



Capablanca's Theorem: Part I

In his excellent book *Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy* John Watson has cast doubt on the validity of Capablanca's famous dictum "in the endgame queen and knight are superior to queen and bishop." He claims that at least one further advantage is required and that a large percentage of these endgames are drawn. So I will look at various possible advantages.

COLUMNISTS

Endgame Corner

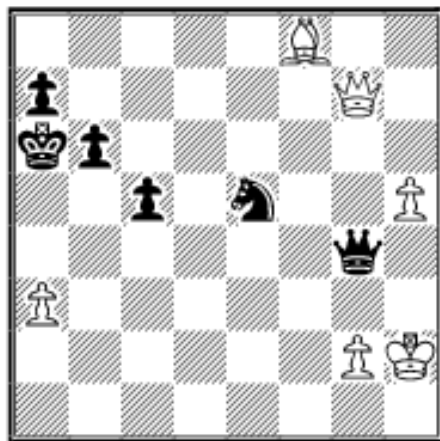
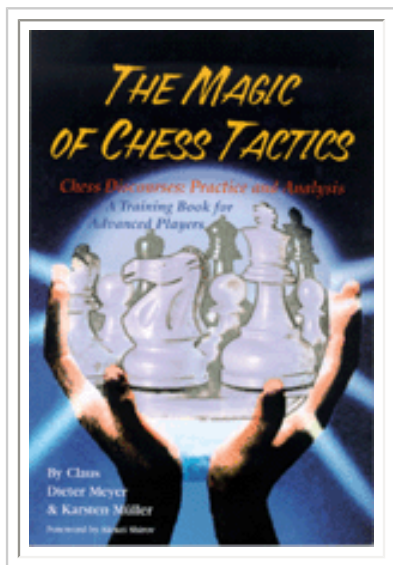
Karsten Müller

A) The strong attacking duo Q+N

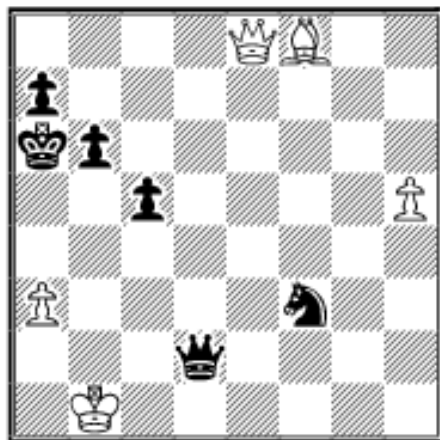
Their good cooperation in a dangerous attack against the enemy king is one of the reasons for the fame of the Q+N duo.

A1) Against an open king

48.01 A.Miles (2560) - V.Kortschnoj (2695)
Konex Buenos Aires 1979



White's king lacks defenders: **39...Qh4+!** this is even stronger than taking the h-pawn **40.Kg1 Ng4 41.Qf7 Qh2+ 42.Kf1 Qh1+ 43.Ke2 Qxg2+ 44.Kd1?!** allows the knight transfer to d4, but **44.Ke1** loses as well: **44...Qe4+ 45.Kf1 Qb1+ 46.Ke2 (46.Kg2? Ne3+—+ winning the queen.) 46...Qc2+ 47.Ke1 Ne5 48.Qf6 Nd3+ 49.Kf1 Qd1+ 50.Kg2 Qg4+ 51.Kf1 Qxh5—+ 44...Ne3+ 45.Ke1 Nc2+ 46.Kd1 Nd4 47.Qe8 (47.Qc4+ b5 48.Qd3 Qg1+ 49.Kd2 Qf2+ 50.Kd1 Qxf8—+) 47...Qf1+ 48.Kd2 Nf3+ 49.Kc2 (49.Kc3? Qc1+ 50.Kd3 c4+ 51.Ke2 Qe1+—+) 49...Qc4+ 50.Kb2 Qd4+ 51.Kc2 Qd2+ 52.Kb1** (see next diagram)



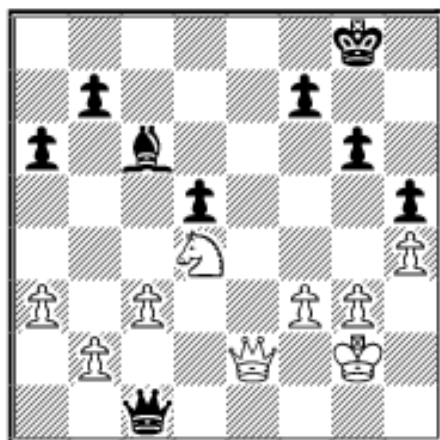
52...Qd1+ Of course not **52...Nd4??**
53.Qa4+ Kb7 54.Qd7+ with perpetual check. **53.Kb2 Nd4** and Miles resigned because of **54.Qe4 Qd2+ 54...Qb3+ 55.Kc1 Qxa3+** should win as well. **55.Kb1** (**55.Ka1 c4 56.Bh6 Qc3+ 57.Kb1 Qb3+ 58.Kc1 c3--**) **55...c4 56.Bb4 c3 57.Bxc3 Qd1+ 58.Kb2 Qb3+ 59.Kc1 Qxc3--**

A2) Using a weak color complex

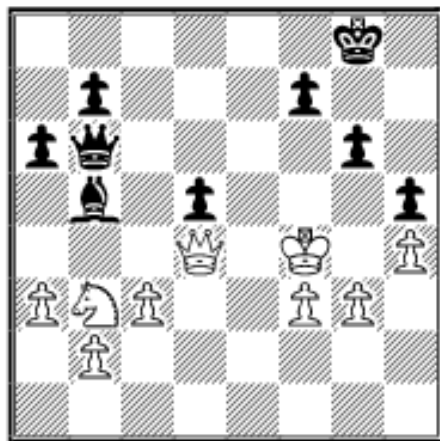
This theme highlights the biggest advantage of the knight over the bishop: it can visit all the squares of the board.

The following example is quite typical.

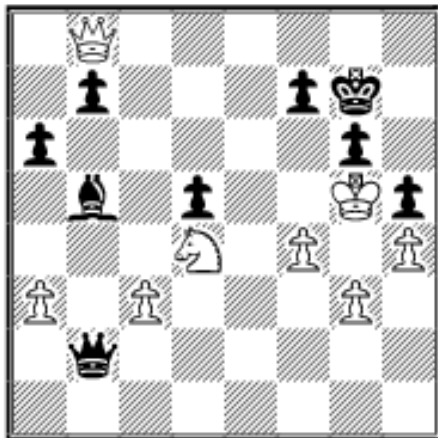
48.02 A.Cherniaev (2509) - D.Frolyanov (2448)
 RUS-ch Krasnodar 2002



Black's king feels a little uncomfortable with all the weak dark squares surrounding it. So Frolyanov must defend very accurately: **59.Kf2 Bd7?** Al.Rabinovich's **59...Ba4!** was much more precise (see CBM 91). **60.Nb3 Qb1 61.Ke3 Bb5 62.Qd2 Qg1+ 63.Kf4 Qb6 64.Qd4** (see next diagram)



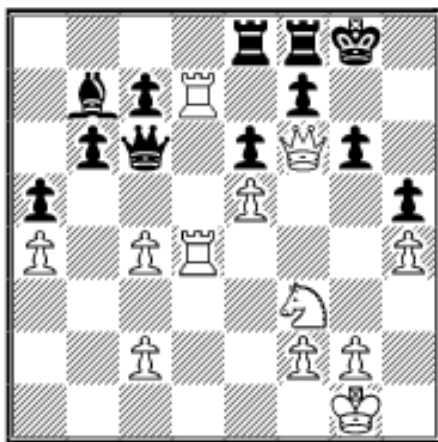
White has made considerable progress. **64...Qc6?!** I like **64...Qd8** more, but White is certainly better after **65.Qe5 Be8 66.Ke3 65.Qe5 Qc4+?** Black completely loses the thread. **66.Nd4 Qf1? 67.Kg5 Qc1+ 68.f4 Qxb2 69.Qb8+ Kg7** (see next diagram)



and now White landed the knock out blow:
70.Ne6+! fxe6 71.Qc7+ Bd7 72.Qxd7+ Kf8
73.Qd8+ Kf7 74.Qc7+ 1-0

This king march reminded me of the famous classic:

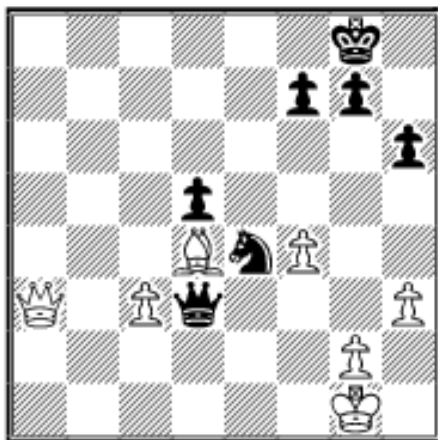
48.02A N.Short (2660) - J.Timman (2630)
 Tilburg 1991



31.Kh2!! Rc8 (31...Bc8 is refuted by
 32.Ng5 Bxd7 (32...Qxd7 33.Rxd7 Bxd7
 34.g4 hxg4 35.h5+-) 33.Rf4 Qc5 34.Nxf7
 Rxf7 35.Qxf7+ Kh8 36.Qxg6 Qxe5 37.g3
 Qg7 38.Qxh5+ Qh7 39.Qxh7+ Kxh7
 40.Rf7+-) **32.Kg3! Rce8 33.Kf4 Bc8**
34.Kg5 1-0 Bravo Nigel!

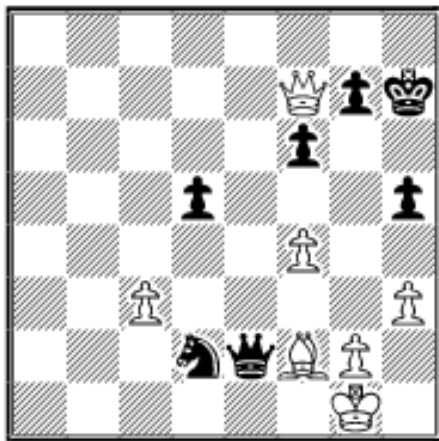
In the next example Adams shows good technique, but misses the win:

48.03 J.Polgar - M.Adams
 Corus A Wijk aan Zee 2005



43...Kh7!? Safeguarding the king, which may become active later via the light squares
44.Qa5 f6 this restriction of the bishop is a typical method **45.Kh2** (45.Qxd5?? Nxc3+-) **45...Qg3+ 46.Kg1 Nd2 47.Bf2 Qd3** (47...Qxf4? 48.Qxd5 Ne4 49.Bd4 leads to nothing as 49...Nxc3 50.Bxc3 Qe3+ 51.Kh1 Qxc3 52.Qe4+ is perpetual check.) **48.Kh2 Qe4 49.Qc7 h5!?** Adams activates his whole army **50.Kg1?** (50.Kh1! was more precise; although I am not sure if White can survive.)

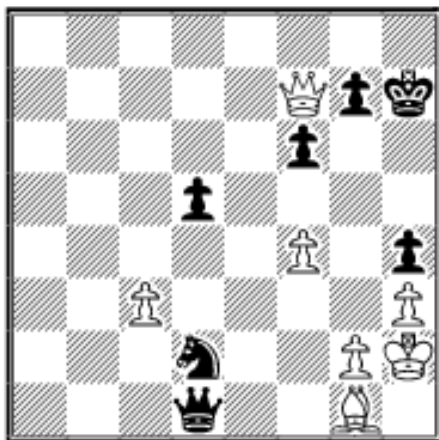
50...Qe2 51.Qf7 (see next diagram)



now Adams misses his chance to maximize the pressure: **51...Ne4?**

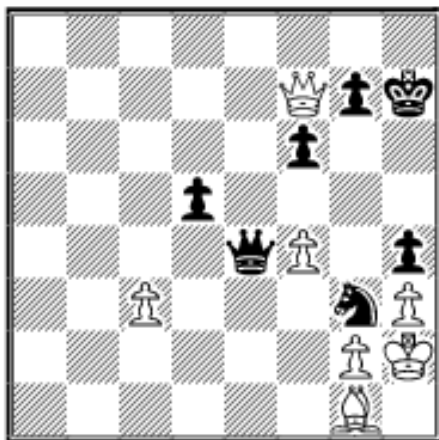
51...h4! was called for: 52.Kh1 (52.Qxd5? Qd1+ 53.Kh2 Nf1+-+; 52.Bxh4? Qf1+ 53.Kh2 Qxf4+ 54.Bg3 Nf1+-+) 52...Ne4 53.Bd4

A) 53...Qd1+!? looks also very promising for Black and may be even better: 54.Bg1 (54.Kh2? Nd2 55.Bg1 (see next diagram)



55...Nf3+!! an amazing shot! 56.gxf3 Qe2+ 57.Kh1 Qxf3+ 58.Kh2 Qg3+ 59.Kh1 Qxh3+ 60.Bh2 Qf3+ 61.Kg1 h3+-) 54...Nxc3 55.Kh2 Ne4 56.f5 Nd6 57.Qg6+ Kg8+-

B) 53...Ng3+ 54.Kh2 Qe1 55.Bg1 Qe4 (see next diagram)



the decisive zugzwang as all of White's pieces are on their optimal squares. 56.Bc5 Qf5! 57.Bf8 (57.Bg1? Ne2 58.Be3 Nxc3+-) 57...Qg6 (57...Nh5!?) 58.Qe7 (58.Qxd5? Qb1+-) 58...Ne4 and Black has a strong attack.

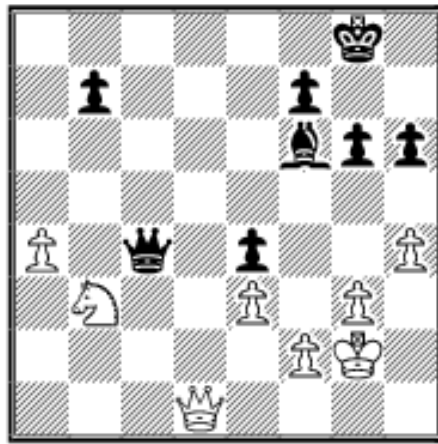
52.Bd4! h4 unfortunately one move too late
53.Kh2 Nd2 54.Kh1 Qd1+ 55.Bg1 Ne4
56.Kh2 Nd2 57.Kh1 Ne4 58.Kh2 Ng3
59.Qe6 Nf1+ 60.Kh1 Ng3+ 61.Kh2 Ne2

62.Bf2 Qd2 (62...Nxc3 63.Qf5+ Kh6 64.Bxh4 Ne4 65.g4=) **63.Qg4 Qxf4+**
 (63...Nxf4 64.Bd4=) 1/2-1/2

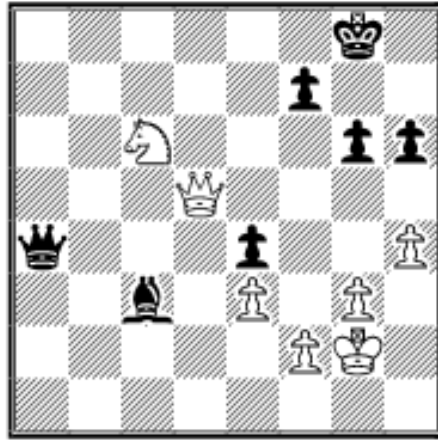
Sometimes the weak color complex must be created first:

48.04 V.Kupreichik (2580) - V.Gavrikov (2365)

URS-ch49 Frunze 1981



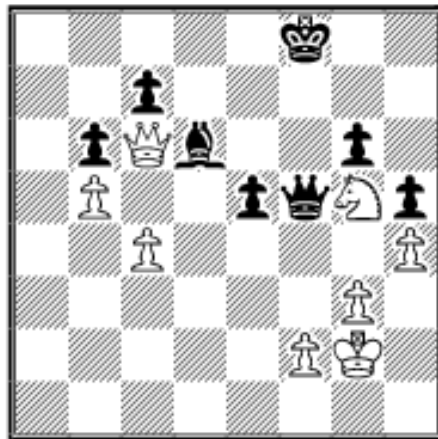
This position may look almost equal at first, but this is completely wrong: **51.Na5 Qb4** (51...Qd3 52.Qxd3 exd3 53.Kf1+- as one of Black's pawns is lost.) **52.Qd5 Qxa4** **53.Nxb7 Be7** **54.Na5 Bb4** (54...h5 loses the e-pawn as 55.Nc4 Qc2? is met by 56.Ne5+-) **55.Nc6 Bc3** (see next diagram)



The following motif is quite typical for this structure. Note that Black's pawn is already on h6, so he has to make a concession: **56.h5! gxh5** the light squares, especially f5, are fatally weak now, but 56...Kg7 doesn't help: 57.hxg6 fxg6 58.Nd4 Qe8 (58...Bxd4 59.Qxe4+-) 59.Ne6+ Kf6 60.Nc5+- **57.Ne7+ Kg7** **58.Nf5+ Kg6** **59.Nh4+ Kg7** **60.Qxh5 Qd7** (60...Qc6 61.Nf5+ Kf8 62.Qh4 Qe6 63.Qd8+ Qe8 64.Qd6+ Kg8 65.Nxh6+ Kh7 66.Qf4+-) **61.Nf5+ Kf6** **62.Qxh6+ Ke5** The knight is poisoned: 62...Kxf5? 63.Qh3+-

63.g4 f6 (63...Kd5 64.Qb6 Kc4 65.Qb1+-) **64.Qh8 Ba5** **65.Qb8+ Bc7** **66.Qb2+ Ke6** **67.Qb3+ Qd5** **68.Ng7+ 1-0**

Exercises (Solutions next month)

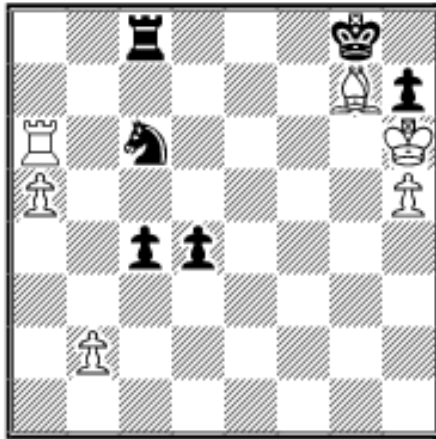


E48.01 K.Müller (2550) - S.Telljohann (2410)

GER-ch Bremen 1998

White to move and win

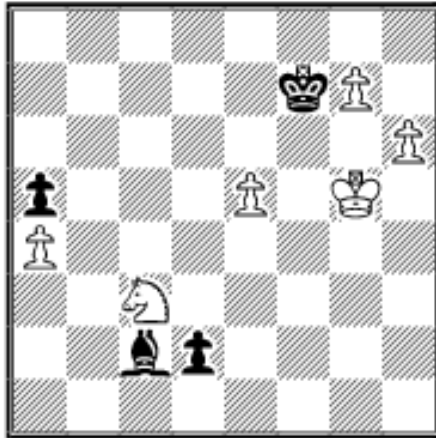
Solutions to last month exercises



E47.01 J.U.Maiwald (2543) - R.Felgaer (2592)

Capablanca mem Elite 39th Havana 2004

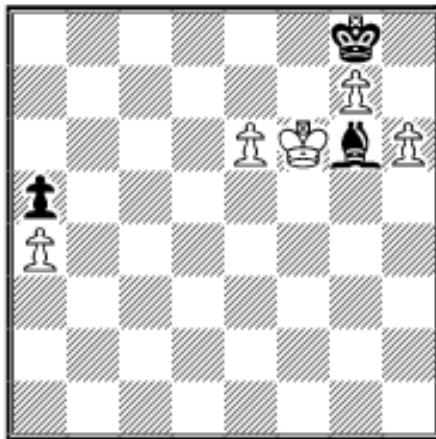
Black exploited White's unfortunate king position as follows: **52...Nd8!** (52...c3? is met by 53.Bxd4! Nxd4 54.bxc3) **53.Rf6 Rc6!** Blow after blow. 53...Nf7+? 54.Rxf7 Kxf7 55.Bxd4 gives White good drawing chances. **54.Rxc6 Nf7# 0-1**



E47.02 Ni Hua (2587) - E.Vladimirov (2621)

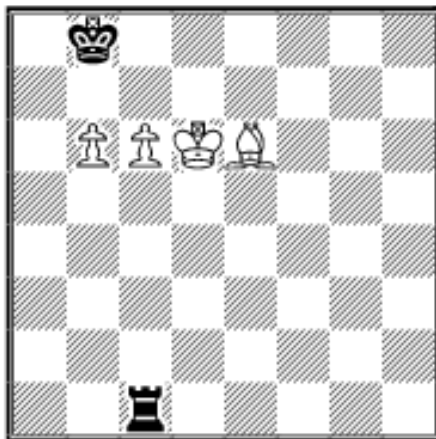
FIDE-Wch k.o. Tripoli 2004

67...Bxa4?? was a fatal error. But the correct defense was not at all easy to spot: 67...d1Q 68.Nxd1 Bxd1 69.e6+ Kg8 70.Kg6 (70.Kf6 Bh5 71.Ke7 Bd1=) 70...Bc2+ 71.Kf6 Bg6!= (see next diagram)



The point; 67...Bb3 draws as well.

68.e6+ Kg8 69.Ne4 1-0

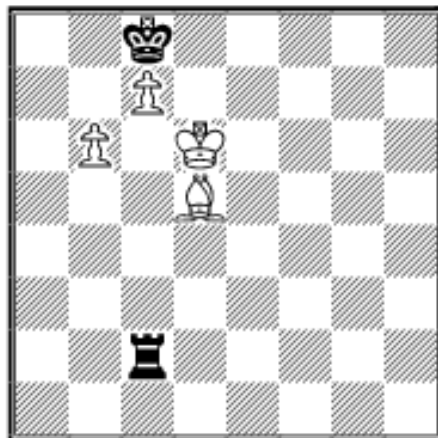


E47.03 Z.Kozul (2640) - K.Haznedaroglu (2394)

36th Olympiad Calvia 2004

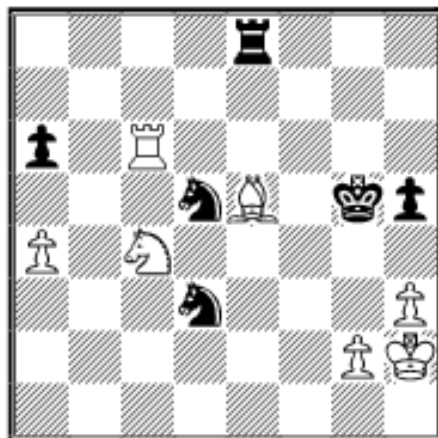
The black rook had to remain on the c-file: **99...Rd1+?**

99...Rc2 100.Bd5 Kc8! 101.c7 (see next diagram)



And now the hidden secret is revealed:
101...Rc6+!!=; 99...Rc3 is also playable.

100.Bd5 Rd2 101.c7+ 1-0



E47.04 A.Belozerov (2548) - N.Coenen (2389)

20th ECC Izmir 2004

Belozerov demonstrated the best way to convert White's advantage: **48.h4+! Kxh4?** (48...Kg4 49.Rg6+ Kf5 50.Rg5+ Ke6 51.Rxh5+-; 48...Kf5? 49.Nd6+-) **49.Rg6 1-0** and Black resigned as mate in one is inevitable.

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