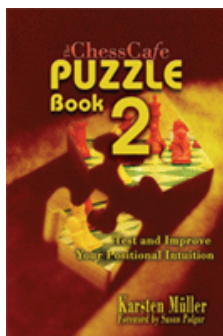




COLUMNISTS

## Endgame Corner

Karsten Müller



CHESTHEATRE

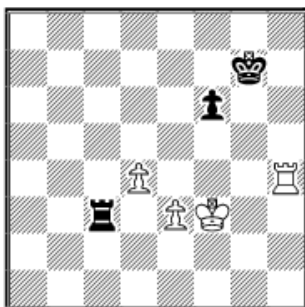
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## Central Pawns

While studying Efstratios Grivas book [Practical Endgame Play – Mastering the Basics](#) (Everyman 2008) my attention was drawn to the following example:

**94.01 Grivas, Efstratios – Soylu, Suat**  
Varna Balkaniad, 1994



Grivas managed to win in an instructive way, but can this position really be called won already? I had my doubts and I sent him a few ideas. He finally came up with a corrected version and with his kind permission I now hand over the microphone to him.

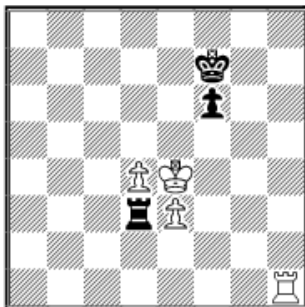
Central pawns are almost always beneficial for the strongest side. In our example White's winning chances are much better than in the case where he has e- and f-pawns against Black's g-pawn. In my opinion there are two reasons for this:

1. Black's rook does not have at his disposal 'enough' files on the queenside to check White's king.
2. White's rook has at his disposal more files on the kingside to act through. But still Black, with accurate play he can hold the draw.

**46.Kf4 Rd3**

There is not much difference with 46...Kf7 47.Rh1, which transposes.

**47.Rh1 Kf7 48.Ke4**



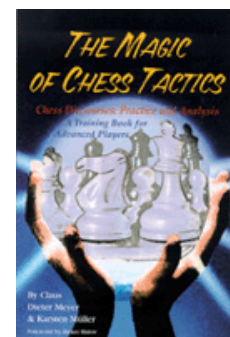
The critical moment has arisen.

**48...Rd2?**

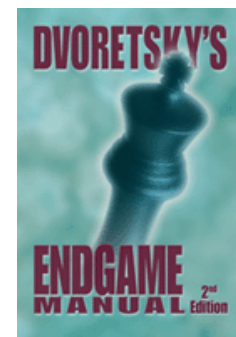
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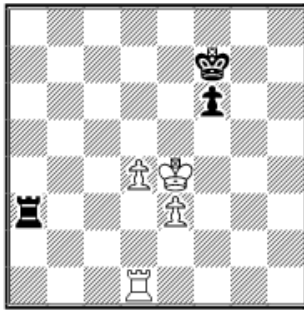


*The Magic of  
Chess Tactics*  
by Karsten Müller

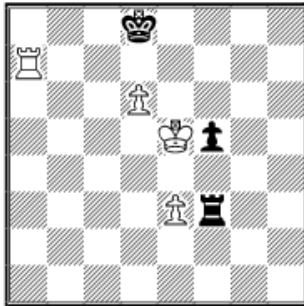


[Dvoretsky's Endgame  
Manual](#)  
by Mark Dvoretsky

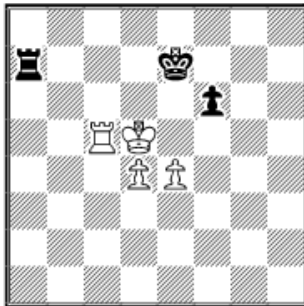
The correct defensive method starts with 48...Ra3! 49.Rd1



49...Ra2! the rook must prepare checks from the a-file and from behind. A typical defensive method in rook endgames! (49...Ke6? 50.Kf4 Kd6 51.e4 Ra4 (51...Rb3 52.Ra1 Rd3 53.d5 Rd2 54.Ke3 Rh2 55.Ra6+ Ke7 56.Ra7+ Ke8 (56...Kd6 57.Rf7+—) 57.d6 Rh5 58.Kd4 Re5 59.Rh7 Ra5 60.Re7+ Kf8 61.Kc4 Rg5 62.Re6 Kf7 63.d7 Rg8 64.Kd5+—) 52.Kf5 Ke7 53.d5+—) 50.Rd3 (50.d5 Rf2! 51.Kd4 f5! 52.Rd3 Kf6! (52...Ke7? 53.Ke5 Rf3 54.Rb3! Kd7 55.Ra3 Ke7 56.d6+ Kd7 57.Ra7+ Kd8



White wins in typical fashion by creating an umbrella: 58.e4! fxe4 59.Ke6 +—) 53.Kc5 Ke7 54.Ra3 Re2 55.Ra7+ Kf6 56.Ra6+ Ke7 57.Kd4 Rd2+ 58.Ke5 Rd3=) 50...Ra1 51.Rc3 Ke6 52.Rc6+ Ke7 53.Kd5 (53.Rb6 Re1 54.Rb7+ Kd6 55.Rb3 Ke6 56.d5+ Kd6 57.Rb6+ Ke7 58.Re6+ Kf7 59.Kf3 Rd1 60.e4 f5=) 53...Ra5+ 54.Rc5 Ra3 55.e4 Ra7!



In this critical position, Black can defend: 56.Rc6 Ra5+ 57.Kc4 Ra4+ 58.Kd3 Ra3+ 59.Kd2 Ra4 60.Ke3 Ra1! 61.d5 Rf1=.

#### 49.Kd5

White has placed his king in front of the pawns, so he can assist with their advance.

#### 49...Ra2 50.Rc1!

Now White's rook can provide shelter.

#### 50...Ra5+

Or 50...f5 51.Ke5 (51.Rc7+ Kf6 52.Rc6+ Ke7 53.Ke5 Rf2 54.Rc7+ Kd8

55.Kd6 Rf3 56.Ra7 Ke8 57.Re7+ Kd8 58.d5 also loses) 51...Rf2 52.d5 Rf3 53.Rc3+- .

### 51.Rc5 Ra3

No help is 51...Ra7 52.Kd6 (the difference!) 52...Ra6+ 53.Rc6 Ra3 54.Rc7 + Kg6 55.e4 Ra6+ 56.Kc5 Ra5+ 57.Kb4 Ra1 58.Re7+-.

### 52.Rc7+! Ke8

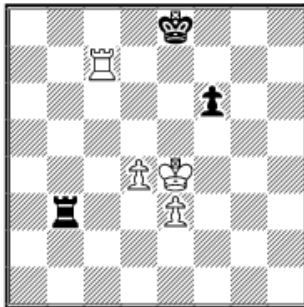
A better, but still insufficient try is 52...Kg6 53.e4 Ra5+ 54.Rc5 Ra7 55.Rc6 Kf7 56.Kd6 Ra4 57.Rc7+ Kg6 58.Kc5 Ra5+ 59.Kb4 Ra1 60.Re7+-.

The defender must (nearly always) stay active.

### 53.Ke4

53.e4 is also fine.

### 53...Rb3



### 54.d5!

Creating a stronghold for the white rook on e6, from where it will protect its pawns and attack the enemy g6-pawn.

### 54...Ra3

54...f5+ 55.Kd4 Rb4+ 56.Rc4 Rb2 57.Rc3 Kd7 58.Ke5 Rd2 59.Ra3 Rd1 60.Ra7+-.

### 55.Kf4 f5

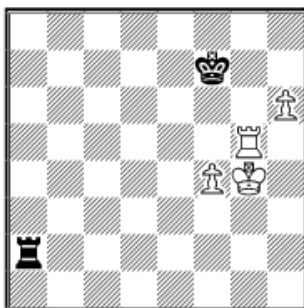
Alternatively, Black could have tried 55...Rb3, but White will still win: 56.e4! Rb1 57.Kf5+- .

### 56.Rc6 1-0

Black resigned in view of 56...Kf7 57.Re6 Ra5 58.Re5+-.

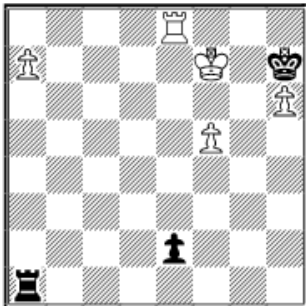
## Exercises (Solutions next month)

### E94.01 Educative Example



Black has only one move to draw. Can you spot it?

**E94.02** *Hecht, Hans Joachim – Springer, Artur*  
Berlin-ch (9), 1959



Black to move has two options to reach the safe heaven of a draw. Find both!

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