



The Strength of Connected Passed Pawns

The power of connected passed pawns is legendary. Rooks especially have problems fighting against them:

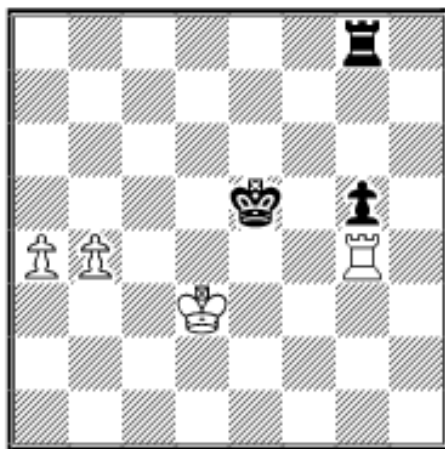
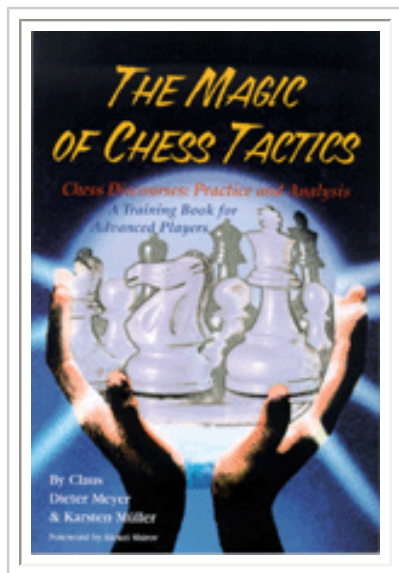
57.01 A.Dreev - J.Ehlvest

Tallinn chsf-USSR 1986

COLUMNISTS

Endgame Corner

Karsten Müller

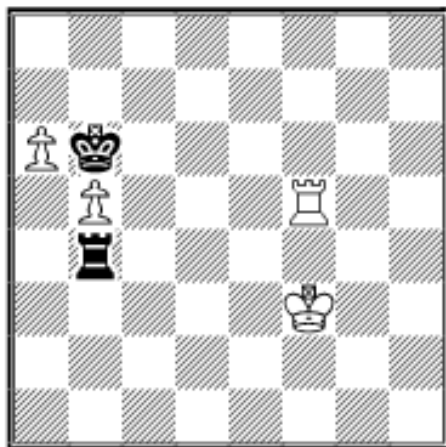


64...Kf5! this seems to draw by a hair because Black's g-pawn manages to reach g4, which gives his rook more scope.

64...Kd5? 65.a5 Rg7 66.Kc3 with the idea of marching to a4 should win for White according to Mark Dvoretsky in his *Endgame Manual*.

65.Rg1 trying to keep the rook active with 65.Rc4 is also insufficient, e.g. 65...g4 66.Ke2 Ke5 67.Kf2 (67.Rc6 Kd5 68.Rb6

Rf8 69.a5 g3 70.Rg6 Kc4=) 67...Kd5 68.Rf4 g3+ 69.Kg2 in general it's good to blockade lone passed pawns with the king, but here Black's king blockades the connected pawns: 69...Kc6 70.Rf6+ (70.b5+ Kb7 71.Rf7+ Kb6 72.Rf6+ Ka7 73.a5 Rg5=) 70...Kb7 71.b5 Rg4 72.a5 Ra4 (72...Rg7? 73.Re6+-) 73.a6+ Ka7 74.Kxg3 Rb4 75.Rf7+ Ka8 76.Rf5 Ka7 77.Kf3 Kb6=.

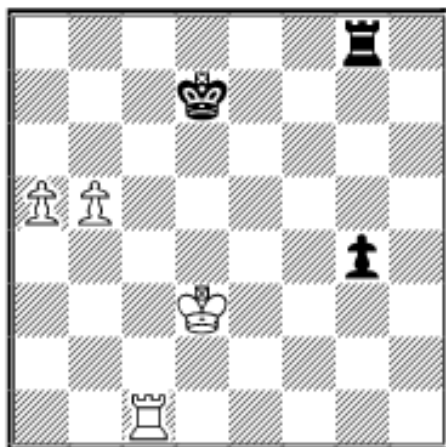


Black has reached the well-known Kling and Horwitz fortress.

65...g4 66.Kc4

66.a5!? is slightly more dangerous, but Black's castle cannot be stormed:

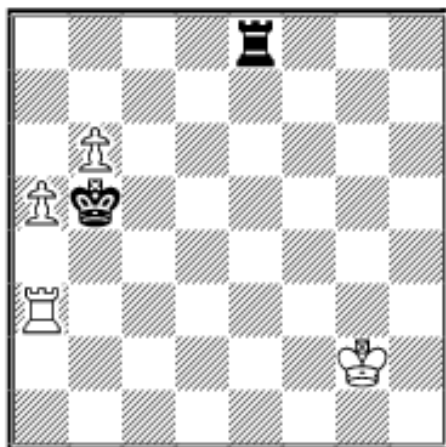
66...Ke6! 67.b5 Kd7 (67...g3? 68.b6 Kd5 69.Rc1 Rb8 (69...g2 70.a6+-) 70.Ke2+-) 68.Rc1



68...Rg5! forces White's rook to relinquish the cut-off 69.Rb1 (69.Kc4 g3 70.a6 Kc7 71.Kb4+ Kb6 72.Rc6+ Ka7 73.Rc7+ Ka8! 74.b6 Rg8 75.Rc1 g2=) 69...g3 70.b6 (70.a6 Kc8 71.Ra1 Rg8=) 70...Kc8 71.b7+ Kb8 72.a6 Ra5=.

66.b5 Ra8 67.Ra1 Ke5 68.Ra3 (68.a5 Kd5 69.Kc3 Kc5 70.b6 Kc6 71.Kb4 Rg8 72.Rc1+ Kb7 73.Rc7+ Ka8 74.a6 g3=) 68...g3 69.Ke2 Kd6 70.a5 Kc5 71.b6 g2

72.Kf2 Kb5 73.Kxg2 Re8



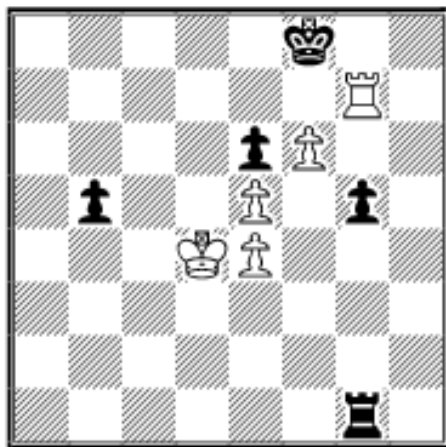
White's rook is too passive, e.g. (73...Rf8? allows the activation of the rook: 74.Rf3+-) 74.Kf2 Rh8 75.Kg3 Rg8+ 76.Kf4 Rf8+ 77.Ke5 Rd8 78.Ke6 Ka6 79.Ke7 Rd1=.

66...g3? now Black's king is too late on the queenside and the rook is no match for the connected passed pawns. Mark Dvoretsky gives the proper path: 66...Ke6! 67.Rg3 Kd6 68.b5 Kc7 69.a5 Kb7=.

67.Kd5! a nasty body-check. **67...Rd8+ 68.Kc6 Rc8+ 69.Kb7 Rg8 70.a5 Rg7+ 71.Kb6 Ke5 72.a6 Rg6+ 73.Kc5 1-0**

In the next example, Black always faces the danger of White getting connected passed pawns:

57.02 V.Topalov (2788) - R.Kasimdzhanov (2670)
WCh-FIDE San Luis 2005



58...b4? now Black's g-pawn remains alive which will cause his ultimate demise.

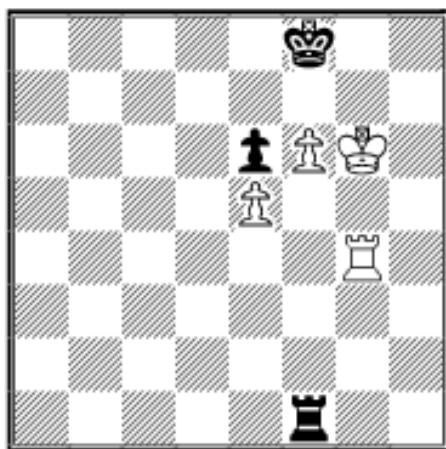
58...Rc1! was much stronger and seems to hold the draw, e.g. 59.Rxg5 Rc4+ 60.Kd3 Rc5 61.Rg7 b4 (61...Rxe5? 62.Kd4 Rh5 63.e5

A) 63.Re7? b4 64.e5 b3 65.Rxe6 Rh4+ 66.Kc3 Rb4 67.Kb2 Rb7 68.Rd6 Kf7=.

B) 63.Rb7? b4 64.e5 (64.Rxb4 e5+ 65.Kd5 Kf7 66.Rb6 Rg5 67.Re6 Rg4=) 64...Rh1 65.Re7 b3 (65...Rh4+? 66.Kc5 b3 67.Rb7 Ra4 68.Rxb3 Ra5+ 69.Rb5+-) 66.Kc3 Rh3+ 67.Kb2 Re3 68.Rxe6 Kf7 69.Re7+ Kf8=.

63...b4 64.Rb7 Rh2 65.Rxb4 Rd2+ 66.Ke3 Rc2 67.Rb8+ Kf7 68.Rb7+ Kf8 69.Re7 Rc6 70.Kf4+-)

62.Rb7 Rxe5 63.Kd4 Ra5 64.e5 Rd5+ 65.Ke4 Rd1 66.Rxb4 Re1+ 67.Kf4 Rf1+ 68.Kg5 Rg1+ (68...Re1!?) 69.Rg4 Rf1 70.Kg6



Black's activity secures the draw, e.g. 70...Rf2 71.Rg1 Rf4 72.Ra1 Rg4+ 73.Kh5 Re4 74.Kg5 Kf7=.

59.Kc5 b3 60.Rb7 Ra1 61.Rxb3 Ra5+ 62.Kd4!?

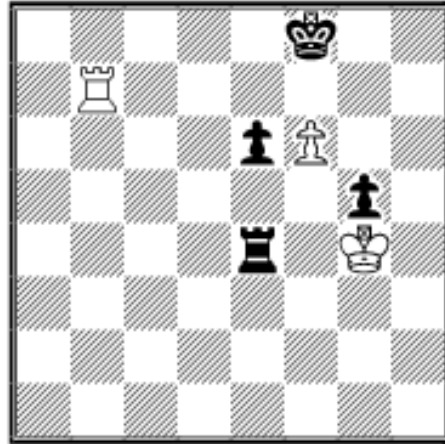
62.Kd6?! Ra6+ 63.Kd7 Kf7 64.Rg3 probably wins as well, but it's much more complicated.

62...Ra4+ 63.Ke3 Ra5

63...Ra7 64.Kf3 Rh7 65.Rb8+ Kf7 66.Rb7+ Kg6 67.Re7 and White prevails as the pawn endgame is won (67.Rxh7? Kxh7 is only drawn as White's king can't penetrate.): 67...Rxe7 68.fxe7 68...Kf7 69.Kg4 Kxe7 70.Kxg5 Kf7 71.Kh6 Kf8 72.Kg6 Ke7 73.Kg7 Ke8 74.Kf6 Kd7 75.Kf7+-.

64.Rb8+! Topalov enters on the 7th rank with tempo. **64...Kf7 65.Rb7+ Kf8** sad passivity, but the active 65...Kg6 loses as well: 66.Rg7+ Kh6 (66...Kh5 67.Re7 Kg6 68.Rxe6+-) 67.Rg8 Ra3+ 68.Kf2 Ra7 69.Kf3 Ra1 70.Kg3 Rf1 71.Re8+-, **66.Kd4** 66.Kf3 was possible immediately. **66...Ra4+ 67.Kc5 Ra5+ 68.Kd4 Ra4+ 69.Ke3 Ra3+ 69...Ra5 70.Kf3 Rxe5 71.Kg4 Rxe4+ 72.Kh5+-.**

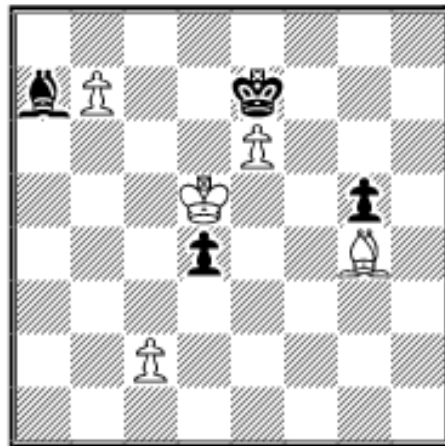
70.Kf2 Ra5 70...g4 71.Re7 Rf3+ 72.Kg2 Re3 73.Rxe6 Rxe4 74.Kg3+-.
71.Kg3 Rxe5 71...Ra4 72.Kg4 Rxe4+ 73.Kh5+- **72.Kg4 Rxe4+**



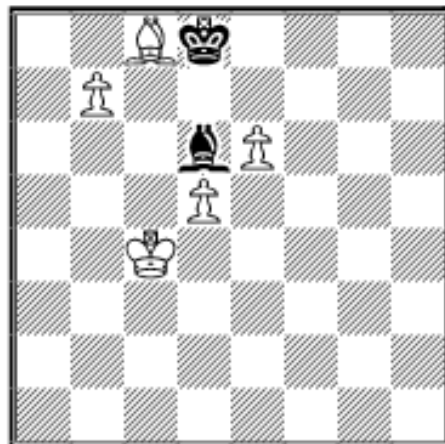
73.Kh5 1-0 White uses Black's pawn as an umbrella to shield it from enemy checks. This is one of the many techniques described in Mark Dvoretsky's outstanding *Endgame Manual* (Russell Enterprises 2003). **73...Rd4** 73...Ke8 74.Kg6 Rf4 75.Kg7+- **74.Kg6 Rd8 75.Rh7 Kg8 76.f7+ Kf8 77.Kf6 g4 78.Rh8#**

Alexandra Kosteniuk recently won an instructive opposite-colored bishop endgame:

57.03 A.Kosteniuk - Y.Dembo
 15th ETC Women Gothenburg 2005



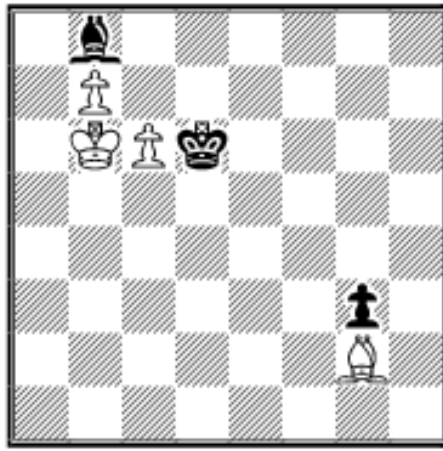
58.Ke5 puts Black in zugzwang, but Dembo fights back: **58...d3!? 59.c4!!** only this advance will do. After 59.cxd3? Black has a watertight fortress as Kosteniuk proves in the German *Schachmagazin* 64, 19/2005: 59...Bb8+ 60.Kf5 Bd6 61.Kxg5 Bb8 62.d4 Bd6 63.Kf5 Bc7 64.d5 Bd6 65.Be2 Bb8 66.Bb5 Bc7 67.Bd7 Bd6 68.Bc8 Bb8 69.Ke4 Bd6 70.Kd4 Kd8 71.Kc4



Black simply waits in her fortress: 71...Ke7 (71...Kc7? hands White the key on a silver platter: 72.Kb5 Kd8 73.Kb6 Bb8 74.d6 Bxd6 75.Ka7+-) 72.Kb5 Bc7 73.Kc6 Bb8=.

59...d2 60.c5 Bb8+ 61.Kd5 Ba7 62.c6 Bb8 63.Kc5 Bc7 64.Kb5 Kd6

64...d1Q 65.Bxd1 Kxe6 66.Ka6 Kd6 67.Bf3 g4 68.Bh1 Bb8 69.Kb6 g3 70.Bg2

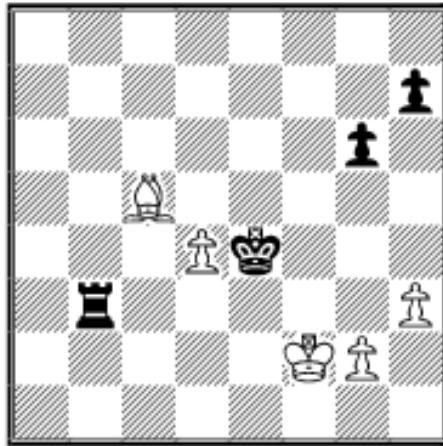


Black is in a fatal zugzwang.

**65.Ka6 d1Q 66.Bxd1 Kxc6 67.Ka7 Kd6
68.Bg4 1-0**

Jürgen Fleck from **Germany** has pointed out a mistake in a crucial line of 54.02 (see the [ChessCafe Archives](#)):

54.02 M. Wahls (2551) - A. Braun (2480)
German Bundesliga 2005

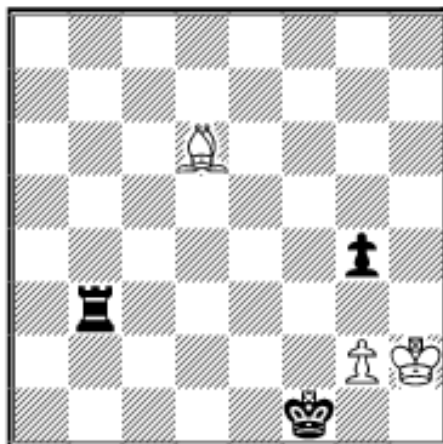


50.Kg1

The immediate sacrifice 50.d5? is wrong: 50...Kxd5 51.Ba7 Ke4 52.Bc5 h5 53.Ba7 g5 54.Bc5 Rb2+ 55.Kf1 g4 56.hxg4 hxg4 57.Bd6 Ke3?! this allows the disturbing Bc5+. Fleck gives the more precise 57...Rc2 58.Bb8 Rc8 59.Bd6 Ke3 60.Kg1 Ke2 61.Kh2 Rc3 and Black wins as in the main line. 58.Kg1 Ke2 59.Kh2 and now I gave 59...Kf1? which allows the activation of White's king: 60.Kg3 Rxd2+ 61.Kf4=

and White draws because of the fortunate position of his bishop on d6 (or c7) as Fleck indicates. But Black's rook can drive it away first:

59...Rb3 60.Bc7 Kf1 61.Bd6



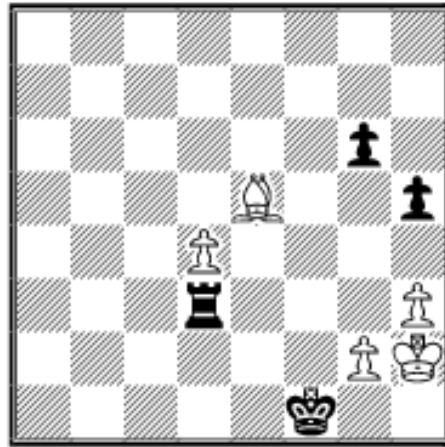
Now the rook starts the dance: 61...Re3 62.Bc7 Re7 63.Bd6 Re6 64.Bc7 Rc6 65.Be5 Rc2 66.Kg3 Rxd2+ 67.Kf4 Kg1 68.Kg5 Kf2 69.Kf4 Rg3 followed by Kg2-h3 and Black wins.

50...Ke3 51.Kh2 Ke2 52.Bd6 Kf1 53.Bf4 Rd3!?

Good technique by the young German talent against the two time German champion! The greedy 53...Rb2 54.Kg3 Rxd2+ leads to a draw because of the

counterplay with the d-pawn: 55.Kf3 g5 56.Be3 h5 57.d5 g4+ 58.hxg4 Rxd4 59.d6=.

54.Be5 h5



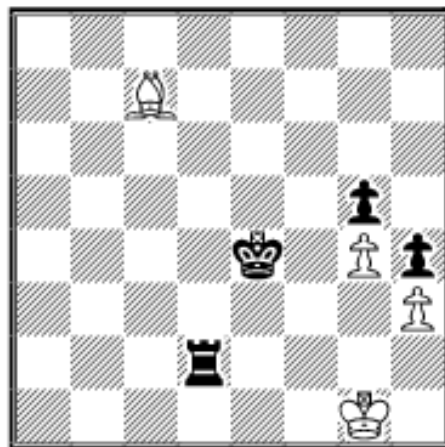
Now White has to act very carefully. The base of his fortress must remain on g2.

55.g4?

55.Bf6 Rd2 (55...Kf2 56.Bh4+ Kf1 57.Bf6=) 56.Kg3 Rf2 (56...Rxd2+ 57.Kf4=) 57.Be7 Rf5 58.Kh2 g5 59.Kh1 Ra5 60.Bd8 Rb5 61.Be7 g4 (61...Kf2 62.Kh2=) 62.hxg4 hxg4 63.Kh2 Rb2 64.Kg3 Rxd2+ 65.Kf4=.

55...h4! 56.Bf6 Rd2+ 57.Kh1 Kf2 58.Bxh4+

58.Be5 doesn't help as the diagonal h2-b8 is surprisingly not long enough: 58...Rd1+ 59.Kh2 Kf3 60.Bb8 (60.g5 Rd2+ 61.Kg1 Rg2+ 62.Kf1 Rxd1=) 60...Rxd4 61.Kg1 Rd8 62.Bc7 Rc8 63.Be5 Ke4 64.Bd6 (64.Bf6 Rc1+ 65.Kf2 Rc2+ 66.Kg1 Kf4 67.Bxh4 g5 68.Be1 Kf3=) 64...g5 65.Kg2 (65.Be7 Kf3 66.Bd6 Rd8 67.Bc7 Rd7=) 65...Rd8 66.Bc7 Rd2+ 67.Kg1



Now Black proves that the diagonal is too short: 67...Rd7 68.Bb8 (68.Bh2 Rd1+ 69.Kg2 Rd2+ 70.Kg1 Rxd2 71.Kxh2 Kf3=) 68...Kd5 69.Kg2 Rb7 and White's bishop is dominated: 70.Bh2 Rb2+ 71.Kg1 Rxd2 72.Kxh2 Ke4 73.Kg2 Ke3=.

58...Kf3 59.Bg5 Rxd4 60.Kh2 Ra4 61.Bd8 Ra2+ 62.Kg1 Rg2+ 63.Kh1 Kg3 64.g5 Kxh3 65.Bf6 Rg4 66.Bd8 Rd4 67.Bb6 Rd5 68.Be3 Re5 0-1



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