



A Nightmare

In his first Bundesliga season my friend Gernd Beckhuis almost managed to defeat the German legend Dr. Robert Hübner. Now, a decade later, he has taken a close look at their fascinating endgame and kindly allowed me to use his notes.

53.01 G.Beckhuis (2300) - R.Hübner (2610)

German Bundesliga 93/94 [E15]

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 b6 3.c4 e6 4.g3 Ba6 5.b3 Bb7 6.Bg2 Bb4+ 7.Bd2 a5 8.0-0 0-0 9.Qc2 c5 10.Nc3 Na6 11.Rad1 d5 12.cxd5 exd5 13.Qb2 Qe7

13...Ne4? is answered with 14.Nxe4 dxe4 15.Ng5 Qe7 16.d5 Bxd5 17.Be3 Nc7 18.a3 and White is on top.

14.dxc5 bxc5 15.a3 d4 16.axb4 dxc3 17.Bxc3 cxb4 18.Be5

After 18.Bxf6 one sample line runs 18...Qxf6 19.Qxf6 gxf6 20.Nd4 Bxg2 21.Kxg2 Rfd8 22.e3 Nc5 23.Rb1 (23.Rc1?! Rxd4 24.Rxc5 Rd2=) 23...Ne6 24.Nc6 Rd3 25.Rfc1 Ra6 and Black's queenside play gives him good drawing chances.

18...Rfc8 19.Nh4 Bxg2 20.Kxg2

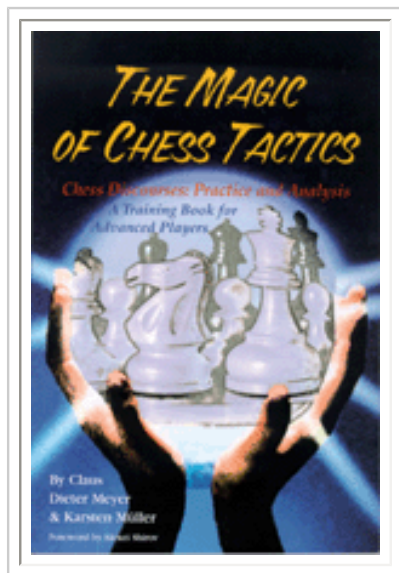
20.Nf5? is incorrect: 20...Qe6 21.Nxg7 Kxg7 22.Rd6 (22.Kxg2 Rc6 23.f4 Re8 24.e4 Kg8+) 22...Qxd6 23.Bxd6 Bxf1 24.Be5 Rc6+.

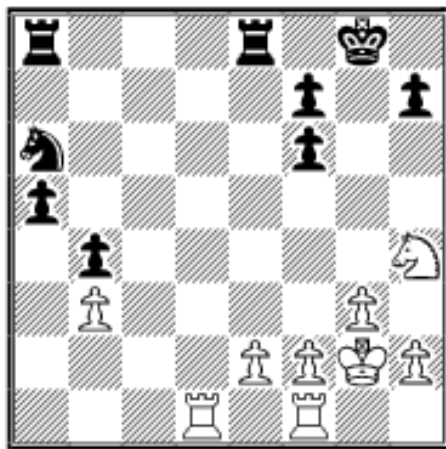
20...Re8 21.Bxf6 Qxf6 22.Qxf6 gxf6

COLUMNISTS

Endgame Corner

Karsten Müller





White grabs the initiative with his next move, but Hübner defends ingeniously.

23.Rd5! Nc7!

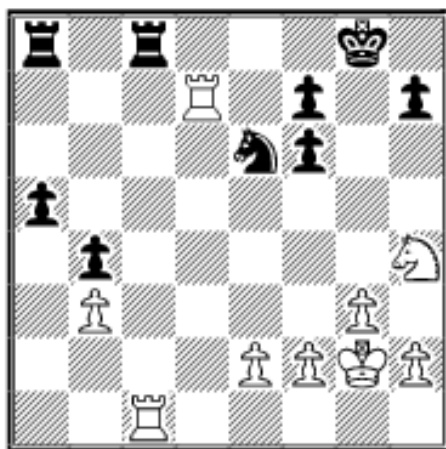
23...Re5? 24.Rxe5 fxe5 25.Rc1 is very pleasant for White.

23...Rxe2? 24.Rxa5 Nc7 25.Rxa8+ Nxa8
26.Rd1 Nc7 27.Rd4 Na6 28.Rd8+ Kg7
29.Nf5+ Kg6 30.g4 h5 (30...h6?? 31.Rh8
Re5 32.Rxh6+ Kg5 33.Kg3 Rxf5

34.Rh5+-) 31.Ng3+-.

The immediate 23...a4?! is very risky: 24.bxa4 Rxe2 (24...Nc7 25.Rc5 Ne6 26.Rb5 Rxa4 27.Rb1) 25.Rc1 and White's initiative is strong in both cases.

24.Rd7 Ne6 25.Rc1 Rec8



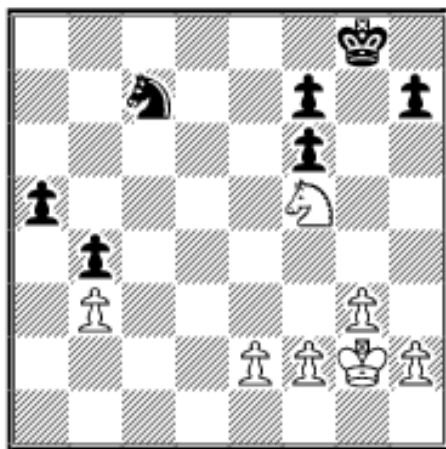
26.Rxc8+

The surprising 26.Ra7!? was an alternative, but Black can defend with 26...Rd8 27.Rxa8 Rxa8 28.Nf5 Kf8.

26...Rxc8 27.Nf5 Rc7

27...Nc5 should lead to a draw, but White still has some chances: 28.Ra7 Rb8
29.Ne7+ Kg7 30.Nc6 Re8 31.Rxa5 Nxb3
32.Ra4 Rxe2 33.Rxb4 Nc5 34.Rg4+.

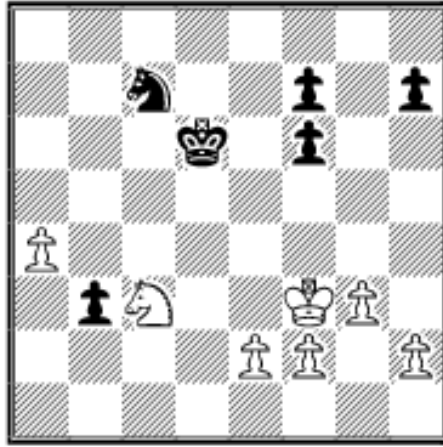
28.Rxc7 Nxc7



29.Nd4!

White does not waste his check on e7 to win a pawn: 29.Ne7+? Kf8 30.Nc6 a4
31.Nxb4 Na6 and only Black can play for a win.

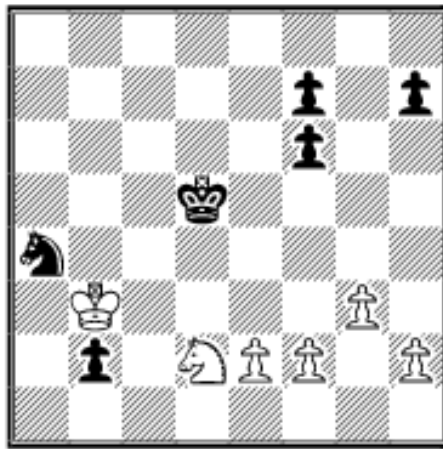
29...Ne6 30.Nc6 a4 31.bxa4 b3 32.Ne7+ Kf8 33.Nd5 Nc7 34.Nc3 Ke7 35.Kf3 Kd6



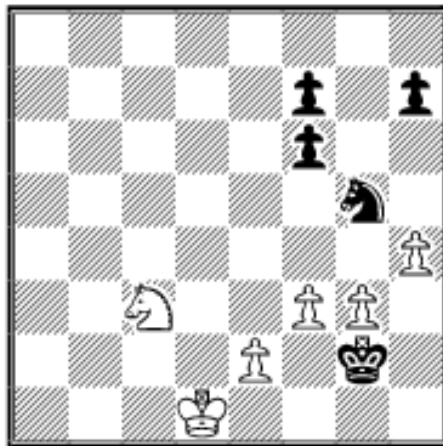
Artur Jussupow now found an amazing resource for White.

36.Ke4?!

36.Ne4+! but Hübner, Jussupow and Beckhuis nevertheless found a way for Black to survive: 36...Kd5 37.Nd2 b2 38.Ke3 Na6 39.Kd3 Nc5+ 40.Kc2 Nxa4 41.Kb3:



41...Kd4!! The point; Black's counterplay is just barely fast enough: 42.Nb1 (Taking the knight doesn't help: 42.Kxa4 Kc3 43.Nb1+ Kc2 44.Na3+ Kd2 45.e4 Ke2 46.f4 Kf3 47.Kb3 h5 48.Kxb2 Kg2 49.Kc2 Kxh2 50.Kd3 Kxg3 51.Ke3 h4 52.Nc4 h3 53.Nd2 h2 54.Nf1+ Kg2 55.Nxh2 Kxh2=) 42...Nc5+ 43.Kxb2 Ne4 44.f3 Ng5 45.Kc2 Ke3 46.Kd1 Kf2 47.Nc3 Kg2 48.h4:

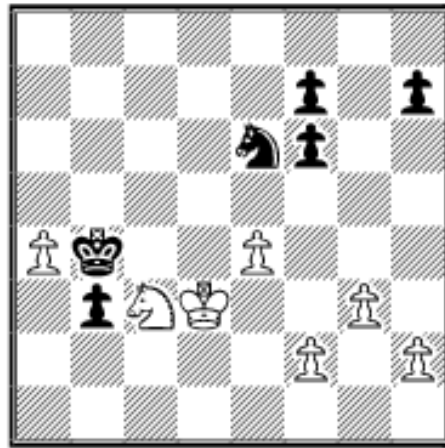


And now Black can establish an impregnable fortress with 48...Nxf3! 49.exf3 Kxf3 50.Ne2 h5 51.Ke1 f5 52.Kf1 f6 53.Ke1 Kg2=.

36...Kc5 37.Kd3 Kb4 38.e4?!

White is probably still playing for a win, but now he should have made a draw with 38.a5 Ne6 39.Nd5+ Kxa5 40.Kc3 Ka4 41.Kb2=.

38...Ne6



39.h4??

This is just one mistake too many. White still had a narrow path available: 39.a5! Nc5+ 40.Kd4 b2 41.Nb1 Nb3+ 42.Kd3 Nxa5 43.Kc2 Nc4 44.h4=; 39.Nd5+? is risky because of 39...Kxa4 40.Kc4 Ng5!.

39...Nc5+ 40.Kd2 Nxa4 41.Nb1

41.Nxa4 Kxa4 42.Kc1 Kb4 43.Kb2

Kc4—+.

41...Kc4 42.Ke3

42.f3 doesn't help: 42...Kd4 43.Na3 Nc3 44.h5 b2 45.Kc2 b1Q+ 46.Nxb1 Nxb1 47.Kxb1 Ke3—+.

39.h4??

42...b2 43.Kd2 Nc5 44.f3 Kb3 45.g4 Ne6 46.Ke3 Kc2 47.Na3+ Kc1 48.Kd3 Nf4+ 49.Kc3 Ng2 0–1

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