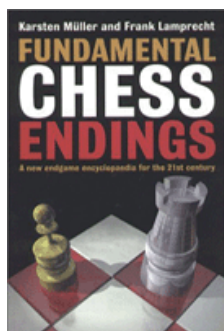




COLUMNISTS

Endgame Corner

Karsten Müller



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Rook + Knight vs. Rook + Knight

Endgames with rook and minor piece vs. rook and minor piece occur frequently in practical play and are not very extensively dealt with in endgame literature. I will now look at the endgame with a knight, as I think that it is useful to know a few guidelines to be able to assess it more accurately. As both rook and knight do not like to defend passively the initiative and control are very important. Even a very slight initiative can be extremely annoying:

111.01 Sanchez, Lo (2232) – Czibulka, Z (2094)

26th Budapest Spring Festival (2), 20.03.2010



[FEN "r7/1p2k3/4p3/pP1nPp2/P4P2/1N4R1/4K3/8 b - - 0 61"]

Black must be careful to keep his advantage.

61...Nxf4+?

This greedy capture allows the activation of White's forces. Black must keep control with 61...Kf7! when Black has good practical winning chances as the drawish tendency of rook endings is much reduced because of the additional knights.

62.Kf3 Nd3?

The rook should be activated with 62...Nh5 63.Rg5 Rc8



[FEN "2r5/1p2k3/4p3/pP2PpRn/P7/1N3K2/8/8 w - - 0 64"]

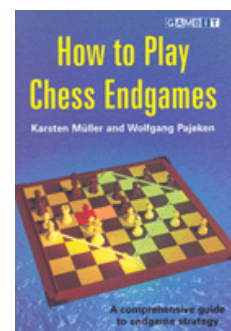
This gives excellent drawing chances; e.g., 64.Nxa5 Rc3+ 65.Kf2 Nf4 66.Rg7 + Kf8 67.Rxb7 Nh3+ 68.Ke1 f4 69.Rh7 f3 70.Rxb3 f2+ 71.Kxf2 Rxb3=.

63.Rg7+ Kf8 64.Rxb7 Nxe5+?!

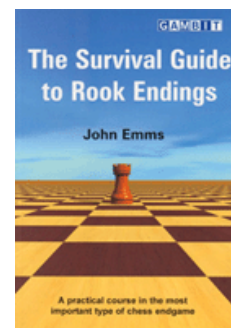
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[ECE: Rook Endings](#)
by Chess Informant



[How to Play Chess Endgames](#)
by Karsten Müller & Wolfgang Pajeken



[Survival Guide to Rook Endings](#)
by John Emms

64...Rd8 is more tenacious.

65.Kf4 Nf7?!

A bit passive, but good advice is already hard to give.

66.Nc5?

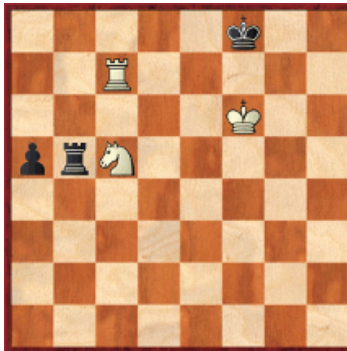
This allows a tactical combination that leads to a drawn N+2P vs. R+P ending.

With 66.Rc7!



[FEN "r4k2/2R2n2/4p3/pP3p2/P4K2/1N6/8/8 b - - 0 66"]

White's active forces should win in the long run; e.g., 66...Rb8 (66...Kg7 67. b6 Kg6 68.b7 Rb8 69.Nxa5 Nd6 70.Ke5+-) 67.Nc5 e5+ 68.Kxf5 Nd6+ 69. Kxe5 Nxb5 70.axb5 Rxb5 71.Kf6!



[FEN "5k2/2R5/5K2/prN5/8/8/8 b - - 0 71"]

71...Kg8 72.Ne6 Rb6 73.Re7 Rc6 74.Kg6 Rc8 75.Ra7 a4 76.Rxa4 Rb8 77. Rd4 Ra8 78.Rd6 Rb8 79.Ng5 Kf8 80.Re6 Rb7 81.Nh7+-.

66...e5+ 67.Kxf5 Nd6+ 68.Kxe5 Nxb7 69.Nxb7 Ke7 70.Kd5 Kd7 71.b6 Rh8 72.Nc5+ Kc8 73.Kc6 Rh6+ 74.Kb5



[FEN "2k5/8/1P5r/pKN5/P7/8/8/8 b - - 0 74"]

74...Rh5!

The rook shows its power in active defense.

75.Kc6 Rh6+ 76.Kb5 Rh5 77.Ka6 Rxc5 78.Ka7 Rc7+ ½-½

A nice joke to end the game.

A dangerous passed pawn is usually very valuable.

111.02 Timofeev, Arty (2655) – Skoberne, J (2509)

11th EICC Men Rijeka CRO (5), 10.03.2010



[FEN "r5k1/7p/4N1p1/p3Pp2/n4P2/1R2K2P/6P1/8 w - - 0 38"]

Black's fate is sealed by the e-pawn despite the reduced material.

38.Kd4 Re8?

38...Kf7! 39.Kd5 Ra7 40.Ng5+ Ke7 41.Nxh7 Rc7+/-



[FEN "8/2r1k2N/6p1/p2KPp2/n4P2/1R5P/6P1/8 w - - 0 42"]

This gives better chances to fight, as White's e-pawn is now under control for the moment.

39.Nc7! Rc8

39...Rd8+ runs into 40.Nd5 Kf7 41.Rb7+/-.

40.Rb7 Nb6

40...Rd8+ does not help either, as White's forces coordinate remarkably well to support the e-pawn: 41.Kc4 Rd1 42.e6 Re1 43.Rb8+ Kg7



[FEN "1R6/2N3kp/4P1p1/p4p2/n1K2P2/7P/6P1/4r3 w - - 0 44"]

44.Rd8! h5 (44...Rc1+ is met by 45.Kb5 Rxc7 46.Rd7+-) 45.Kb5 Nc3+ 46.Kxa5 Re4 47.Rd7+ Kf8 48.Kb6 Ne2 49.Kc6 Rc4+ 50.Kd6 Rd4+ 51.Ke5 Rxd7 52.exd7 Ke7 53.Ne6 Kxd7 54.Nf8+-.

41.e6 Kf8 42.e7+ 1-0

A dangerous outside pawn majority is often also very promising. Alexei Shirov showed the following ending in a lecture for the Hamburger SK. White has to be very careful.

111.03 Najer, E (2681) – Shirov, A (2730)

Bundesliga 2009–10 Emsdetten GER (13), 21.03.2010



[FEN "4rk2/3R2pp/p7/Pp3N2/2p4P/2Pn1P2/1r4P1/R5K1 w - - 0 33"]

33.Rxg7?

Too greedy, as the knight will be too far away and completely helpless. 33. Kh2 Ree2 34.Rg1 was the last chance to fight.

33...Re5 34.Rg5



[FEN "5k2/7p/p7/Pp2rNR1/2p4P/2Pn1P2/1r4P1/R5K1 b - - 0 34"]

34...h6!

Shirov's point, which decides the issue.

35.f4

35.Nxh6 Rxc5 36.hxc5



[FEN "5k2/8/p6N/Pp4P1/2p5/2Pn1P2/lr4P1/R5K1 b - - 0 36"]

Now the queenside majority has the last word: 36...b4 37.cxb4 c3+ (Shirov); 35.Rg6 Rxf5 36.Rxa6 does not help as Black's active forces will decide the day sooner or later as the king escapes; e.g., 36...Nf4 37.Ra8+ Kf7 38.Ra7+ Kf6 39.Ra6+ Ke7 40.Re1+ Kd7 41.Ra7+ Kc6+.

35...Nxf4 36.Nxh6 Rxc5 37.hxc5 Rxc2+ 38.Kh1 Rxc5 39.Rf1 Rh5+ 40.Kg1 Rxh6 41.Rxf4+ Ke7 42.Kg2

42.Kf2 allows the liquidation into a won pawn ending with 42...Rf6+. So White is lost in any case.

42...Rg6+ 0-1

The last example was extensively annotated by Anna Muzychuk in *ChessBase Magazine #135* and I have used her analysis:

111.04 Muzychuk, Anna (2523) – Giri, Anish (2588)

Corus-B ijk aan Zee (9), 26.01.2010



[FEN "r2k3r/1p3ppp/p2p1n2/3Pp3/4P3/7P/PP1N1PP1/R3K2R w KQ - 0 17"]

17.Rc1

White has a very pleasant initiative and Black has no counterplay. This makes his task extremely unpleasant. Even the very talented wunderkind Anish Giri is not able to hold it. One example of his technique can be found in [Endgame Corner 98](#).

17...b5?!

17...Rc8 is easier: 18.Ke2 Ke7 19.Ke3 Nd7 (Muzychuk) and White's advantage is only very slight.

18.Ke2 Kd7 19.Rc6 Rxc8 20.Rxc1



[FEN "r1r5/3k1ppp/p1Rp1n2/1p1Pp3/4P3/7P/PP1NKPP1/2R5 b - - 0 20"]

20...Rxc6?

Now White's initiative can not be stopped anymore because of the passive rook a8. Black had to try to exchange all rooks by 20...Ng8! 21.a4 Ne7 22.Rxc8 Rxc8 23.Rxc8 Kxc8 24.axb5 axb5 25.Kd3 Kc7 26.Kc3 Ng6 27.Kb4 Kb6! with excellent drawing chances as given by Anna Muzychuk.

21.Rxc6 Ng8



[FEN "r5n1/3k1ppp/p1Rp4/1p1Pp3/4P3/7P/PP1NKPP1/8 w - - 0 22"]

22.a4!

White increases her pressure on the queenside by tactical means.

22...Ne7

22...bxa4? runs into 23.Nc4+-.

23.Rb6 Kc7 24.a5 Ra7 25.Nf3 f6 26.Ne1!

The knight comes closer to the queenside and the king and the pawns will operate on the kingside.

26...Nc8 27.Rc6+ Kd7 28.Nd3 Ne7 29.Rc3 f5

29...Rc7 30.Nb4+/-.

30.f3 f4 31.Kf2 Ra8 32.h4 g6



[FEN "r7/3kn2p/p2p2p1/Pp1Pp3/4Pp1P/2RN1P2/1P3KP1/8 w - - 0 33"]

33.g3!

White opens a second front, which will most likely overload the defense.

33...fxg3+ 34.Kxg3 g5?

Opens lines for White. The guideline that one should not play on the wing where the opponent is stronger or wants to infiltrate is valid here. But good advice is very hard to give.

35.hxg5 Rg8 36.Kh4 h6 37.gxh6 Rg1 38.Rc1 Rg6



[FEN "8/3kn3/p2p2rP/Pp1Pp3/4P2K/3N1P2/1P6/2R5 w - - 0 39"]

39.f4

39.Kh5!? wins easier, as Anna Muzychuk proves in her notes: 39...Rg2 (39...Rg3 40.Nf2+-) 40.Rh1 Ng6 41.h7 Nh8 (41...Ke7 42.Rc1+-) 42.Rc1 Rg7 43.Rc6+-.

39...Rxh6+ 40.Kg3 exf4+ 41.Nxf4 Ng6 42.Ne6! Ke7 43.Nd4 Kf6 44.Nf5 Rh5



[FEN "8/8/p2p1kn1/Pp1P1N1r/4P3/6K1/1P6/2R5 w - - 0 45"]

45.Rc8!

Good technique. White activates all her forces.

45...Rg5+

45...Ke5 46.Re8+ Kf6 47.Re6+-.

46.Kf3 Rg1 47.Nxd6 Rb1 48.Re8 Rxb2 49.Re6+ Kg5 50.Nf7+ Kh5 51.Ke3 Rb3+ 52.Kd4 Rb4+ 53.Kc5 Rc4+ 54.Kb6 b4 55.Rxg6 1-0

Exercises (Solutions next month)

E111.01 Livner, A (2304) – Doci, S (2071)

Uxbridge Open ENG (5), 21.03.2010



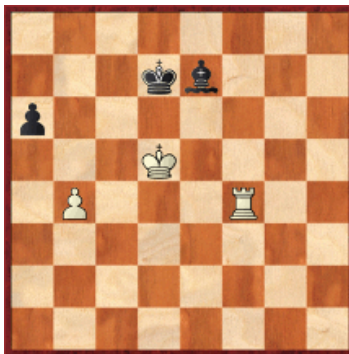
[FEN "8/2R5/3n1kp1/7p/5P2/5NPK/4r2P/8 w - - 0 59"]

White to move and win.

Solutions to last month exercises

E110.01 Petrov, Marij (2500) - Dimitrov, R (2394)

Georgi Tringov Mem Plovdiv BUL (4), 02.02.2010



[FEN "8/3kb3/p7/3K4/1P3R2/8/8 w - - 0 66"]

How did Petrov convert his advantage?

The easiest solution is to liquidate into a pawn ending: **66.Rf7!? Ke8?! 66... Kd8** more or less forces **67.Rxe7+- 67.Ke6** Now this wins as well, and is even quicker than **67.Rxe7+ Kxe7 68.Kc6 a5 (68...Kd8 69.Kb6 Kc8 70.Kxa6 +-) 69.bxa5 Kd8 70.Kb7+- 67...Bxb4 68.Rb7! Ba5 69.Rb8+ Bd8 70.Ra8 a5 71.Kd6 a4 72.Ke6 a3 73.Rxa3 1-0**

E110.02 Kharlov, Andrei (2558) - Movsesian, Sergei (2632)

Moscow Aeroflot op-A (1), 08.02.2006



[FEN "8/8/2Bk3p/P2P2p1/6P1/3KP3/5r2/8 b - - 0 44"]

Why was Kharlov's last move 44.a5? a mistake?

Surprisingly Black wins now: **44...h5!** After 44...Ra2?, White is too active: 45. Ke4 Rxa5 46. Kf5 Ra2 47. e4 Re2 48. Be8=. **45.a6 h4 46.a7** 46.e4 Ke5+-. **46... Ra2 47.a8Q Rxa8 48.Bxa8 h3 49.e4 Ke5!** The point of Black's play. **49...h2? 50.e5+ Kxe5 51.d6+- 50.d6 0-1** White resigned because of 50...h2 51.d7 h1Q 52.d8Q Qd1++

E110.03 Velchev, H (2298) - Petrov, Marij (2500)
Georgi Tringov Mem Plovdiv BUL (3), 01.02.2010



[FEN "8/5Qbk/5q1p/7P/3pp3/5p2/1PP5/1K4R1 w - - 0 44"]

Was 44.Qg6+ a good decision?

White must keep the queens on the board to create counterplay: **44.Qg6+?** 44. Qb7 draws; e.g., 44...e3 45. Rxg7+ Qxg7 46. Qxf3 Qg1+ 47. Ka2 Kg7 48. Qe4 Kf6 49. Qf4+-. **44...Qxg6 45.hxg6+ Kg8 46.Kc1 e3 47.Rh1 Be5 48.Kd1 Bg3 0-1**

E110.04 Bednarski, J - Hecht, H.J.
Wijk aan Zee, 1973



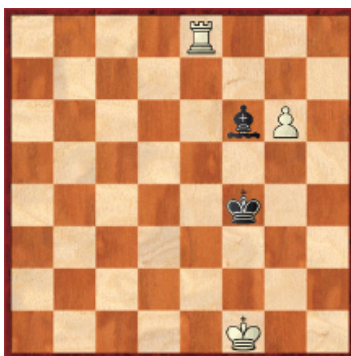
[FEN "8/8/2B5/8/5k2/6p1/1r6/6K1 b - - 0 11"]

White's king is near the dangerous corner. How did German endgame expert Hecht convert his advantage?

White's king is in the dangerous corner, so Black's winning plan is to sacrifice the g-pawn: **11...g2! 12.Kh2 12.Bxg2 Kg3 13.Bf1 Rb1+- 12...Rb6 13.Bxg2**

13.Bd5 Rb5 14.Bc6 Rg5 15.Bxg2 Rh5+ 16.Kg1 Kg3 17.Kf1 Rf5+++. **13...Rh6**
+ 14.Kg1 Kg3 0-1 White resigned, as his king is caught in the dangerous
corner, e.g. 15.Bd5 Rd6 16.Bb3 Rd3 17.Bc2 Rc3 18.Bd1 Rc1—+

E110.05 Serper, G (2435) - Bern, I (2275)
Baguio City, 1987



[FEN "4R3/8/5bP1/8/5k2/8/8/5K2 w - - 0 8"]

White has two winning moves. Find one of them!

White has the following two winning moves: **8.Re7!?** is the elegant finish of
the game. 8.Re2 is the other winning move; e.g., 8...Kf5 9.Rg2 Bg7 10.Kf2
Kf4 11.Rg3 Kf5 12.Kg2 Kf6 13.Kh3 Bh6 14.Kh4 Kg7 15.Kh5+- and White
wins as in E110.04.

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