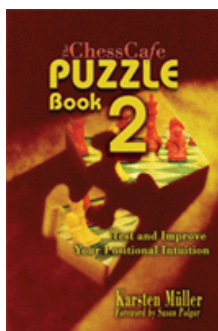




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## Small Advantages in Bishop Endings

According to German grandmaster Georg Meier, the ability to create the maximum of problems out of a small advantage is one of the differences between the world's very top players and other grandmasters. I want to illustrate this point with three same-colored bishop endings. In the first I use Georg Meier's and Claus Dieter Meyer's joint analysis:

**103.01 Dominguez Perez,L (2721) - Meier,G (2641)**  
XLIV Capablanca Memorial Elite Havana CUB (10), 2009



27.b4

White is clearly better because of his queenside majority, but it should still be a draw with best play due to the drawish tendency of bishop endings and the reduced material.

27...Kf7 28.Kf3 Bf6

Meier calculated 28...Bc7?! 29.h3 Ke7 30.Ke4 Kd7 31.Bd4 g6 32.Be5 Bd8 33.Kf4, with the idea Bd4, Ke5 and concluded that his bishop is best placed on the diagonal h6-c1.; An alternative is 28...Be7 29.Bd4 without provoking g6 White cannot make real progress 29...Bf8! a very original defense 30.Ke4 Ke8 31.h3 Kd7 32.Kd3 Kc7 33.Kc4 g6 34.Kd3 Kd7 35.Ke4 Bh6 with a flexible defense: 36.Bh8 (36.c4 Bd2 37.b5 cxb5 38.cxb5 Bh6 39.Be5 Kc8 40.Bg3 Bg7=) 36...Kd6 and Black holds; 28...e5? gives White an easily accessible weakness; e.g., 29.Ke4 Ke6 30.c4 Be7 31.Bd2 Bf8 32.f3 g6 33.Bc3 Bd6 34.b5 cxb5 35.cxb5 Bc7 36.h3 Bb8 37.b6 Bd6 38.b7 Bb8 39.Bb4 Ba7 40.Bc5 Bb8 41.h4 h6 42.Bf8 h5 43.f4 exf4 44.Bh6 f3 45.Kxf3 Kf5 46.Be3 Bc7 47.Bf2 Bb8 48.Bg3 Ba7 49.Bf4 Kf6 50.Ke4 Ke6 51.b8Q+.

29.c4 g6

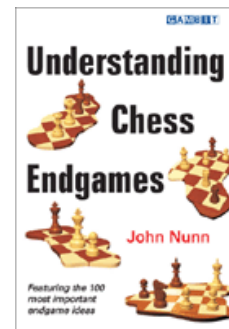
Or 29...Ke8 30.Ke4 Kd7 31.Bd4 Be7 32.b5 (32.Bc3 Kc7 33.h3 Kd7=) 32...cxb5 33.cxb5 Bd6 34.Be5 Bf8 35.Kd4 Ba3 36.Bg3 Bf8 37.b6 Kc6 38.Ke5 Bc5 39.Kxe6 Bxb6 with a draw.

**30.Ke4 Bg7 31.b5 cxb5 32.cxb5 Ke7 33.Bd4 Bh6 34.Be3 Bg7 35.Bd4 Bh6 36.Be5**

36.Ba7 Kd7 37.b6 Kc6 38.Ke5 Kb7 39.Kxe6 Bg7 40.Kf7 Bd4 41.f3 g5 would have divided the board into two halves, but the equilibrium is not disturbed: 42.Kg8 h6 43.Kh7 Be3=.

36...Kd7 37.Kd4 Bf8 38.Bg3

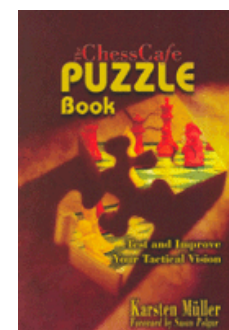
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Dominguez has achieved a perfect setup. His pawn was left at f2 to allow Ke5. Black's problems are really unpleasant now.

**38...Bb4 39.Kc4 Be7 40.Kd4 Bb4 41.h4 Ba3?**

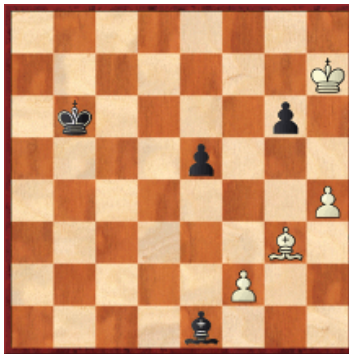
A serious inaccuracy. Meier underestimated that h2-h4 was the start of White's offensive with the king march e5-f6-g7. The position should still be drawn, but now it is almost study like. 41...Be7! was called for; e.g., 42.b6 Kc6 43.Ke5 Bd8! 44.b7 (44.Kxe6 Bxb6=) 44...Kxb7 45.Kxe6 Kc6 46.Kf7 (46.f3 Kc5 47.Kf7 Kd4 48.Kg7 Ke3=) 46...Kd5 47.Kg7 Ke6 48.Kxh7 Kf5= with a solid blockade; Not 41...Be1? because of 42.Kc5+-.

**42.b6 Kc6 43.Ke5**

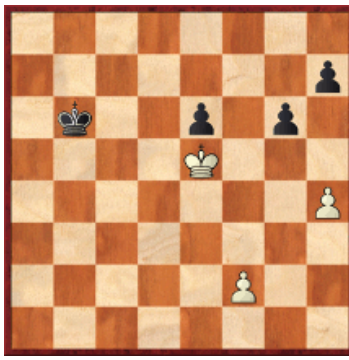


**43...Bc5?**

A decisive loss of tempo. 43...Kxb6 was necessary: 44.Kf6 Bb2+! a) 44...Bb4! is a study like draw found by the players in the post mortem analysis: 45.Kg7 (45.f3 Bc3+ 46.Kf7 Kc5 47.Kg8 Kd4 48.Kxh7 Ke3=; 45.Kxe6 Kc6=) 45...Be1! 46.Kxh7 e5



Black's counterplay is just in time: 47.Kxg6 e4 48.Be5 (48.h5 e3 49.fxe3 Bxg3) 48...Bxf2 49.h5 e3 50.Bd4+ Kc6 51.h6 Bg1 52.h7 e2 53.Bc3 Bd4=; b) 44...Bc1? 45.Kg7 g5 46.h5 g4 (46...Bf4 47.Bxf4 gxf4 48.Kf6!+-) 47.Kxh7+-; 45.Be5 (45.Kf7 Kc6 46.Kg8 h5 47.Kf7 Kd5 48.f3 (48.Kxg6 Ke4 49.Kxh5 Kf5 50.f3 e5 51.Kh6 Bc1+ 52.Kg7 Be3 53.h5 e4 54.fxe4+ Kxe4=) 48...e5 49.Kxg6 Ke6 50.Kxh5 Kf5=) 45...Bxe5+! 46.Kxe5



Black has to foresee that he must defend actively with 46...Kc5! 47.Kxe6 a) 47.Kf6 Kd6 48.Kg7 Ke7 49.Kxh7 Kf7=; b) 47.f4 Kc6 (47...Kc4=) 48.Kxe6 Kc7=; 47...Kd4! 48.Kf6 Ke4 49.Kg7 (49.Kg5 Kf3=) 49...g5! 50.hxg5 Kf5 51. Kh6 Kf4=.

#### 44.Kf6!

But not 44.Kxe6?? because of 44...Bxb6 45.Kf7 Kd5 46.Kg7 Ke4 (46...Ke6 47.Kxh7 Kf5=) 47.Kxh7 Kf5=.

#### 44...Bd4+ 45.Kf7 Bxb6

After 45...Kxb6 46.Kg8, White's king march decides: 46...h5 47.Kf7 Kc6 (47...e5 48.f3 Kc6 49.Kxg6+-) 48.Kxg6 Kd5 49.Kxh5 Bc5 (49...e5 50.Kg6+-) 50.Kg6 Bf8 51.h5 e5 (51...Ke4 52.Kf7 Bh6 53.Kxe6+-) 52.h6 Bxh6 53.Kxh6 Ke4 54.Bxe5! Kxe5 55.Kg5+-.

#### 46.Kg7 e5



#### 47.f3?

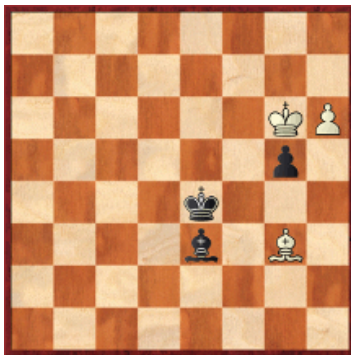
Dominguez Perez makes a mistake, which is not exploited by Meier. The f-pawn should remain on f2 and only advance later: 47.Kxh7 e4 48.Kxg6 e3 49. f4 Bc7 50.h5



White wins the race: 50...e2 51.Kf5! (51.Kg5? Kd5 52.Be1 Ke6=) 51...Ba5 52. h6 Kd5 (52...e1Q 53.Bxe1 Bxe1 54.h7 Bc3 55.Ke6 Bh8 56.f5+-) 53.h7 Bc3 54.Kg6 Ke4 55.f5 Kf3 56.Bh4 Kg4 (56...Be5 57.f6+-) 57.f6 Kxh4 58.h8Q+ Kg3 59.Qb8+ Kg2 60.Qb7+ Kf2 61.f7+-.

#### 47...Kd5?

47...Be3! surprisingly saves Black: 48.Kxh7 g5 49.h5 Kd5 50.Kg6 e4 51.fxe4 + Kxe4 52.h6



Now 52...Bd4! (52...g4? 53.h7 Bd4 54.Bh4 Bh8 55.Bf6 g3 56.Bxh8 g2 57.Bd4 +-) 53.h7 Kf3 54.Be1 g4 55.Bh4 g3=.

**48.Kxh7 e4 49.fxe4+ Kxe4 50.Kxg6 Be3 51.Bd6 Kd5 52.Be7! [52.Bf8? Ke6=] 52...Ke6 53.Bg5! Bc5 54.h5 Bf8 55.Bh4 [55.Bf6? Bh6=] 55...Kd5 56.Bf6 1-0**

In the next example Peter Svidler manages to win a drawn endgame:

#### 103.02 Svidler,P (2727) - Bu Xiangzhi (2714)

Pearl Spring Nanjing CHN (8), 19.12.2008



#### 42.h4!?

This is good technique, as 42.b5?! directly leads to a draw: 42...Kc5 43.b6 Kb5 44.Bxd5 Bc8 45.b7 Bxb7 46.Bxb7 Kxa5 47.Kf2 Kb6 48.Bg2 Kc7 49.Kg3 Kd7 50.Kg4 Ke8 51.Kh5 Kf8 52.Kxh6 Kg8=.

#### 42...Bd3 43.Kf2 d4 44.Kf3 Bf1

The alternative 44...f5 also seems to hold, because of the possible counterplay with the d-pawn; e.g., 45.Kf4 Bb5 46.Bf3 Ke6 47.h5 Ba6 48.Bc6 Kd6 49.Ba4 Bd3 50.b5 Kc5 51.b6 Kd6 52.Be8 Ba6 53.Bg6 Bd3=.

#### 45.Kf4



#### 45...Bd3?

Black cracks under the pressure and loses the all important d-pawn. 45...f6 was called for to try to erect a barrier, e.g. 46.Be4 (46.a6 Kc7 47.Ke4 d3 48.Ke3 Kb6 49.Kd2 f5 50.b5 Be2 51.Bd5 f4 52.Bc4 Bf3 53.Kxd3 Kc5 54.Kd2 Kb6 55.Kc3 Kc5 56.Kd3 Ba8 57.Ke2 Bg2 58.Kf2 Be4 59.Be2 Kb6 60.Bf3 Bg6 61.Bc6 Bh5 62.Ke1 Bg4 63.Kd2 Bf5 64.Kc3 Bg4 65.Kd4 Be2 66.Ke4 f3 67.Ke3 Ka7 68.Bxf3 (Georg von Bülow (Rio de Janeiro) added the following line to my analysis: 68.Kf2 Kb6 69.Kg3 Ka7 70.Bxf3 Bxb5 71.Bb7 Be2 72.Kf4 Kb6 73.Kf5 Ka7 74.Kg6 h5 75.Kg5 Kb6 76.Kf4 Kc7 (but not 76...Ka7?? 77.Bf3 Bxa6 78.Bxh5+- as the king is now too far away.) 77.Bf3 Bxa6 78.Bxh5=) 68...Bxb5 69.Be2 Kxa6=) 46...Ba6 47.Bg6



Now a tactical trick gives Black counterplay: 47...f5!! 48.Bxf5 (48.Bh5 Kd5 49.Bf7+ Kd6 50.Kxf5 d3 51.Ke4 d2 52.Bh5 Kc6 53.Ke3 Kb5 54.Kxd2 Kxb4 55.Be2 Kxa5=) 48...Kd5 49.Bd7 Kc4 50.b5 Bxb5 51.Bxb5+ Kxb5 52.Ke4 Kxa5 53.Kxd4 Kb6=.

#### 46.a6 Kc7 47.Ke5 Kb6 48.Kxd4 Be2

48...Bxa6 loses by one tempo: 49.Bxa6 Kxa6 50.Ke5 Kb5 51.Kf6 Kxb4 52.Kxf7 Kc5 53.Kg6 Kd6 54.Kxh6 Ke7 55.Kg7+-.

#### 49.Ke5 h5 50.Kf6 Bc4 51.Kg5 Be2 52.Bd5 f6+ 53.Kxf6 Kxa6 54.Bc6 1-0

The third endgame arose from the Berlin Defense of the Ruy Lopez:

#### 103.03 Jakovenko,D (2737) - Wang Yue (2736)

FIDE Grand Prix Elista RUS (1), 14.12.2008





Jakovenko has managed to create a lot of pressure, but with best defense it still seems to be tenable:

#### 40...Ba5?

Now White's king will penetrate successfully on the queenside. 40...bxc4 41. bxc4 c6 was called for: 42.Bd6 Ba5 43.Bxc5 (43.e7?! Kf7=; 43.Kf6?! Bc3+ 44.Be5 Be1 45.e7 Bh4+=) 43...Be1



I have not managed to find a way to breach Black's fortress; e.g., 44.Ke4 Bc3 45.Kd3 Be5 46.Kc2 (46.Bb4 Bf6 47.Kc2 Bh4 48.Kb3 a5 (48...Bg3? 49.Ka4 Bc7 50.a3+-) 49.Bxa5 Ke7 50.Bb6 Kxe6 51.a4 Kd7 52.a5 Kc8 53.a6 Kb8=) 46...Bf6 47.Kb3



Now Black should surprisingly play 47...a5! (47...Bd8? 48.Bd6 Ba5 49.Ka4 Be1 50.Bb4+-) 48.Bd6 (48.Bb6 Ke7 49.Ka4 Bc3 50.Bxa5 Bd4 51.Bc7 Bc3 52. Kb3 Be1 53.Bb6 Kxe6 54.a4 Kd7 55.a5 Kc8 56.a6 Kb8=; 48.a4



White would win if he could transfer his king to the kingside. But Black can prevent this by playing against the pawn e6: 48...Be7 49.Bf2 Bf6 50.Bb6 Ke7 51.Bxa5 Kxe6 52.Bb6 Kd7=) 48...Bd4 49.Ka4 Bc3 50.Bc7 Ke7 51.Bxa5 Bd4 52.Bc7 Bc3 53.Kb3 Be1 54.a4 Kxe6 55.a5 Kd7 56.Bb6 Kc8 57.a6 Kb8=.

#### 41.Kf6 c6

41...bxc4 42.bxc4 Kf8



Now White's king will either march via e5 or after e6-e7 via e6: 43.Bb2! c6 (43...Bb4 44.Ke5 Ke7 45.Bc1 a5 46.Bg5+ Ke8 47.a4+-) 44.e7+ Ke8 45.Be5 Bd2 46.Bc7 Be1 47.Ke6 Bh4 48.Kd6+-.

**42.e7 Be1 43.Ke6 Bh4 44.Kd6 Bxe7+ 45.Kxc6 bxc4 46.bxc4 Kd8 47.Bd6 Bh4**

47...Bxd6 48.Kxd6 Kc8 49.Kxc5 Kc7 50.a4 Kb7 51.Kd6 Kc8 52.Kc6+-.

**48.Bxc5 Kc8 49.Kb6 a5 50.Kxa5 Kb7 51.Kb5 Bg3 52.a4 Ka8 53.Be3 Bd6 54.Bd2 Kb7 1-0**

Wang Yue resigned because of 55.Bb4 Bg3 56.c5 Be5 57.c6+ Ka7 [57...Kc7 58.a5 Kc8 59.Kc4 Bc7 60.Kd5+-] 58.Kc4 Kb6 59.Kd5 Bc7 60.Bc3 Bg3 61. Bd4+ Ka6 62.Ke6 Bc7 63.Kd7 Bg3 64.Bc5+-.

### Exercises (Solutions next month)

In the exercises the attacker has already achieved a winning position and you are asked to convert it.

**E103.01 Forster,W (1955) - Smokina,K (2251)**  
Queenstown Classic NZL (6), 20.01.2009



Which is Black's first priority?

**E103.02 Nehls,Benedikt (1836) - Lebeda,Lukas (1710)**  
Open German Youth Ch U25 Willingen (1.23), 30.05.2009



How did White storm Black's castle?

**E103.03 Jakovenko,D (2737) - Alekseev,Evgeny (2715)**

ch-RUS Moscow (3), 05.10.2008



53...Bxe5 is threatened; how do you deal with it?

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