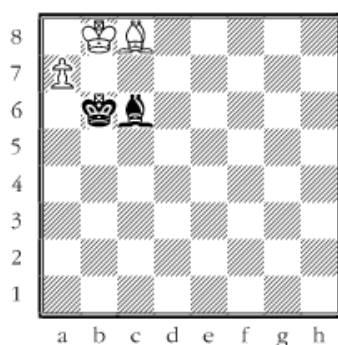
In Diagram 448, with the kings standing in diagonal opposition, and White's king on the short side of the pawn, Black doesn't even have the opportunity to reposition the bishop to the shortest defensive diagonal, since a7 is already guarded by White's king. Thus **1. Bg5 Bg3 2. Be3 Bh2 3. Ba7 Bg3 4. Bb8 Bf2 5. Bh2** (among others) leave Black without resource and the pawn queens.

449) Centurini's position



In Centurini's original position (Diagram 449) the black bishop started not at g3 but h2, so White doesn't have a time-gaining offer at h4. Consequently, White maneuvers for time, waiting for the black bishop to come out of its cubby hole, ripe to be sniped at. If Black offers no resistance, White wins with **1. Bh4 Bf4 2. Bf2 Bh2 3. Ba7 Bg3 4. Bb8 Bf2 5. Bf4 Ba7 6. Be3**. But let's say that after **1. Bh4** Black tries a more active defense, **1...Kb5**, aiming the king at a6, where it can additionally guard a7. White continues **2. Bf2 Ka6 3. Be5** (a waiting move that forces the black bishop to move and expose itself) **3...Bg3 4. Be7** (looking to an eventual block at c7) **4...Kb6** (racing back to guard c7 from c6) **5. Bd8+ Kc6**. We're back in the starting position, with one difference: the black bishop is exposed to capture, now being on g3 instead of h2. White would now win with **6. Bh4!** (forcing Black to waste a tempo saving the bishop, instead of using it to reposition the king) **6...Bh2 7. Bf2**, and we're back to the basic winning idea.

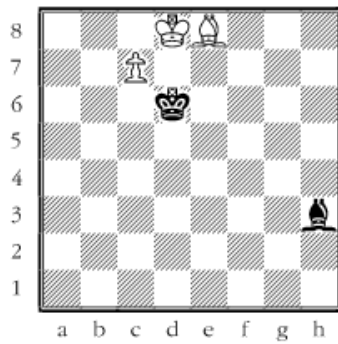
450) Black draws



White can't play Bc8-b7

In such endings knight-pawns pose problems for the defender, since the shortest defensive diagonal consists of but two squares (rook-seven and knight-eight). Rook-pawns, on the other hand, can sometimes be very good for the defender, even though a rook-pawn on the seventh rank offers only one diagonal for the defending bishop. If there is no place on the diagonal to create an obstruction, the defending bishop merely temporizes, and the position is drawn as in Diagram 450. Of course, the black king plays a key role, in that it guards b7 and prevents White from blocking the diagonal by playing Bc8-b7.

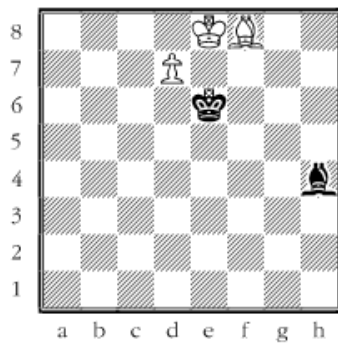
451) Black draws



Shortest defensive diagonal (a6-c8) is long enough

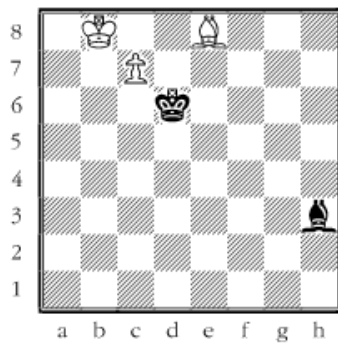
In Diagram 451, instead of a knight-pawn, White has a bishop-pawn, which means the shortest defensive diagonal leading to the promotion square (here, a6-c8), is just long enough. With the kings standing in direct opposition, on the long side of the pawn, the game is drawn after **1. Bb5 Bg4 2. Ba6 Bf5 3. Bc8 Bd3 4. Bd7 Ba6 5. Bb5 Bb7 6. Be2 Ke6**, Black has just enough room, and time to hold, with the position being drawn.

452) Easy draw



If a bishop-pawn provides a long enough secondary defensive diagonal leading to the promotion square, a center pawn makes the defender's job even easier, there being an additional square to work with. In Diagram 452 the black bishop can stop the pawn whether on the long (d8-h4) or short (a5-d8) defensive diagonal.

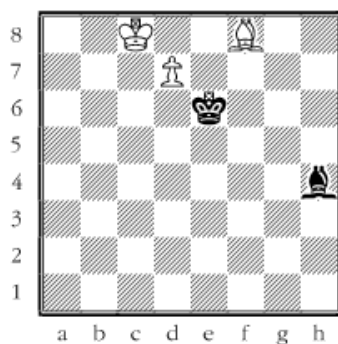
453) White wins



The block occurs at b7

Even with a bishop-pawn, the short defensive diagonal having three squares, the kings can still play a decisive factor. Consider Diagram 453. If White's king were on the long side of the pawn at d8 (every pawn has a long and short side, except for the rook-pawn), with the kings standing in direct opposition, the position would be drawn. But when the attacking king is on the short side of the pawn, with the kings standing in diagonal opposition, the secondary diagonal can be blocked at knight-seven (here, b7). White will win by forcing the black bishop off the c8-h3 diagonal. For instance, on **1. Bb5 Bg4 2. Ba6 Bh3 3. Bc8 Bf1 4. Bg4 Ba6 5. Bf3**, and White will block the diagonal at b7 on the next move, with the pawn queening shortly afterward.

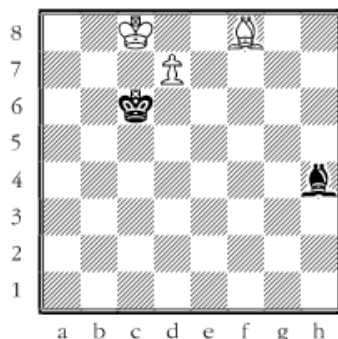
454) Another easy win



White's bishop blocks at c7

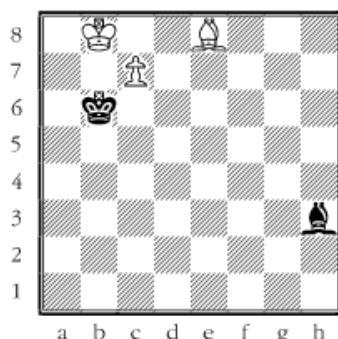
Make the shortest critical defensive diagonal a little longer, by one square, and it doesn't matter. If the kings stand in diagonal opposition, as in Diagram 454, the position is lost. The attacking king, being on the pawn's short side, enables it to support a block at c7. Since the black king isn't able to help out, standing as it does in diagonal opposition to White's king, White forges ahead with **1. Bb4 Bg5 2. Ba5 Bh4 3. Bd8 Bf2** (for instance) **4. Bg5** (or 4. Bh4) **4...Bb6 5. Bf4 Ba5 6. Bc7**, blocking the promotion square (d8) and winning.

455) Drawn



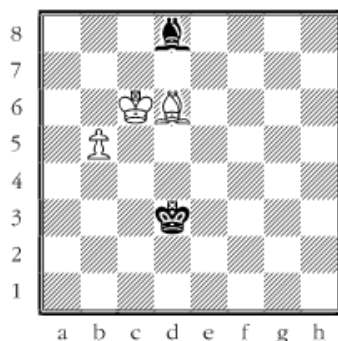
From Diagram 454, shift the defending king over to the short side of the pawn, with the kings then standing in direct opposition and the position becomes Diagram 455. This setup is drawn, since White has no safe way to offer a block at c7. Black's king guards that square and will join forces with its bishop when the time becomes necessary. A sample variation is **1. Bb4 Bg5 2. Ba5 Bh4 3. Bd8 Bf2 4. Bg5 Bb6 5. Be3 Bc7** (or 5. Ba5), and Black holds.

456) White wins



But with a bishop-pawn instead of an adjacent center pawn, and the kings standing in direct opposition on the short side of the pawn, the superior side wins with a partial zugzwang (Diagram 456). For example, after **1. Bh5 Bf5 2. Bf3 Bh3 3. Bb7 Bg4 4. Bc8 Bf3 5. Bg4 Bb7 6. Be2**, Black doesn't have a good move.

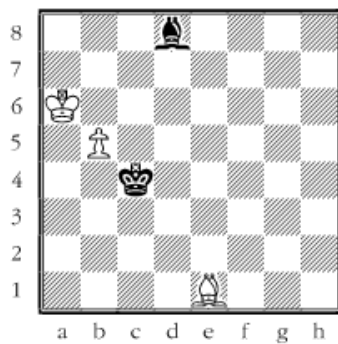
457) Both players want to move



White to move wins; Black to move draws

Let's move off the seventh rank and look at some situations where the pawn isn't that far advanced. Diagram 457 offers a crucial position where each player wants to move. If it's White's turn, the block **1. Bc7** ensures that the pawn will queen. But if it's Black's move a rear attack on the pawn by the defending king, **1...Kc4!**, stops White's aggression. White can't then afford to trade bishops on c7 because the pawn will hang afterward. Meanwhile, there are two diagonals that go through the square b6, which is the place the pawn needs to get to next. There's the shorter one, a5-d8, as well as the longer one, a7-g1. The shorter defensive diagonal turns out to be long enough, and Black's bishop can ferry back and forth, between a5 and d8, with progress being impossible.

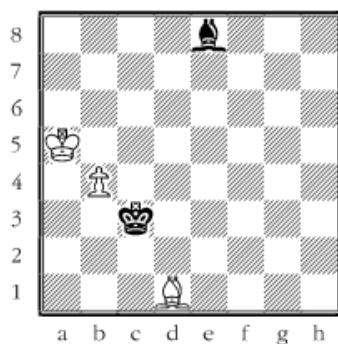
458) White wins



Be1-a5 can't be stopped

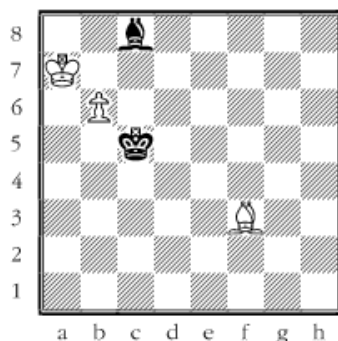
Take the same basic setup, however, placing the white king on the short side, so that the kings stand in diagonal opposition, and an offer of a trade at a5 will win. Thus, in Diagram 458, **1. Ba5** forces the black bishop off the a5-d8 diagonal. After **1...Bf6 2. b6 Be5 3. b7 Kc5 4. Ka7 Kc6 5. Ka8**, and Black cannot prevent the white bishop from going through winning maneuver to b8. Even if Black went first it wouldn't matter: there would still be no way to prevent Be1-a5, breaking the blockade.

459) Deflection



Move the pawn back a rank, swap dark-square bishops for light-square ones, and we have Diagram 459.

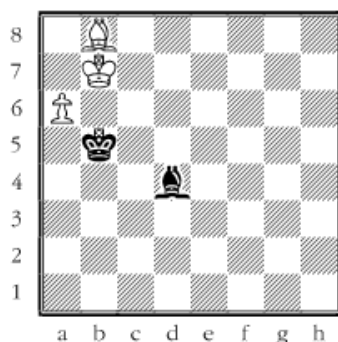
460) Winning by deflection



It's a win too: **1. Ba4 Bf7 2. b5 Kc4 3. b6 Bd5 4. Ka6 Kc5 5. Ka7 Be4 6. Bd7 Bf3 7. Bc8 Be4 8. Bb7 Bf5 9. Bf3 Bc8**, which brings us to Diagram 460. White then wins with the simple deflection, **10. Bg4!**, and the pawn will queen.

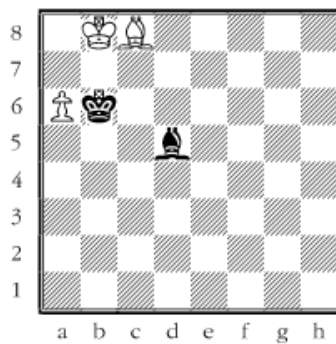
In Diagram 450 we reviewed some aspects of the rook-pawn on the seventh rank. We saw that once the defending bishop and king seized control of knight-seven on the adjacent knight file, that the draw was secured.

461) White wins



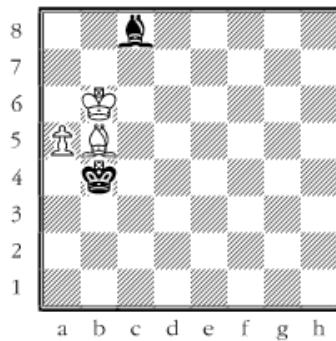
In Diagram 461, the pawn hasn't yet reached the seventh rank. It's on the sixth rank, and that allows White an easy win: **1. Ba7 Be5 (for example) 2. Be3 Bb8 3. Bf4.**

462) White wins



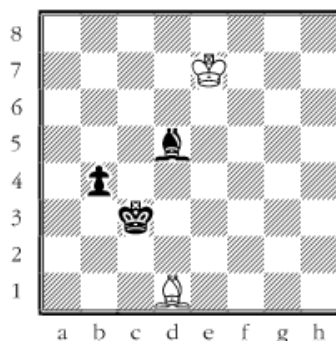
Change the color of the bishops, so they travel on light-squares, put the pieces in slightly different places, and we have Diagram 462, which is a win with White to move. With 1. Bb7 the pawn's safe advance is guaranteed. But Black to play can keep it together with 1...Bc4!, threatening to take the pawn. To avoid that, White has to advance, 2. a7, which is contained by 2...Bd5, and Black controls the critical a8-h1 diagonal, with White having no way to offer an obstructive trade.

463) White wins



In Diagram 463 the rook-pawn is shifted back to its fifth rank, but that doesn't stop White. With the temporizing, **1. Bc6!**, seizing the diagonal leading to the promotion square, Black is left without a good move. Black's bishop must stay where it is, at c8, and if Black tries **1...Kc4**, the pressure is off the a-pawn, giving White time for the interposition, **2. Bb7**, and the pawn will queen.

464) White to move draws



Rear defense

In Diagram 464 it's a matter of who moves. If Black moves first the white bishop can be driven off and Black wins: 1...Be4 2. Kd6 Bc2 3. Bf3 b3 4. Bd5 b2 5. Ba2 Kb4 6. Ke5 Ka3. But if White moves first a draw is achieved by a rear attack with the king, preventing a bishop trade: 1. Kd6 Bb3 (1...Be4 2. Kc5 Bc2 3. Bxc2 Kxc2 4. Kxb4) 2. Bg4 (for instance) 2... Kb2 (or 2...Bc2 3. Be6 Bd3 4. Kc5) 3. Kc5 Ka3 4. Kb6 Bf7 5. Bd1 Be8 6. Ka5, with a drawn position. That's enough bishops for right now.