



The Right Exchange

The problem of when to exchange pieces is at the heart of the game of chess. Many points are won or lost based on this decision. In this article I will concentrate on when to exchange a pair of rooks in the endgame.

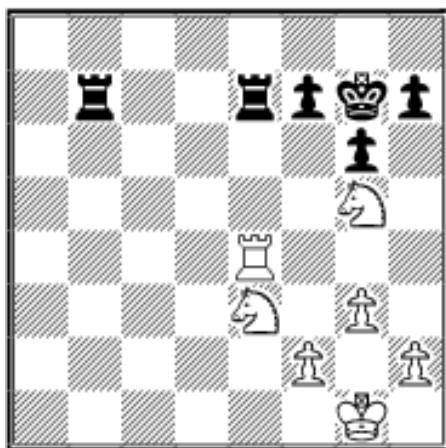
The following guidelines may play a role:

- Single rook endgames have a very large drawish tendency. Remember Dr. Tarrasch's aphorism: "All rook endgames are drawn."
- The side playing against a rook usually wants to retain one rook to coordinate with the minor pieces; for example, with one or two minor pieces against a rook.
- When exchanging into a pawn endgame, you should be absolutely sure about the result, because even the slightest advantage may prove decisive, e.g. a slightly more active king.

Let's look at the guidelines in practice (also please solve the exercises!):

71.01 B.Larsen (2620) – S.Marjanovic (2505)

Bled 1979



Of course, Larsen avoids the exchange of rooks and provokes a weakening of Black's structure.

38.Rh4! h6 39.Nf3 Rb1+ 40.Kg2 Rb2 41. Nc4 Rbe2 42.Ncd2 Rd7 43.Nb3 Rde7 44. Ra4 Rb2 45.Nbd2 Reb7 46.h3 R2b4 47. Ra5 R7b5 48.Ra3

Larsen again avoids the exchange.

48...Rd5 49.Ra7 Rdb5 50.h4 Rb7 51.Ra6 R7b6 52.Ra3 R6b5 53.Rd3 Kh7 54.Ng1 Kg7 55.Ne2 Ra5 56.Nf4 Rba4 57. Nb3 Ra7 58.Rd5

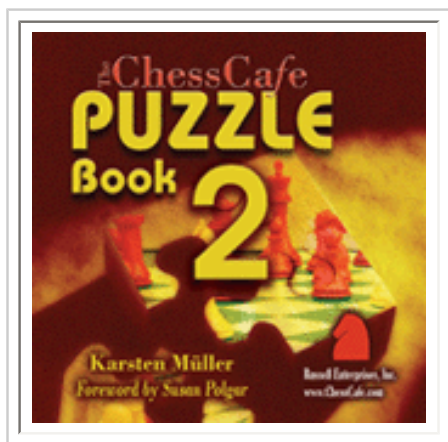
58...R4a6?!



COLUMNISTS

Endgame Corner

Karsten Müller



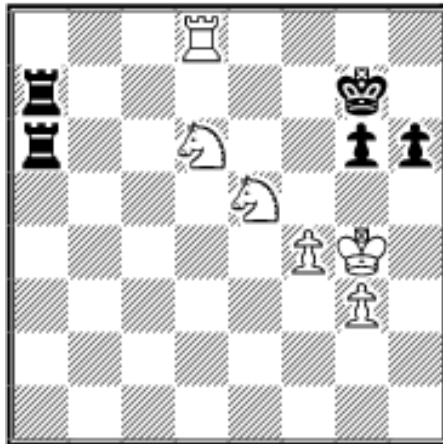


Allowing the undermining h5 eases White's task. 58...h5 was more tenacious.

59.h5 Kh7 60.Nd4 Kg7 61.Nb5 Rb7 62.Nd6 Rbb6?

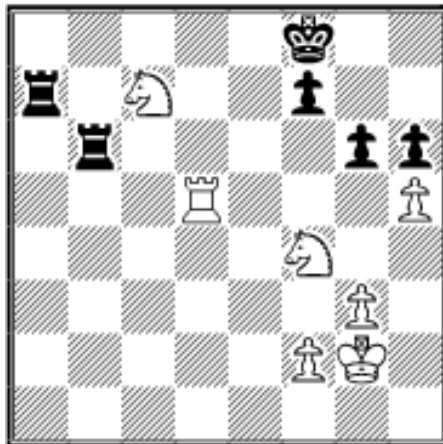
62...Re7 was called for. For example 63. Nc4 Rc7 64.Ne5 Rca7 65.hxg6 fxg6 66. Kh3 Rf6 67.Rd8 Rfa6 68.Nd5 Rb7 69.f4 Re6 70.Kg4 Ra7 71.Nc3 Rea6 72.Nb5 Rb7

73.Nd6 Rba7



74.Ne8+ Kh7 75.Nd7 Ra5 76.Nef6+ Kg7 77.Rf8 h5+ (77...Rb5? 78.Ne8+ Kh7 79. Ndf6#) 78.Kh4+–.

63.Ne8+ Kf8 64.Nc7 Ra7



65.Rd8+!

Larsen has created a mating attack, which forces Black's king to leave its shelter.

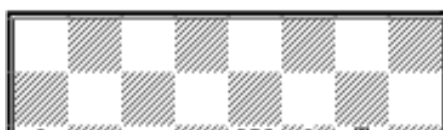
65...Ke7

65...Kg7 66.Ne8+ Kh7 67.Nd5 Rc6 68. Nef6+ Rxf6 (68...Kg7 69.Rg8#) 69.Nxf6+ +–.

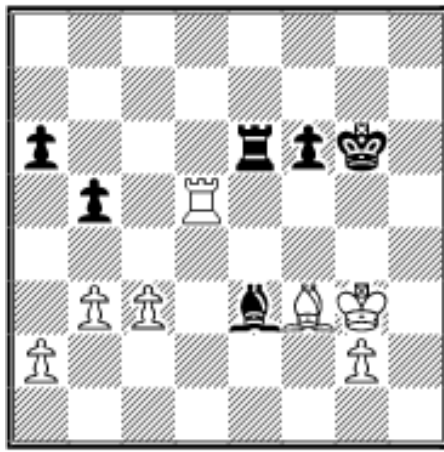
66.Rg8 Rc6 67.Ncd5+ Kd6 68.hxg6 fxg6 69.Nb4 Rb6 70.Nfd5 Rbb7 71. Rxg6+ Kc5 72.Rxh6 Rf7 73.Rc6+ Kb5 74.Rc2 Rad7 75.g4 1–0

With rooks and opposite-colored bishops, the defender usually wants to exchange rooks. But do not use this guideline too mechanically.

71.02 T.Heinemann (2453) – A.Skripchenko (2427)
German Bundesliga 2006



The German trainer Claus Dieter Meyer



deeply analyzed this endgame and kindly allowed me to use his notes.

52...Re5?

An inappropriate moment for the exchange, as White can centralize his king with tempo. With rooks Black should be able to hold: 52...f5 53.Rd3 a) 53.Rd8 Bb6 54.Rc8 Kg5 55.Rc6 (55.Rg8+ Rg6) 55...f4 +; b) 53.Be2 Kg5 54.c4 (54.Bd3 Re5) 54...

bxc4 55.bxc4 Bg1; 53...Bc5 54.Bb7 Kg5 55.Kf3 a5 56.b4 (56.a4 bxa4 57. bxa4 Re5) 56...axb4 57.cxb4 Rd6 with excellent drawing chances in all cases.

53.Rxe5 fxe5 54.Bb7 a5 55.Kf3 Bd2

55...Bc5 56.Ke4 Kf6 (56...b4 57.c4 Kf6 58.Kd5+–) 57.Kd5 Bf2 58.b4 axb4 (58...e4 59.Bc6+–) 59.cxb4 Be1 60.Kc5+–.

56.c4 bxc4 57.bxc4 Kf6

57...Kf5 58.Bc8+ Kf6 59.Ke4 Bf4 60.g4 Ke7 61.c5 Kd8 62.Bf5 Kc7 63.Kd5 a4 64.Be4 Kd7 65.c6+ Kc7 66.Ke6+–.

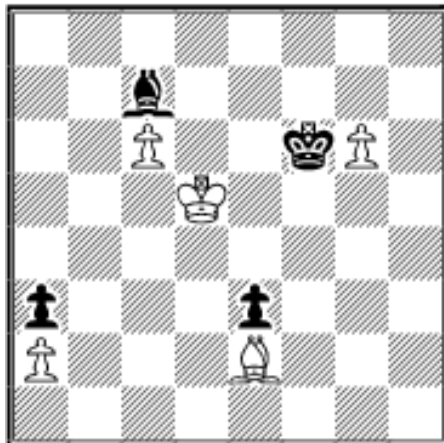
58.Ke4 Ke6

58...a4 59.c5 a3 60.Kd5 Ba5 61.g4 Bd8 62.g5+ Kxg5 63.Kxe5+–.

59.g4 a4 60.c5 a3 61.Bd5+ Kf6 62.Bb3

62.c6 Ba5 63.g5+ Kxg5 64.Kxe5+– is even easier.

62...Bb4 63.Kd5 e4 64.c6 e3 65.Bd1 Ke7 66.g5 Ba5 67.Be2 Bc7 68.g6 Kf6

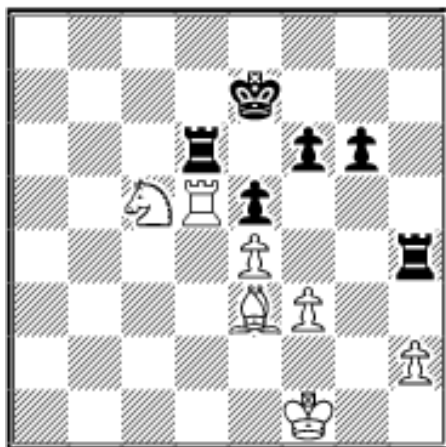


69.Bd3!

The decisive zugzwang. White could still spoil it by violating the principle: do not hurry, e.g. 69.g7? Kxg7 70.Ke6 Bb6 71. Kd6 Kf6=.

69...Bg3 70.Kc5 Bc7 71.Kb5 1–0

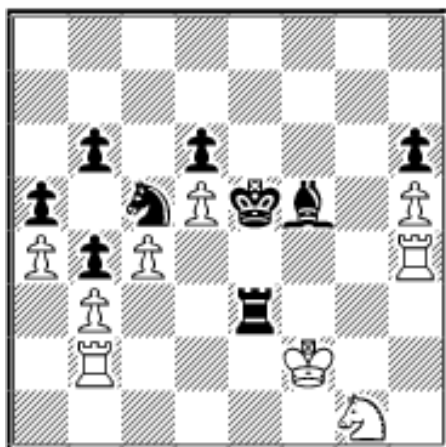
Exercises (Solution next month)



E71.01 *M.Stean* (2420) – *W.Browne* (2550)

Buenos Aires ol (Men) 1978

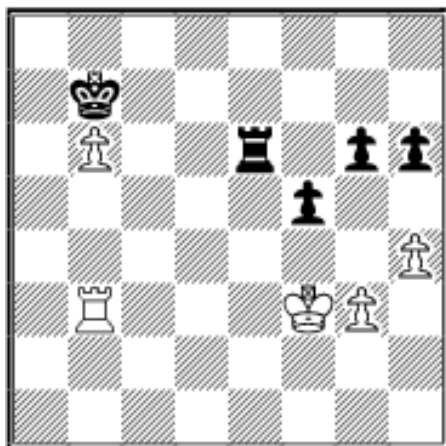
How did White exchange his rook?



E71.02 *I.Sokolov* (2685) – *V.Topalov* (2757)

Corus Wijk aan Zee 2005

To exchange the rook e3 or not to exchange the rook e3 that is the question?



E71.03 *T.Chistiakova* (2351) – *S.Shaidullina* (2293)

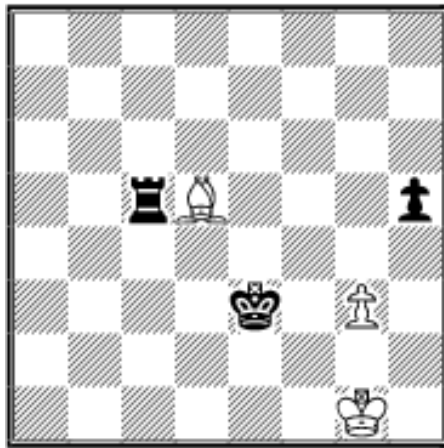
56th ch-RUS w Top League Orel 2006

Was 1...Rxb6 a good choice?

Solutions to last month's exercise

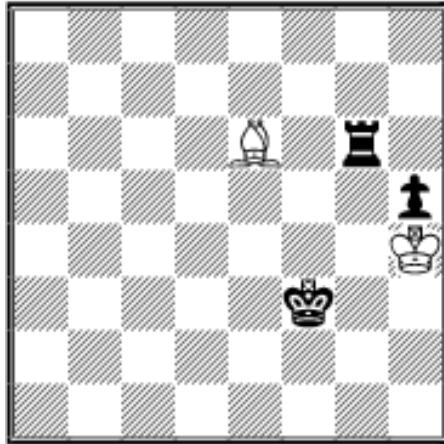
E70.01 *L.Ftacnik* (2540) - *J.Murey* (2505)

New York 1987



66.Bb7?

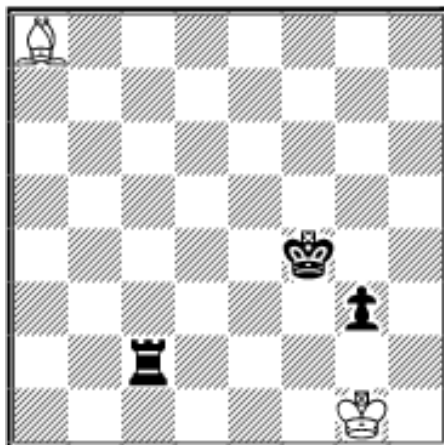
66.Be6! Kf3 67.Kh2 Rg5 68.Kh3 (68.Bf7? Rxc3 69.Bxc3+ Kf2–+) 68...Rxc3+ 69. Kh4 Rg6



Now comes the point of White's defense:
70.Bb3! (70.Bf7? Rg7–+) 70...Rh6 (70... Kf4 71.Kxh5 Rg3 72.Bc2=) 71.Kg5 Rh8 72.Bd1+ Ke4 73.Bxh5=.

66...Rg5 67.Kh2

67.Kg2 h4 68.Kh3 hxc3 69.Kg2 Kf4 70. Bf3 Rc5 71.Ba8 Rc2+ 72.Kg1



Black breaks the fortress with the typical
72...g2 73.Kh2 Rf2 74.Bc6 g1Q+ 75.Kxg1 Kg3–+.

67...Kf2 68.Kh3 Rxc3+ 69.Kh4 Rg7 70. Bc6 Rh7 71.Bd5 Ke3 72.Bg8 Rh8 73.Bf7 Kf4 74.Bb3 Rb8 75.Bc4 Rc8 76.Be6 Rc6 77.Bd5?!

77.Bf7 Rc7 78.Be6 Ke5 79.Bh3 Rh7 80. Bg2 Kf5 81.Bf1 Kf6 82.Ba6 Ra7 83.Be2 Re7 84.Bf3 Kf5 85.Bd1 Rc7 86.Be2 Rd7

87.Bb5 Rd1 88.Bc6 Kg6 89.Be4+ Kh6 90.Bf5 Rd4+–+.

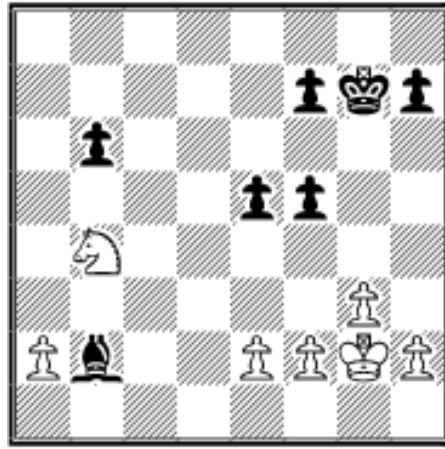
77...Rc2 78.Kh3 Kg5 0–1

Addendum

We return to the fascinating knight vs. bishop endgame between Vladimir Kramnik and Deep Fritz from [Endgame Corner 69](#).

69.02 V.Kramnik (2750) – Deep Fritz

Man vs. Machine, Bonn (1) 25.11.2006



29.Kf3

Instead of 29.Nd5, but the lines ultimately transpose. The real mistake was Kramnik's 30.a4?, which wasted precious time.

29...b5 30.Nd5 Bd4 31.e3 Bc5 32.Ke2 e4

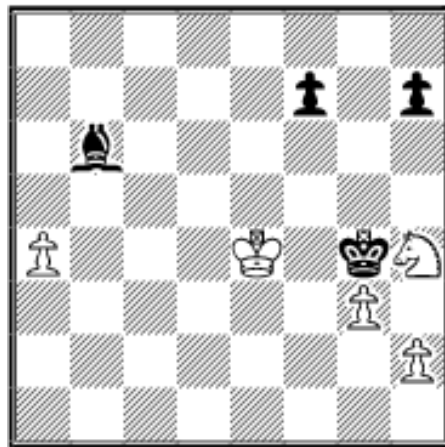
32...Kg6 33.Nc7 b4 34.Kd3 Kg5 35.Kc4 Bd6 36.Nd5 Kg4 37.Nxb4 Kf3 38.a4 Kxf2 39.a5 Bb8 40.Nc6 Bc7 41.a6 Bb6 42.Nxe5 +-.

33.Kd2 Kg6 34.Kc3? Kg5 35.Nc7 Kg4

35...b4+ 36.Kc4 Bd6 37.Nb5 Be7 38.h3 h5 39.Nd4 Bd6 40.Kb5 Kf6 41.h4+-.

36.Nxb5 Kf3 37.Kc4 Bb6 38.Nd4+ Kxf2 39.Nxf5 Kf3 40.Kd5 Bxe3 41.Nh4 + Kg4 42.Kxe4 Bb6 43.a4

So far my main line.



Now Kasparov found **43...h5!**, which I could not refute, as the bishop is very strong fighting on both wings.

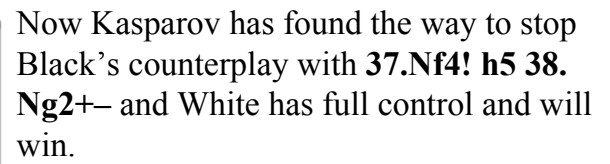
Matthias Feist gives the instructive 43...Bd8? 44.Ng2 Kh3 45.Nf4+ Kg4 (45...Kxh2 46.g4 Kg3 47.Kf5 Kh4 48.Ng2+ Kh3 49.Ne1 Kg3 50.g5 Kh4 51.Ng2+ Kg3 52.Nf4 Kh4 53.Nd5+-) 46.Ke3 Bb6+ (46...h5 47.Ng2 Bb6+ 48.Ke2 Ba5 49.Kf2 Bd8 50.h3+ Kf5 (50...Kxh3 51.Kf3+-) 51.Kf3 +-) 47.Ke2 Bd8 48.Kf2 Kf5 49.Kf3+-.

44.Ng2

44.Nf5 Bd8 (Kasparov stops here) 45.Ne3+ Kh3 46.Kf3 Kxh2=.

44...f5+ 45.Ke5 Bc7+ 46.Kf6 Bd8+ 47.Kg6 Kf3 48.Ne1+ Kg4 49.Nd3 Bc7 50.Nf2+ Kf3 51.Kxh5 Kxf2 52.Kg5 Ke3 53.Kxf5 Kd4 and Black survives.

Instead of my suggestion 34.Kc3?, Raj Tischbierek gives **34.Nc7 b4 35.Nd5! Kg5 36.h3 Bd6** as the main line in his analysis in the German magazine *Schach* 1/07.



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