



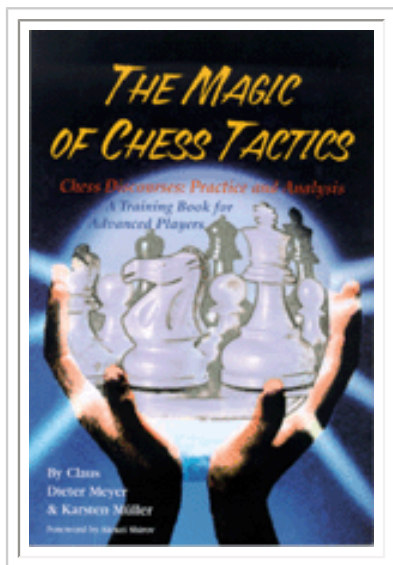
## Deceptive Simplicity

Pawn endings seem easy, don't they? When only kings and pawns remain on the board, very few possible candidate moves must be considered for both sides. But don't be deceived; they can be quite difficult to handle, as the following recent examples show. First let's look at some simplifications into pawn endings:

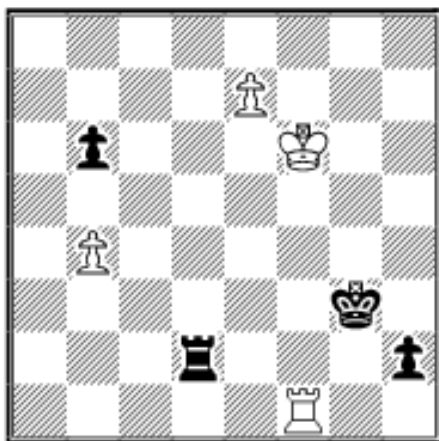
### COLUMNISTS

## Endgame Corner

Karsten Müller



**46.01 A. Morozevich (2758) - A. Korotylev (2596)**  
57th ch-RUS Moscow 2004



Black has to find many exact moves to reach a safe harbor: **56...Rf2+!**

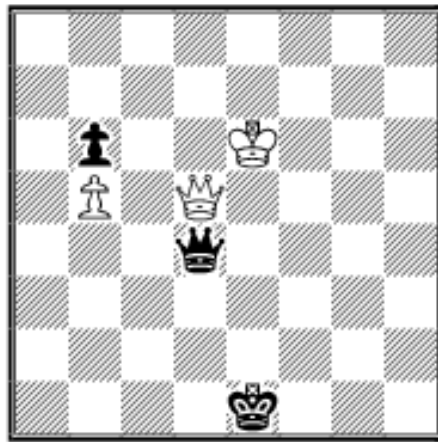
56...Re2? is refuted by 57.Rd1! Kg2 58.Kf7 Rf2+ 59.Ke6 Re2+ 60.Kd7+-

56...Kg2? 57.Re1+-

**57.Rxf2 Kxf2 58.e8Q h1Q 59.b5 Qd5**

After 59...Qh6+ White can continue to fight with 60.Ke7 Qg5+ 61.Ke6 Qe3+ 62.Kd7 Qc5 63.Kd8 which is objectively drawn, but difficult to defend over the board.

**60.Qc6 Qd4+ 61.Ke6 Ke1?!** a step in the wrong direction. 61...Kg1 is better as the defending king should head for the south east corner in the endgame Q+b-pawn vs. Q, if it can't get in front of the pawn. **62.Qd5**

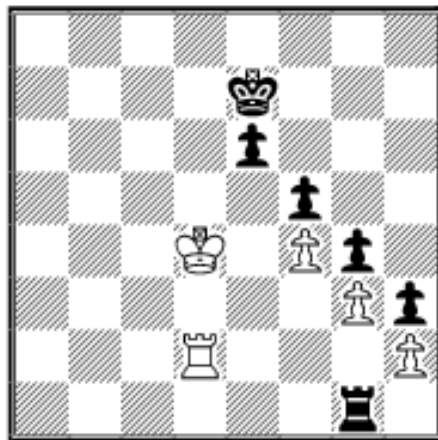


**62...Qc5??** a blunder probably caused by time pressure. 62...Qb4 63.Kd7 Qc5 64.Qc6 Ke2 is objectively still drawn, but very hard to defend over the board. **63.Qxc5 bxc5 64.Kd5! 1-0**

Of course not 64.b6? c4 65.b7 c3 66.b8Q c2= as White's king is just outside the winning zone.

In the next example pawn breakthroughs play a major role:

**46.02 B. Khotenashvili (2248) - S. Gvetadze (2324)**  
Tbilisi Chiburdanidze 2004



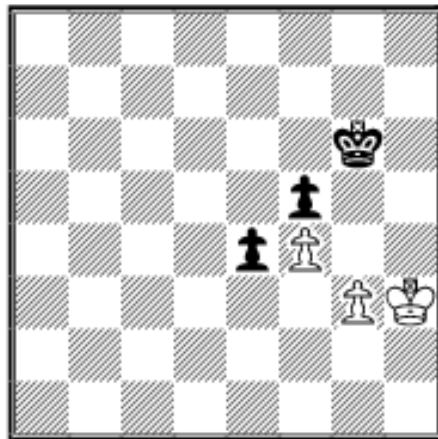
**53.Kd3?**

53.Ke3! was called for, when I haven't managed to find a win for Black.

**53...Rg2?** this natural move is surprisingly a mistake.

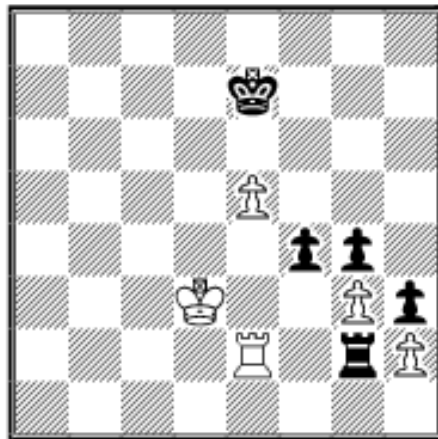
The pawn storm had to start first: 53...e5!

A) 54.Ke3 Rg2 55.Rxg2 (55.Rd5 Rxh2 56.Rxe5+ Kf6 57.Ra5 Rg2—+) 55...hxg2 56.Kf2 e4 57.Kxg2 Kf6 58.h4 (58.Kf1 Ke6 59.Kg2 Kd5—+) 58...gxh3+ 59.Kxh3 Kg6



and Black's king infiltrates successfully as 60.g4 fails because of 60...e3 61.gxf5+ Kxf5 62.Kg3 Ke4 63.f5 Kd3—+

**B)** 54.fxe5 Rg2 55.Re2 (55.Rd1 Rxh2 56.Ke3 Ke6 57.Kf4 Rf2—+) 55...f4! (see next diagram)

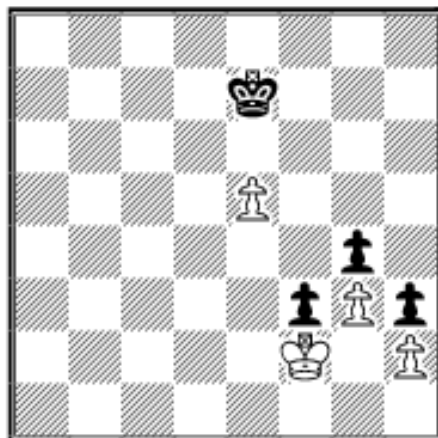


the point 56.Re1 (56.gxf4 Rxe2 57.Kxe2 g3—+) 56...fxg3 57.hxg3 Rxc3+ 58.Ke2 (58.Ke4 Ra3 59.Rh1 g3 60.Rxc3 g2—+) 58...Rf3 59.Rg1 Rf4 60.Ke3 h2 61.Rh1 g3—+

**54.Ke3?**

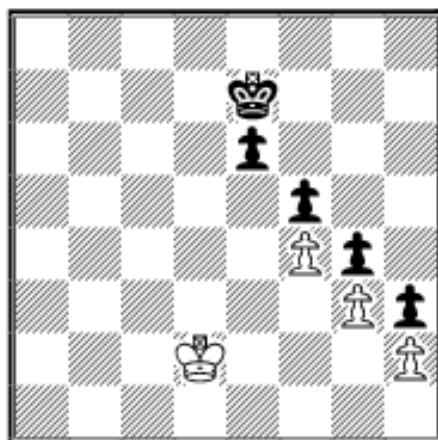
54.Re2! was the only chance as 54...Rxe2 55.Kxe2 e5 56.fxe5 f4 57.Kf2! (57.gxf4?? g3 58.Kf1 gxh2—+) 57...f3= (see next

diagram)

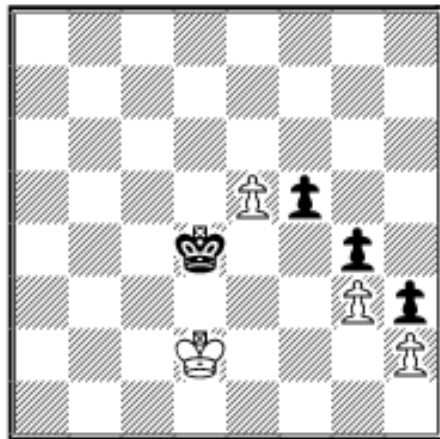


is a watertight fortress.

**54...Rxd2 55.Kxd2** (see next diagram)



**55...Kd6?** missing the immediate breakthrough 55...e5 56.fxe5 (56.Ke3 e4 57.Kd4 Kd6 58.Kc4 Kc6 59.Kd4 Kb5—+) 56...f4 57.gxf4 g3 58.Ke2 gxh2—+ **56.Ke3 Kc5 57.Ke2 Kc4 58.Ke3 Kc3 59.Ke2 Kd4 60.Kd2** (60.Kf2 is much easier.) **60...e5 61.fxe5** (see next diagram)

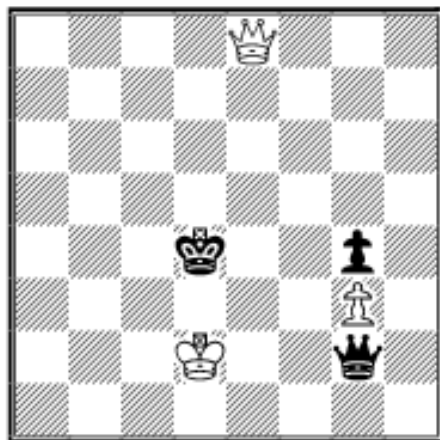


**61...f4**

61...Kxe5 62.Ke3 Kd5 63.Kf2 (Naturally not 63.Kd3? f4 64.gxf4 g3 65.Ke2 gxh2—+) 63...Kd4 64.Kg1 Ke3 65.Kh1= and White has reached a well known fortress.

**62.e6! fxf3 63.hxg3** (63.e7 draws as well, e.g. 63...gxh2 64.e8Q h1Q 65.Qh8+ Kc5 66.Qf8+ and Black can't escape from the checks.) **63...h2 64.e7 h1Q 65.e8Q Qg2+**

(see next diagram)



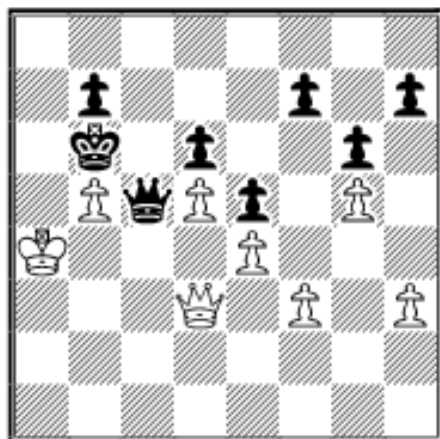
**66.Kd1??** allows Black to reach a won pawn ending. 66.Ke1 was forced: 66...Qxg3+ (66...Qe4+ 67.Qxe4+ Kxe4 68.Ke2=) 67.Kf1=

**66...Qf3+!** The greedy 66...Qxg3? spoils it: 67.Qd7+ Ke4 68.Qe6+ Kf3 69.Qe2+! Kf4 70.Qc4+!= **67.Kd2 Qd3+ 68.Ke1 Qe3+ 69.Qxe3+ Kxe3 70.Kf1 Kf3 0–1**

Fortress and breakthrough themes appear in the following game as well:

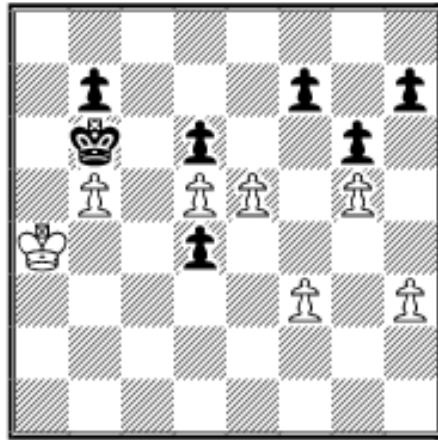
**46.03 M. Kozlov (2282) - M. Novikov (2498)**

Stek Cup Tula 2004



Novikov instructively demonstrates how to convert Black's superior activity: **41...Qc1!**

41...Qd4+? is a horrible blunder: 42.Qxd4+ exd4 43.e5! (see next diagram)



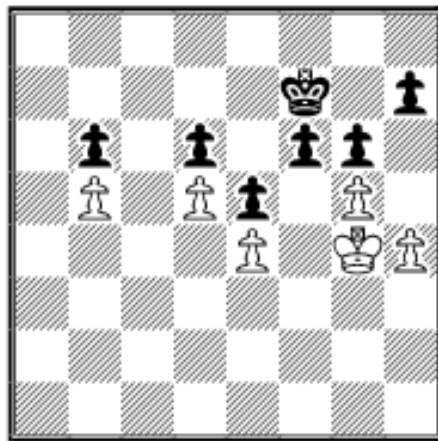
43...dxe5 (43...d3 44.Kb3 Kxb5 45.exd6 Kb6 46.Kc3+-) 44.d6+- and in both cases Black will fall into zugzwang sooner or later.

**42.h4?**

42.Qe2 was much more tenacious as the pawn endgame after 42...Qa1+ 43.Kb3 Qa5 44.f4! Qxb5+? (44...exf4 45.Qf2+ Kxb5 46.Qf1+ Kb6 47.Qxf4 and White is still

fighting.) 45.Qxb5+ Kxb5 46.fxe5 dxe5 is drawn.

**42...Qc5** (42...Kc5 was even easier: 43.Kb3 b6+-) **43.Qb3 Qd4+ 44.Qb4 Qd1+ 45.Ka3 Qxf3+ 46.Ka4 Qd1+ 47.Ka3 Qd3+ 48.Ka4 Qc2+ 49.Ka3 Qc5** the decisive simplification **50.Ka4 Qxb4+ 51.Kxb4 Ka7 52.Ka5 b6+ 53.Kb4 Kb7 54.Kc3 Kc7 55.Kd3 Kd7 56.Ke3 Ke7 57.Kf3 f6 58.Kg4 Kf7**



White's castle will be stormed by h7-h6.

**59.gxf6**

59.h5 fxg5 60.h6 Kf6 61.Kg3 g4 62.Kxg4 g5 63.Kh5 g4 64.Kxg4 Kg6+-

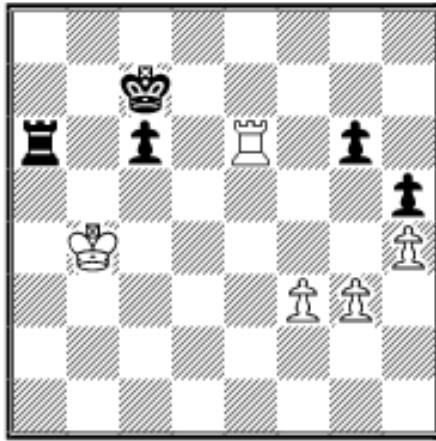
59.Kg3 Kg7 60.Kg4 (60.Kf3 h6 61.Kg3 hxg5 62.hxg5 fxg5 63.Kh3 g4+ 64.Kxg4 Kh6+-) 60...h6+- (But not 60...h5+? 61.Kg3=)

**59...Kxf6 60.Kg3 h5 0-1**

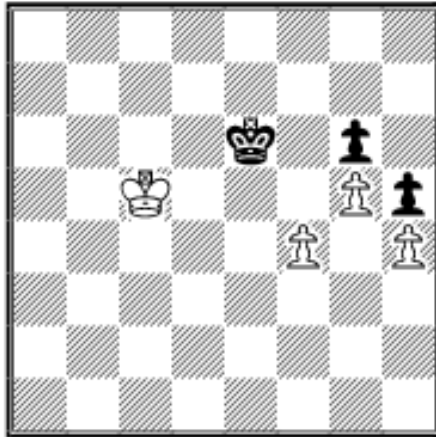
Superior activity is very important in major piece endgames, especially in rook endings:

**46.04 G. Fish (2523) - W. Koch (2330)**

Bundesliga 2004-5 Bremen 2004



**61.Kb3!** Of course not 61.Rxg6?? c5+—+ **61...Rb6+?** (61...Ra1 62.Rxg6 Rf1 63.f4 Kd7 was called for.) **62.Kc4 c5?** based on a miscalculation. Black had to keep the rooks on the board to fight on. **63.Rxb6 Kxb6 64.g4 Kc6 65.g5 Kd6 66.f4 Ke6 67.Kxc5** (see next diagram)

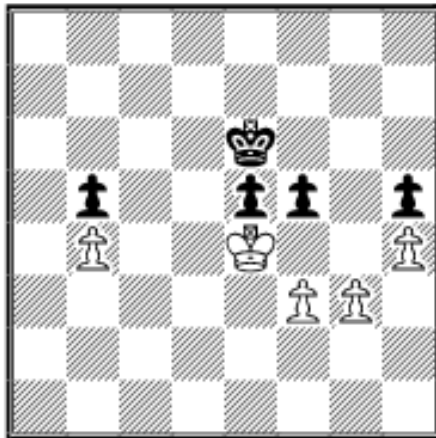


Black's counterplay is just too slow:  
**67...Kf5 68.Kd6 Kg4** (68...Kxf4 69.Ke6 Kg4 70.Kf6 Kxh4 71.Kxg6 Kg4 72.Kf6 h4 73.g6 h3 74.g7 h2 75.g8Q+ Kh3 76.Qa8+-) **69.Ke6 Kxh4** (69...Kxf4 70.Kf6 Kg4 71.Kxg6 Kxh4 72.Kf5 Kg3 73.g6 h4 74.g7 h3 75.g8Q+-) **70.f5 Kxg5 71.f6 h4 72.f7 h3 73.f8Q Kg4 74.Qf2 1-0**

I want to end this short discussion with a missed study-like draw:

#### 46.05 F. Vallejo Pons (2666) - P. Svidler (2733)

Leon rapid 17th 2004

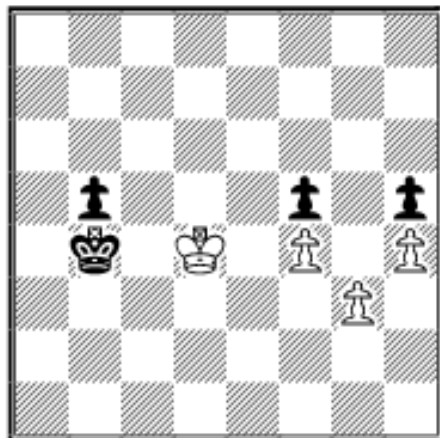


#### 39.Ke3?

39.Kd3! was the right choice:

**A) 39...Kd5 40.Ke3 e4** (40...Kc4? 41.g4+-) 41.fxe4+ fxe4 42.g4=

**B) 39...Kd6 40.Kd2 e4 41.f4 Kd5 42.Kc3 e3 43.Kd3 e2 44.Kxe2 Kc4 45.Ke3 Kxb4 46.Kd4!** (see next diagram)



the hidden point 46...Ka3 47.g4 hxg4 48.h5 b4 49.h6 b3 50.h7 b2 51.h8Q b1Q 52.Qa8+ Kb2 53.Qb7+ Kc2 54.Qg2+=

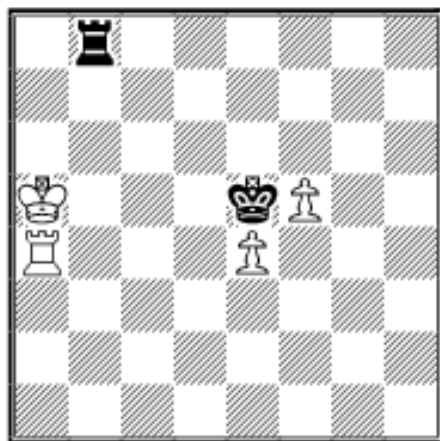
39...Kd5 40.Kd3 e4+ 41.fxe4+ fxe4+ 42.Ke3 Ke5 43.Ke2 Kf5 44.Ke3 Kg4 45.Kxe4 Kxg3 46.Kf5 Kxh4 47.Kf4 Kh3 48.Kf3 h4 49.Kf2 Kg4 50.Kg2 Kf4 0-1

## The Bear in the Hole Revisited

**John Colucci** from **Canada** has found the following tough defense:

“Mr. Müller, I was wondering if you could answer a question I have about your endgame article [Bear in the Hole](#) (R+2P vs. R). I really enjoyed this article even though it was extremely complex. In the first diagram (44.01) Dautov vs. Romanishin we arrive at a critical position after Dautov (White) played 69.Ra4!!.

**44.01 R. Dautov (2535) - O. Romanishin (2520)**  
Kecskemet 1989



I believe in this position Black now assists White to achieve the decisive zugzwang a few moves later with 69...Ra8+??. My question is, what if Black plays 69...Rb7!! Now 70.Ka6 Rb8 doesn't achieve anything, so White is forced to play 70.Rb4 Rc7!. White has several choices but Fritz 8 and I can't seem to find a winning plan. For example 71.Ra4 Rb7 just reaches the same position as before, while other rook moves either lose the rook or the e4-pawn.

Therefore, White must choose a king move:

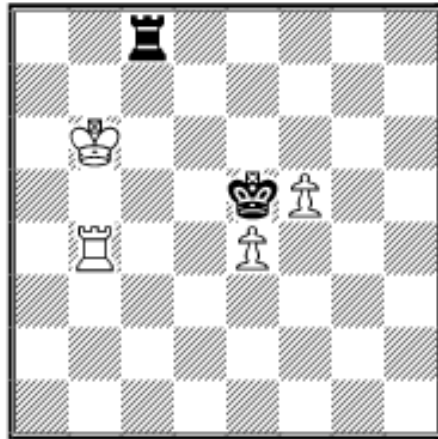
71.Ka4 or 71.Ka6 doesn't accomplish anything since Black can just reply ...Rc8 or ...Kf4 holding the position! Meanwhile 71.Kb5 Rb7+! and White must retreat since he can't attack the rook while leaving his unprotected. As I'm sure you're aware 71...Rc8?? would be answered by 72.Ra4!! and the decisive zugzwang has been reached. Therefore, the only sensible White move is 71.Kb6. Black now replies 71...Rc8 and White will be unable to reach the decisive zugzwang that occurred in the game since Black's rook can just shuffle on the c-file so that when White achieves the Ra4, Kb5 setup he then plays Rc8! forcing White to move! For example, after 71.Kb6 Rc8 72.Ra4 Rc1 73.Kb5 Rc8! After 73...Rc8 White can still force Black's rook off the c-file with 74.



Rc4 but that doesn't seem enough to win after 74...Rb8+ or ...Ra8. Am I missing something here since I can't beat Fritz and Fritz can't beat me when we switch sides in this position after 69...Rb7!! Anyway if you don't have time to respond I'll understand but I just wanted to say that I really enjoy your column."

### 69...Ra8+

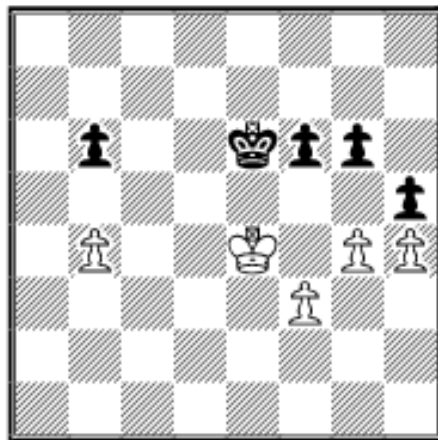
69...Rb7!? is indeed interesting. White breaks through by using zugzwang again and again: 70.Rb4 Rc7 71.Kb6 Rc8



72.Ka6! forcing Black's rook to leave its best post 72...Rc1 (72...Rc7 73.Rb7+-) 73.Kb5 Rc8 74.Ra4 and again the same procedure 74...Rc1 75.Rc4 Rb1+ 76.Kc6 Rd1 77.Kc7 and White wins as in the game.

**70.Kb4 Rb8+ 71.Kc5 Rc8+ 72.Kb5 Rc7 73.Rc4 Rd7 74.Kc6 Rd8 75.Kc7 Rd1 76.Kc8 Rd6 77.Ra4 Kf4 78.Kc7 Rd1 79.f6 Ke5 80.Ra6 Rd2 81.Kc8 1-0**

### Exercises (Solutions next month)

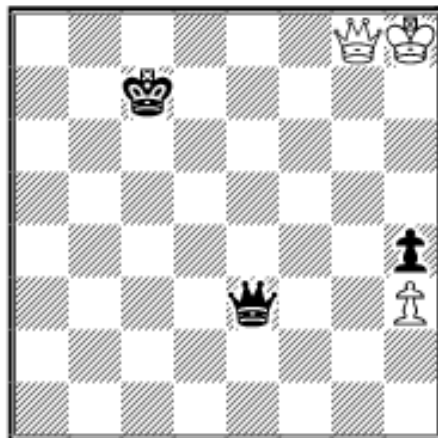


**E46.01 A. Raetsky (2430) - M. Santo Roman (2394)**

4th Rohde Open Sautron 2004

Can Black still save himself?



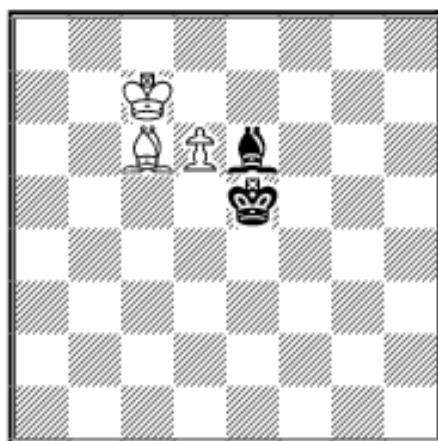


**E46.02 G. Garcia (2461) - V. Mikhalevski (2551)**

Montreal-B 5th 2004

Mikhalevski has been aiming for this position. What was his point?

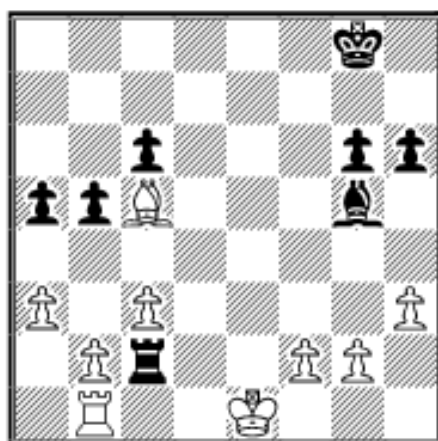
### Solutions to last month exercises



**E45.01 P. Barata (2000) - J. Costa (2021)**

POR-ch57 Lisbon 2001

Black's monarch must hurry to c5 immediately: **48...Bc8?** (48...Kd4! 49.Bd7 Bb3 50.Bg4 Ba4 51.Bf3 Kc5!=) **49.Bd7 Ba6 50.Bg4 Bb5 51.Be2 Ba4 52.Bf3 1-0**



**E45.02 C. Sandipan (2452) - K. Guseinov (2527)**

Moscow Aeroflot op 2002

The tactical shot **31.h4!** decided the game in White's favor: **31...Rc1+** (31...Bxh4 32.Kd1 Rxf2 33.Bxf2 Bxf2 34.Ke2 Bg3 35.Rd1+- (Finkel in CBM 88)) **32.Rxc1 Bxc1 33.Kd1 Bxb2** (33...Bf4 34.Be3+-) **34.Kc2 Ba1 35.Be3 b4** (35...h5 36.Bd2 b4 37.cxb4 axb4 38.a4+-) **36.cxb4 axb4 37.a4! Be5 38.a5**

**Bb8 1-0**



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