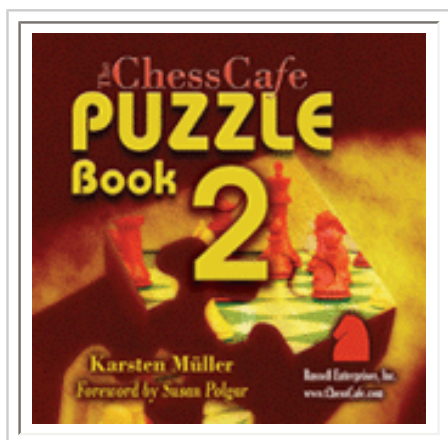




COLUMNISTS

Endgame Corner

Karsten Müller



Endgame Principles

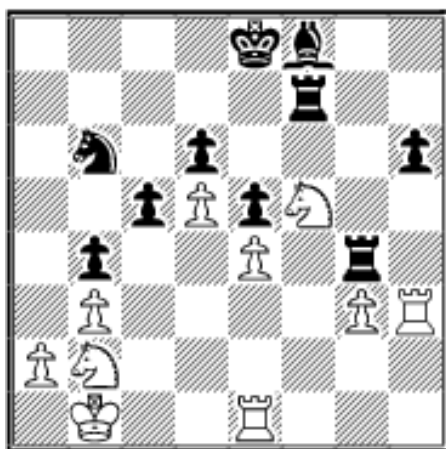
This month I want to look at a few principles of the endgame.

A) The Principle of Two Weaknesses

The defender can usually protect one weakness and survive. Yet if the attacker manages to open a second front and create a second weakness, this can easily lead to insurmountable problems.

75.01 *J.Hodgson* (2550) – *N.Situru* (2385)

Jakarta 1996



I start a bit earlier as Hodgson's play is quite instructive. The first question is: will Black defend actively or passively?

32...Kd7?

Situru had to seize his chance with 32...Nxd5! 33. Nxd6+ Bxd6 34.exd5 e4 (Stohl in *CBM 57*) to activate his sleeping bishop with very good drawing chances.

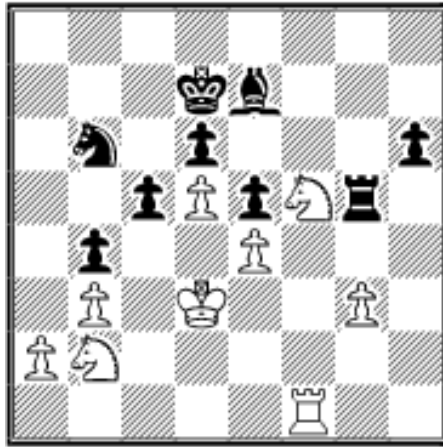
33.Rh5!

A strong prophylactic move to stop tactics based on ...Nxd5.

33...Rf6 34.Kc2

In the next step the king is activated. An important endgame principle!

34...Rfg6 35.Kd3 R4g5 36.Rxg5 Rxg5 37.Rf1 Be7



38.Nc4!

As more pieces are exchanged, the bad bishop on e7 is more of a factor.

38...Nxc4 39.Kxc4 Rg4 40.Kd3 Rg8 41.Rf2 Bg5 42.Rc2 h5?!

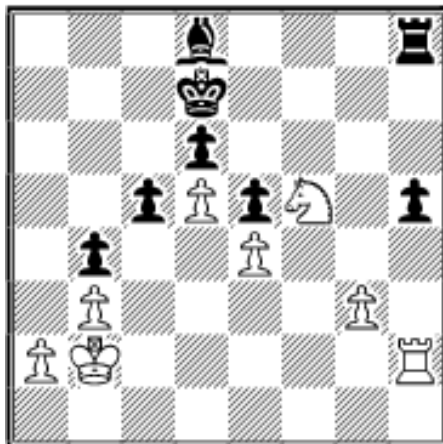
This only makes the pawn weaker, but good advice is already hard to come by.

43.Ke2 Bf6 44.Kf3 Rh8 45.Rh2 Kc7



White has a good position, but how to convert his advantage into a full point? This is where the principle of two weaknesses comes into play. White must open roads on the queenside, so that his king and rook can pressure d6.

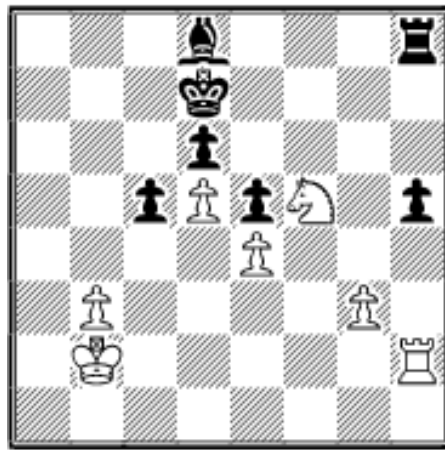
46.Ke2 Kd7 47.Kd3 Kc7 48.Kc2 Kd7 49.Kb2 Bd8



50.a3!

Opening the second front.

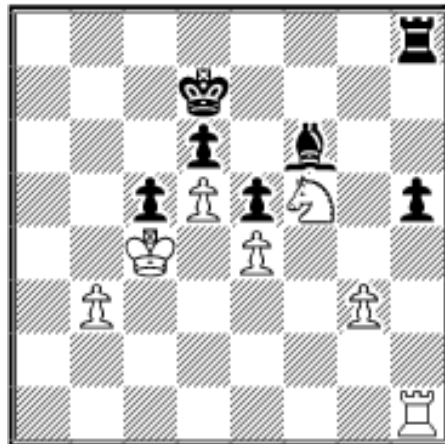
50...bxa3+ 51.Kxa3 Ba5 52.Kb2 Bd8



53.Rh1!

“Space advantage among others means White can more easily transfer his pieces from one flank to the other.” (Stohl)

53...Bf6 54.Kc3 Bd8 55.Kc4 Bf6



56.Ra1!

Now White can use the inroads he has created and the defense quickly collapses.

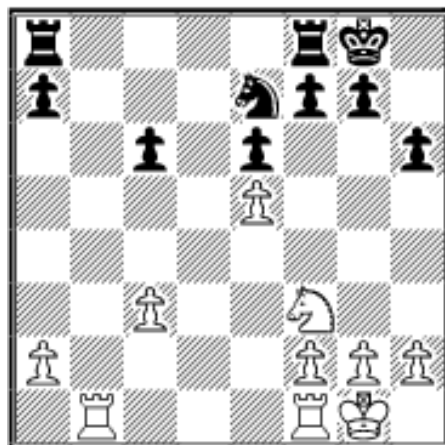
56...Bd8 57.Ra7+ Bc7 58.Ng7! Kc8 59.Ne6 Bb8 60.Rg7 h4 61.gxh4 Rxh4 62.Kb5 Rh8 63.Kc6 1-0

B) The Initiative

The initiative plays an important role in many endgames, but one of the most striking examples is the endgame of rook + knight vs. rook + knight. The next game is presented in full, as Mamedyarov's play also has theoretical importance.

75.02 S.Mamedyarov (2657) – A.Ramirez Alvarez (2507)
Corus-B Wijk aan Zee 2005

1.e4 c5 2.c3 Nf6 3.e5 Nd5 4.Nf3 d6 5.Bc4 e6 6.0-0 Nc6 7.d4 cxd4 8.cxd4 Be7 9.Qe2 0-0 10.Nc3 Nxc3 11.bxc3 dxe5 12.dxe5 Qa5 13.Qe4 Qa4 14.Bg5!? h6 15.Bxe7 Nxe7 16. Rab1 Bd7 17.Bd3 Qxe4 18.Bxe4 Bc6 19.Bxc6 bxc6



Black should be able to hold this endgame, but he must be careful to neutralize White's initiative.

20.c4!/?

After 20.Rb7 Nd5 21.c4 Nc3 22.a3 Rfb8 23.Rc7 Rc8 24.Rb7 Rcb8 25.Rc7 Rc8 26.Rb7 Rcb8, a draw was agreed in M.Adams-V.Tkachiev, Cannes 2001.

20...Rab8?!

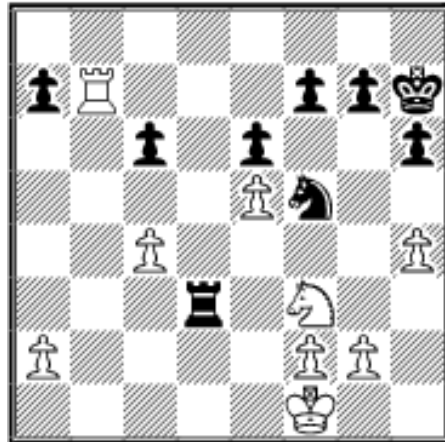
A slight inaccuracy; Black should have moved the

other rook to allow his king to help the defense via f8-e8, as Rogozenko showed in *CBM 105*: 20...Rfb8! 21.Rfd1 Kf8 22.h4 Ke8 23.Kf1 Rb6=.

21.Rfd1 Rfd8 22.Rxd8+ Rxd8 23.h4!

A strong prophylactic move to stop g5 and avoid back rank problems.

23...Nf5 24.Kf1 Rd3 25.Rb8+ Kh7 26.Rb7

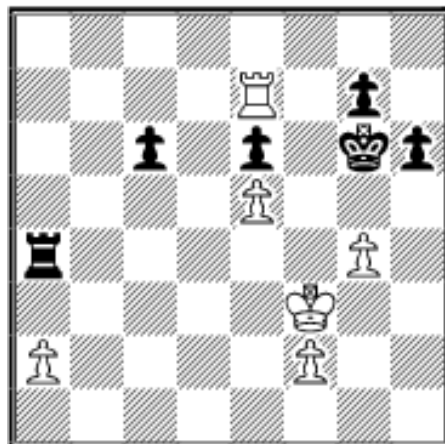


Black is already feeling the pressure, but because of the large drawish tendency of rook endgames, he should still be able to survive.

26...Nd4! 27.Nxd4 Rd1+?!

The immediate 27...Rxd4 is more logical.

28.Ke2 Rxd4 29.Rxf7 Rxc4! 30.Rxa7 Rxh4 31.Ke3 Rg4 32.Re7 Kg6 33.Kf3 Ra4 34.g4



34...Rxa2?

Ramirez Alvarez cracks under the pressure. He had to give checks first to force White's king to an inferior square: 34...Ra3+! 35.Ke4 (35.Kg2 Kg5=) 35...Ra4+ 36.Kf3 Ra3+ 37.Kf4 and only now can he take the pawn: 37...Rxa2 38.f3 Ra4+ 39.Kg3 Ra5 40.f4 Ra3+= (Rogozenko).

35.Rxe6+ Kg5 36.Rxc6 Ra4

36...Ra3+ 37.Ke4 Ra4+ 38.Kd5 Ra2 (38...Kxg4?

39.Rc4++-) 39.f3+-.

37.Rc7 g6 38.Rf7 Ra3+ 39.Ke4 Kxg4

39...Ra4+ 40.Kd5 Ra5+ 41.Kd4 Ra4+ 42.Kc5 Ra6 (42...Ra5+ 43.Kb6 Rxe5 44.f4++-) 43.Kd5 Ra5+ 44.Kd6 Ra6+ 45.Ke7 Ra7+ 46.Kf8 Ra8+ 47.Kg7+-.

40.e6 Ra1

40...Ra2 41.Ke5 Re2+ 42.Kd6 h5 43.Rf6 Kg5 44.Rf3 Kg4 45.Re3+-.

41.Ke5 h5

41...Re1+ 42.Kd6 h5 43.Rf6 h4 44.e7 Kg5 45.Re6 Rd1+ 46.Kc7 Rc1+ 47.Kd7 Rd1+ 48.Ke8 Ra1 49.Kf7+-; 41...Ra5+ 42.Kf6 Ra6 43.Rf8 g5 44.Kf7 Ra2 45.e7 Rxf2+ 46.Kg6+-.

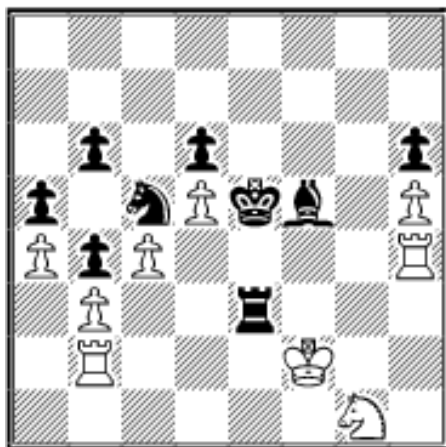
42.e7 Re1+ 43.Kf6 h4 44.Rf8 Kf3 45.Kg5+ 1–0

C) The Right Exchange Revisited

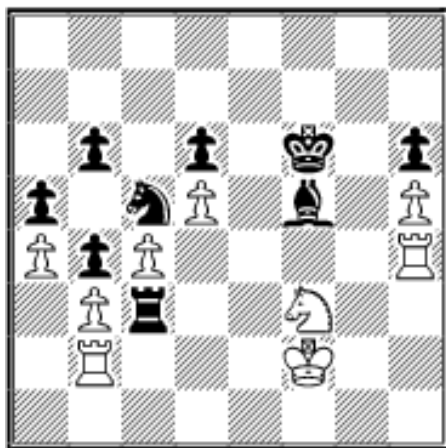
The solution of the following exercise was published in [Endgame Corner 72](#), but I forgot to mention Sokolov's fantastic winning line.

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

Corus Wijk aan Zee 2005

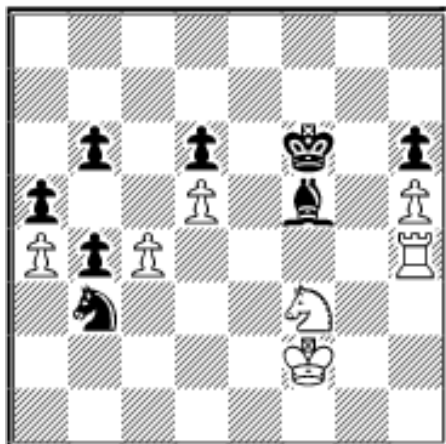


The side fighting against a rook should usually keep as many pieces on the board as possible, so **59...Rxb3?** was a mistake. Now the only question is, if White can win or not. 59...Rc3! was called for, to keep the active rook on the board, e.g. 60. Nf3+ Kf6.



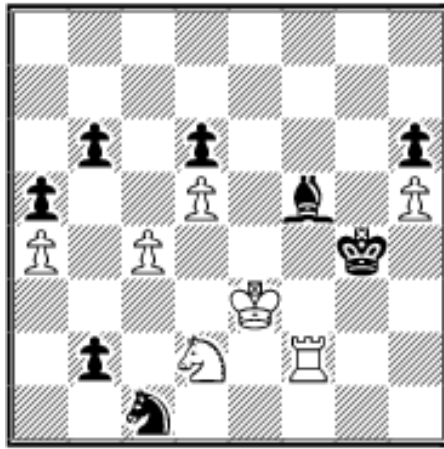
Now it is difficult to find a useful move for White because of the pressure of Black's active rook c3. After 61.Kg2, Black should again refuse to exchange rooks: 61...Nxb3 (61...Rxb3?! 62.Re2 is dangerous for Black, because of White's active rooks.) 62.Rf4 Nc1 63.Nh4 Kg5 64.Rxf5+ Kxh4 65.Rf6 Nd3 66.Rb1 Rc2+ 67.Kf1 Ne5 and Black's counterplay is sufficient.

60.Rxb3 Nxb3 61.Nf3+ Kf6



62.Ke3?

Sokolov found an amazing way to win: 62.Rf4! Nc1 63.Ke3 b3 64.Nd2 Kg5 65.Rf1 b2 66.Rf2 Kg4



Now comes his point: 67.Nb1!! The rook is so strong in this position that White can even sacrifice the knight! 67...Bxb1 68.Rxb2 Bd3 69. Rxb6 Bxc4 70.Rxd6 Nb3 71.Rxh6 Bxd5 72.Rd6 Bg8 73.Rg6+ Kxh5 74.Rxg8 Nc5 75.Ra8 Nxa4 76. Rxa5++-.

62...Bd7 63.Rf4+ Kg7?

63...Ke7! was called for.

64.Nd4 Nc5 65.Kd2?

Sokolov's plan allows Black to exchange too many pawns. After 65.Rf1, he has very good winning chances.

65...Kg8!

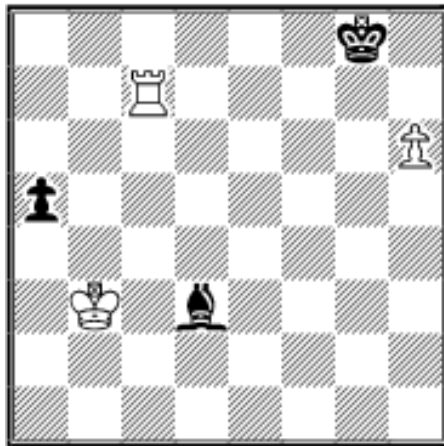
65...Bxa4? 66.Ne6+ plays into White's hands.

66.Ne6 Nxe6 67.dxe6 Bxe6 68.Rd4 Kf7 69.Rxd6 Bxc4 70.Rxh6 b5!

As a rule, the defender exchanges pawns, the attacker pieces.

71.axb5

71.Rc6 b3 72.Kc3 Be2 73.axb5 Bxb5 74.Rc7+ Kg8 75.Kxb3 Be2 76.h6 Bd3=:



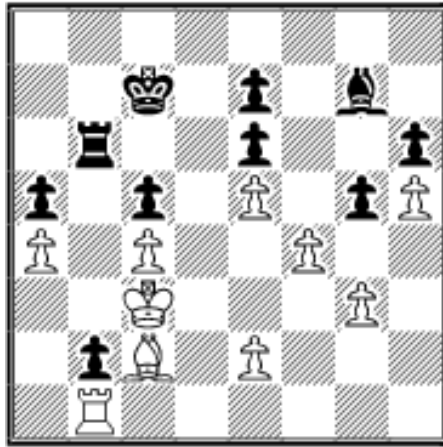
Reaching a well-known fortress.

71...Bxb5 72.Rg6 Be8 73.Rg1

73.Rg5 Kf6 74.Rxa5 b3 75.Kc3 Kg7 76.Kxb3 Kh6=.

73...Kf6 74.h6 Bg6 75.Rf1+ Kg5 76.Ra1 ½-½

Solutions to last month's exercises



E74.01 A.Miles - V.Smyslov

Dortmund 1986

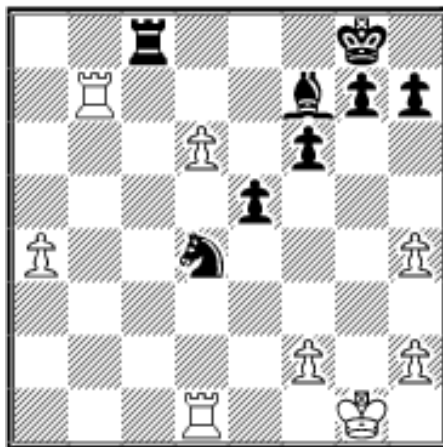
White must keep the rooks on the board, as he needs his rook to invade Black's camp.

34.Bb3!

34.Rxb2? Rxb2 35.Kxb2 gxf4 36.gxf4 and White probably cannot win because of the extreme drawish tendency of opposite-colored bishop endgames.

34...gxf4 35.gxf4 Kd7 36.Rxb2 Ke8 37.Rb1 Kf7 38.Rg1 Bh8 39.Bc2 Bg7 40.Bg6+ Kg8 41.Rd1 1-0

Black resigned, because of 41...Rd6 42.Rb1 Rd8 43.Rb5 Rf8 44.e3+.



E74.02 L.Aronian - V.Anand

XXIV SuperGM Morelia/Linares 2007

White can only make progress by activating his rook d1 and threatening to exchange a pair of rooks.

35.Rdb1!

35.d7? Rd8, followed by Kf8-e7, plays into Black's hands.

35...Rf8

35...Nf3+ 36.Kh1 Bd5 37.Rb8+.

36.Rb8 Be8 37.a5 Nf3+

After 37...Nc6, White can even sacrifice the exchange: 38.a6 Nxb8 39.Rxb8 Bc6 40.a7 Kf7 41.d7+.

38.Kf1 Nd2+ 39.Ke1 Nxb1 40.a6 Bc6 41.a7

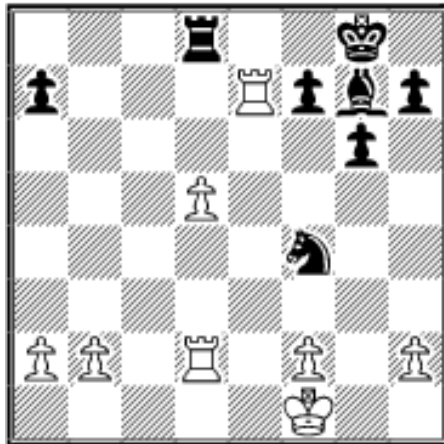


Black is defenseless.

41...Kf7 42.d7 Ke7 43.Rxf8 Kxd7 44.a8Q Bxa8 45.Rxa8 h5

45...Ke7 46.Ra7+ Kf8 47.Ra5 Nc3 48.f3 e4 49. Kd2 Nb1+ 50.Kc2 e3 51.Ra8+ Ke7 52.Ra7+ Kf8 53.Kd3+—.

46.Ra7+ Ke6 47.Rxg7 Kf5 48.Rg3 1–0



E74.03 R.Vaganian - E.Sutovsky
Pamplona 2004

Black should not exchange rooks.

29...a5!

29...Rxd5?? 30.Rxd5 Nxd5 31.Re8+ Bf8 32.Ra8 (Krasenkow in *CBM 105*) plays into White's hands.

30.d6

30.Ra7 Rc8 31.f3 Rc1+ 32.Kf2 Bh6 gives Black a strong initiative.

30...Bf8 31.a4?

Now Black has everything under control. The best chance to fight for a draw was 31.Re4! Rxd6 32.Rxd6 Bxd6 33.Ra4 Bc7 34.b4 (Krasenkow) and the passed a-pawn gives White some hope, especially as he has managed to exchange one pair of rooks.

31...Rxd6! 32.Rxd6 Bxe7 33.Rd4 g5 34.Ke1 Bf6 35.Rc4 Bxb2 36.Kd1 Ba3 37.Rc8+ Kg7 38.Kc2 Nd5 39.Kb3 Bb4 40.Rd8 Nf6 41.Rb8 Be1 42.f3 h5 43.Rb7 g4 44.fxg4 hxg4 45. Rc7 Bb4 46.Rb7 Nd5 47.Rb5 Ne3 48.Rxb4 axb4 49.Kxb4 Nd5+ 50.Kc5 Ne7 0–1



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