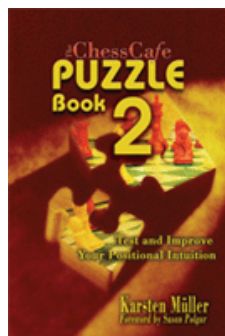




## COLUMNISTS

Endgame  
Corner

Karsten Müller



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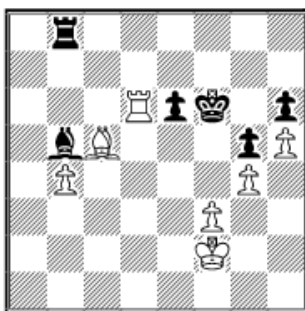
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## Position is Everything

In pure opposite-colored bishop endgames the defender usually wants to construct a fortress on the squares that his bishop controls (see [Endgame Corner 2](#)). So material is often less important than positional factors. The following endgame, from Lars Bo Hansen's excellent book [How Chess Games are Won and Lost](#) (GAMBIT 2008), caught my attention.

**97.01 Hansen, Lars Bo - Rasmussen, K**  
Danish Championship Playoff Match Ry, 1993

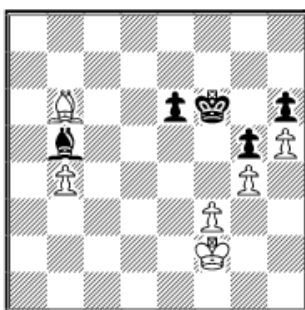


My feeling was that White is better, but somehow it should still be drawn with best defense, as the drawish margin is quite large in opposite-colored bishop endings. Yet Hansen managed to win, so I had to search for improvements.

**47.Rb6?**

A surprising decision, as usually the attacker wants to keep the rooks on the board. So 47.Bd4+ was necessary; e.g., 47...Kf7 (47...Ke7 48.Be5 Rb7 49.f4 Kf7 50.fxg5 hxg5 51.Rd8) 48.Be5 now Rxe6 is threatened 48...Ra8 (48...Rb7 49.Rd8 Ra7 (49...Be8 50.Rc8 with the threat Rc7+ as now the pure opposite-colored bishop endgame is won.) 50.Rh8 Ra2+ 51.Kg3 Re2 52.Bd6 Rd2 53.Bb8 Bf1 54.f4) 49.Rb6 Ra2+ 50.Kg3 and White has a strong initiative in all cases.

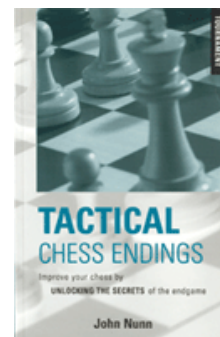
**47...Rxb6 48.Bxb6**



**48...Bc6?**

Black must act energetically to stop White's plan. White wants to play f3-f4 and after gxf4 Bxf4 put his king on h4 and play g4-g5 hxg5 Kxg5

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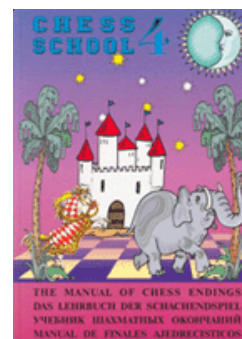


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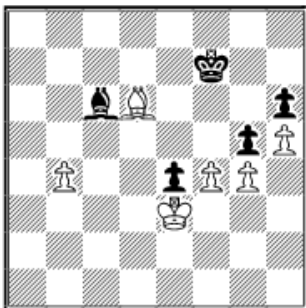


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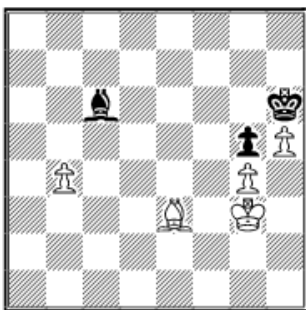


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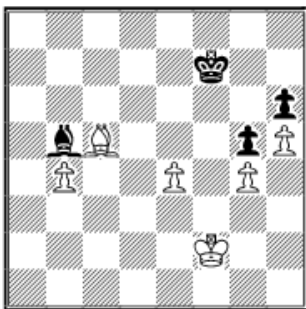
followed by h5-h6. Then put his bishop to e3, where it protects h6 and stops Black's e-pawn (the important principle of one diagonal at work), so that White's king can march to the queenside to win Black's bishop. 48...e5! 49.Bc5 (49.Ke3 Bc6 50.Bc5 Kf7 51.Bd6 e4 52.f4



52...Bd7! (of course not 52...gxf4+? 53.Kxf4 Bd7 54.Bc5+-) 53.f5 Bb5 54.Kxe4 Be2 55.Be5 Ke7 56.Bg7 Bxg4 57.Bxh6 Kf6 58.b5 Bxf5+ and Black draws.) 49...e4 50.fxe4 (50.Bf8 exf3 51.Kxf3 Bc6+ 52.Kg3 Bd7 53.Bxh6 Bb5 54.Bf8 Bc6 55.Bc5 Kg7 56.Be3 Kh6=



White can not make meaningful progress because of his weak pawn g4.) 50...Kf7



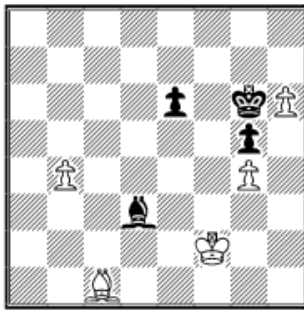
It seems that Black draws because of White's weak g4-pawn; e.g., 51.e5 Bd7 52.Kf3 Bc6+ 53.Ke3 Bd7 54.Bd6 Bxg4 55.b5 Bd7 56.b6 Bc6 57.Bb4 Ke6 58.Kd4 Bf3 59.Be1 Kd7 60.Bg3 Kc6=.

#### 49.Bc5 Kf7

Now it is too late for 49...e5 50.Bf8 e4 51.fxe4 Bxe4 52.b5+-.

#### 50.Bd4 Bd7 51.Kg3 Bb5 52.Ba1 Kg8 53.Bb2 Kh7

53...Kf7 54.f4 Be2 55.Bc1 Kf6 56.fxg5+ hxg5 57.h6 Bd3 58.Kf2 Kg6



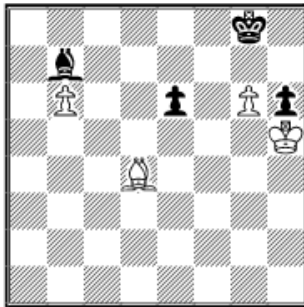
Now White has 59.Bxg5 Kxg5 60.Ke3+- overloading the bishop.

**54.f4 gxf4+**

54...Be2 55.Bf6+-.

**55.Kxf4 Be2 56.Be5 Bb5 57.Kg3**

57.g5?! is less precise, but wins as well: 57...Be2 58.g6+ Kg8 59.Bd4 Bxh5 (59...Kf8 60.Ke5 Kg8 (60...Bxh5 61.b5 Bf3 62.Kf4 Be2 63.b6 Ba6 64.Kg4 Bc8 65.Kh5+-) 61.Bc3 Kf8 62.Kf6 Bxh5 63.b5 Bf3 64.Kxe6 h5 65.Be1 Kg7 66.Kf5 Bd5 67.b6 Kg8 68.Kg5 Bf3 69.Kh6 Kh8 70.Bc3+ Kg8 71.Bf6 Kf8 72.Kh7 Be4 73.b7+-) 60.b5 Be2 61.b6 Ba6 62.Kg4 Be2+ 63.Kg3 Ba6 64.Kh4 Bb7 65.Kh5+-



White wins based on the principle of one diagonal. This time it is the diagonal a1–h8.

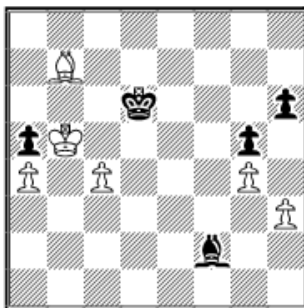
**57...Bd3 58.Kh4 Be2 59.Bb2 Bd3 60.Bc3 Be2 61.Be5 1–0**

The game was adjourned here and Black resigned. A possible finish is 61...Bb5 62.g5 hxg5+ 63.Kxg5 Be2 64.h6 Kg8 65.Kg6 Bd3+ 66.Kf6 Kh7 67.Bf4 Bc4 68.Ke5 Kg6 69.Kd4 Bf1 70.Kc5 e5 71.Be3 Kf6 72.b5 Bd3 73.b6 Be4 74.Kd6+-.

### Exercises (Solutions next month)

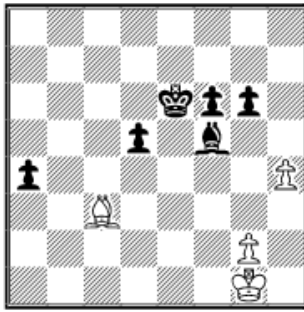
**E97.01 Kramnik, Vladimir (2777) - Svidler, Peter (2747)**

Corus Wijk aan Zee (4), 14.01.2004



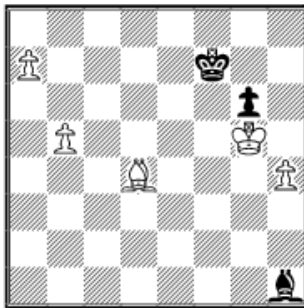
Svidler resigned here. Is Black really lost?

**E97.02 Topalov, Veselin (2740) - Shirov, Alexei (2710)**  
 Linares, 1998



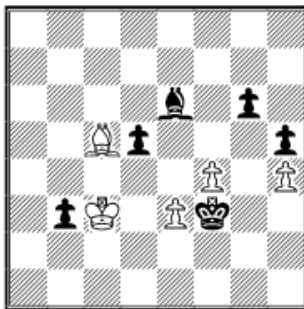
There is only one move that wins for Black. Can you find it?

**E97.03 Euwe, Max - Yanofsky, Daniel Abraham**  
 Staunton m Groningen (1), 1946



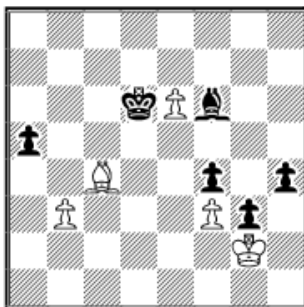
How to break Black's fortress?

**E97.04 Kotov, Alexander - Botvinnik, Mikhail**  
 URS-ch22 Moscow, 1955



How did Botvinnik win?

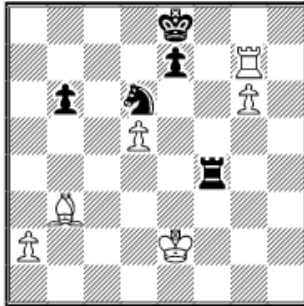
**E97.05 Skatchkov, Pavel (2370) - Sherbakov, Ruslan (2580)**  
 RUS-Cup5 terinburg (2), 1997



Can White to move survive?

**E96.01 Balashov, Y (2407) – Ruchkin, I (2188)**

Open A Vladimir RUS (3), 14.08.2008



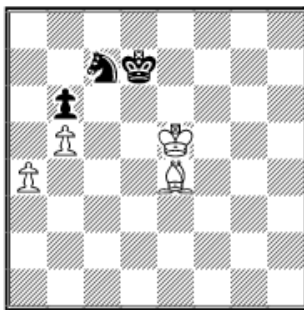
Balashov won with **43.Rg8+ Rf8 44.Ba4+!**

The point. Black must open a road for White's king. 44.Rxf8+? Kxf8 45. Ke3 Kg7 46.Bc2 Kf6 gives Black drawing chances.

**44...b5 45.Rxf8+ Kxf8 46.Bc2 Kg7 47.Ke3 Kf6 48.Kd4 Nb7 49.Bd3 e6 50.dxe6 Kxe6 51.Bxb5 Nd6 52.Be2 Ne8 53.a4 Kd6 54.a5 1–0**

**E96.02 Luther, Thomas (2515) – Hoffmann, Michael (2470)**

Lippstadt (9), 1994



Black can draw by hiding near the corner: **51...Ke7?**

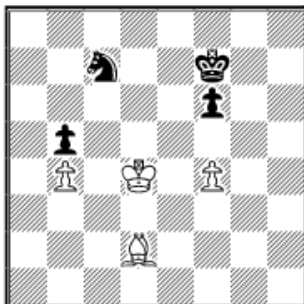
51...Kc8 52.Bc6 Kb8 53.Kd6 Ka7 54.Kd7 Kb8 55.Be4 Ka7 56.Kc8 Nxb5 57.axb5 stalemate; 51...Kd8 is playable as well: 52.Bf5 Ne8 53.Bg6 Nc7 54.Kd6 Kc8 55.Kc6 Na8 56.Bf5+ Kb8=.

**52.Bf5 1–0**

Black resigned because of 52...Ne8 53.Kd5 Nd6 54.Bh3+-

**E96.03 Larsen, B – Gligoric, S**

Linares, 1981



Black must try to get active counterplay.

**3...Ke6?**

53...Na6! 54.f5 (54.Kd5 Kg6 55.Kc6 Nxb4+ 56.Bxb4 Kf5 57.Bd2 b4=) 54...Ke7 55.Kd5 Kd7 56.Bc3 Nc7+ 57.Kc5 Ne8 58.Kxb5 Nd6+ 59.Ka6 Nxf5 60.b5 Nd6 61.b6 Kc8! 62.Bxf6 Nb7= (Larsen in Informant 31/415).

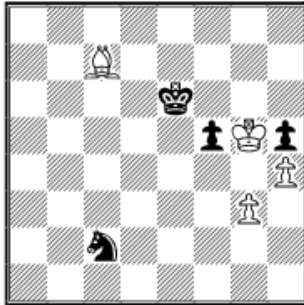
**54.Kc5 Kd7 55.Bc1 Ke6**

55...f5 56.Bd2 Kc8 57.Kd6 Kd8 58.Be3 Kc8 59.Bc5 Kb7 60.Ke5 Kc6 61.Kxf5 Kd5 62.Kf6 Ke4 63.f5 Nd5+ 64.Kg6 Ke5 65.Kg5 Nc3 66.Bg1 Nd5 67.Bh2+ Kd4 68.f6+-.

**56.Kc6 Ne8 57.Kxb5 Kd5 58.Ka5 Nd6 59.b5 f5 60.Ka6 Ne8 61.b6 Kc6 62.Ba3 1–0**

**E96.04 Spassky,B – Benko,P**

Palma de Mallorca, 1968



Black can draw by precise defense.

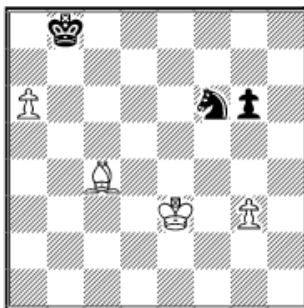
**53...Ne3?**

53...Nd4! 54.Kxh5 Kf6 55.Kh6 (55.Bd8+ Kg7 56.Kg5 Ne6+=) 55...Ne2 56.h5 Nc3 57.Bd8+ Kf7 58.Bg5 Ne4 59.Bh4 Nd6 60.Bd8 Ne4=; 53...Kf7? 54.Bf4 Nd4 55.Be5 Nf3+ (55...Ne2 56.Kxf5 Ng1 57.Kf4 Ne2+ 58.Kg5 Ke6 59.Bb8+-) 56.Kxf5 Nh2 57.Bc7 Ng4 58.Kg5 Ke6 59.Kxh5 Kf5 60.Bd8 Ne5 61.Bb6 Ng4 62.Bd4 Nh2 63.Kh6 Nf1 64.Bf2+-.

**54.Kxh5 Nd5 55.Bf4 Kf6 56.Bd2 Nc7 57.Bc3+ 1–0**

**E96.05 Salov,V (2630) – Timman,J (2610)**

Amsterdam, 1989



Timman constructed a barrier on the kingside. **47...g5!**

Just waiting with 47...Ka7? is insufficient: 48.Kf4 Nh5+ 49.Kg4 Kb6 50.Kh4 Nf6 51.Kg5 Ne4+ 52.Kf4 Nf6 53.g4 Nh7 54.Bf1 Ka7 55.Ke5+-.

**48.Be2 Ka7**

49.Kf3 49.Kd4 g4 50.Ke5 Nh5=.

**49...Kb6 50.Bf1 Ka7 51.Bd3 Kb6 52.Bc4 Ka7 53.Bb5 Kb6 54.Be2 Ka7 55.Bf1 Kb6 56.Bd3 Ka7 57.Bc4 Kb6 58.Bb5 Ka7 59.Be2 Kb6 60.Ke3**



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