



The Passed Pawn is the Lord of the Endgame

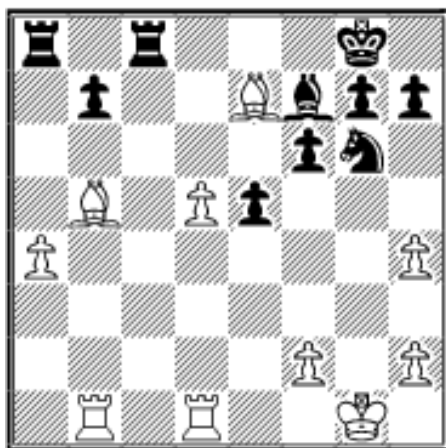
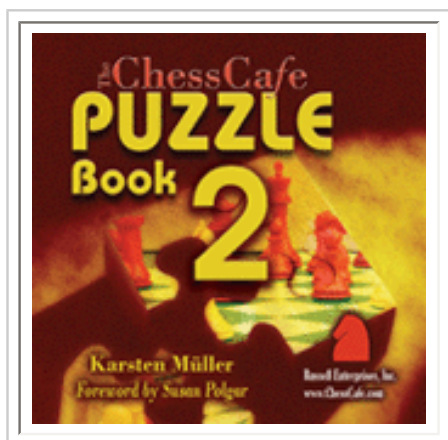
The German chess trainer Claus Dieter Meyer has made a deep investigation of Aronian – Anand, Linares 2007, which I dealt with in [May 2007](#). This time I start a bit earlier and incorporate Meyer's discoveries:

L.Aronian (2744) - V.Anand (2779)
Morelia/Linares 2007

COLUMNISTS

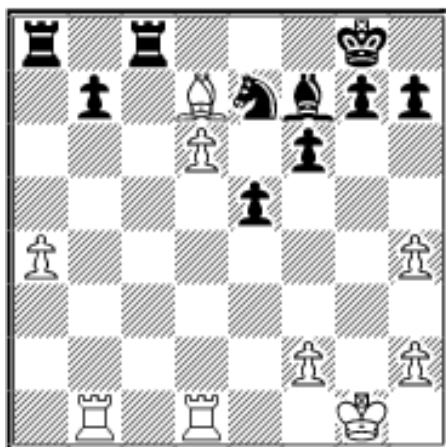
Endgame Corner

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Aronian unleashed a fantastic combination based on the strength of his passed d-pawn:

31.d6!? Nxe7 32.Bd7!!



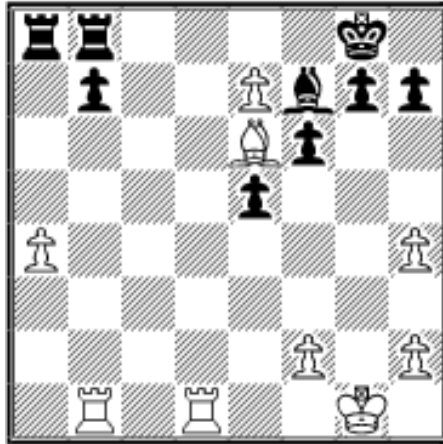
Aronian's point. 32.dxe7?! Be8 33.Be2 (33.Bd7 Bxd7 34.Rxd7 Re8 35.Rxb7 Rxa4=) 33...Bxa4 34.Bc4+ Rxc4 35.Rd8+ Kf7 36.Rxa8 Kxe7 37. Rxb7+ Kd6



Black should be able to hold because of his activity.

32...Nc6?

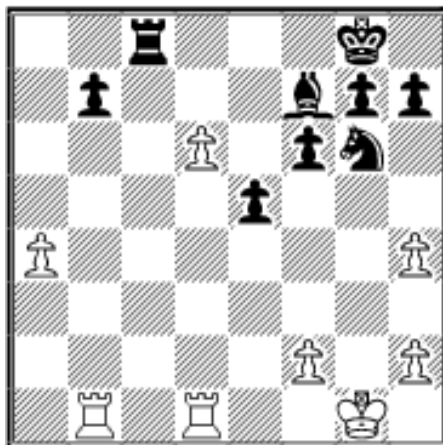
Black has to accept the sacrifice. If 32...Rcb8? (the only square along the back rank where the rook will not be attacked after White's next move), then 33.dxe7 Be8 34.Be6+ Bf7



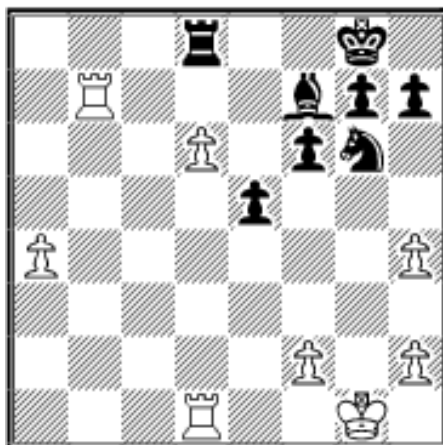
35.Rxb7!!+- (M. Marin in [CBM 117](#)).

32...Nd5?! 33.Bxc8 (33.Rxb7?? Rd8+-) 33...Rxc8 34.Rxb7 Kf8 (34...Be6? 35.d7 Rd8 36.a5+-) 35. Rdb1 Be6 36.Rb8 Ke8 37.a5±.

32...Ng6! 33.Bxc8 (33.h5?? Rd8) 33...Rxc8

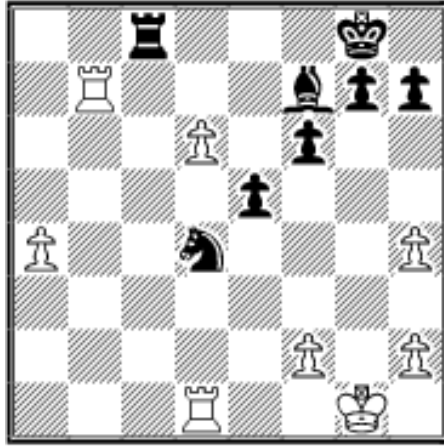


34.Rxb7 (34.Rdc1? is met by 34...Rd8! 35.Rxb7 Bd5) 34...Rd8!



In all cases Black is alive and fighting, e.g. 35.a5 (35.h5 Nf8 36.h6 gxh6 37.a5 Bh5 38.Rd3 Nd7 39. a6 Kf7 40.a7 Ke6) 35...Bc4 36.Rc7 Be2 37.Rd2 (37.Rb1 Nf4 38.Rbb7 Nh3+ 39.Kg2 Nf4+ 40.Kg3 Nh5+ 41.Kg2 Nf4+ with perpetual check.) 37... Nf4 38.h3 Bb5 39.Kh2 Ne6 40.Rb7 Bc6 41.Rc7 Nd4 42.Rxd4 exd4 43.Rxc6 d3.

33.Rxb7 Nd4 34.Bxc8 Rxc8



Now we have reached the position from E74.02, the solution of which was published in [June 2007](#).

35.Rdb1!

“Threatening to exchange Black’s remaining rook, when the passed pawns would be impossible to stop.” (Marin)

35.d7? Rd8 36.a5 Kf8 37.a6 Bd5 38.Rc7 Ke7 plays into Black’s hands.

35...Rf8

35...Be6 36.d7 Rf8 37.Rc7 Ne2+ 38.Kf1 Nf4 39.Rd1 Bh3+ 40.Ke1 Rd8 41.Rc8 Ne6 42.Rd6 Kf7 43.Rxe6 Rxd7 44.Rec6+–.

35...Nf3+ 36.Kh1 Be6 37.d7 Rf8 38.Rc1 Nxe4 39.Rc8+–.

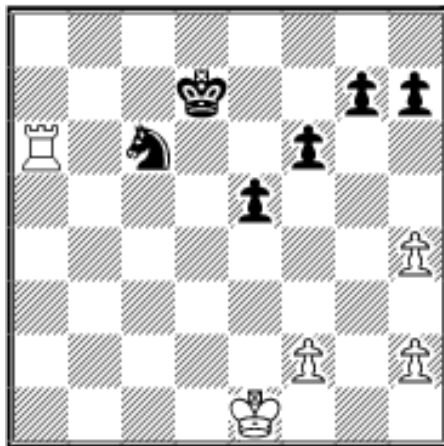
36.Rb8?

Surprisingly this natural move is a mistake, as it allows Black to interpose a minor piece on b3 to take advantage of the large drawing margin of rook endgames. 36.d7 Be6 37.Rc7 and White must be winning because of his dangerous passed pawns.

36...Be8?

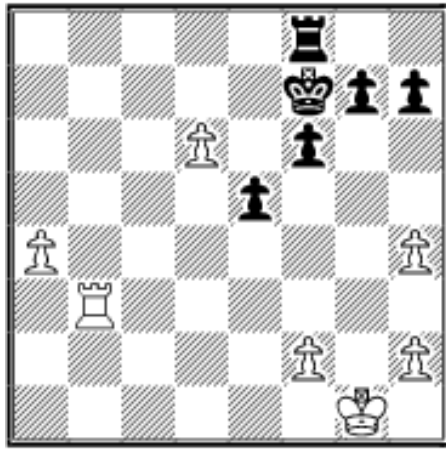
Black must interfere on b3 to make White pay a price for the exchange of a pair of rooks:

36...Bb3 37.Rxf8+ Kxf8 38.a5 Ne2+ 39.Kf1 Nd4 40.a6 Bc4+ 41.Ke1 Bxa6 42.Rb8+ Kf7 43.d7 Nc6 44.Rb6 Ke7 45.Rxa6 Kxd7



Black can hope to construct a fortress.

36...Nb3 37.Rxf8+ (37.R1xb3 Bxb3 38.Rxb3 Kf7

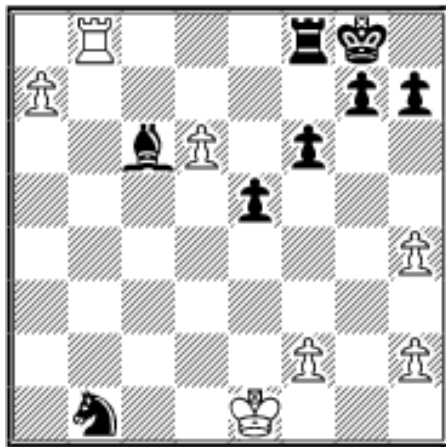


Black can probably save the rook endgame: 39. Rb7+ Ke6 40.d7 Ra8 41.a5 Ke7 42.d8Q+ Kxd8 43.Rxg7 Rxa5 44.Rxh7 Ke8) 37...Kxf8 38.a5 Ke8 39.a6 Bd5 40.a7 Nd4 41.Rb8+ Kd7 42.a8Q Bxa8 43.Rxa8 Kxd6 and again it is not clear if White can storm Black's solid fortress.

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



"An incredible position. Black is lost in spite of being two whole pieces up." (Marin)

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?

47...Nc3 48.Rh7+--.

48.Rg3 1-0