



Rooks Revisited

In this column I want to look at some recent endings with at least one rook on the board. I start with pure rook endings: Doug Schwetke from the USA has sent me a very interesting game with his comments. My first [ChessCafe](#) column dealt with Rook+h and f pawn vs lone Rook (see the [ChessCafe Archives](#)) and Doug's endgame shows a battle with this material balance and the notorious 4 pawns vs 3 pawns on the kingside:

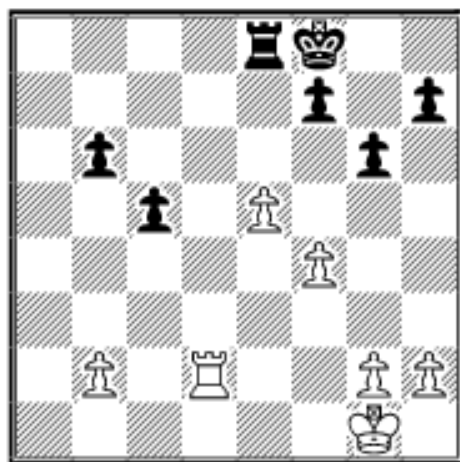
COLUMNISTS

Endgame Corner

Karsten Müller



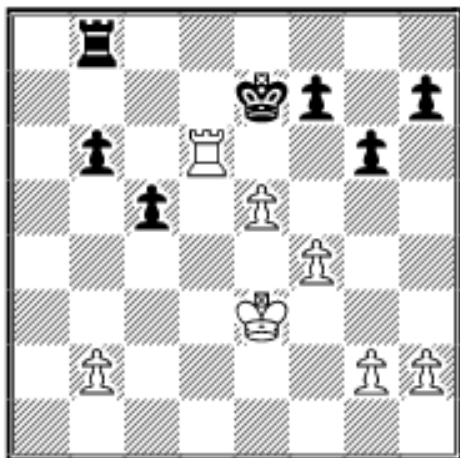
**18.01 A.Echeverry (1910) - D.Schwetke (1667) DCC GP 8
Dallas, Texas 2002**



At first White activates his king and his rook and as activity is crucially important in rook endings his position is slightly better. **32.Kf2 Ke7?!**

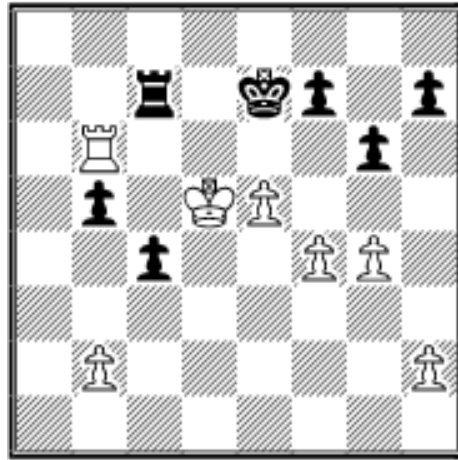
Activating the rook with 32...Ra8 is more precise.

33.Rd6 Rb8 34.Ke3



34...Rb7?! Schwetke suggests 34...h5 and explains: "Even I know this is the correct pawn formation for Black. This comes back to haunt me big time. I could have played it maybe even as early as 31...h5." (instead of 31...Kg8-f8) **35.g4!? b5 36.Ke4 c4?!**

36...Ra7! was called for, e.g., 37.Kd5 Ra2 38.Kxc5 Rxb2
39.g5 Rxb2= **37.Kd5 Rc7 38.Rb6**



38...c3?! 38...Rd7+! 39.Kc5
Rd2 40.Rxb5 Rxb2 as given by
Schwetke was called for, when
Black should be able to hold
the draw without having to
defend an awkward 4 pawns vs
3 pawns rook endgame with the
pawns all on the kingside.

39.bxc3 Rxc3 40.Rxb5

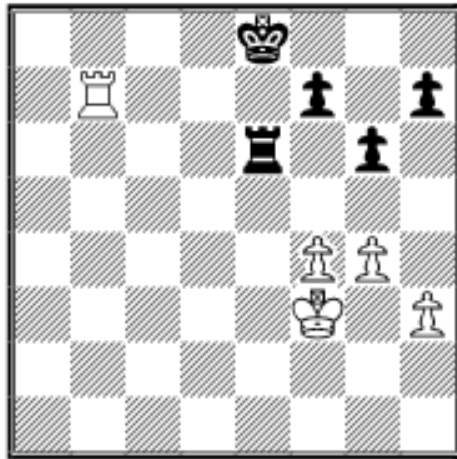
“Botvinnik said upon becoming
world champion that he would learn to draw the endgame
of rook plus 4 pawns vs rook plus 3 pawns with all pawns
on the same side of the board. Here I demonstrate why I am
not the ‘World Champion’.” (Schwetke) **40...Rc2?!**

40...Rd3+! was better to force White's king out of his
commanding position. **41.Rb7+!** “Nice technique.”
(Schwetke) **41...Ke8?** 41...Kf8 was more tenacious. **42.h3?**

42.e6! fxe6+ (42...Rd2+ 43.Ke5 Re2+ 44.Kf6 Rxe6+
45.Kg7 Re2 46.Rxf7 Rxb2 47.g5 Ra2 48.Rf8+ Ke7 49.Rg8
Rh2 50.Rh8+-) 43.Kxe6 Re2+ 44.Kf6 Rxb2 45.Kg7 Rh4
46.g5 Rxf4 47.Kxh7 Kf8 48.Kxg6 Rg4 49.Rb8+ Ke7
50.Rg8+-

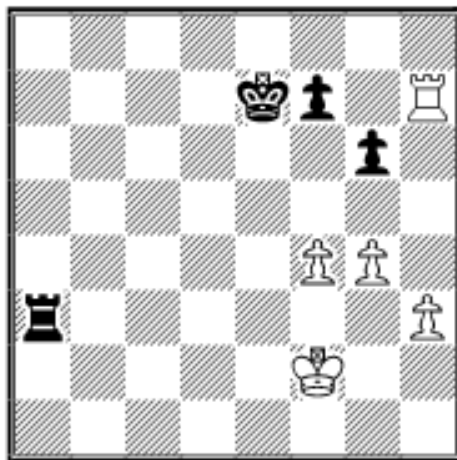
42...Rh2? (42...Rd2+! 43.Ke4 Rh2 was more precise.)
43.e6! “See how effective the rook on the seventh is here.”
(Schwetke) **43...Rd2+** (43...Rxb3 44.Rxf7+-) **44.Ke4?**
“Whoa Nellie. Did I just get a draw, again? I only see the
win of the e-pawn.” (Schwetke)

44.Ke5! Re2+ 45.Kf6 Rxe6+ 46.Kg7+- was winning due to
White's very active pieces.

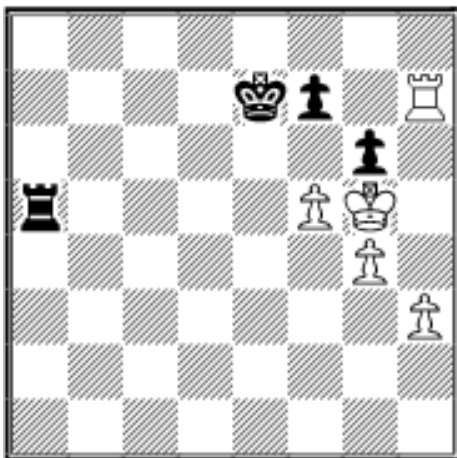
44...Re2+! 45.Kf3 Rxe6

“Now I offered a draw as I did not see the following manoeuvre. Not playing 34...h5 kills me here.” (Schwetke)

**46.Rb8+! Ke7 47.Rh8 Ra6
48.Rxh7 Ra3+ 49.Kf2**



49...Ra2+? Activating White's king is a big mistake. 49...Kf8 draws relatively easy. **50.Kg3 Ra3+?! 51.Kh4 Ra4?! 52.Kg5** After several Black inaccuracies is in deep trouble again. **52...Ra5+ 53.f5**



53...Rb5? 53...Kf8! was called for, e.g., 54.Kh4 gxf5 55.Rh5 Kg7 56.Rxf5 Ra3=

54.h4

54.Rh8 gxf5 55.gxf5 Rb3
56.f6+ Kd7 57.h4 Rg3+ 58.Kf4 Rh3 59.Kg4 Rh1 60.Ra8 Rg1+ and Black should be able to

save the game.

54...Ra5?!

54...gxf5!? 55.gxf5 Rb1 (Schwetke) is more to the point.

55.Rh8 gxf5 56.gxf5 f6+??

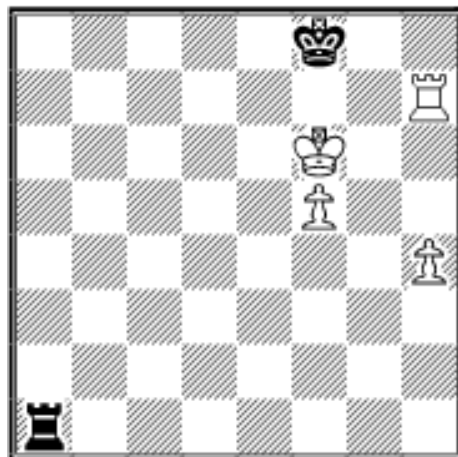
Schwetke comments: "Fritz gives "the position was bad, and this mistake simply hastens the end. [Doug made a blundercheck with Fritz. Giving Fritz 10 seconds per move to find errors and comments on the play. KM] I actually think it clever. It allows my king access to the corner of the board and there is the theoretical possibility of the draw. during the game I thought I had read somewhere that R+h and f pawns vs rook can be a draw."

This misses the point: 56...f6+?? is a losing blunder as the resulting ending with h- and f-pawn is lost. Black's position was still tenable:

56...Ra1! 57.f6+ Kd7 58.Rb8 Rg1+ 59.Kh6 Rg6+ 60.Kh7 Rxf6 61.h5 Rf4

A) 62.h6 Ke7 (62...Rg4? 63.Rg8 f5 64.Rg6+-) 63.Rb7+ Kf8=

B) 62.Kg7 Ke7 63.Rb7+ Ke8 64.h6 Rg4+ 65.Kh8 f5 66.Rg7 Kf8=

57.Kg6 Ra1 58.Rh7+ Kf8 59.Kxf6

This endgame is lost because Black's king is passively confined to the 8th rank.

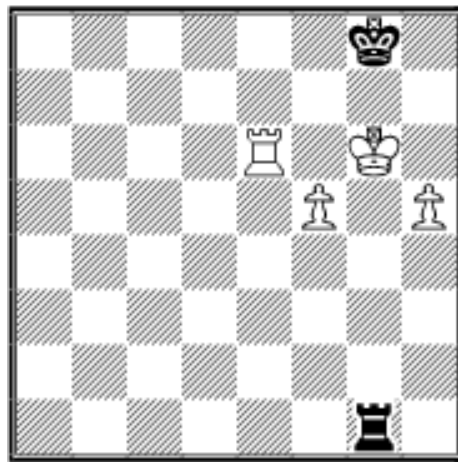
59...Ra6+ 60.Kg5 Kg8 61.Re7 Ra1 62.Kf6

One road to victory is 62.h5 Rg1+ (62...Ra6 63.h6 Rb6 64.f6 Rb1 65.h7+ Kh8 66.Re8+ Kxh7

67.f7+-; 62...Ra2 63.Kg6 Rg2+ 64.Kf6 Ra2 65.Re8+ Kh7

66.Kf7 Ra7+ 67.Kf8 Ra6 68.Re7+ Kh8 69.Re6 Ra8+
 70.Re8 Ra6 71.Kf7+ Kh7 72.f6+-) 63.Kf6 Rh1 64.Re8+
 Kh7 65.Kf7 Rxb5 66.f6 Ra5 67.Kf8 Kg6 68.f7 Ra7
 69.Re6+ Kh7 70.Re1 Ra8+ 71.Ke7 Ra7+ 72.Kf6 Ra6+
 73.Re6 Ra8 74.Re8+-

62...Rh1?! 63.Kg5?! 63.Re8+ “makes it even easier for White” (Schwetke) **63...Kh7 64.Kf7+- 63...Ra1 64.h5 Ra6 65.Re6?! 65.f6 Ra1 66.h6+-** was much easier. **65...Ra1 66.Kg6 Rg1+**



67.Kh6? (67.Kf6+- was the correct way to proceed.)

67...Rg7?? (67...Kf7! 68.Rg6 Rf1 69.Kg5 Rg1+ 70.Kh6 Rf1 71.Rg5 Kf6 72.Rg8 Kf7=)

Schwetke explains his blunder as follows: “Fritz says ‘the final mistake, not that it matters anymore.’ Why did I make this move? I was delusional with hunger is the best excuse for cracking under

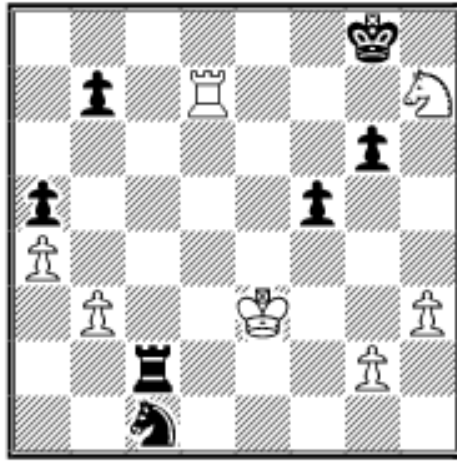
pressure. Please notice my lack of endgame game skills has hurt me three times in this game. That is why this game is so important to my chess education. Sometimes lacking skills makes my games go on longer than they should. You would think a lack of skills would shorten your games. I am frequently the Last Man ‘playing’ in my games.”

Thank you, Doug for allowing me to use your game and open comments in my column!

68.Re8+ Kf7 1-0 and Black resigned due to **69.Re7+ Kxe7 70.Kxg7+-** with an easily won pawn ending.

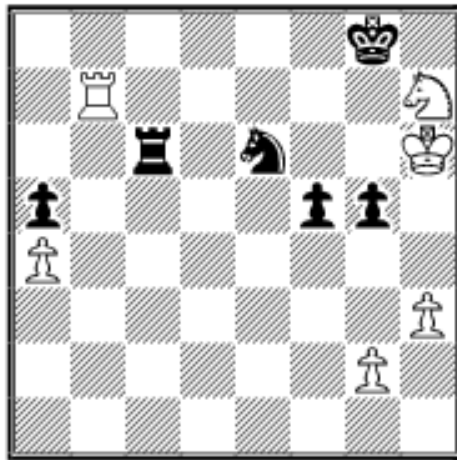
The next example shows an attack with very reduced material:

18.02 E.Berg (2500) - H.Kallio (2522) GM-B Bermuda 2002



White's king advances to support his attacking forces:
32.Kf4!? Nxb3? (32...Rxf4 is better, e.g., 33.Ke5 Nd3+ 34.Kf6 Nc5 35.Rg7+ Kh8 36.Rc7 Ne4+ 37.Ke5 b6 38.Nf6 Nxf6 39.Kxf6 Rg3 40.Rc8+ Kh7 41.Rc7+ Kh6 42.Rc8=) **33.Kg5 Nc5!** (33...Rxf4+? 34.Kh6 Rg3 35.Rg7+ Kh8

36.h4 Rg4 37.Nf6 Rxf4+ 38.Kxf6+-) **34.Re7 Ne6+**! (34...Rxf4+? 35.Kh6 Rg3 36.Rg7+ Kh8 37.h4 Ne6 38.Re7+-) **35.Kh6** (35.Rxe6 Kxh7 36.Re7+ Kg8 37.Kxf6 Rxf4+ 38.Kxf5 is drawn.) **35...Rc6 36.Rxb7 g5**



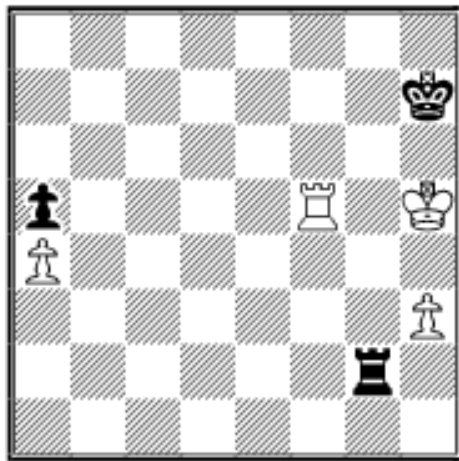
White's attack is very dangerous now. But it appears that Black can still fight very tenaciously.

37.Rb8+?!

37.Nf6+!? gives more chances in my opinion as the game leads to a pure rook ending,

where White's winning potential is very reduced: 37...Kf8 38.Ra7 g4 39.hxg4 fxg4 40.g3

37...Nf8+! 38.Kxf5 Kxh7 39.Rxf8 Rg6+ 40.Kh5 Rh6+ 41.Kg5 Rg6+ 42.Kf4 Rxf2 43.Rxf5 Rf2+ 44.Kg5 Rg2+ 45.Kh5 1-0

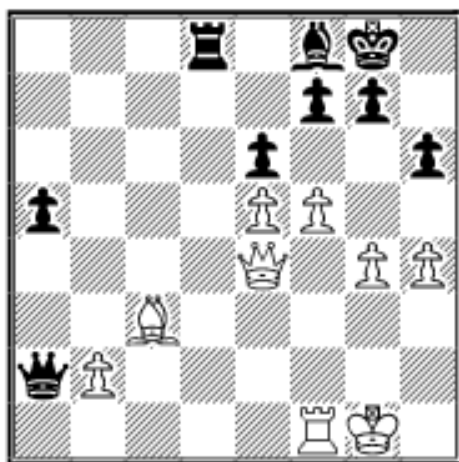


and Black resigned as he loses the a-pawn. But the position is drawn nevertheless: **45...Rc2 46.Rxa5 Rc4** and **White's rook can't leave the a-file** (this technique is worth knowing!), e.g. **47.h4 Kg7 48.Ra7+ Kg8 49.Kg6 Rc6+ 50.Kf5 Rc4 51.h5 Kh8 52.Ke6 Kg8 53.Kd5 Rf4 54.Kc5 Rf5+=** see

for example *Fundamental Chess Endings* 6.81 on page 200.

In my last example in this column I want to begin with analysis of some very interesting complications that occurred earlier in the game:

18.03 K.Müller (2506) - P.Wells (2517) Austrian Staatsliga A, Mörbisch 2001, Gleisdorf-Austria Graz, 1st board



Black's position is much easier to play as he has two clear plans:

A) a5-a4-a3 to destroy White's bishop's base and

B) to attack White's very open king position by manoeuvres like Bc5+, Rd3, Qd5 (for the

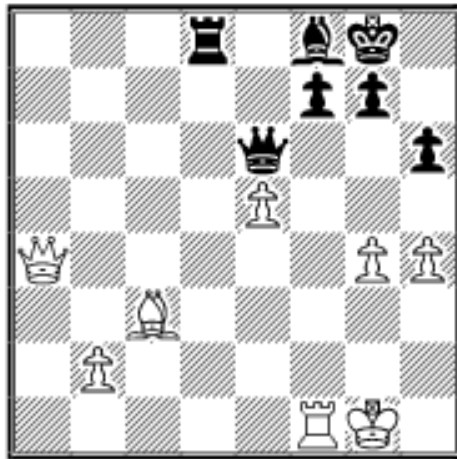
moment the dominant position of White's queen prevents some of them, but this will not be forever).

White's attack on the other hand is not as dangerous as it looks at first sight:

28...a4 (28...Qb3!?) 29.fxe6 Qxe6

I After 29...Bc5+ one possible continuation is 30.Kh2 fxe6 31.g5 hxg5 32.hxg5 a3 33.Qb7 axb2 34.Qf7+ Kh8 35.Qh5+=

II 29...fxe6 30.g5 hxg5 31.hxg5=

30.Qxa4

30...h5?! The alternatives are more dangerous, but I didn't find a way for Black to win, e.g.,

30...Bc5+ 31.Kh2 Qe7 32.Kg3 Rd3+ 33.Rf3 Rxf3+ 34.Kxf3 Qxh4 35.Qa8+ Kh7 36.Qe4+=

30...Rd3!?

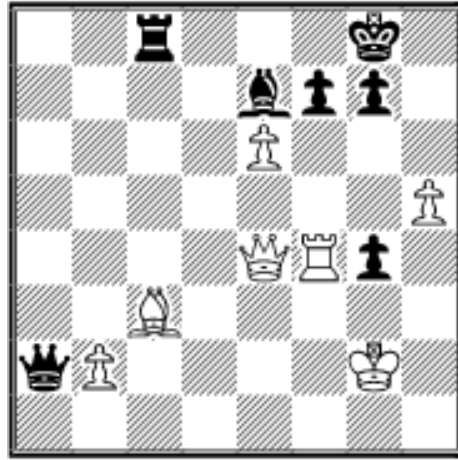
A) 31.Qe4?! Rg3+ 32.Kh2 Rxg4 33.Rf4 Rg6

B) 31.Kg2?! Qd5+ 32.Kh2 Qd8 33.Kg2 (33.Be1? Rd4 34.Qb3 Qd7 35.Qf3 Rxg4 36.Qf5 Qxf5 37.Rxf5 g6 38.Rf3 Re4 and Black is clearly better.) 33...Qxh4 34.Rf3 Rd8

C) 31.Qf4?! Bc5+ 32.Kh2 Qa2

D) 31.Rf4 Qb6+ 32.Kf1 Qe3 33.Rf2 and Fritz says, that the position is equal. But this looks nevertheless very dangerous.

31.Qe4 (31.gxh5? Rd3 32.Qf4 (32.Kf2 Qb6+ 33.Kg2 Qb7+ 34.Kh2 Qc8-+) 32...Bc5+ 33.Rf2 Be3 34.Qe4 Qh3 35.Qa8+ Kh7 36.Qe4+ Kh6 37.Qc6+ Kxh5-+) **31...hxg4** (31...Bc5+ 32.Kg2 hxg4 33.Kg3=) **32.Kg2 Be7 33.h5 Rc8 34.Rf4 Qa2?! 35.e6!?**



Setting a trap **35...Qxe6?!
Wells was in time trouble and had to play this and the following moves very quickly.**

**I 35...fxe6? 36.Bxg7! Qd5
(36...Kxg7? 37.Qg6+ Kh8
38.Qh6+ Kg8 39.Rxg4+ Kf7
40.Qg6+ Kf8 41.Qg8#)
37.Bd4+-**

**II 35...f5! was the right answer: 36.Qd3 (36.Qxf5 Rxc3=)
36...Qxe6 37.Qxf5 Qxf5 38.Rxf5 Bf6 39.Bxf6 gxf6 and
Black should be able to hold the rook endgame.**

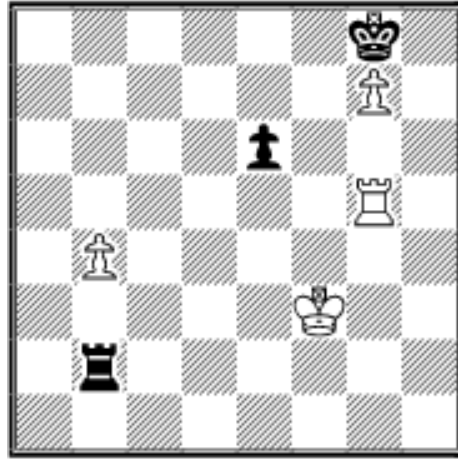
36.Qxe6 fxe6 37.Rxg4 Bf8 38.h6 g5?!

38...g6 39.Rxg6+ Kh7 40.Rxe6 Bxh6 and Black can most probably sacrifice his bishop for White's b-pawn to reach a drawn R+B vs R endgame.

39.Rxg5+ Kh7 40.Bg7 Rc2+

The pawn endgame after 40...Bxg7? 41.hxg7 Rg8 42.b4 Rxg7 43.Rxg7+ Kxg7 is lost as Black's king is outside the square of the b-pawn.

41.Kf3 Bxg7? The resulting rook endgame is lost due to White's dangerous outside passed b-pawn. Something like 41...Bd6 had to be tried. 42.hxg7 Kg8 43.b4 Rb2



44.Rg4! White needs time to transfer his king to the queenside to support the passed b-pawn. The hasty 44.b5? spoils it: 44...e5 45.Rxe5 Kxg7 46.Ke4 Kf6= **44...Rb3+ 45.Ke2 e5 46.Kd2 e4** (46...Rf3 47.Kc2 Rf7 48.Kd3 Rb7 49.Kc4 Re7 50.Kd5 Re8 51.Re4 Kxg7 52.Rxe5 Rb8 53.Re4 Kf6

54.Kc6 Kf5 55.Rh4 Ke6 56.b5+-) **47.Rxe4 Kxg7 48.Rf4 Kg6 49.Kc2 Re3 50.b5 Kg5 51.Rb4 Kf5 52.b6 Re8 53.b7 Rb8 54.Kb3 1-0** and Black resigned due to **54...Ke6 55.Ka4 Kd6 56.Ka5 Kc5 57.Rb1 Kc6 58.Ka6 Kc7 59.Ka7+-**

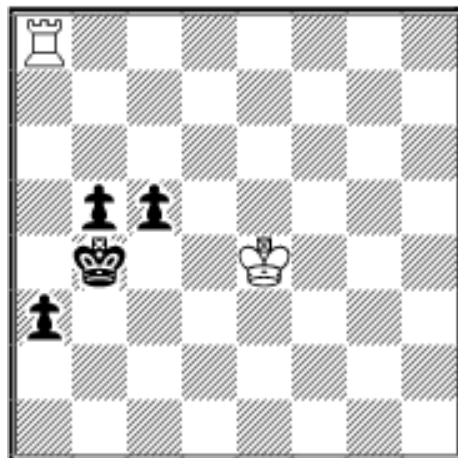
Sources:

Fundamental Chess Endings, Karsten Müller and Frank Lamprecht, GAMBIT 2001

ChessBase MEGABASE 2001

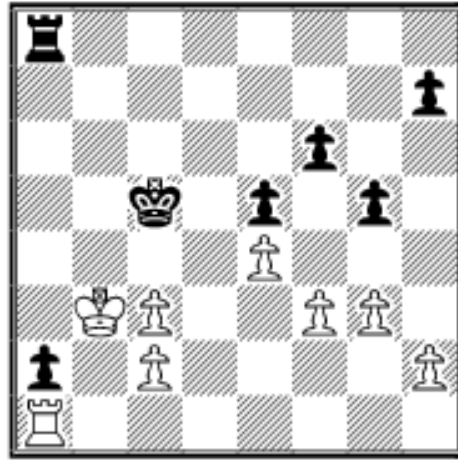
The Week in Chess

Exercises (Solutions next month)



E18.01 J.Loifensfeld (2400) - A.Illner (2309)
2nd Bundesliga West, Germany 2000

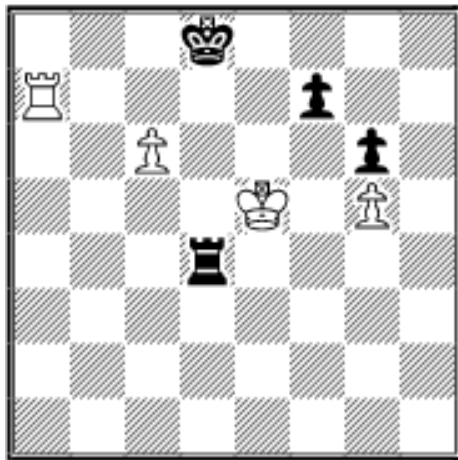
Can White to move save himself?



E18.02 *H.Hebblinghaus - T.Heinemann*

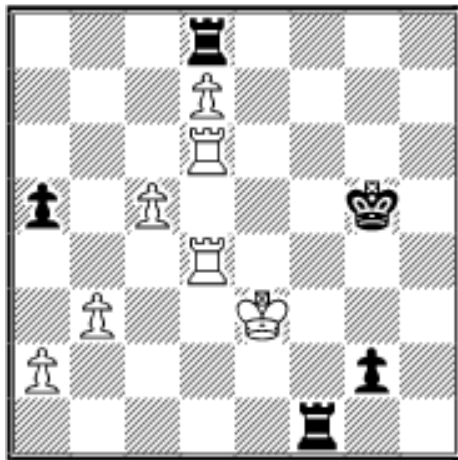
**Northern German Blitz Team
Championship Potsdam 2002**

In a blitz game White took the pawn with 1.Rxa2. Was this a fortunate choice?



**E18.03 *R.Polzin (2469) - E.Brestian (2428)* Austrian
Staatsliga A, Graz 2002,
Gleisdorf-Gamlitz, 2nd board**

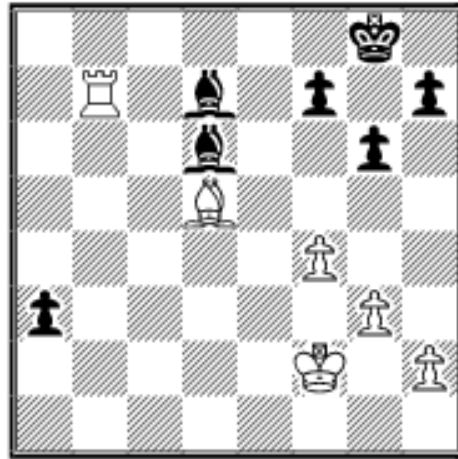
The position looks dangerous for Black. What should he do?



**E18.04 *V.Anand (2794) - A.Shirov (2722)* Leon
Man+Comp 2001**

White to move and win.

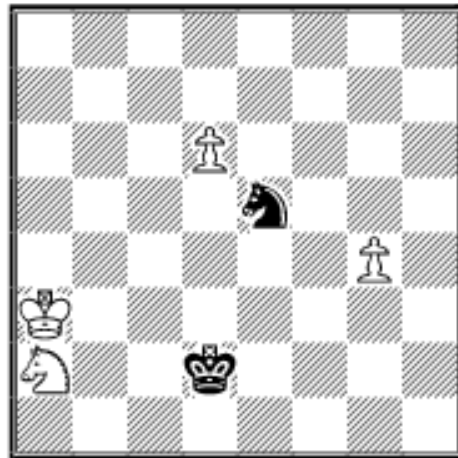
[Solutions to last month exercises](#)



E17.01 A. Feuerstein - E. Mednis U.S. Championship, New York 1957

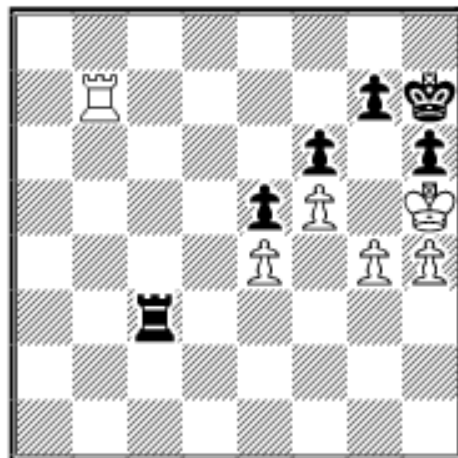
Mednis played the amazing **43...Bc6!! 0-1** and White resigned as he loses after **44.Bxc6** (44.Bxf7+ Kf8 45.Ra7 Bc5+—; 44.Rxf7 Bxd5 45.Rd7 a2—) **44...a2 45.Rd7 a1Q**

46.Rxd6 Qa7+ 47.Kg2 Qc7 48.Rf6 Kg7—+



E17.02 W. Müller, K. Müller

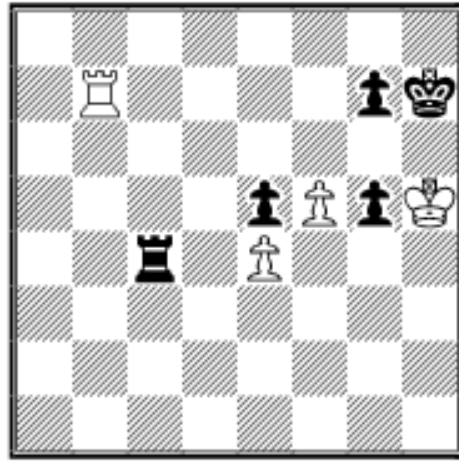
White wins by avoiding nasty checks with **1.Kb3!** (1.Kb4? Ke3 2.g5 Kf4 3.g6 Nxg6 4.d7 Ne5=; 1.Ka4? Nc4 2.d7 Nb6+=) **1...Ke3 2.g5 Kf4 3.g6 Nxg6 4.d7 Ne5 5.d8Q+-**



E17.03 O. Meyer - S. Puttfarken Hamburg youth championship under 12, Schönhagen 2002

I want to thank Jeronimo Hawellek from Hamburg for allowing me to use his analysis of this instructive rook ending.

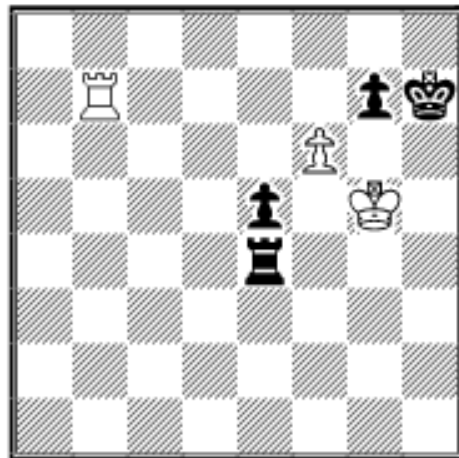
The two very young players made several mistakes and **44...Rc4?** was the first of them. **44...Rg3=** or **44...Rh3=** would have drawn. **45.g5!** Threatening back rank mate. **45...hxxg5 46.hxxg5 fxxg5**



47.Kxg5? I found the correct way to proceed in the post mortem analysis: 47.f6!!

A) 47...Rc8 48.Rxg7+ Kh8 49.Kg6 Rc6 (49...Rg8 50.Rxg8+ Kxg8 51.Kxg5+-) 50.Rd7 Rc8 51.Rh7+ Kg8 52.f7+ Kf8 53.Rh8+-

B) 47...Rxe4 48.Rxg7+ Kh8 49.Kg6 Rd4 50.Rh7+ Kg8 51.f7+- The pawns on e5 and g5 hinder Black. White shall not take these shields for his king! **47...Rxe4 48.f6**



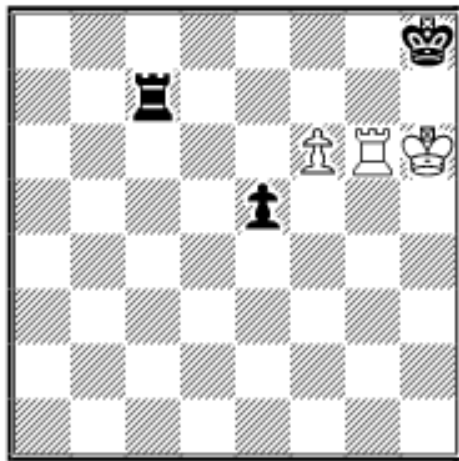
48...Rc4? Black had to play 48...Kg8! 49.Rxg7+ (49.fxg7 Re1=) 49...Kf8 50.Ra7 (50.Kf5 Ra4 51.Rd7 Ra1=) 50...Re1 51.Kf5 Rb1= and Black's rook can deliver a check against Ke6 and Kg6. **49.Rxg7+ Kh8 50.Kh6 Rc6**

50...Rh4+ 51.Kg6

A) 51...e4 52.Re7 Rg4+ 53.Kf7 Kh7 54.Ke8+ Kg6 55.f7 (55.Rg7+? Kxf6 56.Rxg4 Kf5=) 55...Rf4 56.f8Q Rxf8+ 57.Kxf8 Kf5 58.Kf7 Kf4 59.Ke6 e3 60.Kd5 Kf3 61.Kd4 e2 62.Kd3+-

B) 51...Rg4+ 52.Kf7 Ra4 53.Rg1 Ra7+ 54.Kg6 Kg8 55.Rb1 Ra8 56.Rb7+-

51.Rg6 (51.Kg6+-) **51...Rc7**



52.Rg5? A mistake allowing White to use a stalemate defence. White's rook had to move farther south.

I 52.Kg5? e4 53.Rh6+ Kg8
54.Kg6 e3 55.Rh4 e2 56.Re4
e1Q 57.Rxe1 Rg7+=

II 52.Rg1! e4 (52...Rh7+
53.Kg6 Kg8 54.Rd1 Rf7 55.Rd8+ Rf8 56.f7++-) 53.Rd1
Kg8 54.Kg6 Rc8 55.Rd7 e3 56.Rg7+ Kh8 57.Rh7+ Kg8
58.f7++-

52...e4?

52...Rh7+! 53.Kg6 Kg8 54.Rxe5 (54.Rg1 Rh2 55.Ra1
Rg2+ 56.Kf5 Rb2=) 54...Rg7+= as 55.fxg7 is stalemate.

53.Rf5? (53.Kg6 Kg8 54.Re5+-) **53...Kg8 54.Re5 Rc4?**
(54...Kf7 55.Kg5 e3=) **55.Kg6 Rc8 56.Rxe4 Kf8 57.Rh4!**
Kg8 58.f7+ 1-0

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