

Arkadij Naiditsch
Csaba Balogh

Most instructive endgames of 2012–2015



Kramnik vs Tomashevsky

73. ♖xd5!!



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Arkadij Naiditsch
Csaba Balogh

Most instructive endgames of 2012–2015



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ul. Smutna 5a, 32-005 Niepolomice, Poland

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KEY TO SYMBOLS

= Equality or equal chances

\pm White has a slight advantage

\mp Black has a slight advantage

\pm White is better

\mp Black is better

+ - White has a decisive advantage

- + Black has a decisive advantage

∞ unclear

∞ with compensation

\rightleftarrows with counterplay

\uparrow with initiative

\rightarrow with an attack

Δ with the idea

\square only move

N novelty

! a good move

!! an excellent move

? a weak move

?? a blunder

!? an interesting move

?! a dubious move

+ check

mate

INTRODUCTION

Useful information for our valued readers.

- >>> The book contains the 80 most instructive endgames from 2012 to 2015.
- >>> The games were selected and analyzed by the authors GM Arkadij Naiditsch and GM Csaba Balogh.
- >>> Most of the games are taken from the highest-level tournaments, such as Wijk aan Zee, FIDE Grand Prix series, Olympiads etc.
- >>> Most of the games are played by top Grandmasters: Carlsen, Anand, Kramnik, Aronian, Caruana and many, many more of the world's best chess-players.
- >>> The games are sorted in chronological order, from 2012 through to 2015.

EDITORIAL PREFACE

We are proud to present our third book in a series of 5 — “Most instructive endgames of 2012–2015”.

It was very interesting work trying to select and analyse the 80 most instructive endgames from the past 4 years: the choice was so wide! We were aiming to find the most exciting, spectacular and, of course, useful attacking ideas which might also occur in our own practical games.

The main idea behind this book stands out clearly: We try to reduce the importance of opening theory, and rather get inside the workings of the best chess-playing brains on the planet in an attempt to explain the most complex attacking ideas in a simple and understandable way to any chess lover.

Another very important point of the book which we are proud of is, we have not used much 'engine' assistance during our commentary on the games. We try to see the game the way we would do in a practical game, which makes the commentaries very special — which in practice puts the reader fully in the shoes of the world-class players; this is exactly the best way to improve our own chess level.

Sadly, nowadays, we have more-and-more computer analyses and we can hear chess amateurs judging the play even of Carlsen. Yes, you can find tactical mistakes with an engine at home — but the question is, can you do the same during your practical game over the board ?! Chess is a game where everyone is making mistakes — and this is what it is all about in the current book!

We would advise all our readers to take out a real chessboard and enjoy these beautiful masterpieces. This is how we learned to play chess and this is why we still enjoy every wonderful game, even after almost 20 years of being professional chess players!

Yours,

Arkadij Naiditsch & Csaba Balogh

GAME 1

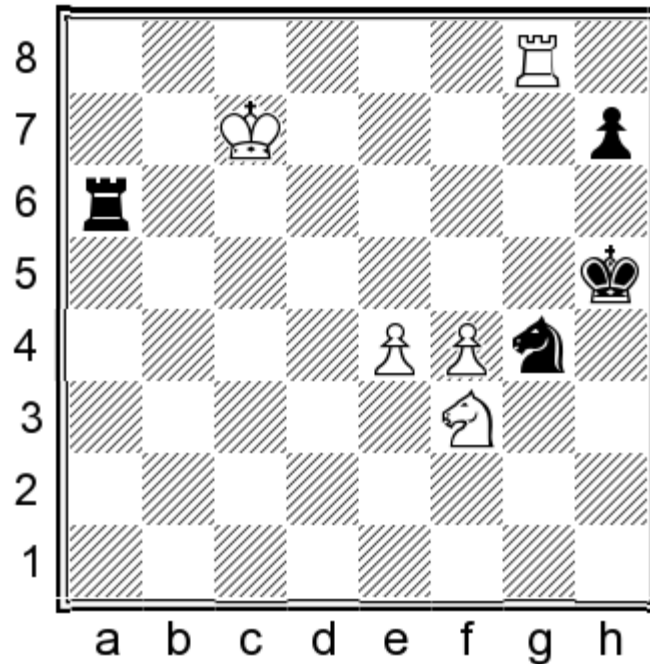
V. Kramnik (2801)

E. Tomashevsky (2738)

Tal Memorial

14.06.2012

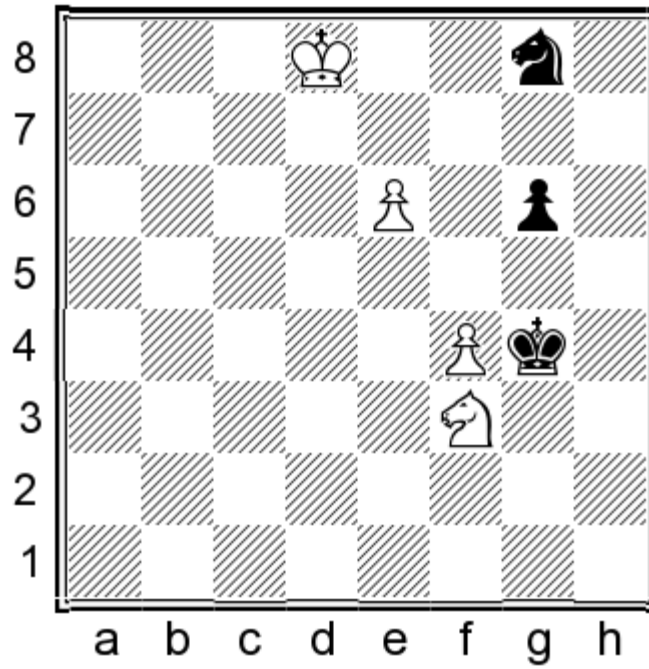
Annotated by Csaba Balogh



We are at move 60, when the players have just passed the 2nd time-control and received their extra 15 minutes. Despite the small amount of pieces, the position is full of beautiful ideas, and requires very deep play from both sides. It was practically impossible to continue the game flawlessly... the position is objectively drawn, but probably in a practical game White has better chances to win, than Black has to hold.

60...h6!

Tomashevsky finds the only move. He prevents the ♖g5 threat. Exchanging the rooks would win for White with very precise play 60...♖g6 61.♖xg6 hxg6 (61...♔xg6? 62.♕e5+- The pawn endgame is hopeless.) 62.e5 ♕h6 63.e6 ♕g8! The critical move, where the knight is quite safe against attacks from his White counterpart. (63...♕f5 64.♔d7 ♔g4 65.♕d4! White easily promotes the pawn. 65...♕g7 66.e7 ♔xf4 67.♕e6+-) 64.♔d8! White must give up all his pieces to send away the g8-knight. 64...♔g4



65.♔e8!! ♕xf4 (65... ♕xf3 66.♔f7 ♖h6+ 67.♔xg6 ♖g8 68.f5+- wins.) 66.♔f8 ♖f6 (On 66... ♔f5 White can first protect the pawn, then take the knight. 67.♖d4+-) 67.e7! ♕xf3 68.♔f7 ♖e4 69.♔e6!+- The last exact move to prevent ...♖d6.;

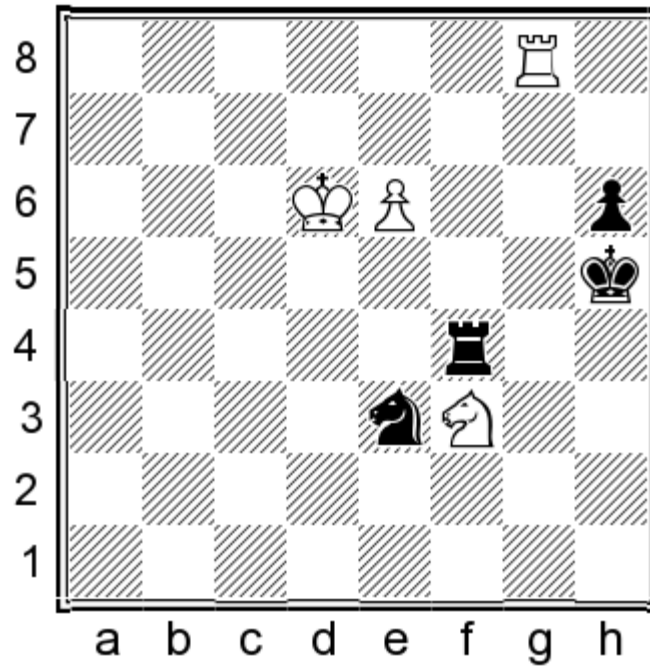
The double attack with 60...♖f6 loses after 61.♖g5+ ♔h6 62.♖d4!+- with a picturesque mate.

60...h6! 61.e5

Obviously, White should push his passers.

61...♖f6

After this move the position is still drawn, but it becomes much more difficult to hold... 61...♖e3! with the threat of ♖d5. 62.♔d7 (62.♖d8 This allows the Black king to approach... 62... ♔g4! 63.♖d4 ♕xf4 64.e6 ♖a7+! The only move. 65.♔d6 ♖c4+ 66.♔c5 ♖e5 and Black saves the game.) 62...♖a7+ 63.♔d6 (63.♔e6 ♖a6+ and the White king has no shelter.) 63...♖f7! wins the f-pawn and at the same time the knight catches the e-pawn 64.e6 ♖xf4



65.e7 ♖f5+! 66.♔e5 ♜xe7!= and the rook on g8 hangs as well.

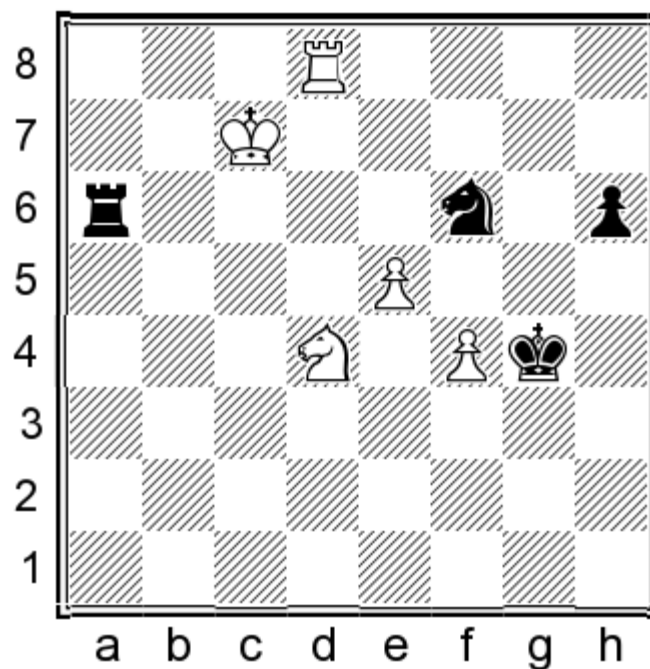
62.♞d8

Kramnik uses his great imagination and sets up very difficult tricks for Black to solve. 62.exf6? did not come into consideration 62...♞xf6 White cannot defend the f4-pawn. 62.♞f8 ♜d5+ 63.♔d7

(63.♔b7 ♞b6+ 64.♔a7 ♞b3 65.♜d4 ♞b4 66.♜e6 ♔g4=)

63...♔g4

62...♔g4 63.♜d4



63...♖a7+!

Tomashevsky defends very well, but it takes all his time and energy to stay focused until the end of the game. The tempting 63...♙xf4 loses immediately 64.♔b7!+— and the rook has no square on the 6th rank from which to defend the knight.

64.♙d6!

64.♔b6 is met with 64...♞d7! 65.♞xd7 ♜xd7+ 66.♔c7 ♙xf4 This was the point of the check on the 63rd move.

64...♞e4+ 65.♙d5 ♞c3+!

65...♙xf4 loses the knight by force... 66.♞f8+ ♔e3 67.♞f3+ ♔d2 68.♙xe4+—

66.♙c4 ♙xf4!

Black chooses the right moment to take the pawn. 66...♞c7+? would walk into the e6 check. 67.♔d3+— ♙xf4? 68.♞e6+

67.e6 ♞c7+ 68.♙d3

Until this moment Tomashevsky has defended tenaciously, but now fails to find the last exact move to secure the draw. We must add that the players had already been fighting for 7 hours, were completely exhausted and surviving only on the 30 seconds increments.

68...♔e5?

White wins in a study-like way after this move. 68...♞a4 followed by ...♞c5 was the way to draw.

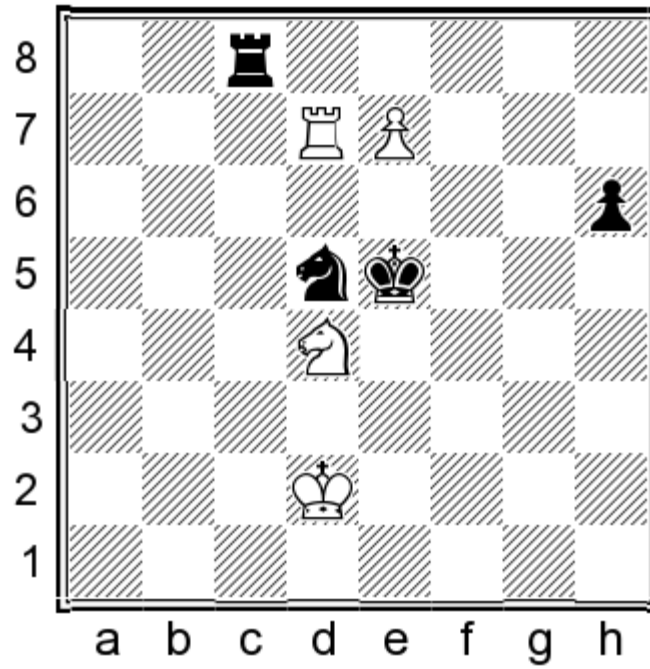
69.♞d7! ♞d5

69...♞c8 70.e7+— followed by ♞d8 wins.

70.e7!

After this great move, rather strangely Black is simple unable to stop the pawn.

70...♞c3+ 71.♙d2 ♞c8



72. ♖c6+!!

Tomashevsky missed this motif on the 68th move. Of course, we cannot blame him for this mistake, especially with only seconds on his clock. 72. ♖d8? ♜xe7 was a draw.

72... ♜e6 73. ♖xd5!! ♖xc6

73... ♜xd5 74. ♜d8! was the whole point, and the pawn promotes.

74.e8=♚+ ♜xd5

We have reached a winning endgame, but it still requires some accurate moves. Of course, such a technical task is not a huge challenge for a player like Kramnik.

75. ♜d3 ♖e6 76. ♚b5+ ♜d6 77. ♜d4 ♜e7 78. ♚f5!

The White king and queen co-operate well to squeeze the Black king to the 8th rank.

78... ♖f6 79. ♚h7+ ♜f8 80. ♜e5 ♖a6 81. ♚b7 ♖g6 82. ♚h7 ♖a6 83. ♚d3!

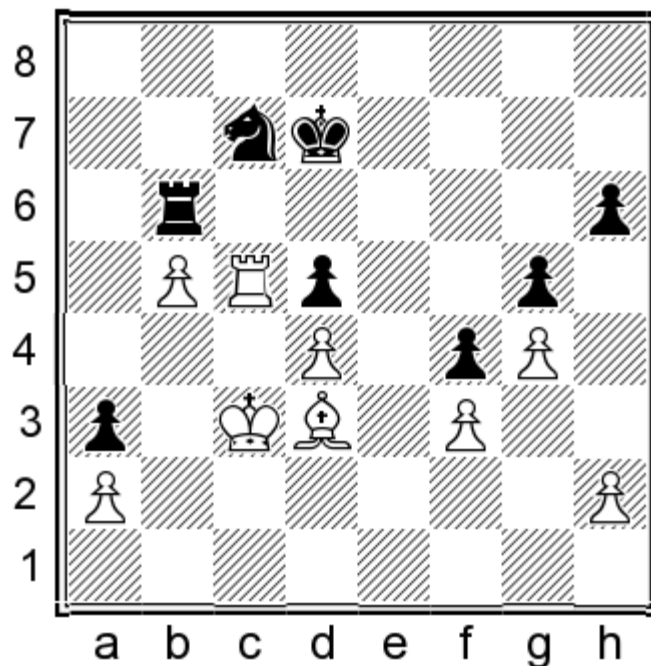
Black resigned because he must give up the 6th rank with his rook and will lose his h-pawn soon. 83. ♚d3 ♖a7 84. ♚d6+ ♜g7 85. ♜e6! The shortest way to win. Black has serious problems with his rook in trying to avoid being checked by the queen. 85... ♖f7 86. ♚g3+ ♜f8 87. ♚g6 ♖e7+ 88. ♜d6+— White wins the h-pawn, and the game. A very interesting endgame with many study-like motifs.

1–0

GAME 2

M. Carlsen (2837)

V. Bologan (2732)



Carlsen obviously has a completely winning position with an extra pawn, and the days of the a3-pawn are also numbered. However, while ‘converting’ the advantage, White allowed a miraculous escape for his opponent...

43. ♕f5+?

In my opinion, Carlsen had already seen the final position of the game. Everything seems to be quite forced, so the World’s Nr. 1 had to be confident with his calculations. 43. ♖b4! was probably the easiest way to victory. 43... ♗a6+ 44. ♖xa3 ♗xc5 45. dxc5 ♖b8 46. ♖b4+– and there is nothing that can stop the pawn avalanche on the queenside, supported by the bishop and the king.

43. ♕f5+? ♗d6 44. ♖b4?

Continuing with the wrong plan. 44. ♕d3! Repeating the moves would have been objectively better.

44... ♗a6+ 45. ♖a5 ♗xc5 46. ♖xb6 ♗b3!

Bologan finds the only chance to stay in the game. Black collects the d4-pawn. I don’t think that Carlsen blundered this move, since after the coming moves it all seems to be over.

47. ♖a7?

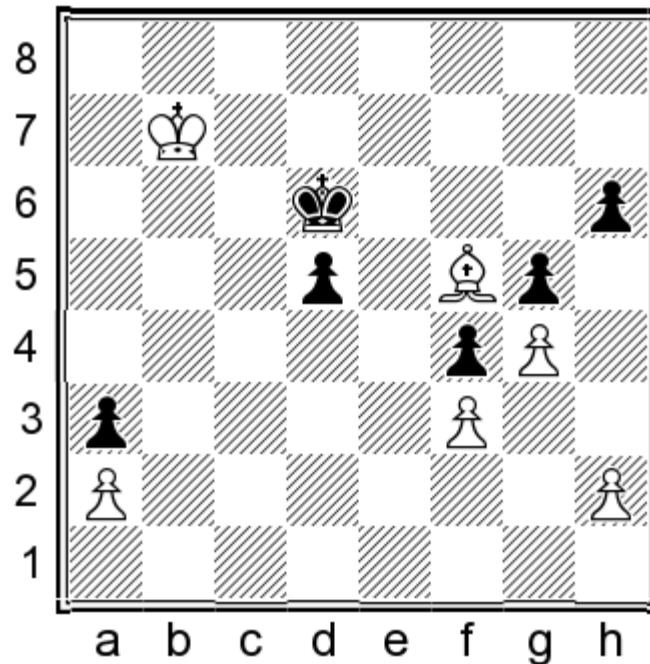
Still following the wrong path... 47. ♖a6 should have been played, even though after 47... ♗xd4 48. b6 ♗c6 49. ♕b1 ♗b4+ 50. ♖b5 ♗c6 I don’t see a winning plan for White.

47... ♗xd4 48. b6 ♗c6+ 49. ♖a8

This was Carlsen’s idea when he played 43. ♕f5. White promotes the b-pawn soon and the bishop covers the a2- and f3-pawns, which might give some counter-chances to Black. I’m sure that at this moment, both players accepted that White has won the struggle. But chess is a more difficult game...

49...d4?

49...♖a5!! would have led to an amazing position... 50.b7 ♜xb7 51.♔xb7



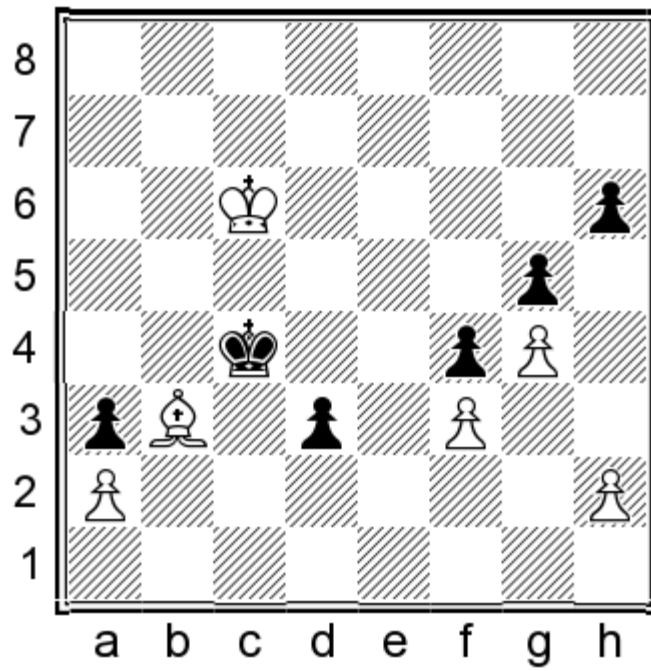
In my opinion, many players would just resign here after a short hesitation. Who would believe that Black is close to winning in this position!!! At first sight, I thought it was a mistake of the computer. Then, after checking a few logical lines, everything became clear... 51...♔c5! Let's summarize the main ideas: The White king has no access to the d-pawn, Black simply wants to promote the d-pawn with the help of the king. It seems like even if he manages to do it, White will sacrifice his bishop, capture the a3-pawn and his a-pawn will queen automatically. But in this case, Black is in time to collect the f3-pawn and promote his own f-pawn... 52.♔a6 trying to catch the pawn and approaching a3 seems to be the most logical attempt.

a) 52.♔c7 is a tricky option to rush to the e-file with the king. 52...d4 53.♞c2 ♔c4 54.♔c6

(54. ♔d6 requires precise moves by Black. 54...d3 55. ♞d1 ♔d4! in order to keep the king away from the e5-e4 path.

Black wins an important tempo to push d2 on the next move, and only then goes with the king. 56.h3 d2 57. ♔e6 ♔e3)

54...d3 55.♞b3+



55...♔d4! Again, it is very important to prevent the ♔d5-e4 idea.

(55...♔c3? is a mistake because of 56.♔d5! d2 57.♔e4 ♔b2 58.♔d3 ♔c1 59.♔e2+— just in time.)

56.♔b5

(56.♔d6 d2)

56...♔c3 and again White has nothing better than transposing to the main line with 52.♔a6.

b) 52.h3 d4 53.♙c2 White needs to move into this tempo to control the promoting square on d1. 53...♔c4 54.♔b6 d3 55.♙b3+ ♔c3 This is a transposition to our main line. 52...♔b4! A necessary move. The idea is to block to king's route on the a-file and save an important tempo to push d4.

(52...d4? immediately is a mistake. 53.♔a5 ♔c4 54.♔a4 d3 55.♔xa3 ♔c3 56.♙e6+—)

53.h3! White must already understand that “this ship is gone” and try to defend the inferior endgame, where the pawn must stay on h3.

(53.♔b6 d4 White can achieve the same queen endgame, but with his pawn on h2. Everything is forced from now on... 54.♔c6

(54.♙c2 ♔c3 55.♙b3 d3 56.♔b5 d2)

54...♔c3 55.♔c5 d3 56.♙e6 d2 57.♙b3 ♔b2 58.♔b4 ♔c1 59.♔xa3 d1=♚ 60.♙xd1 ♔xd1 61.♔b4 ♔e2 62.a4 ♔xf3 63.a5 ♔xg4! That is why the pawn should be on h3. 64.a6 f3 65.a7 f2 66.a8=♚ f1=♚ with a winning endgame.)

53...d4 The next moves are ...♔c3 and ...d3. White can do nothing against it... 54.♙c2 ♔c3 55.♙b3 d3 56.♔b5 d2 57.♔a4 ♔b2 58.♔b4 ♔c1 59.♔xa3 d1=♚ 60.♙xd1 ♔xd1 61.♔b4 ♔e2 62.a4 ♔xf3 63.a5 ♔g3 64.a6 f3 65.a7 f2 66.a8=♚ f1=♚ and in the coming endgame Black's winning chances are better than White's drawing ones. Most probably, a ♚+1 pawn against a ♚ endgame will arise, which could continue for 100 moves. A shocking endgame which shows excellently how difficult chess is. 49...♞d8! is also fine, with the same idea.

50.b7 ♔c7 51.♙d3!

The bishop is heading to b5 and the knight cannot hold the b-pawn.

51...♞b8 52.♙b5

Black is in zugzwang.

52...d3 53.♙xd3 ♜d7 54.♚a7!

Black resigned in view of 54...♜b8 55.♙b5. Everything went as Carlsen expected, but there could have been a big surprise for him...

1–0

GAME 3

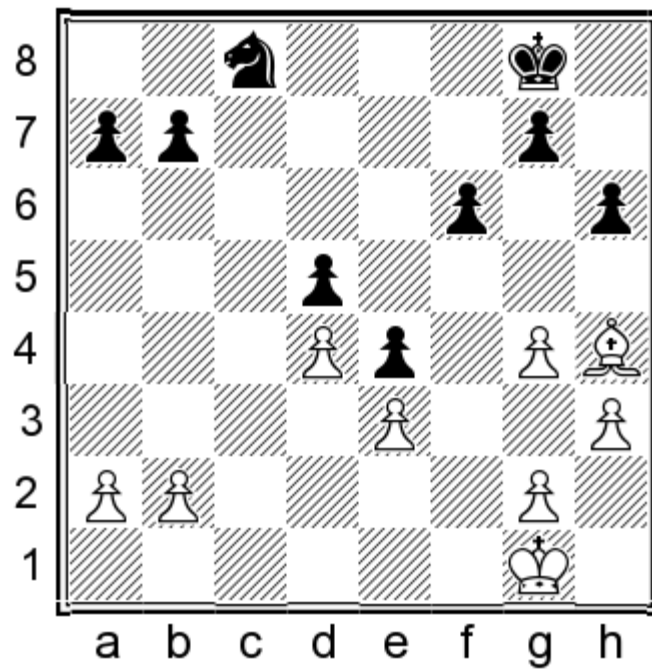
J. Gustafsson (2629)

R. Ponomarev (2726)

40th GM Dortmund GER (8)

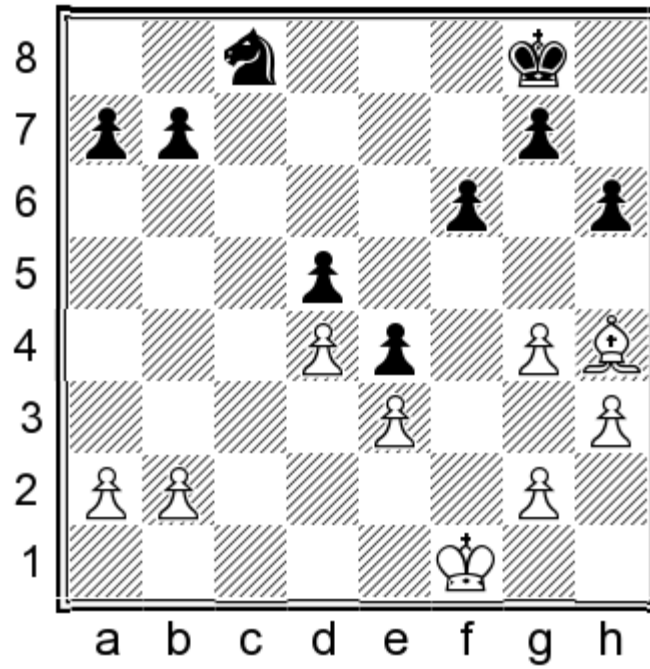
21.07.2012, [D45]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

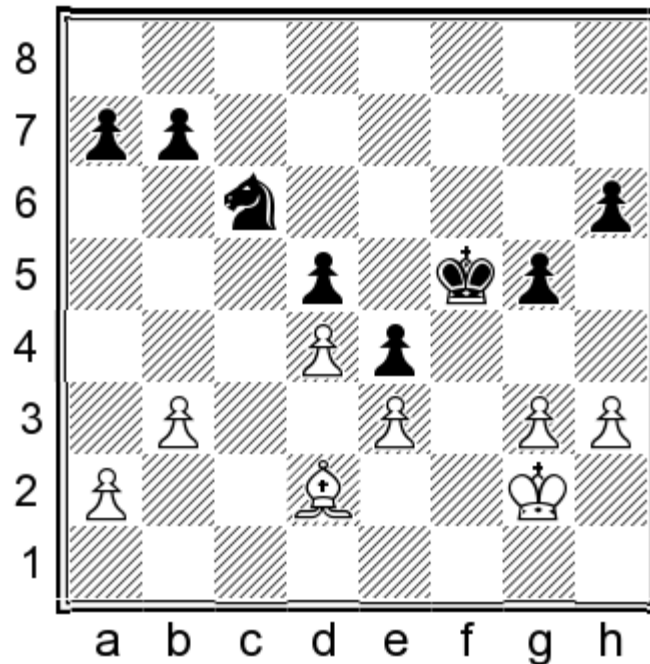


This endgame looks like an easy draw. But... it's much trickier than it looks. We will see how quickly Gustafsson manages to lose it...

30.♚f1

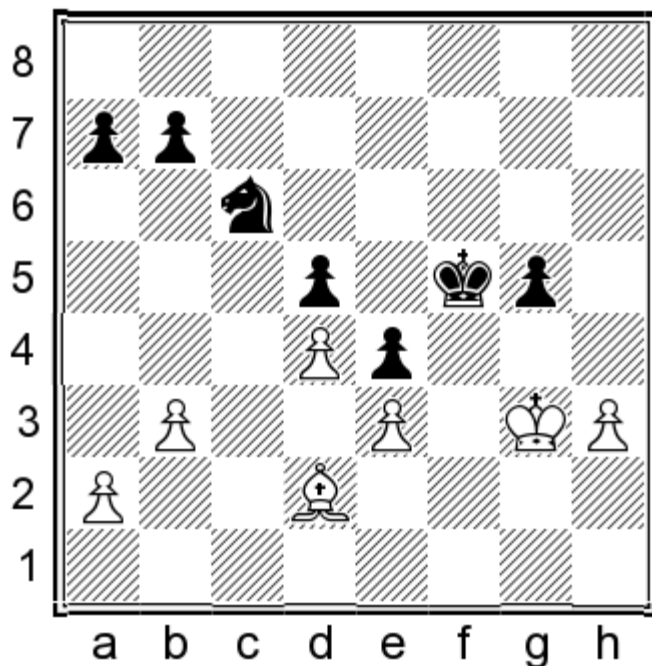


Gustafsson decides to put the king on e2. I'm not sure if this was a good idea. It's clear that Black will start his play on the kingside, so there's no real reason to move the king away to e2?! The White bishop has to control the knight — mainly the b4-square. The pawns on the queenside should stand on a2-b3 and, for example, the bishop on d2 or maybe on d6. Let's take a look at a few options. 30.♔e1 ♖e7 31.♔d2 ♖c6 32.b3 ♕f7 33.♕f2 Now Black has 2 plans, to play with ...g5 or without it. Maybe another idea could be to play ...b5-a5-a4, but right now it wouldn't achieve anything at all. White would just keep on waiting... 33...♕g6 (33...g5 34.g3 ♕g6 35.♕g2 h5 seems to be the only way to break through... (35...f5 36.gxf5+ ♔xf5



37.♕f2! (37.g4+?! White has to be careful until the end. This logical-looking move could land White in some trouble. 37...♕g6 38.♕f2 h5 39.♕g2 hxg4 40.hxg4 ♕f7 The Black king is going to b5, and Black will try to play ...a5-a4, trying to create weaknesses in White's pawn structure. If the White king goes to b2, Black could react very quickly with ...♖e7-♖g8-♖f6, winning the g4-pawn. Probably the position is still a draw, but it would get tricky...) 37...h5

38.♔e2 By keeping the pawns on g3-h3, White is ready to react against Black's ...g4 with h4, and against Black's ...h4 with g4. 38...g4 39.h4 ♖e6 40.♖d1 ♜e7 41.♙e1 ♜f5 42.♙f2 ♖d6 43.♖c2 ♖c6 44.♖b2 ♖b5 45.♖c3 with a draw.) 36.gxh5+ ♖xh5 37.g4+! (37.♖f2?! Now the waiting strategy could lead to a lost position. 37...f5 38.♙c3 ♖g6 39.♖e2 ♜d8! Black brings the knight to e6 before starting action with f4. 40.♖f2 ♜e6 followed by f4 with good winning chances.) 37...♖g6 38.♖g3! White wants to play h4 trying to exchange both pawns on the kingside. 38...f5 39.gxf5+ ♖xf5

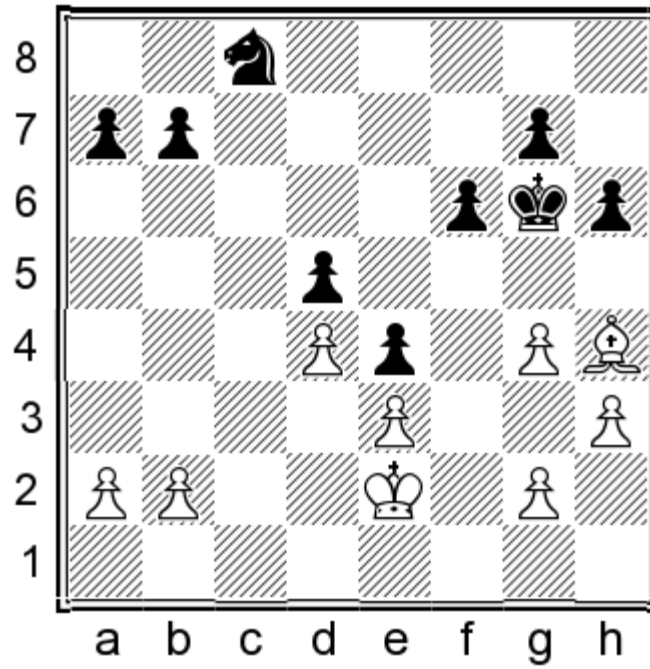


40.h4! g4 41.h5 with a draw.) 34.g3 h5 (34...f5 35.gxf5+ ♖xf5 36.♖g2 and we already know that White makes a draw just by waiting and keeping the pawns on g3-h3.) 35.gxh5+ ♖xh5 36.g4+! allowing Black to play ...f5. 36...♖g6 37.♖g3 followed by h4, with an easy draw.

30.♖f1 ♖f7 31.♖e2

The White king goes in the wrong direction.

31...♖g6



32. ♕g3?

White is playing completely without a plan. 32. ♕e1 followed by ♖f2, with a draw.

32... h5 33. gxh5+ ♔xh5

and it's too late. g4 is no longer possible, so Black is in time to put the pawns on g5-f5.

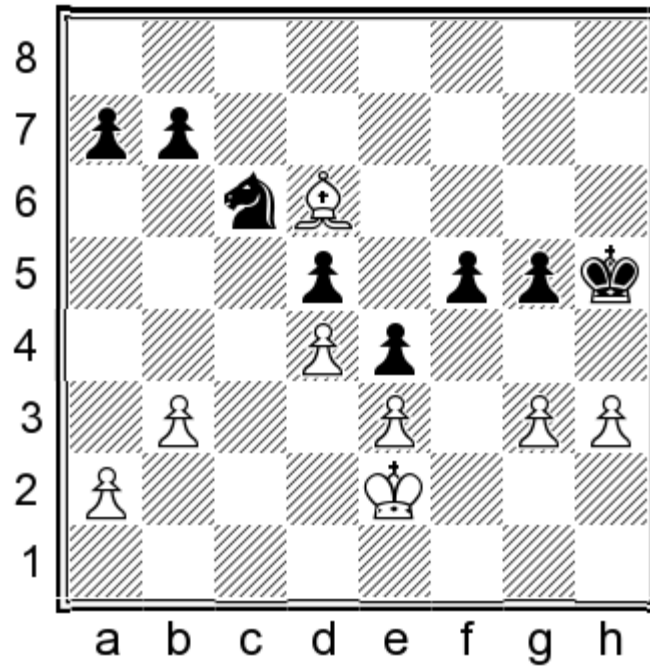
34. ♕c7 ♖e7

There is no hurry to play ...f5 because against White's g4, Black now has ...♖h4.

35. ♕d6 ♖c6 36. b3 g5?!

A logical move, but not the most precise. 36...f5 37. ♖f2 ♖d8 38. ♖e2 ♖e6 39. ♖f2 ♖g5!/? Black could try to keep the g5-option in mind. In case of White's g3, Black would have the winning maneuver ...♖g5-♖f3. 40. ♕e7+ ♖g6 41. ♕d6 ♖f7 The Black king is going to b5. In comparison to the game, the Black pawn stands very well on g7 or g6. White has no h4-push, which would give him a free passed h-pawn in case of Black's ...g5.

37. g3 f5



We can clearly see that it's not going to be easy to make a draw anymore...

38.♔d2?

38.♔f2 White should not let Black play ...f4. 38...♞d8 39.♔g2 ♞e6 40.♔f2 ♔g6 41.♔g2 It looks as though Black doesn't have the ...f4-move, and to find another idea seems to be a difficult task. Probably the position is a draw, but a very tricky one. If Black manages to find an idea, White could simply be lost.

38...f4!

Of course! A very typical move.

39.gxf4

39.exf4 g4! A very strong reaction! 40.hxg4+ ♔xg4 41.♔e3 ♔xg3 42.f5+ ♔g4 43.f6 ♞d8 and Black is in time to stop the f-pawn. Now the Black king is going to e6, and White would lose the f-pawn. The position is lost for White.

39...gxf4 40.♙xf4 ♔h4 41.♙d6

41.♔e2 ♞b4! doesn't work and White is probably lost.

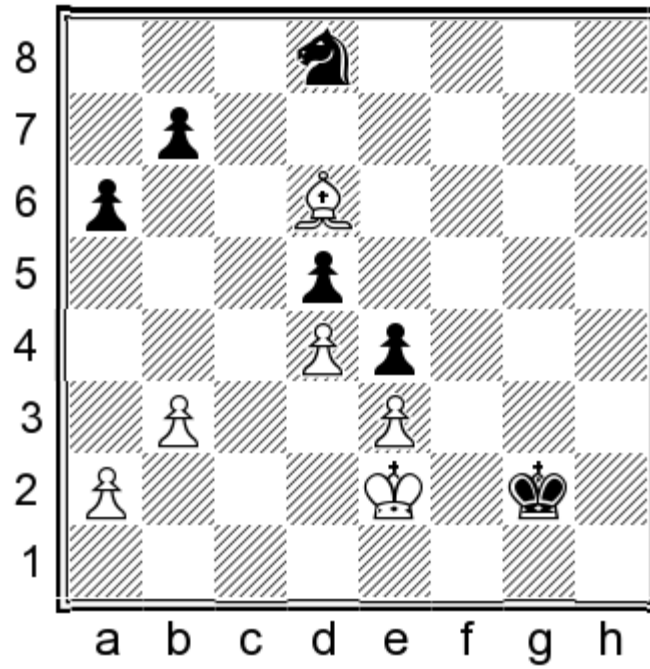
41...♔xh3 42.♔e2 ♔g2!

We have a very interesting position. Black's winning idea is clear: to bring the knight to g3 or g1, then the White king would have to move, allowing Black to get to f2, netting the full point. Can White stop the Black knight from jumping to g3 or g1? Let's take a look.

43.♙c5 a6 44.♙d6

Gustafsson tries to use passive tactics because, of course, there's nothing else to do.

44...♞d8



The knight starts getting closer.

45.♙e5!

A very good defensive move. White cuts the knight off with the bishop.

45...♘f7

45...♘e6 46.♙f6 ♔g1 47.♙e1 ♔g2 48.♙e2 ♔g3 49.♙e5+ ♔g2 50.♙f6 would bring nothing for Black.

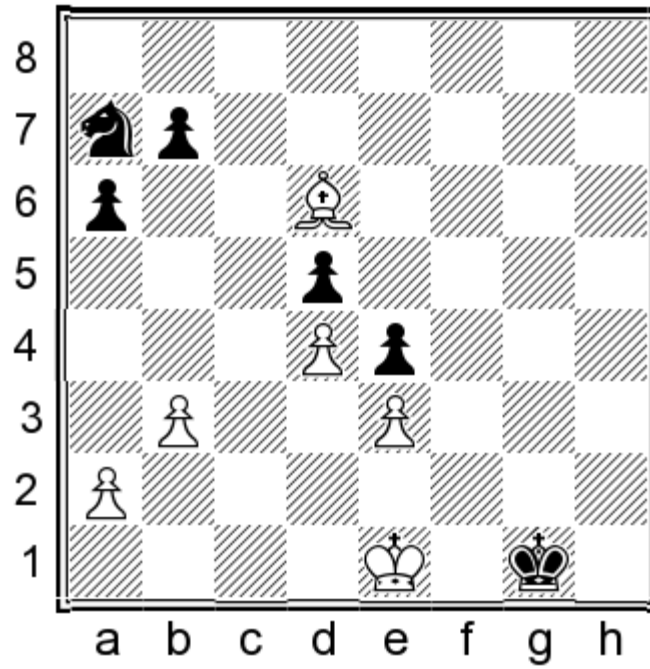
46.♙f4

Again, the knight is cut off.

46...♘d8 47.♙e5 ♔g1 48.♙e1 ♘c6 49.♙d6

It looks like Gustafsson has managed to create a fortress...

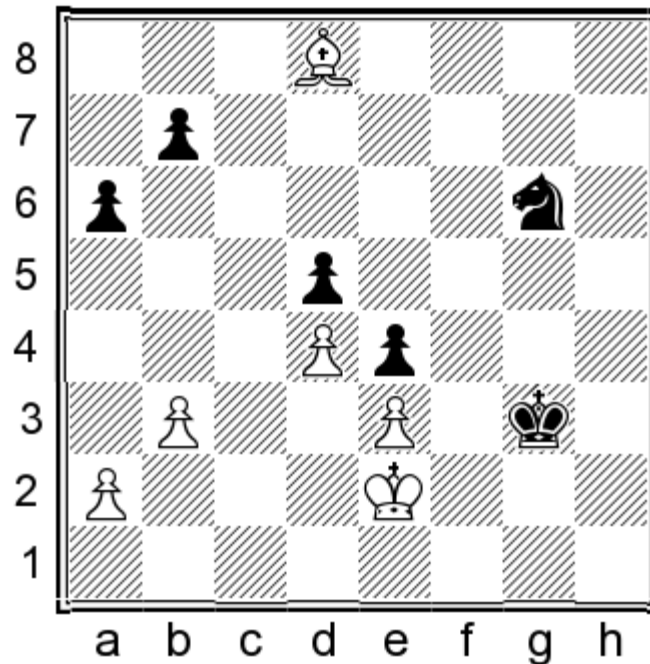
49...♘a7



The last try for Black. As we saw before, ...♖d8 didn't achieve anything.

50.a4?

What a terrible mistake... Why didn't White just continue with his "standing" strategy? 50.♙c5 ♜b5 51.♙b4 b6 (51... ♜c7 If Black tries to go back, the position seems to be a draw. 52.♙e7 ♜e6 53.♙f6 ♜g2 54.♜e2 ♜f8 The only attempt to do something new. 55.♙e7 ♜g6 56.♙d8 ♜g3



57.♙c7+! kicking the Black king from its control of the f2-square. 57... ♜h3 58.♜f2 ♜h4 59.♙d6 ♜f3 60.♙c7 Black has managed to put the knight of f3, but in exchange has had to give the f2-square. The position is still a draw. 60... ♜h2 61.♙f4 ♜g4+ 62.♜f1)

52.♜e2 a5 53.♙e1 ♜g2 54.a4! fixing the Black pawns on the squares b6-a5. 54...♜d6 55.♙h4 with an easy draw. Now

the white bishop is no worse than the black knight, and the pawn on b6 is a nice target.

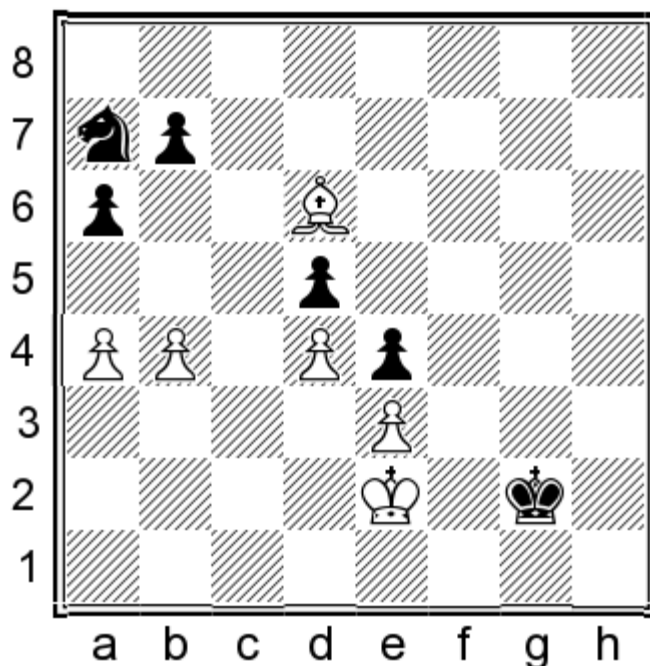
50...♖c6!

Black provokes the White pawn into advancing...

51.b4

What else to do? Black wants to play ...♗a5, and against ♙c7 ...♗b4 would finish the game.

51...♙g2 52.♙e2 ♗a7!



What a great move! Black wants to play ...♖c8 and the White bishop is hopeless. Black would have 2 threats, ...♗b6 and ...♗e7-♗f5-♗g3. The only way to avoid it is to keep the bishop on c5. In this case White is in zugzwang after Black's ♙g3. Probably the position is just lost!

53.♙c5 ♖c8! 54.a5 ♙g3

And White is in zugzwang.

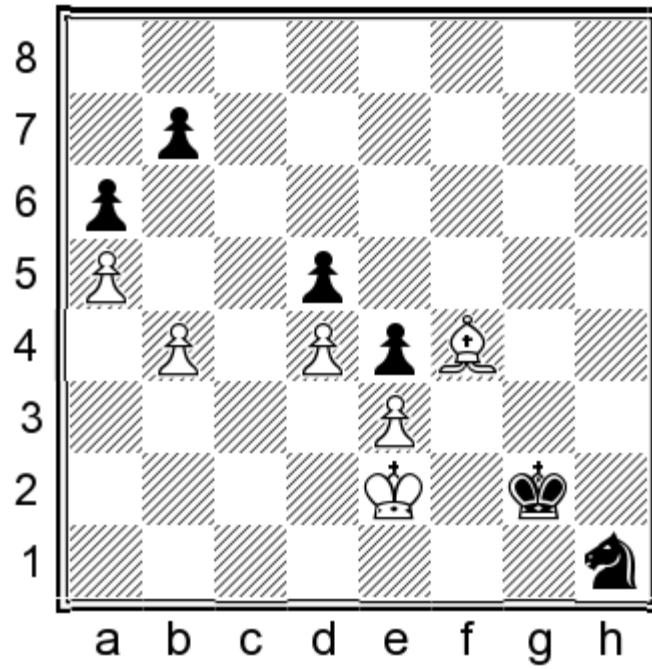
55.♙f8

Nothing else to do...

55...♗a7 56.♙d6+ ♙g2 57.♙c5

Full attention to the Black knight.

57...♗b5 58.♙f8 ♗a3 59.♙e7 ♗c4 60.♙c5 ♗b2 61.♙e7 ♗d3 62.♙d6 ♗f2 63.♙f4 ♗h1



and the final destination has been reached!

64. ♖d2 ♜f3 **65.** b5 axb5 **66.** ♜c3 ♞f2 **67.** ♙g5 ♞d1+ **68.** ♜b4 ♞xe3 **69.** ♜xb5 ♞c4 **70.** ♜c5 e3

What an endgame...

0-1

GAME 4

A. Moiseenko (2711)

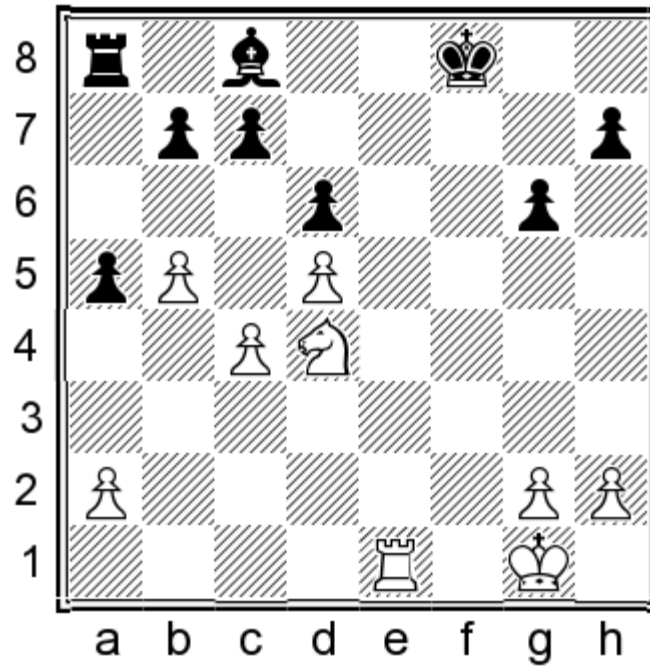
Y. Vovk (2562)

81st ch-UKR 2012

Kiev UKR (9.4)

05.08.2012, [E70]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



We are in an interesting starting position. It's clear that White wants to try to win this game. A 150 ELO difference and the White pieces give at least a psychological advantage. But how to continue here?! Black wants to play ...♙d7 followed by ...♖e8, with a draw.

24.b6!

The only chance to play for a win! White has no other idea in the position.

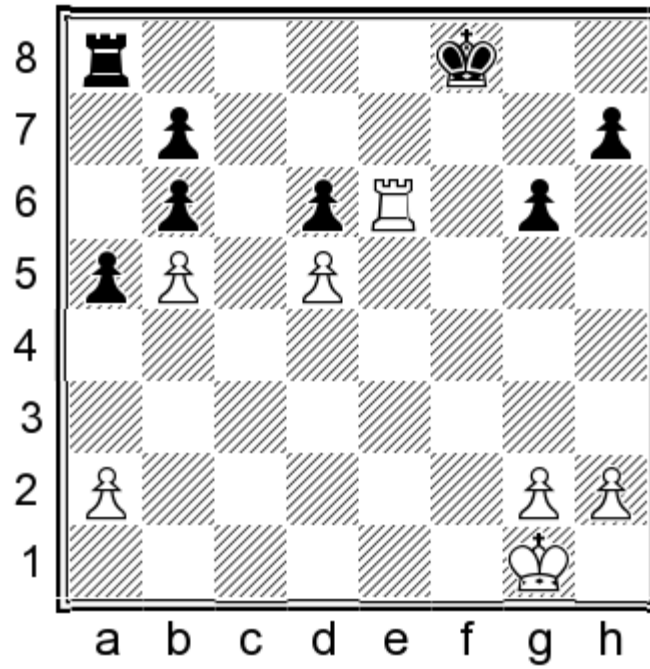
24...♙d7

of course not 24...cxb6? 25.♘b5 when the-d6 pawn is falling, leaving White with a won position.

25.♘b5!

A great idea from White — and probably the only way to play for a win! Another option was: 25.♘e6+ but this move simply leads to a draw: 25...♙xe6 26.♖xe6 ♜c8 ! A precise move which forces the exchange of pawns, making the result quite clear. 27.bxc7 ♜xc7 28.♖xd6 ♖xc4 with a clear draw.

25...♙xb5 26.cxb5 cxb6 27.♖e6



And now we can see the main idea behind 25.♖b5!?. White has no pawn on c4, which would fall after Black's ...♖c8. Its position on b5 is, of course, much better.

27...♖c8!

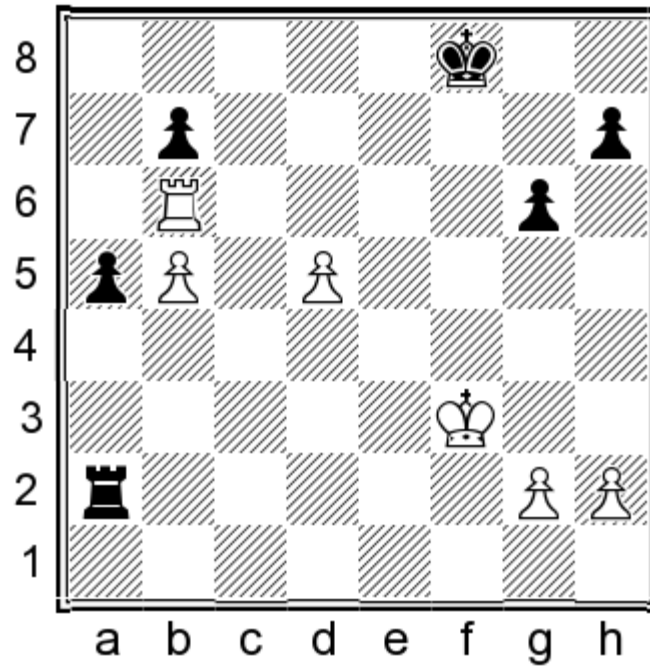
Black tries to find a way to escape with active play. Let's take a look at what would happen if Black were to continue with passive defense. 27...♖d8 28.a4! White should not allow Black to play ...a4. 28...♖f7 29.♖f2 Black has no moves to improve his position. This is usually a bad sign. 29...♖d7 30.♖g3 h6 31.h4 followed by h5 or ♖h3, g4-h5. It's clear that Black's position is close to being lost.

28.♖xd6

The critical moment of the endgame. Can Black hold this position?! There are no simple ways and a mistake could mean the loss of the game.

28...a4?!

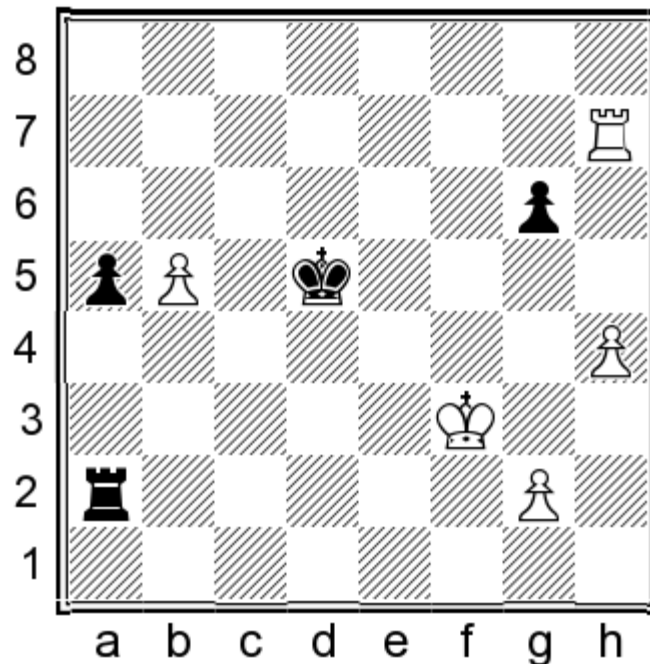
Not the best decision in an extremely complex rook endgame. It looks like this move also leads to a very difficult position for Black. 28...♖c1+ 29.♖f2 ♖c2+ 30.♖f3 ♖xa2 31.♖xb6



31...♔e7! Black needs to get the king out of the 8th rank.

(31...♖d2? To keep the Black king passive would be tantamount to resignation. 32.♖xb7 ♖xd5 33.♕e4! and it's the White king's show! 33...♖h5 34.♕d4! The White king is going to support the advance of the b-pawn and is just in time to stop Black from moving the a-pawn too far. 34...a4 35.♕c4 followed by ♖a7 and b6-b7. White is winning.)

32.♖xb7+ ♕d6 33.♖xh7 ♕xd5 Can Black hold this? I don't think so. The position is very forcing and also very complicated, with a lot of winning and drawing ideas. Let's take a look at a few lines. This is a great position for further analysis for endgame fans! 34.h4!

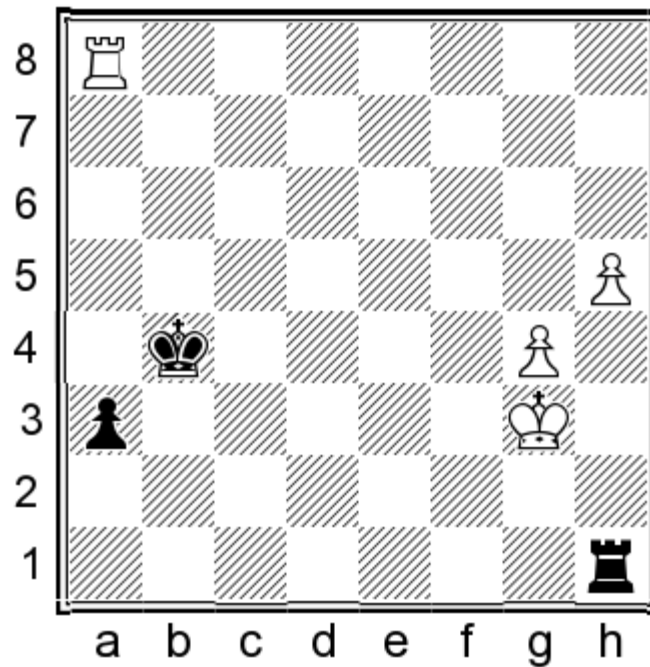


White has to start pushing his pawns.

(If White tries to win the pawn immediately, then Black has a nice drawing idea: 34.♖g7 ♖a3+! getting the White king away from the pawns. 35.♕f4 ♖a4+ 36.♕g5 ♖a2 Now the White king on g2 blocks his own rook... 37.g4 ♖xh2

38.♖xg6 ♔c5 39.b6 ♜b2 and Black is just in time to make a draw.)

34...a4 35.♞g7 ♔c5 36.♞xg6 ♔xb5 We have a move-by-move position. It looks like White is just in time to win the game. 37.♞g8 ♞a1 38.h5 From now on, everything is forced! 38...♞h1 39.g4 a3 40.♞a8 ♔b4 41.♔g2! This moves win a tempo. 41...♞h4 42.♔g3 ♞h1



43.♞a6! White is in time to bring the pawn to h6, and then to g5! 43...♔b3 44.h6 a2 45.g5 ♔b2 46.♔f4 a1=♚ 47.♞xa1 ♔xa1 48.♔f5 ♔b2 49.♔g6 ♔c3 50.♔h7 ♔d4 51.g6 ♔e5 52.g7 ♞g1 53.g8=♚ ♞xg8 54.♔xg8 ♔f6 55.h7 White is winning. 28...♞c5!? I have no idea whether this move leads to a won or to a drawn position. A lot of drawing and winning ideas make this rook endgame extremely complex! 29.♞xb6 ♞xd5 30.♞xb7 ♞d1+ 31.♔f2 ♞d2+ 32.♔e3 ♞xa2 33.♔d4 a4 34.b6 ♞b2

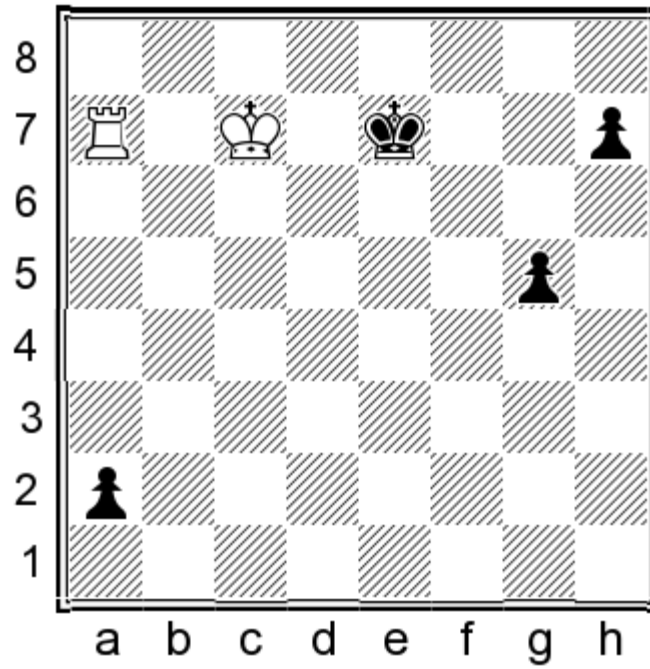
(34...♞xg2? 35.♞xh7 and White wins.)

35.♔c5 a3 36.♞a7 a2 37.g3! An important move; Black is not in time to catch both White pawns.

(The beginning of a very forced line which leads to a draw! 37.♔c6 ♞c2+ 38.♔d7 ♞d2+ 39.♔c8 ♞c2+ 40.♔b8 ♞xg2 41.b7

(41.h3 doesn't change much 41...♞h2 42.b7 ♞xh3 43.♔a8 ♞b3 44.b8=♚+ ♞xb8+ 45.♔xb8 and we are back to the main line.)

41...♞xh2 42.♔a8 ♞b2 43.b8=♚+ ♞xb8+ 44.♔xb8 g5 45.♔c7 ♔e7



and here comes the Black king! 46.♔c6+ ♕e6 47.♔c5 ♕e5 48.♖xa2 g4 with an easy draw!)

37...♕e8!! What an amazing drawing idea!

(37...♖xh2 38.b7! forces the Black rook to go back to b2. 38...♖b2 39.♔c6 ♖c2+ 40.♔d7 ♖d2+ 41.♔c8 ♖c2+ 42.♔b8 ♖b2 43.♔a8 and White is easily winning.)

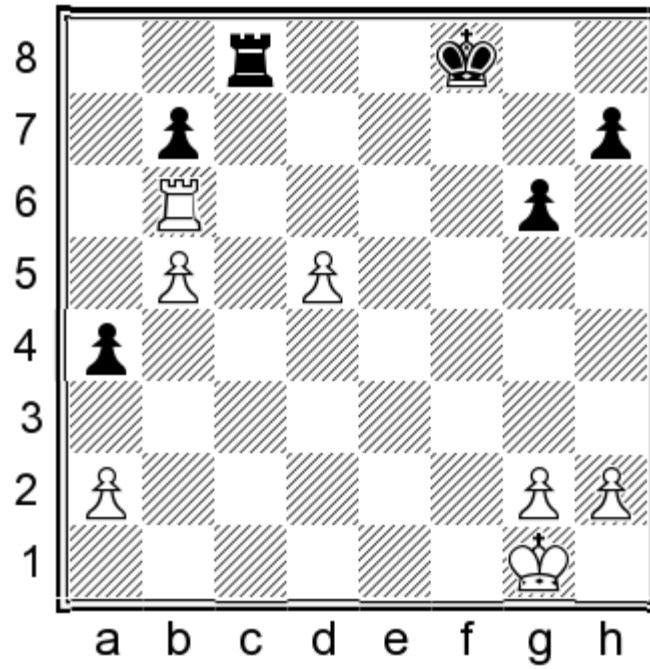
38.♔c6 ♖c2+ 39.♔b7 ♕d8!= Black is in time to stop White from playing ♕b8 and b7. 40.♔b8 ♖c8+ 41.♔b7 ♖c2 An amazing draw.;

28...♖c2 Another interesting option for Black, but it seems to lose. 29.♖xb6 ♖xa2 30.♖xb7 ♖b2 31.d6 ♕e8! Again, we see the typical idea. The Black king takes an active part in the defense. 32.♖e7+!

(32.b6 ♕d8 and draw. 32.♖xh7 It's quite unclear if this move is winning or not, but it's just a worse version than the move ♖e7, so it doesn't make a lot of sense for White. 32...♖xb5 33.♖g7 a4 34.♖a7 ♖d5 35.♖xa4 ♖xd6 36.♖f4)

32...♕d8 33.♖xh7 ♖xb5 34.♖g7 a4 35.♖a7 ♖d5 36.♖xa4 ♖xd6 37.♖e4! Cutting the Black king off from the g-pawn. The position is easily winning for White!

29.♖xb6



Now Black is not in time...

29...a3?

This move is already clearly losing. 29...♔e7 would be the best way to fight, even though the position is lost. 30.♖xb7+ ♕d6 31.♗xh7 ♖c1+ 32.♔f2 ♖c2+ 33.♔f3 ♖xa2 34.♗g7 ♕xd5 35.♖xg6 and as we saw already, White is winning here.

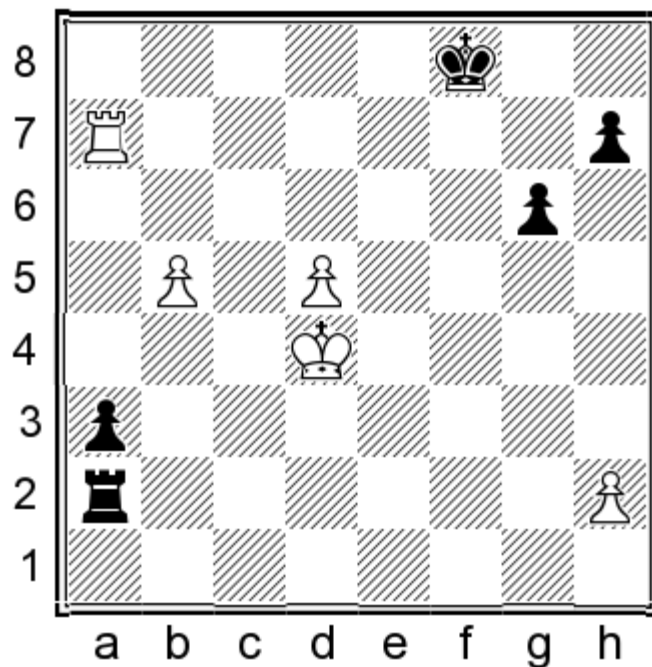
30.♖xb7 ♖c1+

Black is too late to cut off the White king. 30...♖c2 31.♗xh7! White doesn't take the pawn... 31...♖xa2 32.♖a7 with an easy win for White.

31.♔f2 ♖c2+ 32.♔e3 ♖xg2 33.♖a7

33.♗xh7 would win as well.

33...♖xa2 34.♔d4



and White wins with an already well-known idea.

34...♞d2+ 35.♔c5 a2 36.b6

As we saw in the lines above, the White king is going to a8! And the extra d-pawn of White gives him an easy win.

36...♞xh2 37.b7 ♞b2 38.♔c6

White wants to take on a2, so Black is forced to check.

38...♞c2+ 39.♔d7 ♞b2 40.♔c8 ♞c2+ 41.♔b8 ♞b2 42.♔a8 a1=♚ 43.♞xa1 ♔e7 44.♞a6!

The last precise move! What a complex rook endgame. Great play by Moiseenko, even though Black made it slightly too easy!

1–0

GAME 5

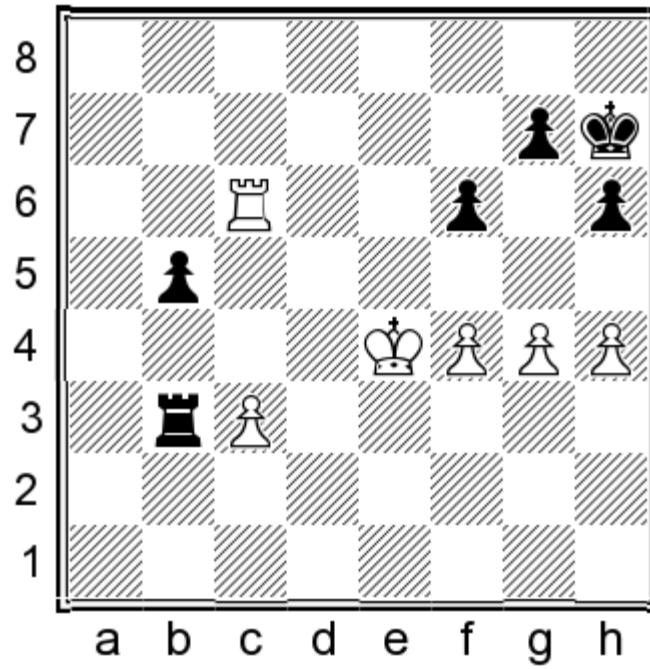
V. Kramnik (2797)

A. Shirov (2706)

Olympiad

30.08.2012

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



This easy looking endgame brings us many surprises when played at the highest level. White has the more active pieces, but of course the limited material should allow Black to hold the draw...

40...b4

A logical move. Black either exchanges the queenside pawns, after which there is no reason to continue the game, or creates a passed pawn for himself.

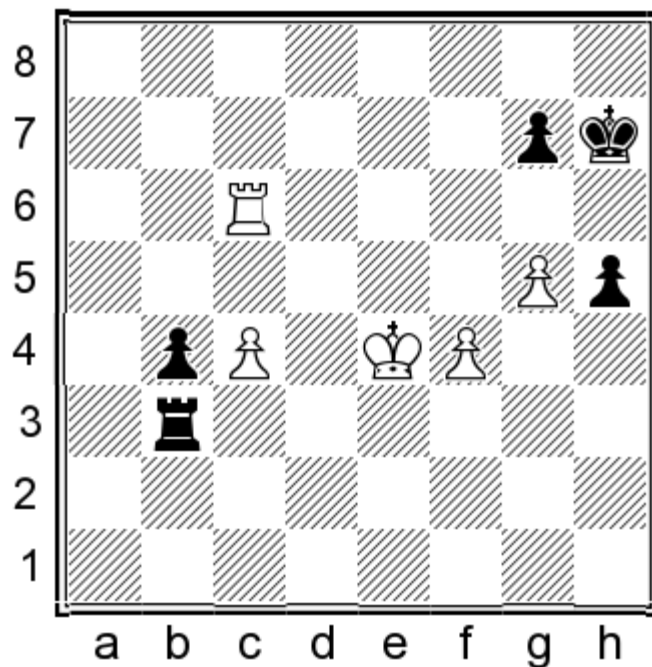
41.c4

White has a theoretical advantage. His king can support the c-pawn and be close enough to stop the b-pawn...

41...h5?!

This is the first inaccuracy. Shirov probably underestimated White's reaction... 41...♖b1 was the right way to draw 42.c5 b3 43.♔d4 and here Black can execute Shirov's idea in a much better version. (43.♞b6 is nothing after 43...b2 44.♔f5 ♞c1=) 43...h5! Not the only way to draw. 44.g5 (44.gxh5 ♔h6 with an easy draw.) 44...fxg5 45.fxg5 (In comparison to the game 45.hxg5 is risky now, because of 45...h4) 45...b2 46.♔c3 ♞h1 47.♔xb2 ♞xh4 Everything has developed logically and the players should shake hands soon... 48.♔c3 ♞h1 49.♞e6 h4= The draw is inevitable.

42.g5! fxg5 43.hxg5!



This is what Shirov probably underestimated. Suddenly White creates very dangerous mating threats, which neutralizes the power of the h-pawn. From now on, Black must be really careful to avoid losing.

43...♖a3

Defending against the mate... 43...h4? leads to a forced mate after 44.g6+ ♔h6 45.♕f5! and Black is simply unable to prevent ♖c8-h8. 45...♖a3 46.♖c8 ♖a5+ does not help 47.c5+—

44.♖b6!

By realizing that Black can parry the concrete threats, Kramnik stops the b-pawn and frees the way for his c-pawn... 44.g6+ ♔h6 45.♕f5 ♖a8! This was the point behind 43...♖a3, Black solves all his problems. 46.♖b6 ♖a5+ 47.♕e4 h4= The game will soon end in a draw. 44.♕f5 is also met by 44...♖a8!

44...b3 45.f5

Squeezing the Black king into the corner. White has a tactical solution to stop the h-pawn.

45...h4 46.♖b8!

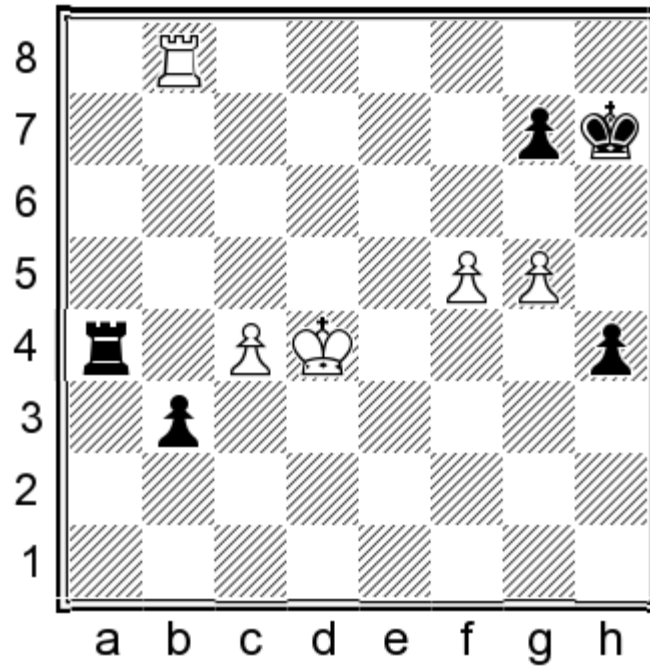
Kramnik creates another kind of mating net: 47.g6 ♔h6 48.♕f4 and ♖h8 are inevitable. 46.♕f4 with the same idea as the game, but Black can once again play 46...♖a4;

46.♖b7 with the idea of f6 is too slow, e.g. 46...h3

46...♖a4

Black has to lure the king to prevent ♕f4...

47.♕d4



47...♖a5?

According to my analysis, this is the losing move. 47...h3? is also bad. 48.♞xb3+–;

47...♖a1! should have been played and the position is ‘suspicious’, but Black seems to hold in all lines. The move itself is pretty principled as generally, in rook endgames, the weaker side should look for an active defense! 48.c5

(48.♞xb3 ♞d1+ 49.♔e5 ♞c1 Black starts to harass the pawns... 50.♔d5 ♞f1 White cannot improve because he must take care of the h-pawn as well.)

48...♞d1+ 49.♔e5 ♞c1 We’ll see a typical defensive technique now. 50.♔d6 ♞d1+ Black tries to force the king ahead of the pawn in order to block its way... 51.♔e6

(51.♔c7 ♞d3 followed by h3!)

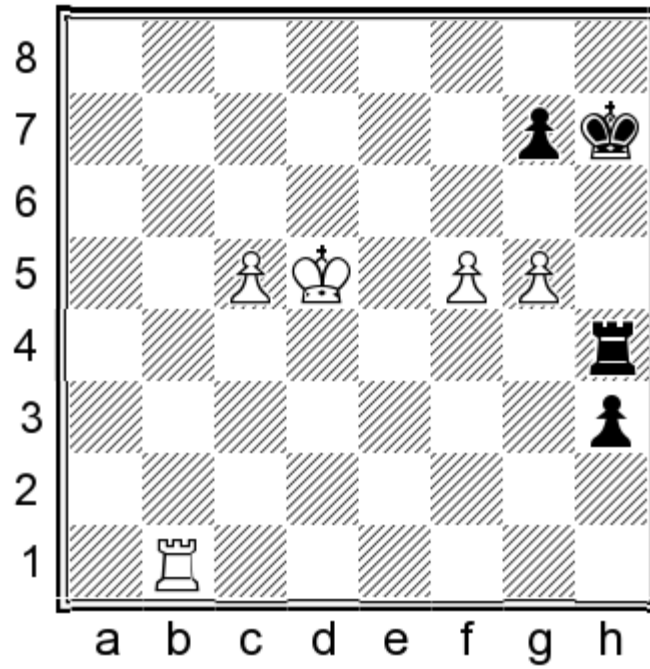
51...♞c1 and the maximum that White can get is 52.♞xb3 ♞xc5 53.♞b4 ♔g8 54.♞xh4 A pawn up, but of course the game is easily drawn. 54...♞c6+=

48.c5!

It’s objectively winning now, but it requires precise calculation and technique...

48...♖a4+

48...h3 is the other attempt, but it also fails to hold. 49.♞xb3 ♖a4+ 50.♔d5 ♞h4 51.♞b1



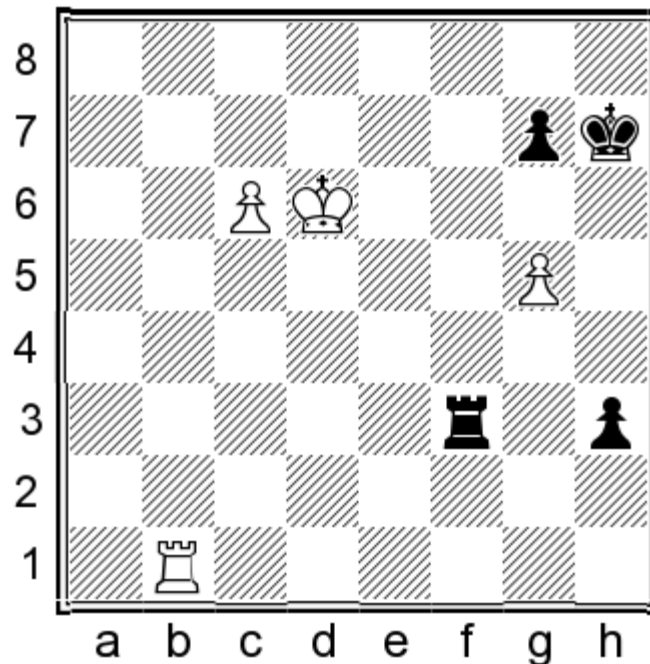
White goes into passivity, but the c-pawn is even more dangerous... The main problem is the Black king, which still stands awfully. 51...Rf4 Black's only chance to save the game is to take the f- and g-pawns and sacrifice the rook for the c-pawn. Then, with the help of the king, to promote his own g-pawn.

(51...h2 just helps White. 52.Rh1 Rh3 53.c6 ♔g8 54.c7 Rxc3 55.♕d6 Rxd3+ Black must send the king in front of the pawn, but this does not help here.

(55...Rc2 56.Rxh2!+- is a well-known trick!)

56.♕c6 Rxc3+ 57.♕d7 Rxd3+ 58.♕c8 Rxd2 59.Rb1!+- followed by ♕b8.)

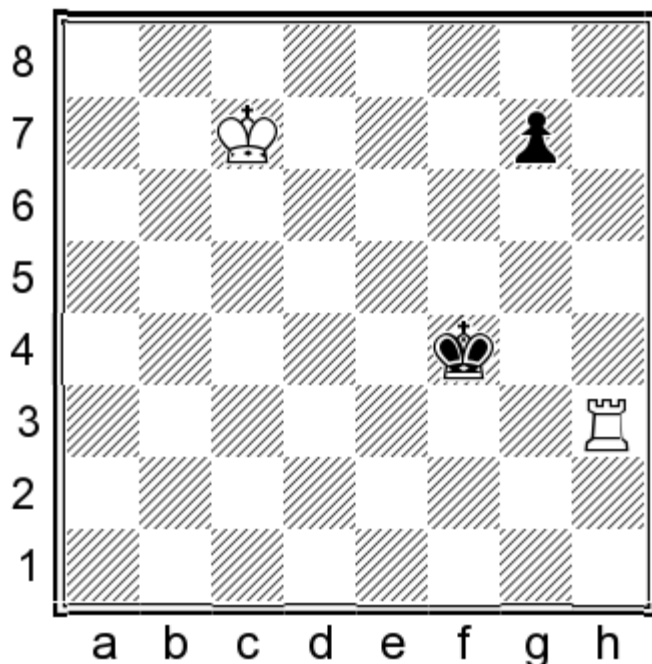
52.c6 Rxf5+ 53.♕d6 Rf3



Black could not waste time on taking g5, this is his king's job. Now it's White's turn to find the way to win. White has two candidate moves, but only one of them is winning. It's very easy to go wrong... 54.Rc1!! This move order wins the

missing tempo in comparison to the 54.c7 line.

(54.c7 fails to win by one tempo. The following couple of moves are forced... 54...♖d3+ 55.♔c6 ♖c3+ 56.♔b7 ♔g6 57.♖h1 White must go for the h-pawn, otherwise it's just an easy draw. 57...♔xg5 58.♖xh3! ♖xc7+ 59.♔xc7 ♔f4



Here we are! Black miraculously survives in all the lines. 60.♔d6 g5 61.♖a3

(61.♖h8 is less dangerous. 61...g4 62.♖f8+ ♔e4 63.♖g8 ♔f4 64.♔d5 g3 65.♔d4 ♔f3 66.♔d3 g2=)

61...g4 62.♖a4+ ♔f3 63.♔e5 g3 and we have reached a theoretical drawn position with the help of a stalemate idea... 64.♖a3+ ♔f2 65.♔f4 g2 66.♖a2+ ♔g1! 67.♔g3 ♔h1! this is the point! 68.♖xg2=)

54...♔g6

(54...♖d3+ does not affect the result. 55.♔e5 ♖e3+

(55...♖d8 56.c7 ♖c8 57.♔f5! transposes to 55...♖e3.)

56.♔f4 ♖e8 57.c7 ♖c8

(57...h2 58.♖h1+–)

58.♔f5! Suddenly Black is facing different kind of mating threats again... 58...h2

(58...♖f8+ 59.♔g4 h2 60.♖h1+–; 58...♔g8 59.g6! ♔f8 60.♔e6!+– squeezing the king to the back-rank, followed by ♖b1–b8.)

59.g6+ ♔h6 60.♖h1! ♖xc7 61.♖xh2#)

55.c7 ♖f8 56.♖h1! ♔xg5

(56...♖h8 57.♖xh3 ♖xh3 58.c8=♚ White is winning here, because he can transfer his king behind the g-pawn.

58...♖g3 59.♚b7! This is the most precise way. 59...♖xg5 60.♚e4+ ♔h6 61.♔e6+– followed by ♔f7. It's important to mention that if the Black king was on h8 and his rook could pass to the f6–h6 squares, the position would be a theoretical draw!)

57.♖xh3 ♔f4 58.♖h1! The key move! White is winning because of the ♖f1 threat which allows him to force the Black king closer to the g-pawn. 58...♖a8

(58...♖c8 59.♖f1+ ♔g5

(59...♔e4 60.♖g1+-)

60.♔d7+-)

59.♖f1+ ♔g5

(59...♔e4 doesn't work. 60.♖g1 and g7 falls.)

60.♔d7+- Black cannot push his pawn.

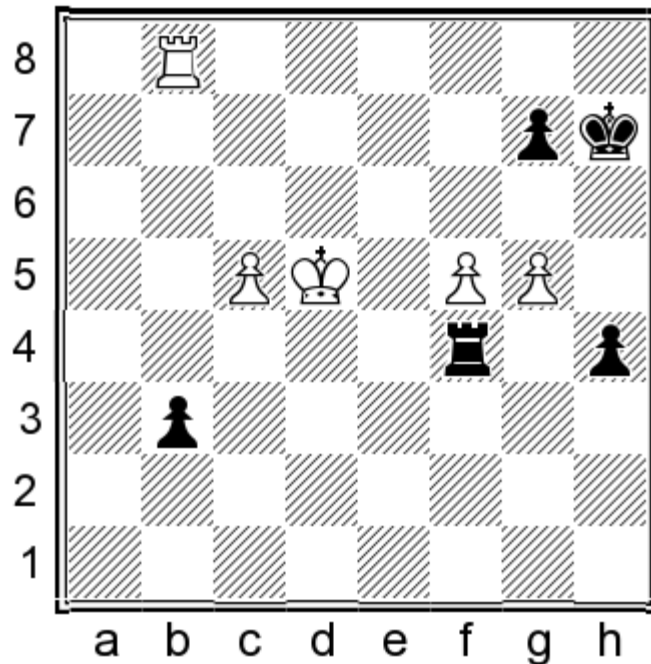
49.♔d5 ♖f4!

Shirov tries the same idea, to eliminate the f-pawn followed by giving up the rook for the c-pawn... 49...h3 50.♖xb3 ♖h4 51.♖b1 transposes to the 48...h3 line.

50.♔e6

Kramnik repeats once.

50...♖e4+ 51.♔d5 ♖f4



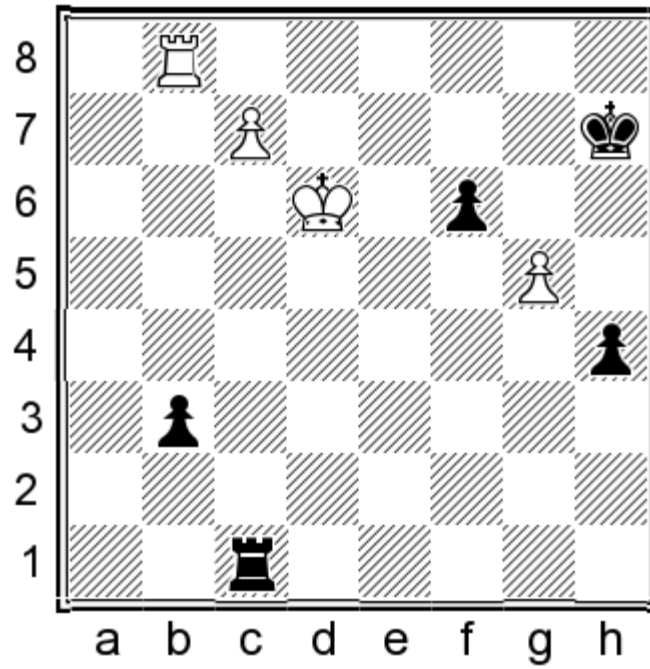
52.f6!!

Brilliant calculation! In such positions there are no principles, pure calculation is needed. 52.c6 ♖xf5+ 53.♔d6 ♖f7!
This is the point that White avoided by pushing f6. Black is in time to take the king to support his pawns... 54.c7 ♖xc7
55.♔xc7 ♔g6 56.♖xb3 ♔xg5 57.♔d6 ♔g4 58.♔e5 h3 59.♔e4 h2 60.♖b1 ♔g3=

52...gxf6 53.c6 ♖f5+!

Another great technical move! The White king must be sent as far as possible from the kingside pawns before sacrificing the rook. 53...h3 54.♖xb3+- wins easily.

54.♔d6 ♖f1 55.c7 ♖c1



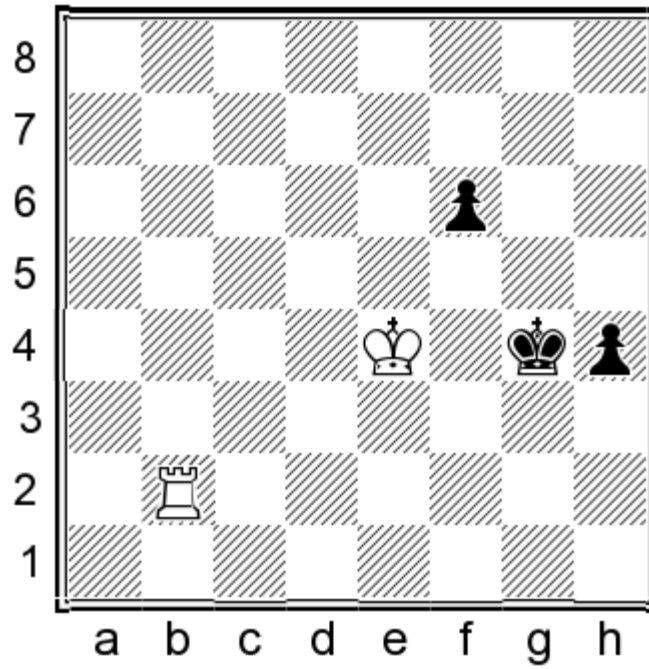
We have reached the final critical position of the game, where Kramnik spoils the win after playing such an excellent endgame...

56.gxf6?

56.c8=♖! would have won the game. 56...♞xc8 57.♞xc8 ♔g6 58.♔d5! White is simply ahead with this tempo in comparison to the game. Still the win is quite instructive. 58...b2 The best chance. This prevents White from squeezing the Black king to the h-file as we'll see in the other lines.

(58...♔xg5 59.♔e4 ♔g4 60.♞g8+ ♔h3 61.♔f3+- is easy. 58...h3 59.♞c1! ♔xg5 60.♔e4 ♔g4 61.♞g1+! ♔h4 62.♔f3 h2 63.♞b1 ♔h3 Black runs out of moves and White need only pass with his rook on the 1st rank and then, when the moment comes, play ♔g2... 64.♞h1+-)

59.♞b8 ♔xg5 60.♔e4 ♔g4 61.♞xb2



61...h3 and White is winning only because of the appearance of the f6-pawn. Let's see why it is so... 62.♔e3 ♕g3 63.♖b8 ♕g2! Without the f-pawn, this move would lead to a theoretical draw!

(63...h2 loses easily. 64.♖g8+ ♕h3 65.♕f2 h1=♔+ The only move, but the knight is trapped in the corner. 66.♕f3 ♕h2 67.♖g2+ ♕h3 68.♖g6 ♕h2 69.♖xf6+-)

64.♕e2

(64.♖g8+ ♕f1! would be the point without the f-pawn.)

64...h2 65.♖g8+ ♕h1 and now we see the difference. Black would be stalemated without the f-pawn, but now he simply gets mated in 3 moves...

(65...♕h3 66.♕f2 h1=♔+ 67.♕f3+- wins as we saw in the 63...h2 line.)

66.♕f2 f5 67.♖a8 f4 68.♖a1#

56...♕g6! 57.♖xb3

57.c8=♖ leads to a draw as well. 57...♖xc8 58.♖xc8 b2 59.♖b8 ♕xf6 60.♕d5 h3 61.♖xb2 Otherwise h2... 61...♕f5 The Black king blocks the route of the White monarch to approach the corner... 62.♖b8 ♕f4 63.♖h8 ♕g3 64.♕e4 h2 65.♕e3 ♕g2 66.♖g8+ ♕f1 67.♖h8 ♕g2=

57...♕xf6

Black is safely in time to secure the draw and the rest is easy for him.

58.♖b8 ♖d1+ 59.♕c6 ♖c1+ 60.♕d7 ♕f5 61.c8=♖ ♖xc8 62.♖xc8 h3 63.♕d6 ♕f4 64.♖c3

64.♖h8 ♕g3 65.♕e5 h2 66.♕e4 ♕g2=

64...♕g4 65.♕e5 h2 66.♖c1 ♕f3 67.♕f5 ♕g2 68.♕e4 h1=♖

An instructive endgame with many nice motifs.

GAME 6

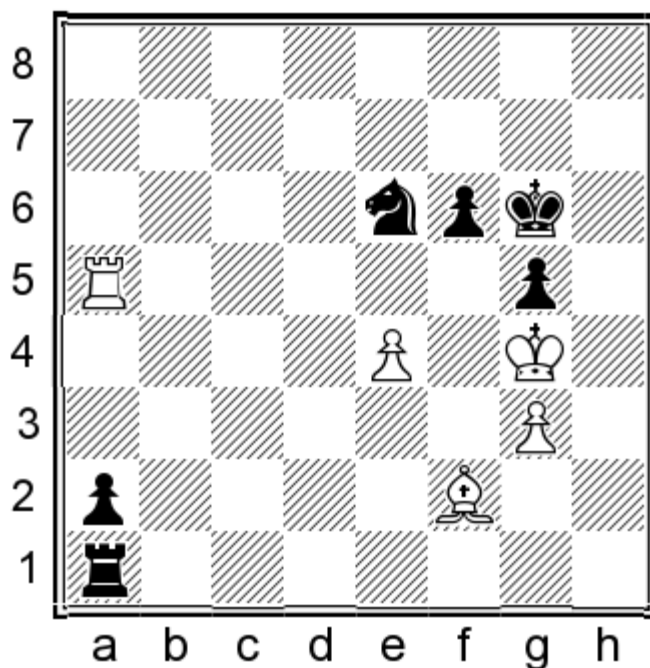
S. Hansen (2577)

P. Leko (2737)

Olympiad

07.09.2012

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



Black has a winning advantage, but converting it requires very good technique. Normally Leko makes no mistakes in such positions, but at this moment both players were living on the 30 second increments, which made their tasks much more difficult.

61...♞d8!!

Leko would like to take his knight to e5, which is the only way to improve his position. The same idea with 61...♞f8 was less effective, because of 62.♙d4 ♞e1 63.♙b2! White collects the a2-pawn. 63...♞xe4+ (63...♞e2 64.♞xa2 White holds, because if Black brings his knight to e6 or d7, the rook can leave the unpleasant pin on the 2nd rank by attacking the knight.) 64.♙f3 ♞c4 65.♞xa2 ♞c2 66.♞a8! White is again able to leave the pin. Objectively the position is drawn, but of course, Black can still create some problems...

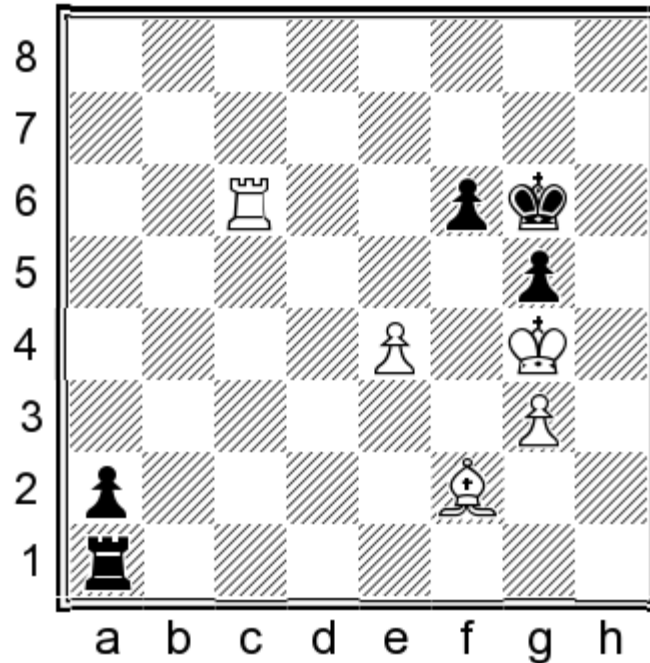
61...♞d8!! 62.♞a6

White tries to restrict the knight and prepares the ♞xf6 or ♙d4 ideas. In comparison to the previous line, now on 62.♙d4 Black has 62...♞e1 63.♙b2 ♞e2! 64.♙a1 (64.♞xa2? ♞f7! This is the difference. Now the knight is protected, White cannot escape the pin with ♞a7. ...♞e5-d3 is coming next. 65.♙f3 ♞c2 66.g4 ♞e5+ 67.♙g3 ♞d3) 64...♞c6 65.♞a6 ♞c2 and Black has good winning chances, but anyway this would have been the only try for White.

62...♞c6!

This great move was probably missed by Hansen. White is forced to take the knight.

63.♖xc6



63...♞d1?!

I thought this move spoiled the advantage, but as we'll see it just makes it much harder to convert it. The study-like 63...♞e1!! would have won on the spot. 64.♙d4

(64.e5 is probably the best practical chance, but it also leads to a theoretically-lost position after 64...a1=♚ 65.♞xf6+ ♔h7 66.♙xe1 ♚xe5! 67.♞f5 ♚xe1 68.♞xg5 ♚e4+ 69.♔h3 ♔h6 and Black has a long-term winning position, by using zugzwang in the future...; 64.♙xe1 a1=♚ White would be able to hold the draw here, were his king not in a mating net. 65.♙c3 ♚d1+ 66.♔h3 ♚h1+ 67.♔g4 ♚h5#!)

64...♞xe4+ 65.♔f3 ♞xd4 66.♞a6 ♞d2 is hopeless for White.

64.♙d4!

The only move.

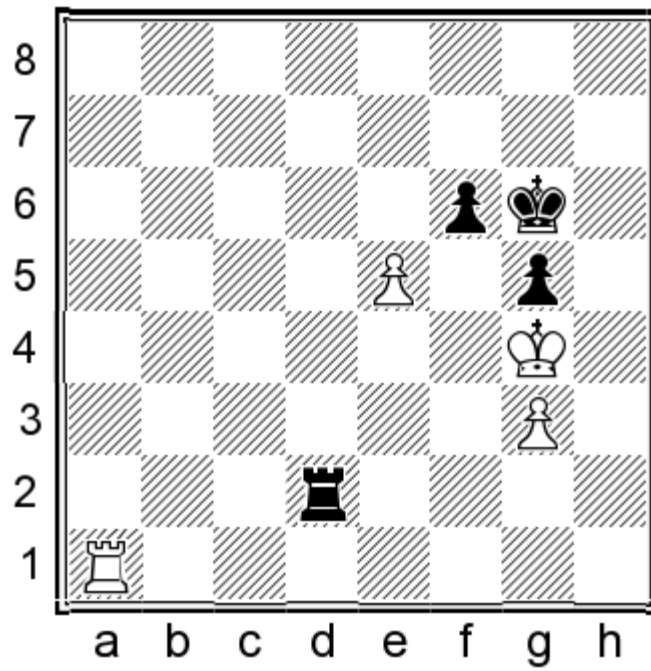
64...♞xd4 65.♞a6 ♞d2!

65...♞xe4+ is much weaker 66.♔f3 ♞b4 67.♞xa2 and White has an easy draw here.

66.e5

Any exchange of pawns generally favors the defending side, but here it doesn't help White to survive.

66...a1=♚! 67.♞xa1



67...♖d4+?

This is a mistake, which could have cost him the victory... With only 30 seconds on the clock, Leko missed the opportunity to play 67...f5+! 68.♔f3 g4+! 69.♔e3 ♖g2! Black wins the g3-pawn and obtains a winning rook endgame. 70.♔f4 ♖f2+ 71.♔e3 ♖f3+ 72.♔d4 ♖xg3 White's last chance is to create counterplay with the e-pawn, but both attempts fail as we will see. 73.♖e1

(73.♖a8 ♔g5! 74.e6 ♔f6 Black wins.)

73...♖b3! 74.e6 ♖b8 75.♔e5

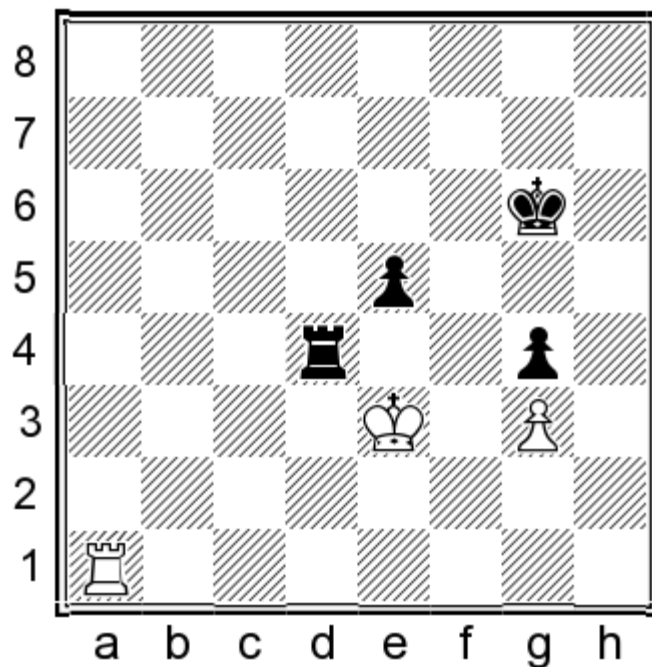
(75.e7 ♖e8)

75...♔g5! Both sides are focused on their own respective pawns. 76.e7 f4! 77.♔d6

(77.♔d4 ♖e8 is hopeless.)

and now 77...g3! 78.e8=♖ ♖xe8 79.♖xe8 f3! As the rule says, if two pawns reach the 3rd rank, the rook can't stop them. This case is not an exception...one of the pawns promotes. 80.♔e5 f2 81.♖g8+ ♔h6

68.♔f3 g4+ 69.♔e3 fxe5



We have reached a very drawish rook endgame. White has various defensive options...

70. ♖f1?!

White tries to cut the king, but this was not the most accurate move. Probably the easiest would have been 70. ♖a8 trying to keep the g4-pawn under attack. 70... ♖b4 71. ♖g8+ ♔f5 72. ♖f8+ ♔e6 73. ♖g8= when Black can't improve his position.

70... ♖a4 71. ♖f8 ♖a3+ 72. ♔f2!

Only passive defense saves the game! 72. ♔e4? ♖xg3 wins for Black, because after 73. ♖g8+

(73. ♔xe5 ♖e3+! Black cuts the king with two files from the pawn, which means an easy win for him. 74. ♔d4

(74. ♔f4? ♖f3+)

74... ♖e1)

73... ♔f6 74. ♖f8+ ♔g7 75. ♖f5 ♔g6 76. ♖xe5 ♖f3! This is a known position from rook endgame books. The winning line is as follows: 77. ♖a5 White tries to cut the king along the 5th-rank, otherwise the Black king goes ahead of the g-pawn and wins using the “bridge building” method. 77... ♔f6 78. ♖b5 ♖f1! 79. ♖a5 g3! Black wins because of the g2-threat, which forces White to allow the king to come with ♖a2 and ♔g5...

72... ♖a2+ 73. ♔f1!

Generally it's not a good sign if the king is squeezed to the back rank, but here this is the only move to survive. 73. ♔e3? ♖g2

73... ♖a6

Leko frees his king with the idea of ... ♖f6...

74. ♔e2 ♖a2+

Black makes some time-winning random moves. This is the right technique when we play with the 30 seconds

increment time-control.

75.♔f1 ♖b2 76.♔g1 ♜b6 77.♔g2 ♜d6 78.♔g1 ♜f6 79.♞a8 ♔f5

Finally the king is out, but the position is still drawn...

80.♞a4

The idea introduced on the 70th move was good enough here as well. 80.♞g8 ♜d6 81.♔f2 ♜d2+ 82.♔f1 ♞a2 with the idea of playing ♔e4! would be the winning move,

(but here White has the concrete 82... ♔e4 83.♞xg4+! ♔f3 84.♔e1!= avoiding the mate on the back rank. 82...e4 83.♞e8= Black can't make progress.)

83.♔g1! Avoiding the trap of ♔e4 ♞xg4 ♔f3! The only try for Black is to give up the pawn with 83... ♔e4 84.♞xg4+ ♔f3 85.♞g8 e4 but White makes a comfortable draw after 86.♞f8+ ♔e3

(86... ♔xg3 87.♔f1=; 86... ♔e2?? 87.♞f2+)

87.g4 ♔d3 88.♞d8+ ♔e2 89.♔g2! The idea is to sacrifice the rook for the e-pawn and promote the g-pawn with the help of the king. Black has nothing against it. 89...e3 90.♔g3 ♔e1 91.g5 e2 92.♞e8=

80...♜d6 81.♔f2 ♜d2+ 82.♔f1 ♜d4

82...e4 83.♞a5+ ♔f6 Without the king Black can't make progress. 84.♞b5=

83.♞a2 ♜d3 84.♔f2 ♔e4 85.♞a4+ ♜d4 86.♞a2

White has found a very safe defensive setup. Black can't really break it, but of course he can try for as long as he wants.

86...♞c4 87.♔e2

87.♞e2+ ♔d5 88.♞d2+ ♜d4 89.♞a2= was completely fine.

87...♞b4 88.♞c2 ♞b3 89.♞c4+ ♔f5 90.♔f2 ♞f3+ 91.♔g2 ♜d3 92.♔f2 ♜d2+ 93.♔f1 ♜d4

Leko is trying to confuse his opponent by maneuvering, and suddenly, after a stubborn defense, Hansen decides to defend differently... It was a slightly strange decision...

94.♞c3?!

94.♞c2 was the right move!

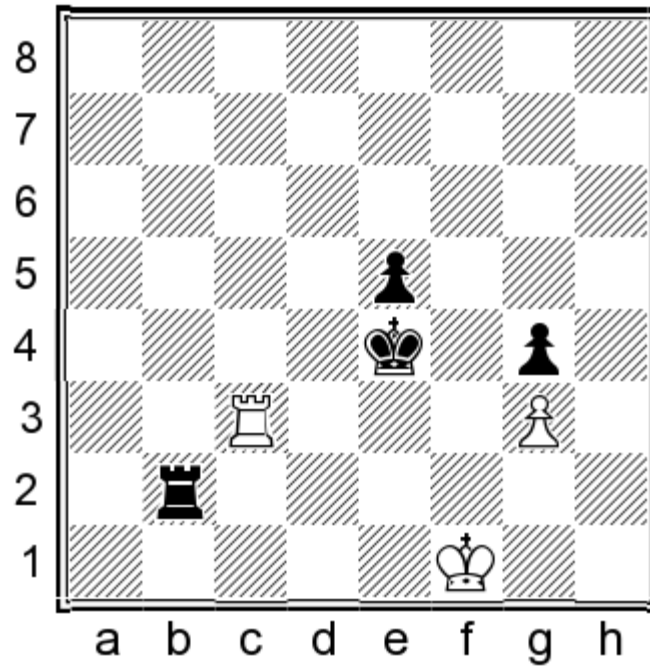
94...♞b4

94...♔e4 95.♔e2

95.♔e2?

Black is winning after this move. 95.♞c2! was still the right move. Probably the only one to save the game.

95...♞b2+ 96.♔f1 ♔e4



Black wants to play ...♖d2-d3, followed by penetrating with the king to the 3rd rank. White can't avoid this threat.

97. ♖a3

97. ♖c4+ is met by 97...♔e3! (97...♔f3 98. ♖c3+ Black has to retreat.) when the pawn is untouchable, e.g. 98. ♖xg4? because of 98...♔f3: 98. ♖c3+ ♔d4 and ...e4 comes next.

97... ♖d2 98. ♖a4+ ♖d4!

Black gets his king to e3 in any case, and then he can calmly advance his e-pawn.

99. ♖a2

99. ♖a3 ♖d3 100. ♖a5 ♔f3! wins.;

99. ♖a5 ♖d5! 100. ♖a4+ ♔e3! We already know this trick well, e4 is coming next. 101. ♖xg4 ♔f3

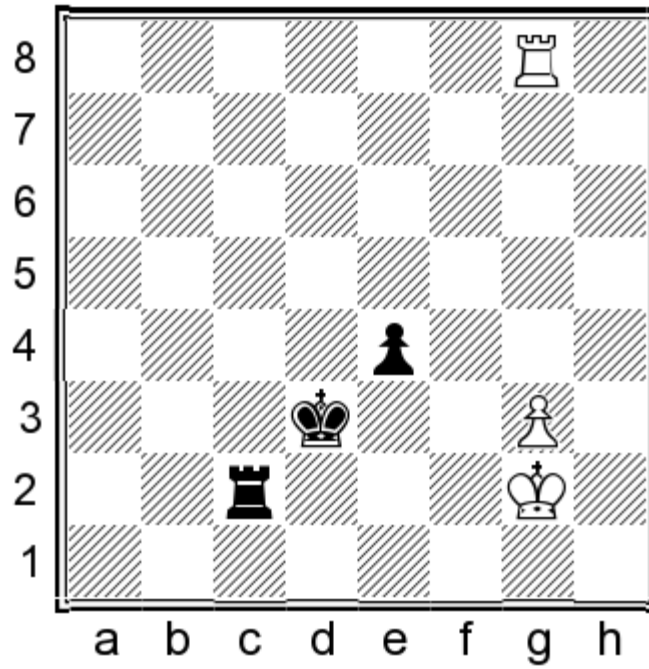
99... ♖d3?

This is a strange mistake, which would never happen if the players had more time — or if the game had been played for less than 6 hours already. Now the game is drawn again! 99...♔e3! would have easily won.

100. ♔f2 ♖f3+ 101. ♔g2 ♖c3 102. ♖a4+ ♔d3

Leko tries his last attempt, giving up the g-pawn...

103. ♖xg4 e4 104. ♖g8 ♖c2+



105.♔f1!!

An excellent move! I must say, though, that it's pretty much an illogical one. Most of us would have gone with the king to h3, from where it can support the g-pawn. However Black is winning after 105.♔h3 e3 106.♖d8+ ♔c3 107.♞e8 e2 108.g4

(108.♔g4 ♔d2 109.♔f5 e1=♚ 110.♞xe1 ♔xe1 111.g4 This is very similar to the final position of the game. The huge difference is that the rook is on the 2nd rank, which leaves the g3-square free for the Black king. The only win is 111...♞f2+! 112.♔e6 ♞g2 113.♔f5 ♔f2! 114.g5 ♔g3! 115.g6 ♔h4 116.♔f6 ♔h5 117.g7 ♔h6)

108...♔d2 109.g5

(109.♔g3 transposes to the previous line. 109...e1=♚+ 110.♞xe1 ♔xe1 111.♔f4

(111.g5 loses to 111...♞c4! An important motif, cutting the king and when White pushes his pawn, the Black rook attacks and wins it.)

111...♞g2! 112.g5 ♔f2 113.♔f5 ♔g3 114.g6 ♔h4 115.♔f6 ♔h5 116.g7 ♔h6)

109...♞c3+

(109...♞c4 cutting the king works as well. 110.g6 e1=♚ 111.♞xe1 ♔xe1 112.g7 ♞c8 and ...♞g8 next.)

110.♔g4 ♞e3 wins.

105...♞c1+ 106.♔g2 e3 107.♖d8+ ♔e2 108.♞a8?!

This is just a waste of time, but not a decisive mistake. 108.g4 leads to an easy draw. 108...♔e1 109.♞e8 e2 and here White has different ways to draw. The easiest one is 110.g5 ♔d2

(110...♞c5 is met by 111.♔f3! ♞f5+ 112.♔g4=)

111.♔f3 e1=♚ 112.♞xe1 ♞xe1 113.♔f4! and Black must give up his rook for the pawn. 113...♞g1 114.♔f5 ♔e3 115.g6=

108...♔e1

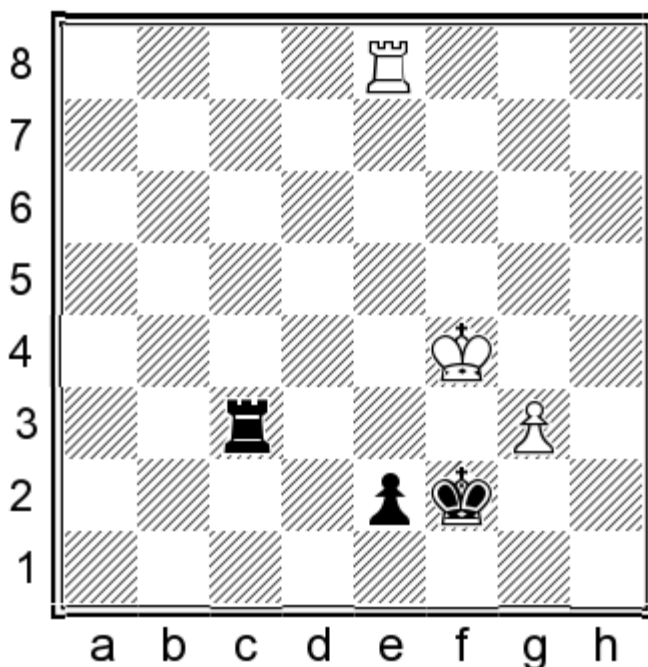
At this moment, White lost on time, but right after it happened, Hansen admitted that the game was over anyway. However, White has a study-like way to draw... 108...♔e1 109.♔f3!

(109.g4? loses to 109...e2 110.g5 ♔d2 111.♖d8+ ♔c3 112.♖c8+ ♔b2 113.♖b8+ ♔a3 The Black king seems to be very far from the g-pawn, but it's still on time to catch it. 114.♖e8 e1=♚ 115.♖xe1 ♖xe1 116.♔f3

(116.g6? ♖e6)

116...♖g1 117.♔f4 ♔b4 118.♔f5 ♔c5 119.g6 ♔d6 120.♔f6 ♖f1+ 121.♔g7 ♔e7 122.♔h7 ♖g1 123.g7 ♔f7)

109...e2 110.♖e8 ♖c3+ 111.♔f4 ♔f2



This is the position that both players had foreseen. Unexpectedly, White can save the game with 112.♖xe2+!

(Not 112.g4? because of 112...♖f3+! 113.♔g5 ♖e3)

112...♔xe2 113.g4! The following line confirms the evaluation: 113...♖f3+ This is generally the principled method.

a) 113...♖c4+ 114.♔f5 ♔f3 115.g5 ♖c5+ 116.♔f6 ♔g4 117.g6 ♖c6+ 118.♔f7 ♔h5 119.g7 ♖c7+ 120.♔f8=;

b) 113...♔d3 114.g5 ♔d4 115.g6 ♔d5 (115...♖c1 116.♔f5 ♔d5 117.g7 ♖g1 118.♔f6=) 116.g7! ♖c8 117.♔f5=;

c) 113...♔f2 114.g5 ♖g3 115.♔f5;

114.♔e5 ♖g3 115.♔f5 ♔f3 116.g5 and now, compared to the 105.♔h3 line, Black doesn't have ...♔g3, so he must waste a decisive tempo on it. 116...♖g2 117.g6 ♔g3 118.♔f6 ♔h4 119.g7 ♔h5 120.♔f7= White is just in time!

0-1

GAME 7

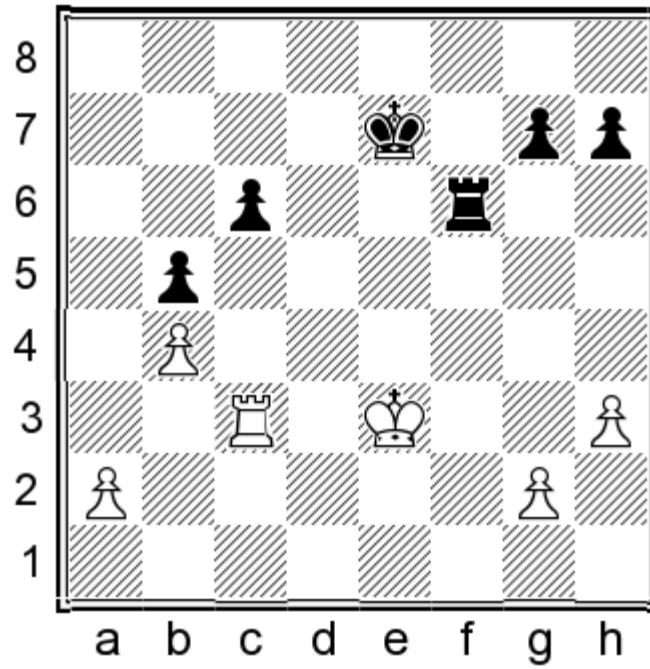
E. Rozentalis (2570)

P. Jaracz (2543)

Polish league

16.09.2012

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



Obviously the position is dead-drawn, but let's take a look at how easily it can be lost even at GM level...

32. ♖a3 ♜e6

Black has various ways to achieve the draw. One of them is 32... ♖e6+ 33. ♔d4 ♔d6 34. ♖a7 ♜g6 35. g4 and here Black can choose between two direct draws: 35... h5 (or 35... ♖h6 36. ♖xg7 ♖xh3=) 36. gxh5 ♜g5= and the kingside vanishes soon.

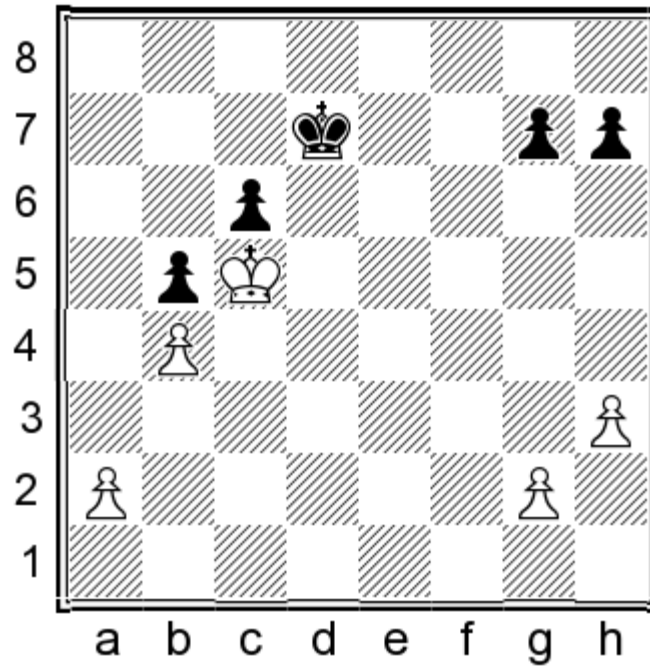
33. ♖a7 ♜f7??

This could have been the decisive mistake, but the idea itself is already dubious. Why take the unnecessary risk of transposing into a pawn endgame, where one possible calculation mistake could be crucial?!

34. ♖xf7!

White senses his chance.

34... ♔xf7 35. ♔d4 ♔e6 36. ♔c5 ♔d7



We have reached a critical position. White is winning and it would have been possible to find the solution with some logical thinking. White's only plan to make progress is to get his king behind the c-pawn with the help of zugzwang. White should play ♔b6, and on ...♔d6, ♔b7 ♔d7, a3 puts Black in zugzwang. Black is forced to play ...♔d6, which is met with ♔c8 ♔d5, ♔c7. The game will be forced to continue with ...c5, bxc5 ♔xc5, and ♔b7, and here again Black will be forced to push ...b4, clearing the queenside completely, after which a race to collect the kingside pawns will begin. When we have foreseen this, we must think about how to improve our chances in the final stage of the game: the race to the kingside. If we reach this point, we easily come to the conclusion that both sides should aim to advance their pawns on the kingside before the action on the queenside begins...

37.♔b6??

White is the first one who fails... 37.h4!+- was the winning move. All of Black's possible reactions will be discussed after 38.h4.

37...♔d6??

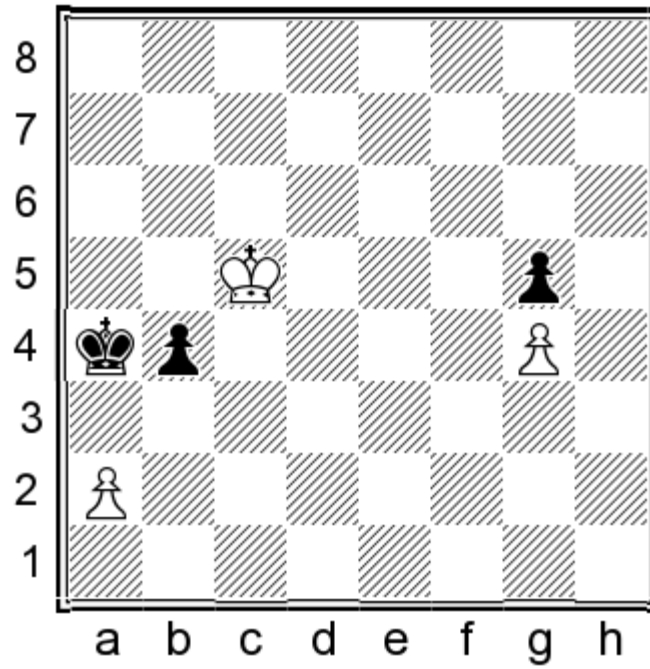
Black returns the favor, but from now on White plays perfectly... 37...g5! was the right move, as explained above.

38.♔b7 ♔d6 39.♔c8

(39.g4 ♔d7 40.a3 h6= The same story as after 39.a3. 39.a3 would spoil White's extra tempo, and there will be no zugzwang anymore... 39...♔d7 40.g3 h5=)

39...c5 40.bxc5+ ♔xc5 41.♔c7 Now Black can reach a draw in different ways. One of them is 41...b4 keeping the decision open regarding which direction the king should take. 42.g3 h5 43.g4 hxg4 44.hxg4 ♔d5! is the right direction.

(However 44...♔b5? loses very instructively. 45.♔d6 ♔a4 46.♔c5



46...♔a5 Black seems to control the situation, but White can place him in zugzwang using triangulation.

(46...♔a3 47.♔b5+- is over.)

47.♔d4! ♔a4

(47...♔b5 48.♔d5 will be the same.)

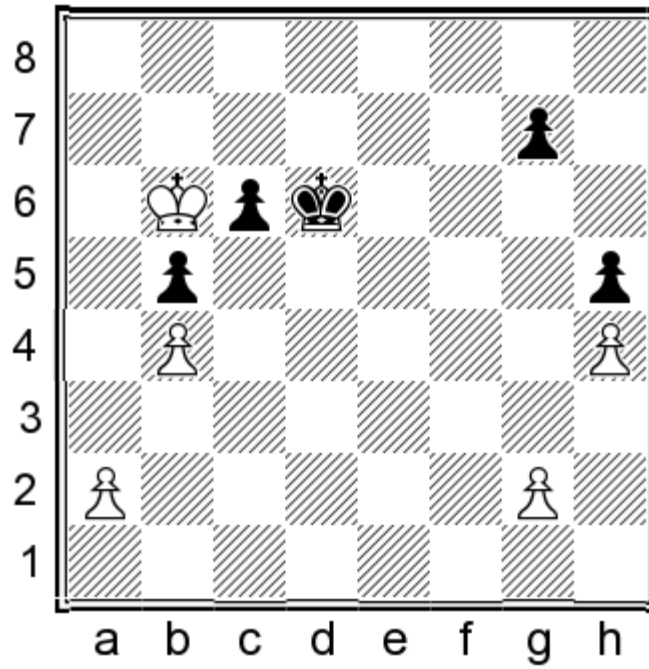
48.♔c4! ♔a5 49.♔c5! ♔a4 50.♔b6! ♔a3 51.♔b5+- White successfully completed his plan.)

45.♔b6 ♔e4 46.♔c5 ♔f4 47.♔xb4 ♔xg4 48.a4 ♔f4= The pawns promote at the same time.

38.h4!

White has found the right idea! From now on he has a very easy task. The winning method is the same in all the variations!

38...h5



It's time for White to execute the winning method again, but the move-order is really important! 38...♔d7 39.g4! ♔d6 40.g5 advancing the pawns as far as possible. 40...g6

(40...♔d7 41.h5 ♔d6 and now White can execute the usual plan: 42.♔b7 ♔d7 43.a3 ♔d6 44.♔c8 ♔e5 45.♔d7 ♔f5 46.♔xc6 ♔xg5 47.♔xb5 ♔xh5 48.♔c4! g5 White wins because his king is close enough to catch the g-pawn, while the Black monarch is too far away from the b-pawn. 49.♔d3 ♔g4 50.b5 ♔h3 51.b6 g4 52.b7+—)

41.a3 ♔d7 42.♔b7 ♔d6 43.♔c8 c5 44.bxc5+ ♔xc5 45.♔c7 ♔c4 46.♔c6+— White wins. 38...g6 is met by 39.g4! h6 40.g5! Black has two choices, but both of them lead to the same result. 40...hxg5

(40...h5 41.a3 ♔d7 42.♔b7 ♔d6 43.♔c8 c5 44.bxc5+ ♔xc5 45.♔c7 ♔c4 46.♔c6 and White wins.)

41.hxg5 ♔d7 42.♔b7 ♔d6 43.♔c8!

(43.a3? ♔d7)

43...♔e6

(43...c5 44.bxc5+ ♔xc5 45.♔d7 ♔b4 46.♔d6+— is hopeless.)

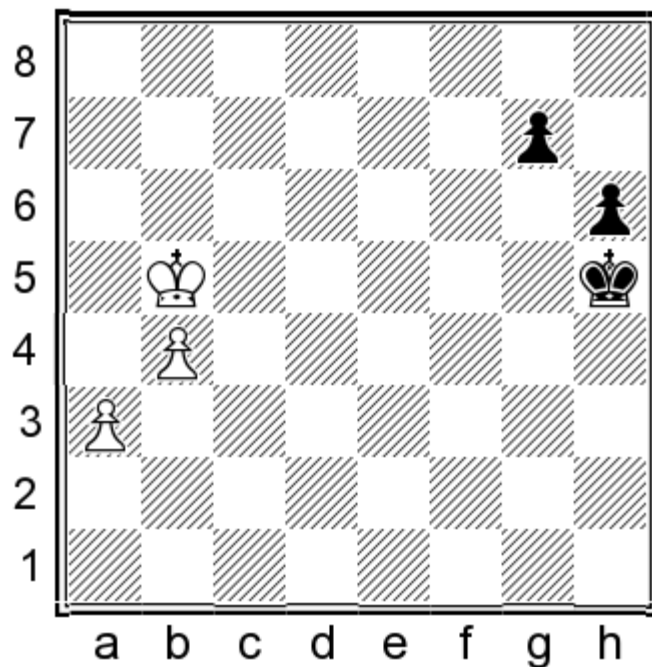
44.♔c7 ♔f5 45.♔xc6 ♔xg5 46.♔xb5 ♔f5

(46...♔h4 47.a4+— White queens first and he can exchange the queens with ♖h8 and ♖g8 at the end.)

47.♔c4 The White king catches the g-pawn. 47...g5 48.♔d3 ♔f4 49.b5+— and b8=♖ arrives with check. 38...h6 is the worst, because after 39.h5 White preserves 3 extra tempi for the following fight. 39...♔d7 40.a3 ♔d6 41.g4 This is not necessary, but wins easily. 41...♔d7 42.♔b7 ♔d6 43.♔c8 ♔e5 Black loses by one tempo.

(43...c5 44.bxc5+ ♔xc5 45.♔c7 ♔c4 46.♔c6+— with the usual win.)

44.♔c7 ♔f4 45.♔xc6 ♔xg4 46.♔xb5 ♔xh5



The pawns seem to promote at the same time, but White has a well-known and instructive winning method: 47.♔c4 g5 48.b5 g4 49.♔d3! The White king threatens to catch the pawn. Black is forced to support it with his king. 49...♔h4 50.b6 g3 51.♔e3 Black must use his king again. 51...♔h3 52.b7 g2 53.♔f2! and after 53...♔h2 White promotes with check. 54.b8=♚++-

39.a3!

This is the only way to win. 39.♔b7? with the same plan would spoil the win, because of 39...c5! 40.bxc5+ ♔xc5 41.♔c7

(41.a3 is not the same anymore. 41...b4 42.axb4+ ♔xb4 and Black is a tempo ahead in comparison to the game, which is enough to save the game. 43.♔c6 ♔c4 44.♔d6 ♔d4 45.♔e6 ♔e4 46.♔f7 ♔f4 47.♔xg7 ♔g4=)

41...b4! 42.♔d7 ♔b5 43.♔d6 ♔a4 44.♔c5 ♔a3 45.♔b5 ♔xa2 46.♔xb4 and the race ends in a draw. 46...♔b2 47.♔c4 ♔c2 48.♔d4 ♔d2 49.♔e4 ♔e2 50.♔f4 ♔f2=

39...♔d7 40.♔b7 ♔d6

40...g6 does not change much after 41.g3+-

41.♔c8

Everything is easy and forced from now on...

41...♔e5 42.♔c7 ♔d5

42...♔f4 is very slow now. 43.♔xc6 ♔g4 44.♔xb5 ♔xh4 45.a4 ♔g3 46.a5+-

43.♔d7 c5 44.bxc5 ♔xc5 45.♔c7 ♔c4 46.♔c6 b4 47.axb4 ♔xb4 48.♔d5 ♔c3 49.♔e6 ♔d3 50.♔f7 ♔e3 51.♔xg7 ♔f4

51...♔f2 52.♔g6 ♔xg2 53.♔xh5+-

52.♔g6

and Black resigned in view of 52.♔g6 ♕g4 53.g3!+— The final subtlety!

1–0

GAME 8

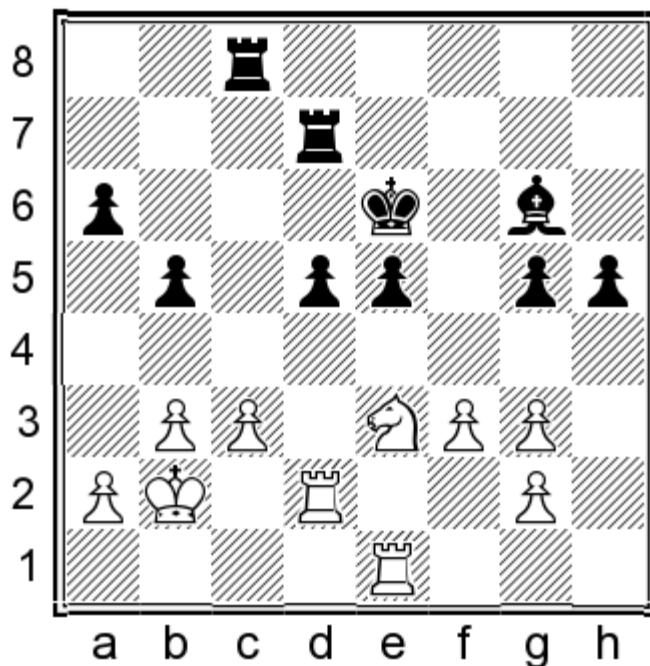
Vallejo F. Pons (2697)

M. Carlsen (2843)

Sao Paulo

25.09.2012

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



Black has some space advantage, a better pawn structure and his bishop is stronger than the knight. However, White has built up a very solid defensive wall, which seems to be unbreakable. As befits a true World number 1, Carlsen finds his only chance.

26...d4!!

At first sight, it looks slightly suspicious to open the e-file against his own king, but the knight doesn't have any good way to jump with discovered check. Black tries to create a passed d-pawn.

27.cxd4 ♖xd4 28.♖xd4?

I believe it's a mistake to allow Black to obtain a strong d-pawn. Also, White will face problems covering the c2 invasion square. Passively waiting with 28.♖de2 was better. 28...♔f6 Black's position remains preferable, but he must work hard to make progress. 29.♘d1! looks like a good defensive plan, transferring the knight to f2, followed by waiting moves with the rooks. White has good drawing chances. (29.g4 is always met with 29...h4 fixing the weakness on g2. 29.♘c2 ♖d6)

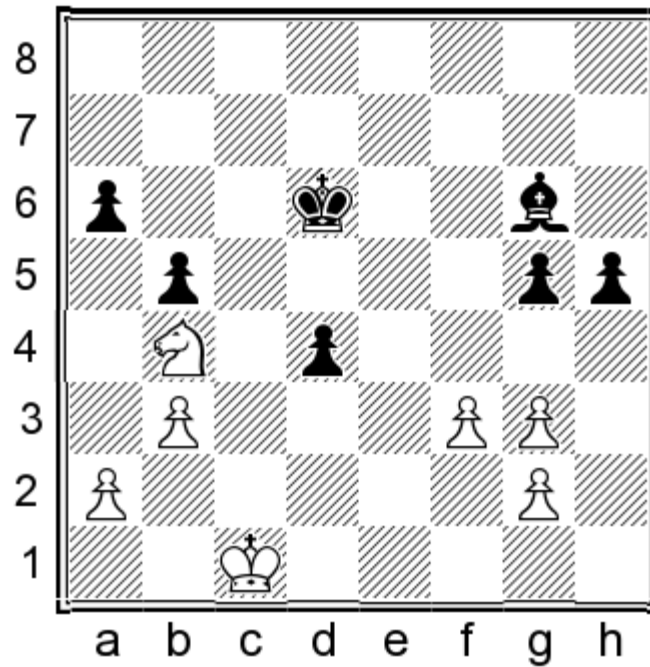
28...exd4 29.♘c2+ ♔d5

Black has made serious progress in comparison to the initial position.

30.♖b4+ ♔d6 31.♞c1?

This logical move is objectively the losing mistake, although White's position was already very difficult. Black was threatening to push ...a5 and to penetrate with the rook on c2. 31.♞d1 should have been played, when Black must react precisely with 31...♕e5! (On the tempting 31...a5 White has a hidden resource: 32.♞xd4+ ♕e5 33.♞d8! This tactical trick seems to solve all his problems. 33...♞xd8 34.♖c6+ ♖f6 35.♖xd8 ♕d3 Black regains the pawn with ...♕f1, but White builds up a fortress with 36.♕c3 ♕f1 37.♕d2 ♕xg2 38.♕e3 and the knight starts to harass the queenside pawns.) 32.♞e1+ ♕f6 Black is better. 33.♖d5+ leads nowhere. 33...♕f7 The c2-square and the d-pawn are very dangerous together. 31.♖xa6 loses to 31...♞c2+ 32.♕a3 ♞xg2 Black obtains too many passed pawns.

31...♞xc1 32.♕xc1

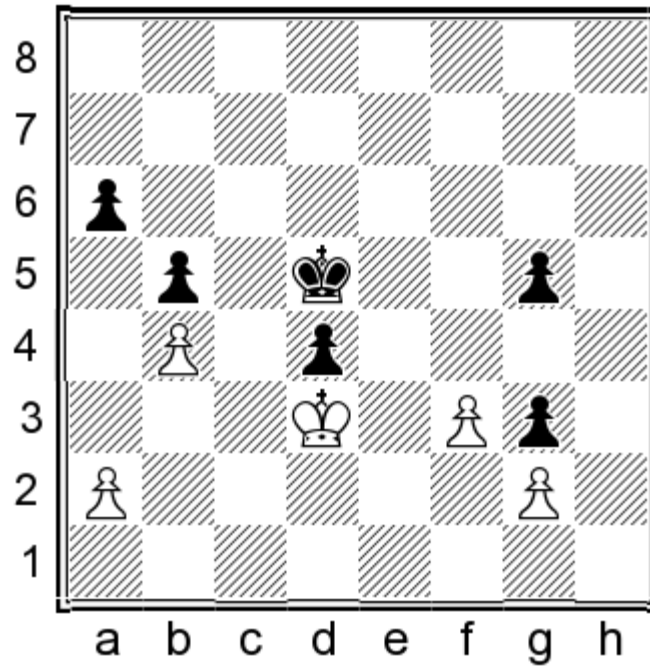


32...h4!

Excellent calculation by Carlsen, who had to foresee his 37th move. Black fixes the weakness on g2 and is winning now. The bishop dominates the knight.

33.gxh4

33.♖c2!? could have been the last chance. 33...♕c5! keeping the minor pieces on the board. (Black should not be greedy and go for the pawn endgame with an extra pawn. 33...♕xc2 34.♕xc2 hxg3 35.b4! White blocks all the invading squares. All he needs to do is to meet ...♕d5 with ♕d3 to hold the draw. 35... ♕d5 36.♕d3



36... ♖e5 37. ♕d2=) 34.gxh4 gxh4 ♔d3-f1 is threatened. 35. ♖e1 b4! fixing more weaknesses on the queenside. The king must cover the b1-square and the knight must cover d3, while Black simply wants to march with his king to g3.

33...gxh4

Black again threatens to play ...a5 and the arising pawn endgame is now winning for him, since in comparison to the 33. ♖c2 line, he has an invasion square on g3 for the king.

34. ♖xa6

34. ♖c2 ♔xc2 35. ♕xc2 ♖e5 wins like in the 34. ♕d2 line. 34. ♕d2 a5! 35. ♖c2 ♔xc2 36. ♕xc2 ♖e5 37. ♕d3 ♕f4 Black wins the pawn race. 38. ♕xd4 ♖g3 39. ♕e5 ♕xg2 40. f4 h3

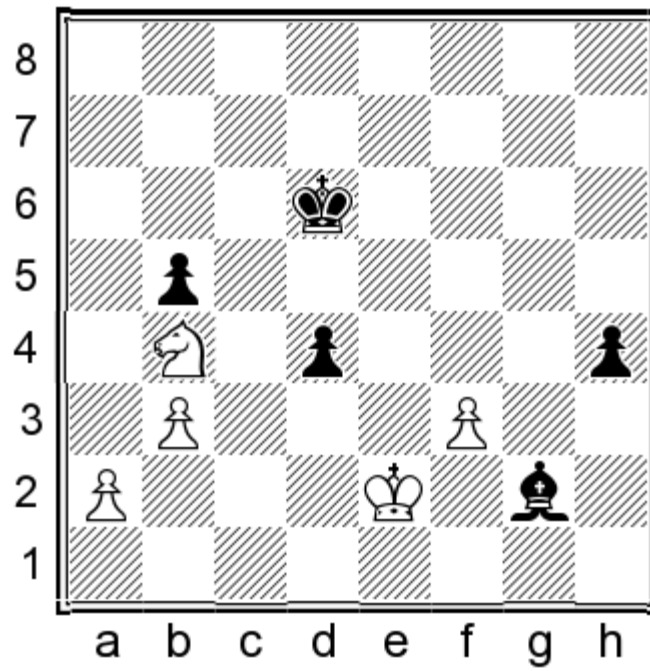
34...♔d3

The bishop collects the g2-pawn and Black obtains a second passed pawn.

35. ♖b4 ♔f1 36. ♕d2

After 36. ♖c2 White can't stop the h-pawn. 36... ♔xg2 37. ♖xd4 h3

36...♔xg2 37. ♕e2



We have reached the critical position, where Black has to find the only winning move. Carlsen had seen it when he played ...h4.

37...♖h3!!

Before making use of the two passed pawns, Black transfers his bishop to f5, from where it excellently supports both pawns. 37...h3 38.♔f2 The bishop is stuck, so White holds.

38.a4

38.♘d3 doesn't change anything. 38...♙f5 39.♘f2 b4! This is the most accurate, fixing the a2-weakness, followed by ...♙e5-f4.

38...♙f5 39.axb5 d3+

One of the pawns will promote.

40.♙e3 h3

40...d2 was also possible. 41.♙xd2 h3 and a new queen is coming.

41.♘xd3 ♙xd3

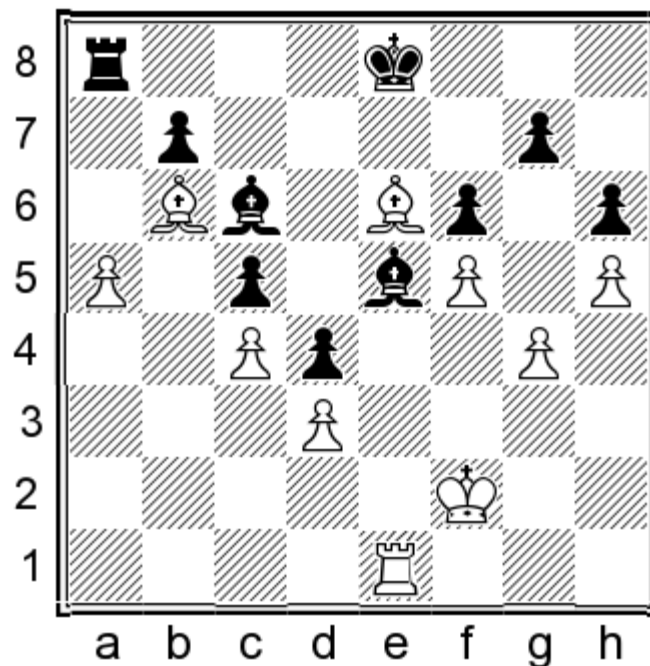
White resigned in view of 41...♙xd3 42.♙f2 ♙xb5 43.♙g3 ♙d7 The Black king collects both pawns and the h1-promoting square matches the bishop's color.

0-1

GAME 9

H. Nakamura (2783)

A. Giri (2730)



After unexpectedly losing 4 games in a row, Nakamura didn't collapse completely and recovered with a brilliant endgame victory. White is clearly better with his more active pieces (especially the Black king and rook are squeezed in the 8th rank), but how to make progress? White can't exchange his a5-pawn for the d5-pawn and the rook has no open files to penetrate. Nakamura instead found a fantastic breakthrough!

47.g5!!

Black is forced to accept the sacrifice, otherwise White takes on h6 and occupies the g-file with the rook. Black can never play ...♔e7 because of the c5-pawn hanging with check.

47...hxg5 48.h6! gxh6 49.♖xe5!!

The aim of the offers in the previous three moves was to create a passed f-pawn, which becomes unstoppable with the support of the bishops.

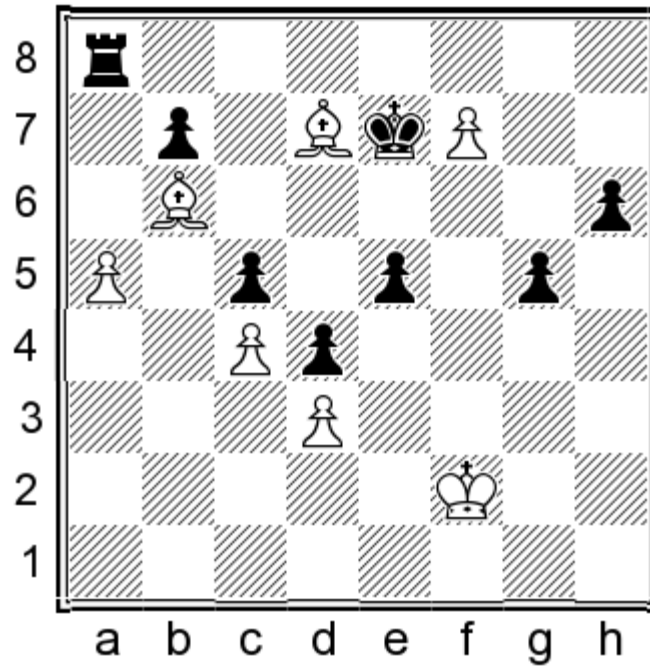
49...fxe5 50.f6!

White wants to take on c5, followed by queening the f-pawn. Black has only one move to avoid it.

50...♙d7

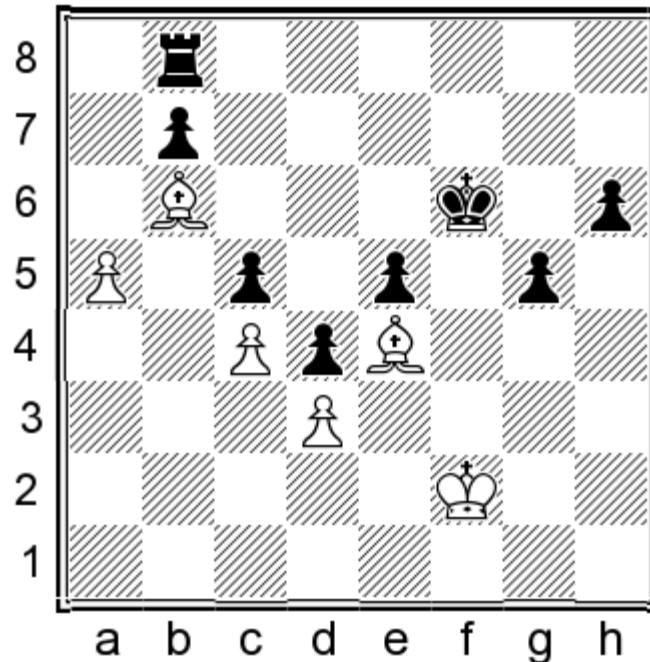
50...h5 51.♙xc5+-

51.f7+ ♔e7 52.♙xd7



52...♔xd7?!

This is practically the same as resigning, but the other continuation was also objectively losing... 52...♔xf7 Black is materially completely fine, he has 3 pawns and a rook for two minor pieces. Despite that, his position is hopeless, because of the huge power of the bishop pair and the a-pawn, which promotes automatically if the b7-pawn falls. 53.♙f5 White should immediately attack the b7-pawn. 53...♖f6 (53...h5 54.♙e4 ♜b8 55.♙xc5 ♖e6 56.♔g3 leads to the same position as in 53...♖f6.) 54.♙e4 ♜b8



55.♙xc5 By eliminating the c-pawn, White creates another way to obtain the a-passer, namely by threatening ♙b6 and c5-c6. The direct threat is ♙d6 and Black must deal with it. 55...♖e6 (55...h5 is refuted by 56.♙d6! ♜a8 57.♙c7 ♜c8 and now 58.♙xb7! ♜xc7 59.a6+- wins.) 56.♔g3 h5 57.♙b6 Black has no chance to create counterplay with his kingside pawns. ♙c7 ♜c8 ♙xb7 ♜xc7 a6 is threatened again. 57...♖d6 58.♙f3! weakening the pawns, in order to be able

to collect them with the king. 58...g4 (58...h4+ 59.♔g4+-) 59.♙d5 White wants to play ♔h4 and Black is also in a kind of zugzwang. He can only move with his king, e.g. 59...♔d7 but this allows 60.c5+- and White wins.

53.♙xc5

Black loses a full rook and the connected h-g passers don't give enough compensation to survive.

53...h5 54.f8=♖ ♖xf8+ 55.♙xf8 h4

The main problem is that Black can't support the pawns with his king, because if it goes too far, White creates an a-passer. 55...♔e6 56.♙h6 ♔f5 (56...g4 57.♔g3+- wins easily.) 57.c5!+- followed by the break-through of c6 and a6.

56.♙h6!

White employs the right technique. He's immobilizing the pawns by attacking them with the bishop.

56...g4 57.♙g5 h3 58.♙h4!

The bishop occupies the g3-square, where it not only stops the pawn, but also attacks the e5-weakness. White gets a "free hand" to use his king.

58...♔d6 59.♙g3 ♔e6 60.♔e2

60.♙h2 with the idea of ♔g3 was even easier. 60...♔f6 loses again to (60...♔d6 61.♔g3+-) 61.c5!+-

60...♔d6 61.♔d2 ♔c5 62.♙xe5 ♔b4 63.♔c2

63.♙c7+- was also winning.

63...♔xa5 64.♔b3

Black is in zugzwang! He must move into dropping the d4 pawn with check.

64...♔b6

64...b5 65.c5+- and 64...♔a6 65.♔b4+- were equally hopeless.

65.♙xd4+

Black resigned in view of 65.♙xd4+ ♔c6 66.♙e5 ♔d7 67.d4 ♔e6 68.♙g3+- with an easy win.

1-0

GAME 10

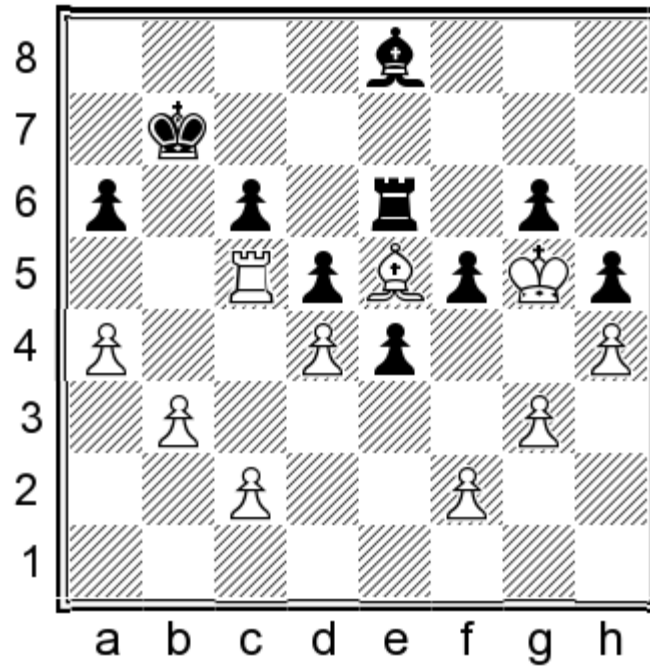
J. Zorko (2476)

G. Froewis (2399)

Austrian league

03.11.2012

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



Here is an excellent example illustrating why it is useful to solve studies; they might appear in real games as well! White is close to winning with his dominating pieces, and especially the difference between the two bishops is telling. Who would believe that the poor e8-bishop wins the game soon for Black? White continues with the most tempting move, but it leads to defeat...

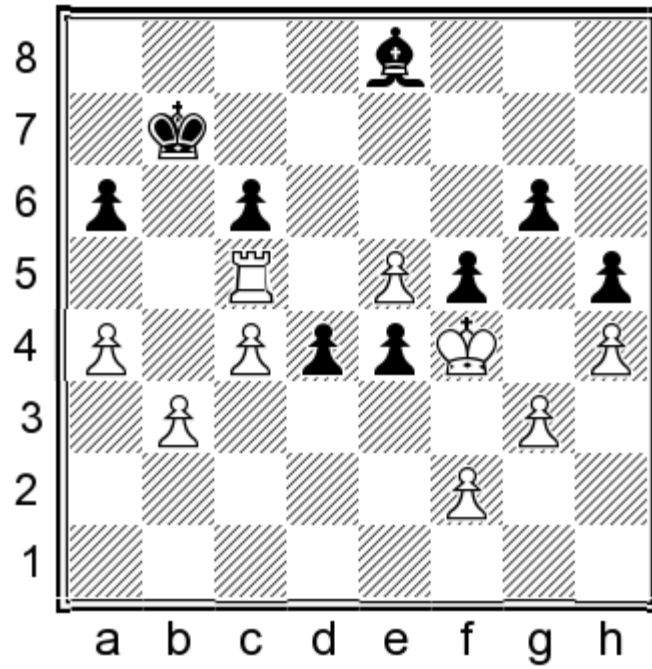
66.c4??

This allows Black to play an evergreen!! 66.♔f4! followed by opening the position with c4 should bring home the full point.

66.c4?? ♖xe5!! 67.dxe5 d4!

Suddenly the White rook is out of the game, but it still looks as though — after the king catches the d-pawn — White will easily realize his material advantage. However...

68.♔f4



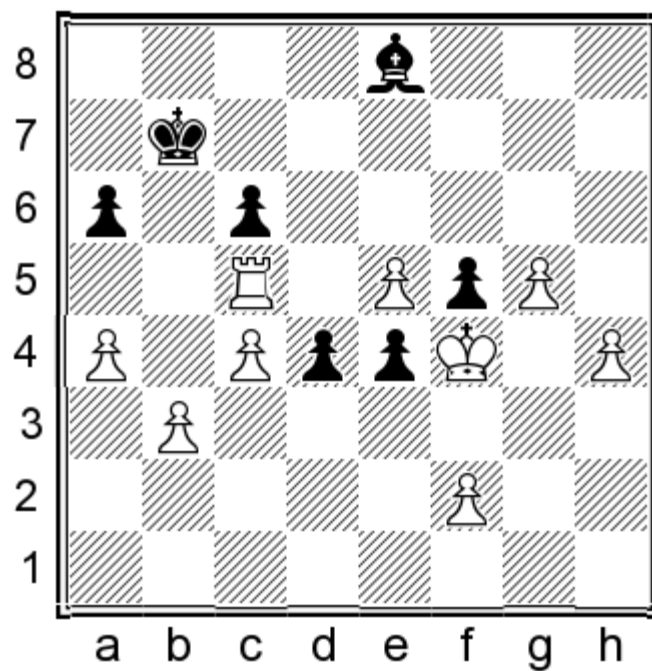
68...g5+!!

Black needs to sacrifice all his pawns to support his d-pawn. Firstly he tries to deflect the king, so White is forced to play

69.hxg5 h4!!

Another fantastic move! Black threatens ...h3, so the next move is forced again.

70.gxh4



70...e3!!

The final blow! Black cuts off the king's route to the d-pawn.

71.fxe3

71.♔f3 loses to 71...♙h5+ and e2 next.

71...d3! 72.g6

The whole point of the ...g5 and ...h4 sacrifices becomes clear after 72.♔f3 ♙h5+! when the bishop joins the game! 73.♕f2 d2 and Black wins.

72...d2 73.g7 d1=♚!

73...♙f7 was also good, but the text is nicer and better.

74.g8=♚ ♚f1+!

The king is forced to move to the g-file and White loses his queen.

75.♔g5 ♚g1+

Just brilliant!!! Chess can be beautiful!

0-1

GAME 11

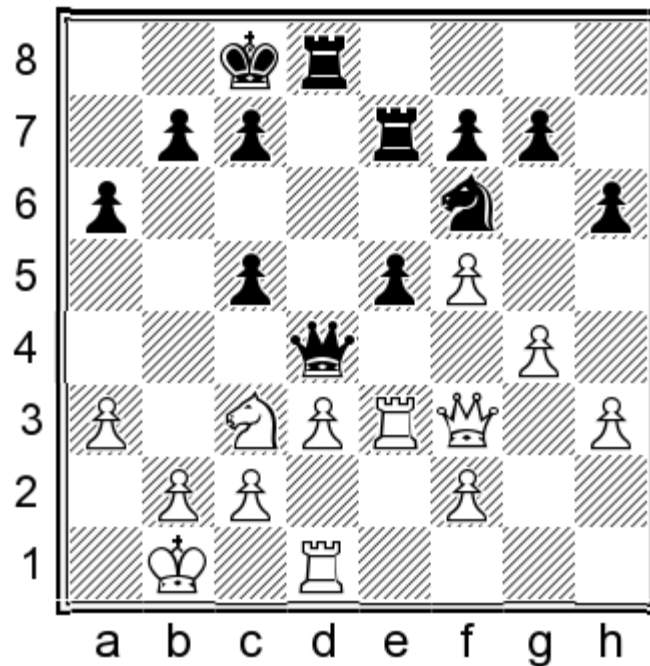
A. Morozevich (2748)

F. Caruana (2786)

Tashkent

23.11.2012

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

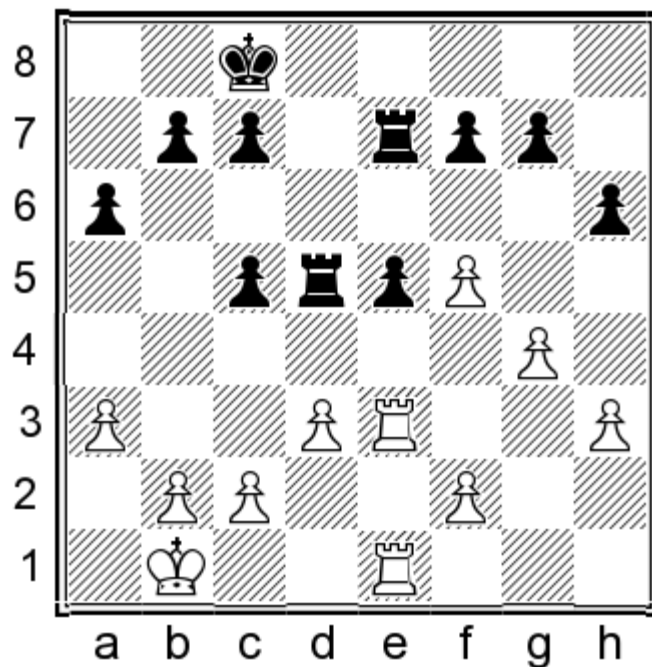


Black is slightly worse because of the e5-weakness. White has many ways to strengthen his position, while Black can only wait passively. Caruana looks for salvation in the rook endgame.

20...♞d5

20...♞e8 with the idea of consolidating with ...f6 doesn't help. White can, for instance, play 21.h4 gaining ground on the kingside with g5. 21...f6 and now White unexpectedly wins a pawn with 22.♞e4! ♞d6 23.♞c4!± and ♞e4 appears next.

20...♞d5 21.♞xd5 ♞xd5 22.♞xd5 ♞xd5 23.♞de1



White is definitely slightly better, but it's very important for him not to allow Black to activate his rooks. So, the first step is to keep the e5-pawn under permanent attack and then think about how to improve his position on the queenside.

23...f6

Black wants to play ...♖d4-f4, so White must increase the pressure on the e5-pawn.

24.f4!

It's time to improve the position of the king for both sides...

24...♔d7 25.c3!

White prepares ♔c2 and the future actions with b4...

25...b5

I don't like this move — it eases White's plans on the queenside. Black should have definitely opted for 25...a5!

26.♔c2 Now d3 is protected, so White threatens to take a pawn with c4, followed by fxe5. 26...♔d6 27.♖e4

(It might make sense to provoke the c6 move with a king march to b5. 27.♔b3 b6 28.♔c4 c6 29.♔b3 ♖e8 30.a4 ♖e7 31.♔c2 ♖e8 and only now the plans start on the kingside)

27...b6 and from now on Black starts to wait with ...♖e7-e8. It's not so easy to find a break-through for White. 28.h4 This looks like the only option for White. 28...♖e8 29.g5 White continues pressing, but it's hard to judge whether it'll be enough to win the game.

26.♔c2 ♔d6

Unfortunately, time-trouble starts to affect the game, and this is the reason for the following inaccuracies.

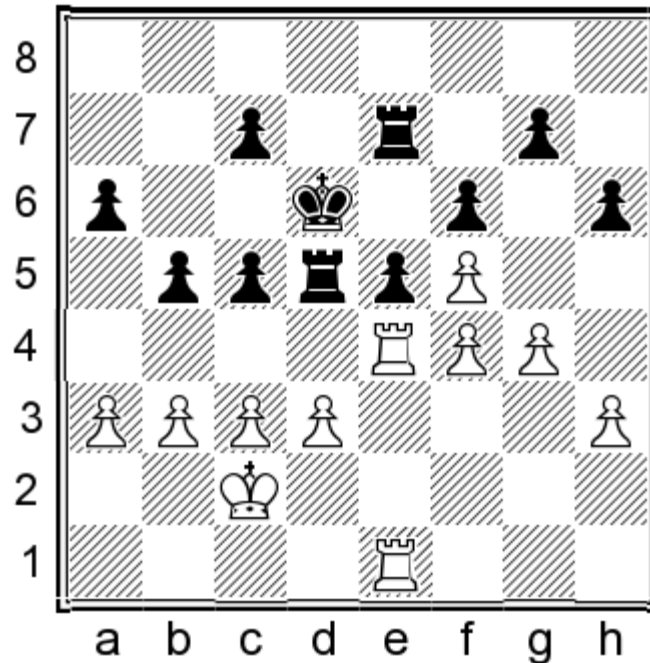
27.b3

27.b4! should have been played immediately as Morozevich did it a few moves later.

27...♖e8

Black should have prevented the b4-plan again, followed by c6 and the waiting policy, so 27...a5!

28.♖e4 ♜e7



29.b4!

Morozevich finds the right idea. White threatens to win a pawn as happened in the game. Black has only one way to prevent it.

29...♖e8!

Caruana prefers to play the endgame a pawn down, but with activity, rather than suffering in zugzwang with material equality. This is generally the right strategy for the defensive side in rook endgames! 29...♔c6 was the only move to avoid fxe5 and bxc5, capturing with checks... 30.bxc5

(Now on 30.c4 Black has 30...♜d4 31.fxe5 ♜xe4 32.♜xe4 fxe5 and Black is solid.)

30...♔xc5 The position remains really unpleasant. 31.d4+! ♔d6 32.h4! ♜e8

(32...c5 doesn't solve the problems regarding the pressure on the e5-pawn. 33.dxe5+ fxe5 34.g5)

33.g5 hxg5 34.hxg5 Let's see how White can break through if Black just keeps waiting. 34...♜e7 35.♔b3 White wants to penetrate with ♔b4, so Black should play 35...c5 36.dxe5+ fxe5 37.a4

(White can win a pawn anytime with 37.f6 gxf6 38.gxf6 ♜f7 39.fxe5+ ♔e6 but it's probably better to improve the position a bit. This possibility will never run away.)

37...♜e8 38.c4! bxc4+ 39.♔xc4 The game is basically over; White threatens ♜b1-b6. 39...♜d4+

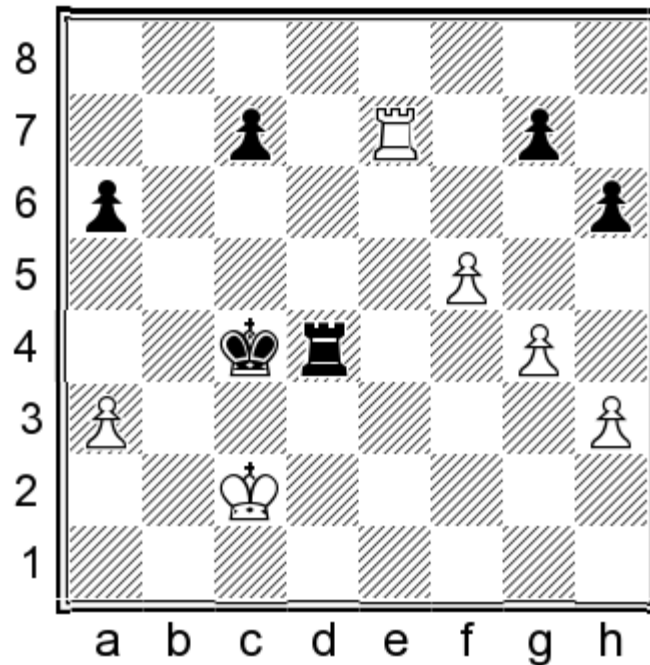
(39...♜e7 40.♜b1+-)

40.♜xd4+ cxd4 41.♔d3! in order to avoid Black's attempt to gain some activity with ...♜c8. 41...♜e7 42.♜e4! ♜e8 and now the easiest way to collect the point is 43.g6! ♜e7 44.fxe5+ ♜xe5 45.f6! and Black has to resign.

30.c4

It might be objectively better to play 30.bxc5+ ♖xc5 31.d4 ♜d5 32.h4 and continuing as in the 29...♔c6 line, but who could restrain himself from taking a pawn for seemingly nothing?!

30...bxc4 31.dxc4 ♜d4 32.fxe5+! fxe5 33.bxc5+! ♔xc5 34.♞xe5+ ♞xe5 35.♞xe5+ ♔xc4 36.♞e7!



Morozevich had obviously foreseen this position before playing 30.c4. It seems to be over, but the saying is applicable again... that all rook endgames are drawn.

36...c5

Black's hope is the c-pawn.

37.♞xg7 ♜d3 38.h4!

White needs to keep his connected passed pawns on the kingside.

38...♞f3!

Black could not allow f6 and g5, because the pawns would promote automatically. He tries to squeeze the king to the first rank and support his c-pawn with the king. 38...♞xa3? would have led to a quick defeat. 39.f6 ♞f3 40.g5 hxg5 41.hxg5 ♞f2+ 42.♔d1 ♔d3 43.♞d7++ and f7, g6 next.

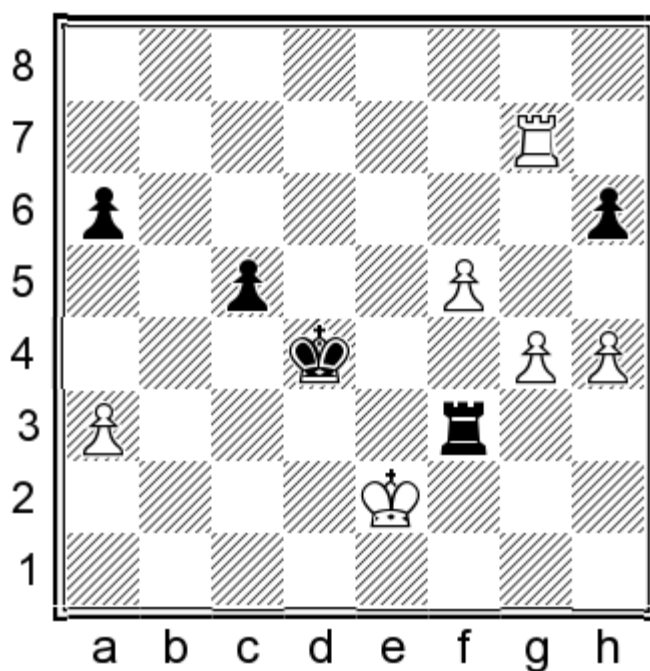
39.♔d2!

White tries to send the rook away from the f-file. The machine recommends 39.♞h7 ♞f2+ 40.♔d1 ♞f4 41.♞xh6 ♞xg4 42.♞xa6 but despite the fact that White is two pawns up, the position is drawn. Black will recover one because of the active configuration of his pieces, and regarding the remaining one, the c-pawn supported by the king gives enough compensation. (42.♔e2 ♞f4) 42...♔b3! ♞a4 had to be parried first... 43.h5 ♞g5 44.f6 ♞xh5 45.♞b6+ ♔xa3 46.♔d2 ♞f5 If the king goes to support the f-pawn, the c-pawn will also be promoted, so he should first try to capture on c5. 47.♔c3 ♞f3+ 48.♔c4 ♞f5 White can't make progress. Black is not in zugzwang, since if he was the one to move, ...♔a2 would

be available.

39...♔d4 40.♕e2

(40.♖g6 ♜f2+ 41.♕d1 ♜f4)



40...♜xa3??

This is a terrible blunder on the last move of time-trouble. From now on, White simply can't go wrong — all moves are just winning. 40...♜f4 seems to give an easy draw. Black wants to push his c-pawn and White sooner or later has to give up his connected passed pawns, but it will make the position drawish, as the 39.♜h7 line showed us. 41.♜g6 c4 42.f6 is too slow now, with the idea of g5 and ♜g7, escaping with the rook because the c-pawn is too far advanced. 42...c3

41.f6 ♜a2+ 42.♕f3 ♜a1 43.♕g2 ♜a2+ 44.♕g3 ♜a1 45.g5 hxg5 46.hxg5 ♜f1 47.♜c7 a5 48.f7 a4 49.g6 a3 50.♜a7 ♜f6 51.g7 1-0

GAME 12

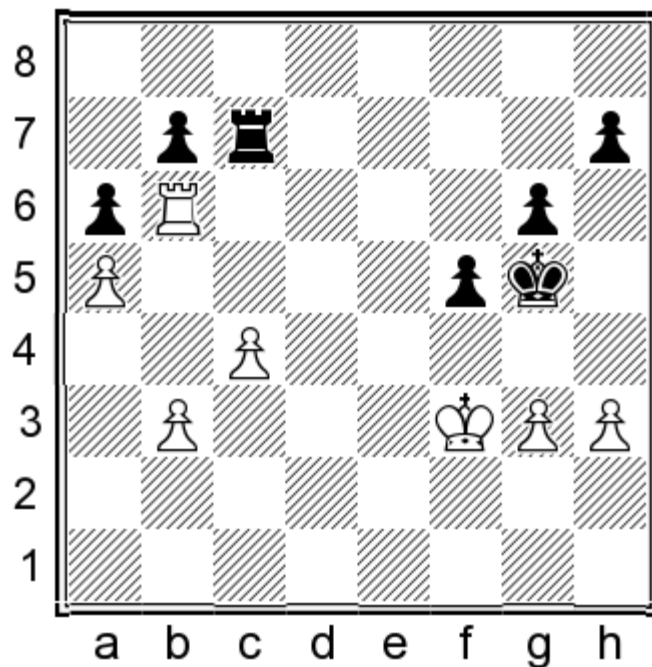
S. Karjakin (2775)

A. Morozevich (2748)

Women World Championship

29.11.2012

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



We enter this rook endgame right after the time-trouble phase. White is clearly better because of his active rook on b6. If the Black rook leaves the c7 square, White can advance his pawns with b4 and c5, creating the threat of c6 bxc6 ♖xa6. Black seems to be in deep trouble.

42...♔h5

Morozevich decides to give White a tempo. 42...h5 with the idea of playing ...h4 fails to 43.h4+! ♔h6 44.♔f4 and only White has made progress.

An attempt to activate the rook with 42...♞d7 is met with 43.b4! ♞d3+ 44.♔f2 and the rook must go back into passivity, so the action has only helped White to continue his plan... 44...♞d4 45.c5 ♞d7 46.c6! bxc6 47.♞xa6± with good winning chances.

42...♔h5 43.♔f4

Karjakin tries to squeeze the Black king, but this allows hidden counterplay. 43.b4! was stronger. 43...♞xc4 44.♞xb7 It's difficult to judge whether it's a draw or if it's winning, but definitely over-the-board it is almost impossible to hold. White wants to put his rook on b6 and bring his king across to protect the b4-pawn in order to take on a6. Black can take the kingside pawns, but White's pawns on the queenside are more advanced, which gives him excellent chances. 44...h6

(44...♞c3+ just helps White. 45.♔f4 ♞c4+ 46.♔e5)

45.♞b6 ♔g5 46.♔e2! f4 Black must hurry to create counterplay, but it seems to be too slow. 47.gxf4+

(Of course not 47.♔d3?? fxg3!)

47...♞xf4 48.♔d3 h5 49.♔c3 White is ready to take on a6. 49...♞f3+ 50.♔c4 ♞xh3 51.♞xa6 and both White pawns have advanced one rank further, so the position seems to be winning. 51...h4 52.b5 ♞f3 53.♞d6+—

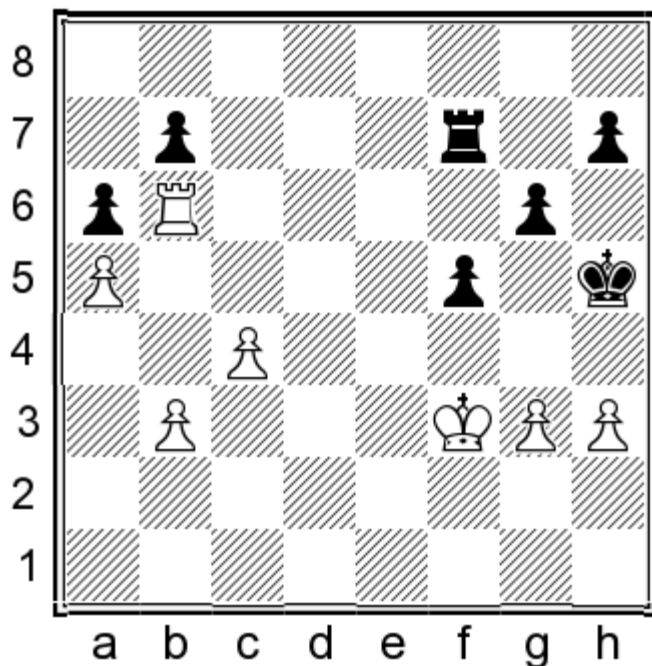
43...♞f7!

A great defensive idea in connection with the ...g5-g4 moves.

44.♔f3

44.b4 g5+ will be the same as the game.

Karjakin admits his mistake and tries to transpose to the previous line and play b4 instead of ♖f4, but Morozevich finds a better plan for Black...



44...g5!

...g4 is coming next. On the other hand, this allows White to continue his plans on the queenside.

45.b4 g4+ 46.hxg4+

It makes no sense to keep the f-file closed with 46.♔g2 because of 46...♞d7! and Black gets too much activity.
47.hxg4+ ♔xg4

46...fxg4+ 47.♔e4 ♔g5!

This was the point of the ...♞f7, ...g5-g4 idea. Now Black intends to create his own passed pawn with ...h5-h4. White is still better obviously, but at least Black has something to play for.

48.b5

48.c5 was an interesting alternative and Black needs to play precisely to hold. 48...♞e7+! Black tries to send the king to the c-file, where it moves into a tactical motif...

(48...h5 seems to be too slow 49.c6 bxc6 50.♞xa6 h4

(50...♞b7 is always met by 51.♞b6; 50...♞f6 loses to 51.b5)

51.gxh4+ ♔xh4 52.♞xc6 g3 53.b5 The connected pawns promote with the help of the king and White can sacrifice his rook for the g-pawn. This is a known method of winning this kind of rook endgame.)

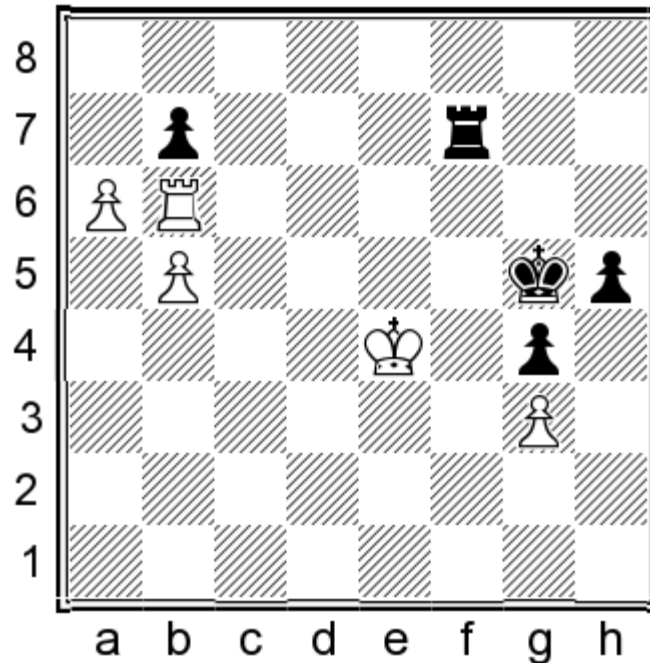
49.♔d4 ♞d7+! 50.♔e5 stops White from covering the 3rd rank, and Black will make use of it later.

(The point of the check becomes clear after 50.♔c4 h5 51.c6 where Black has 51...♞c7! 50.♞d6 ♞c7 Finally, Black

has successfully prevented the c6 and ♖xa6 idea and can continue his plan of ...h5-h4.)

50...h5 51.c6 bxc6 52.♖xa6 ♖d3! 53.♖xc6 ♖xg3 Both pawn chains are equally advanced, so the game should be drawn.
54.a6 ♖a3 55.b5 g3

48...axb5 49.cxb5 h5 50.a6



Morozevich has spent all his time and he fails to find one of the ways to draw.

50...♖e7+

50...bxa6 51.bxa6 h4 was the most logical reaction and good enough to save the game. 52.♖b5+

(52.♖b7 ♖f1 53.♖b5+ ♔h6 54.♖a5

(54.gxh4 ♖a1 is an easy draw.)

54...h3! It's important that the pawn promotes with check. 55.♖a2 ♔g6! A very nice motif! The king departs from the h-file and prepares for the h2-push to lure the rook away from behind the a-pawn. 56.a7 h2! 57.♖xh2 ♖a1=)

52...♔h6 53.♖a5

(53.gxh4 g3 White's king is cut off along the f-file, so the g-pawn will be traded for the a6-pawn. The draw is inevitable.)

53...h3! It's an important detail to promote with check. Black is safe.

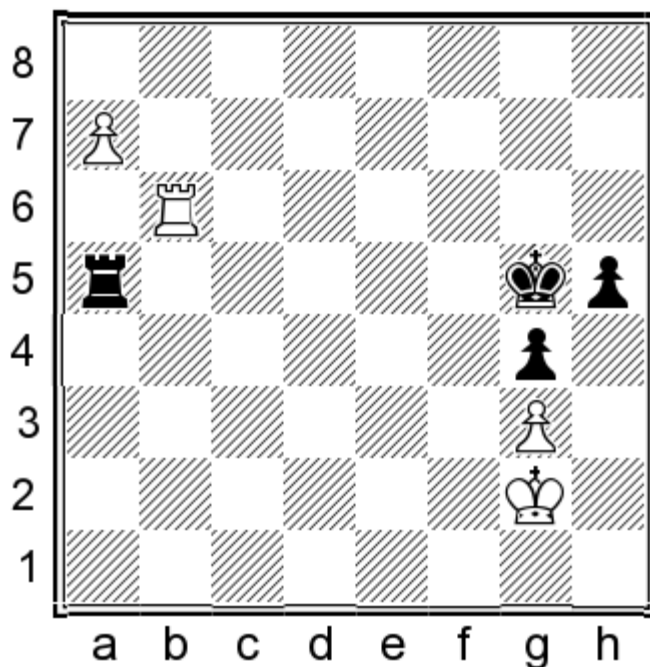
(After 53...hxg3 Black gets mated with the queens on the board. 54.a7 g2 55.a8=♕ g1=♕ 56.♕h8+ ♔g6 57.♖a6+ ♔g5 58.♕h6#)

51.♔d3!

A very tricky move, which confused Morozevich a lot. The most obvious move, ♔d4, would have allowed the promotion of the g-pawn with check... 51.♔d4 bxa6 52.bxa6 h4 53.♖b5+ ♔h6 54.gxh4 g3 55.♖g5 ♖a7=

51...♖d7+ 52.♔c4

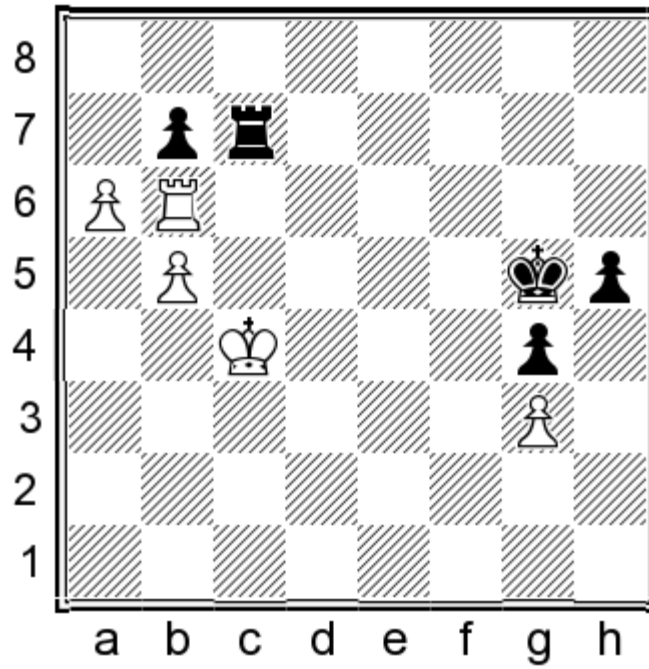
52.♔e2 was a serious attempt to hide the king on g2 from the checks, and at the same time stopping Black's counterplay on the kingside. However, Karjakin rightly pointed out at the press conference that Black holds the draw in a study-like way: 52...♖e7+ 53.♕f2 ♖f7+ 54.♕g2 bxa6 55.bxa6 ♖f5! preventing White from playing ♖b5-a5. It looks like an easy draw as the rook goes behind the a-pawn, but... 56.a7 ♖a5



57.♖b5+! We should never forget this kind of decoy trick, which are very easy to miss during our games. This time, luckily for Black, the position remains a draw after creating an unbreachable fortress 57...♖xb5 58.a8=♚ ♖f5!= The position is drawn, as White's king can't join the battle. The queen alone can't make progress and the only idea would be to create some kind of zugzwang, but in this case, the Black king has good squares on h6 and g6, while the rook can pass along the f-file.

52...♖c7+??

A terrible tactical oversight.



52...bxa6 53.bxa6 h4 would have led to a draw. 54.♖b5+ ♔h6 55.gxh4

(55.♖a5 hxg3

(55...♖a7 is also good, transposing to 55.gxh4.)

56.a7 ♖xa7 57.♖xa7 ♔g5 58.♔d3 g2 59.♖a1 ♔f4 60.♔e2 ♔g3=)

55...♖a7 56.♖a5 g3 57.♔b5 g2 58.♖a1 ♔h5 59.♖g1

(59.♔b6 ♖xa6+ 60.♔xa6 ♔xh4=)

59...♖g7 60.♔b6 ♔xh4

(60...♖g6+ also holds. 61.♔b7

(61.♔b5 ♖g7=)

61...♖g7+=)

61.a7 ♖xa7 62.♔xa7 ♔h3= Just in time.

53.♖c6!!

A beautiful combination, even with such a small amount of material on the board. White is winning now. As the rule says, if two connected pawns reach the 6th rank, a rook is unable to stop them.

53...bxc6 54.b6 ♖c8 55.b7 ♖b8 56.♔c5!

White doesn't promote immediately with a7, in order to avoid any kind of fortress. Now he simply wants to take on c6 followed by a7, so the next move is forced.

56...h4

And now:

57.a7! ♖xb7 58.a8=♚

and White wins the h-pawn in any case. The game is over.

58...♖h7 59.♔g8+ ♕h6

From now on all moves are winning, but Black continues playing as he was nervous to blunder 53.♖c6, instead of making a draw with bxa6 one move before.

60.gxh4 ♖g7 61.♔h8+ ♕g6 62.h5+ ♕f7 63.h6 ♖g5+ 64.♕d6 g3 65.♔h7+ ♕f6

Karjakin finds the most elegant way to finish the game.

66.♔e7+ ♕f5 67.♔xg5+! ♕xg5 68.h7 1–0

GAME 13

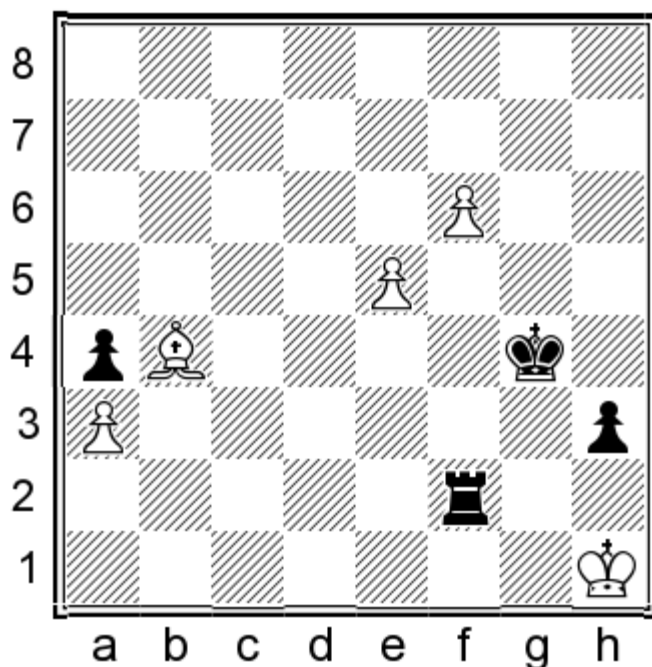
H. Nakamura (2769)

I. Sokolov (2663)

Wijk aan Zee

13.01.2013

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



Black is winning, but the way to do it is really instructive and hard to find over the board.

59...h2!

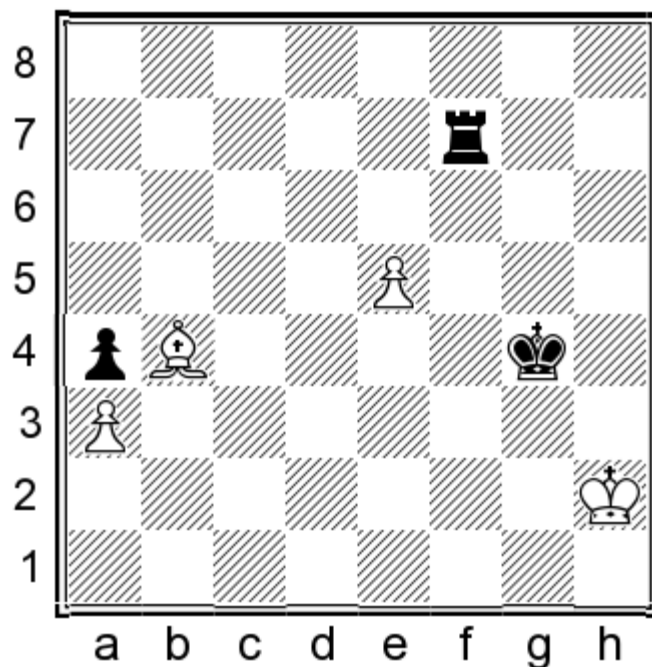
59...♕g3? doesn't work. 60.♕e1+;

59...♖f5 makes no progress, since the e5-pawn is not hanging because of f7. 60.♕h2

59...h2! 60.f7!

White is forced to give up his dangerous connected passed pawn to parry the mate threat of ♕h3. 60.♕c5 ♖e2 61.f7 would have lost on the spot. 61...♕h3! 62.f8=♔ ♖e1+

60...♖xf7 61.♔xh2



The endgame seems to be very close to a draw, as the bishop is well placed: it protects both pawns and Black is slightly restricted, because if White manages to push e6-e7, they can immediately agree to draw. However, Black is winning — he can make use of the squeezed situation of the White king. The following moves are necessary...

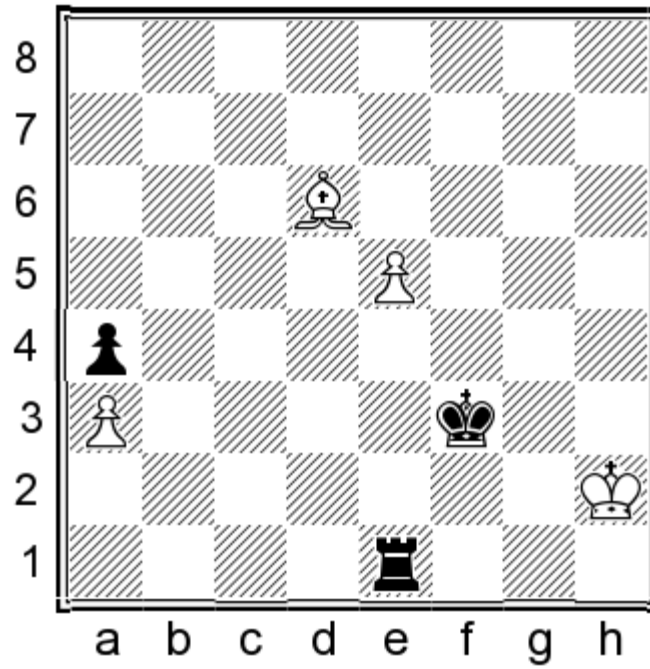
61...♖f2+! 62.♔g1 ♜e2!

The pawn had to be stopped.

63.♙d6 ♔f3! 64.♔f1 ♜e4 65.♔g1

65.♙c7 loses to 65...♜c4 attacking the bishop and threatening with mate.

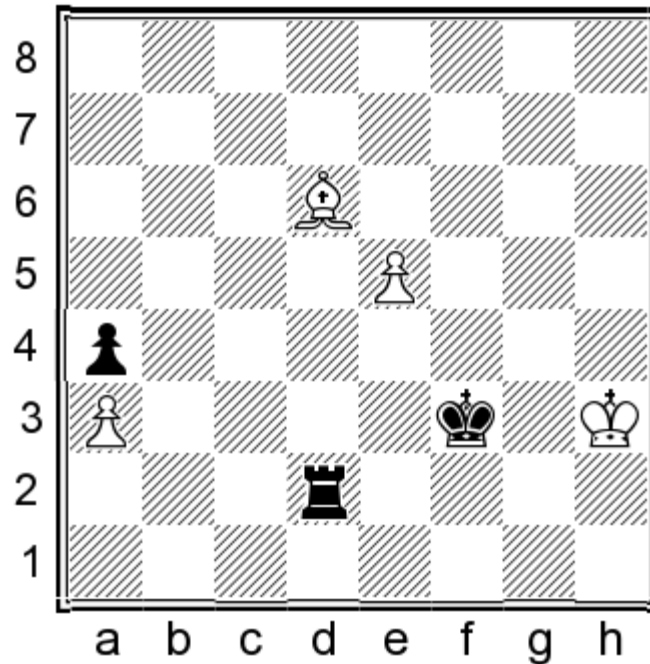
65...♜e1+ 66.♔h2



This is the critical position, which Black could reach in many different ways. What to do now? If we study endgames, then we know that very often we must ask ourselves what would happen if it was our opponent's turn? If we do this, we can easily realize that Black is in zugzwang, as he can't move his king, so the bishop must give up its protection of one of the pawns... The first target should be to pass the move over to White...

66...♖d1 67.♙b4

67.♙c5 would have made the job easier. 67...♖d5 68.♙d6 ♖d2+ 69.♔h3



(69.♔g1 ♖d1+ 70.♔h2 ♖e1 Black achieved what he wanted.) 69...♔f4! and White is in zugzwang again! Only his bishop can move, but then he drops one of the pawns. 70.♙c7 ♖d3+ 71.♔h2 ♖xa3 72.e6+ ♔f5 73.e7 ♖e3

67...♖d4!

Very nice move! It seems like Black allows White to advance his e-pawn, but this is met with a tactical refutation.

68.♙d6

68.e6 ♖h4+! A very important intermediate check in order to promote the a-pawn with check. 69.♔g1 ♖xb4! 70.axb4 a3 Despite White being the one who queens first, he gets mated by force.... 71.e7 a2 72.e8=♚ a1=♚+ 73.♔h2 ♚b2+ 74.♔h3 ♚g2+ 75.♔h4 ♚g4#

68...♖h4+ 69.♔g1 ♖h6!

Sokolov is using the method of zugzwang again! White is forced to move the bishop.

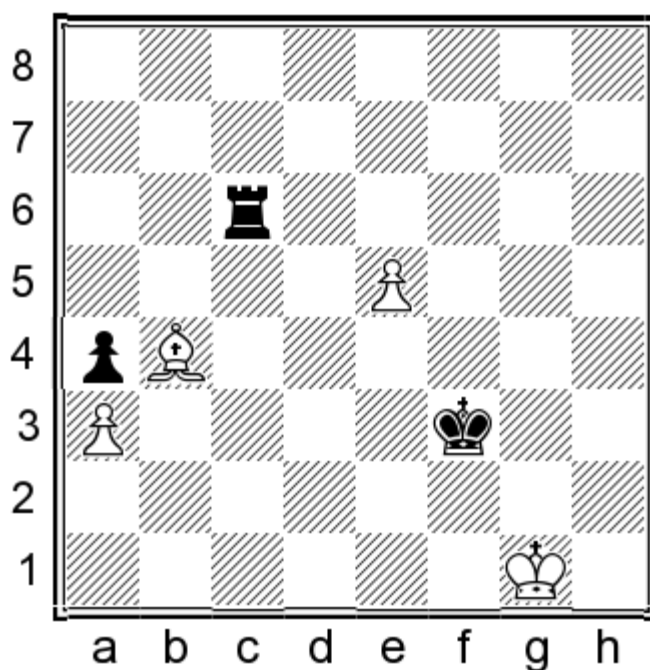
70.♙f8 ♖h8

This is just to gain some time.

71.♙d6 ♖h6 72.♙f8 ♖b6! 73.♙d6

This allows Black to achieve his zugzwang position. Let's see what happens on other moves... The king can't escape from the 1st rank with 73.♔h2 because of 73...♖b2+ 74.♔h3 ♖b8 and White gets mated. 75.♙g7 ♖b7;

73.♙c5 ♖c6 74.♙b4

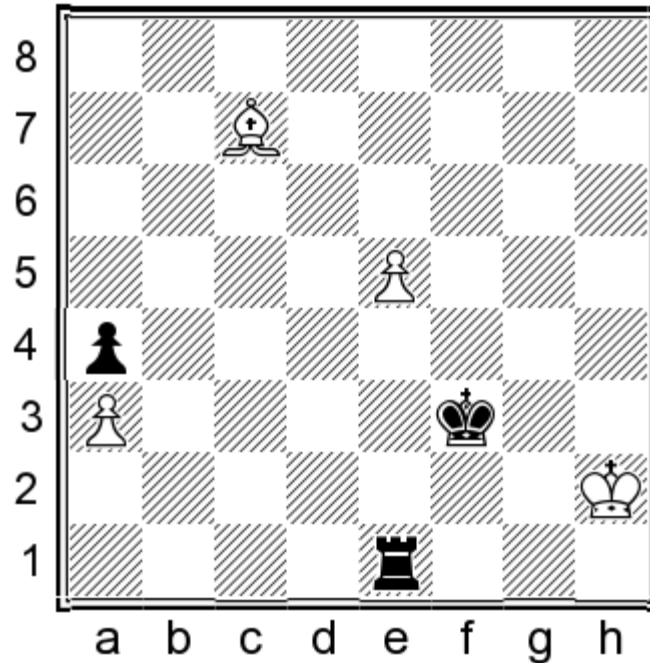


(74.♙d6 transposes to the game...) 74...♖g6+! Very subtle chess, after which there is no good square for the king. 75.♔h2 (75.♔f1 allows 75...♖b6 and ♖xb4 wins next as the bishop can't go away.) 75...♖g2+ 76.♔h1 (76.♔h3 ♖g5 wins the pawn.) 76...♖g4 Black can always win a tempo with this trick of taking on b4. 77.♙c5 ♖c4 78.♙d6 ♔f2 and the king in the corner has decisive problems. 79.e6 ♖h4+ 80.♙h2 ♖h7! White must sacrifice his pawn, as he has no other moves.

73...♖b1+ 74.♔h2 ♖e1!

Here we are! The bishop has to leave its ideal square. However, Black still has to find some really difficult moves.

75.♙c7



75...♖a1?

Sokolov fails to find the winning plan. 75...♖e2+! 76.♔h3 (76.♔g1 is met by 76...♖g2+! forcing the king into the corner, where different kinds of mate threats can be created. 77.♔h1 (77.♔f1 ♖c2 wins.) 77...♔f2! 78.e6 ♖g6 79.e7 ♖h6+ 80.♙h2 ♖h8! and the pawn must be sacrificed, which means the end of the game.) 76...♔f4!! This is the key move! Black threatens ...♖e3 and ...♖xa3, so the next move is forced. 77.♙d6 and now 77...♖d2! the final zugzwang! White loses one of the pawns, and the game. 78.♙c7 ♖d3+ 79.♔g2 ♖xa3 The e-pawn can be easily stopped. 80.e6+ ♔f5 81.e7 ♖e3

76.♙d6 ♖d1 77.♙b4 ♖d4 78.♙d6 ♖g4?

This is the final mistake. Black should have gone back to the beginning, put White in zugzwang and then find the winning plan, given in the 75...♖e2 line.

79.e6!

The pawn reaches the 7th rank. The game is drawn.

79...♖g2+ 80.♔h1 ♖e2

It's too late to create the usual mating net with 80...♔f2 81.e7 ♖g8 82.♙c5+ ♔f1 83.♔h2 and the king escapes from the corner...

81.e7 ♔g4 82.♔g1 ♔f5 83.♔f1 ♖e6 84.♔f2 ♔g6 85.♔f3 ♔f7 86.♙b4 ♔e8 87.♙c5 ♔d7

Black is still aiming for a zugzwang. He wants to attack the bishop, to threaten ...♖xb4, and try to send it away from the b4-c5-d6 squares. However, he is unable to do so... quite an unlucky position.

88.♙b4 ♖b6 89.♙c5 ♖c6

89...♖b5 90.♙d6! is the point! The bishop can hold the diagonal with this small tactical trick.

90.♙b4 ♜c4 91.♙d6!

A hard-fought draw!

1/2

GAME 14

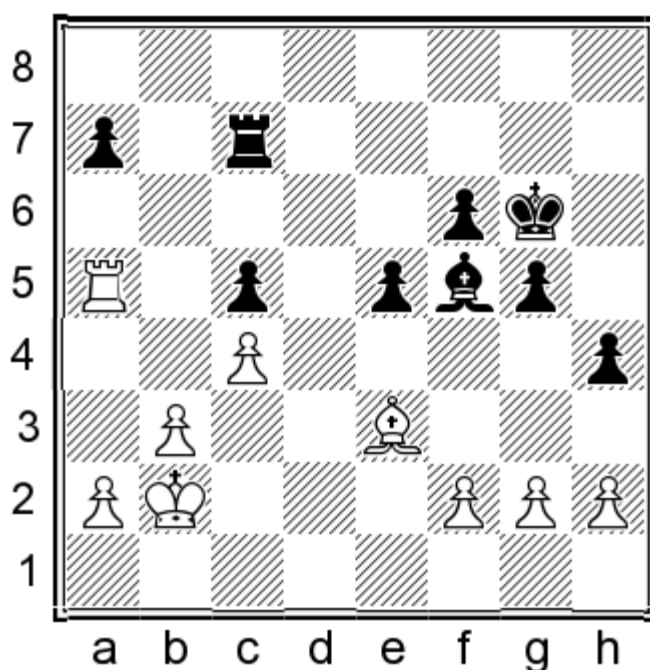
V. Anand (2780)

G. Meier (2640)

Grenke Chess Classic

15.02.2013

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



A surprising position — at least for me. White seems to be completely winning, as he is going to take the c5- and a7-pawns soon, while Black's counterplay on the kingside seems to be far behind... However, in reality, after some strong logical moves by Black, White has to play precisely to hold the draw.

39...♞d7!

Black cannot hold his queenside pawns. He must aim for the activation of his rook and to bother White's kingside.

40.♙xc5

40.♖c1 was an alternative to prevent ...♞d1, but here Black gets counterplay after 40...♙e4! 41.g3

(41.f3 ♙a8 42.♙xc5 h3! 43.gxh3 ♙xf3 and Black has also created two very dangerous passed pawns. The race begins and the outcome is unclear.)

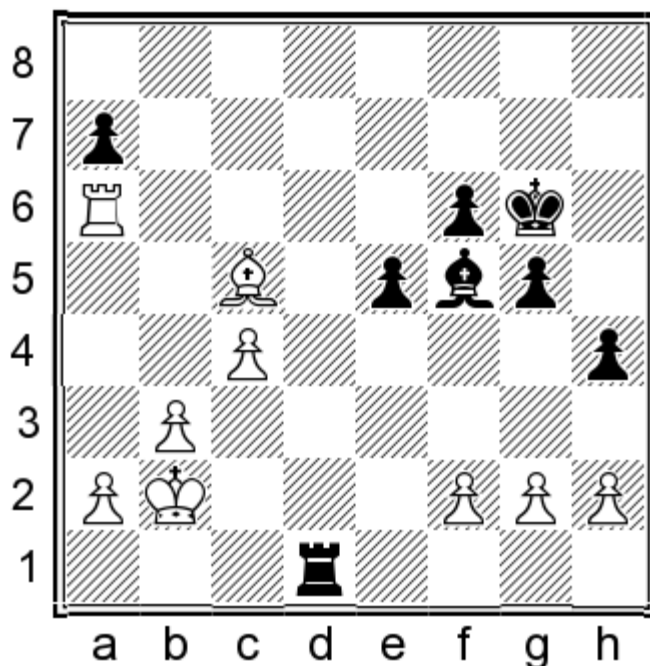
41...♙f3! Refreshing the idea of ♞d1–h1. 42.♙xc5

(42.gxh4 gxh4 43.♙xc5 ♞d1+ 44.♖c2 ♞h1)

42...♖d1+ 43.♔c2 ♜h1 Suddenly, just like in the game, Black's h-pawn becomes extremely dangerous.

40...♖d1 41.♞a6!?

A tricky move. White tries to eliminate the f6- pawn — the key of Black's pawn chain- with ♕e7, but Black has a strong response to avoid it.



41...♕c8!

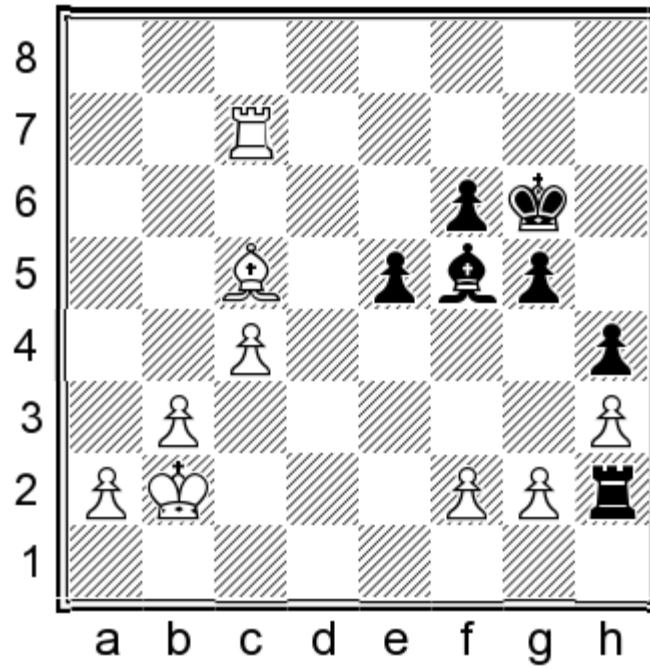
The rook cannot continue putting pressure on the f6 pawn. 41...♜h1? 42.♕e7

42.♞xa7

White is ready to push his queenside pawns, while Black is not even attacking the ones on the kingside, but his big advantage, after taking the h2- and g2-pawns, is that the h4-pawn is already very far advanced! 42.♖d6 closes the bishop's way to e7. 42...♜h1;

42.♖c6 ♕b7 43.♖d6 ♜h1 collecting the kingside.

42...♜h1 43.♖c7 ♕f5 44.h3 ♜h2



45.a4?!

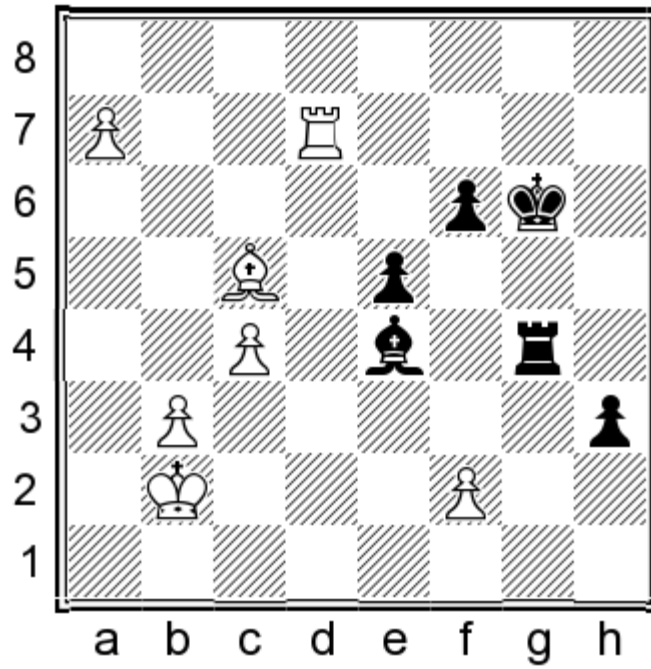
This logical move is an inaccuracy. The point is that White needs to push the pawn to a7 in order to lure the bishop to e4. On the other hand, if White had pushed his b-pawn, when it reaches the 6th rank, Black must stop it with ...♙e4. This kind of “half-tempo” makes a big difference. 45.b4! ♖xg2 46.b5 g4 47.b6 ♙e4 48.hxg4 h3 and White has 49.♖c8! threatening to go behind the pawn, which Black cannot allow. 49...♔h7 50.♖c7 and the repetition is forced.

45...♖xg2 46.a5 g4!

Black creates his own passed pawn.

47.hxg4 ♙xg4?!

47...♖xg4! was the right move to play for a win! 48.a6 h3 and White cannot play this ♖c8-h8 plan until the bishop is on f5. 49.a7 ♙e4 50.♖d7! Just as in the game, this is the only motif for White to stay in the game.



(50. ♔f8 does not stop the pawn. 50...h2 51. ♖g7+ ♔f5 52. ♖h7 h1=♚)

50...♖h4! This is the reason why Black should have taken with the rook on g4. Now it is going back to h8 to stop the a-pawn.

(50...h2 51. ♖d5! is more or less the same as the game.)

51.f3! Another only move!

(51. ♖d5? makes no sense now. 51... ♔xd5 52.cxd5 ♖h8-+ and the h-pawn promotes.)

51...h2

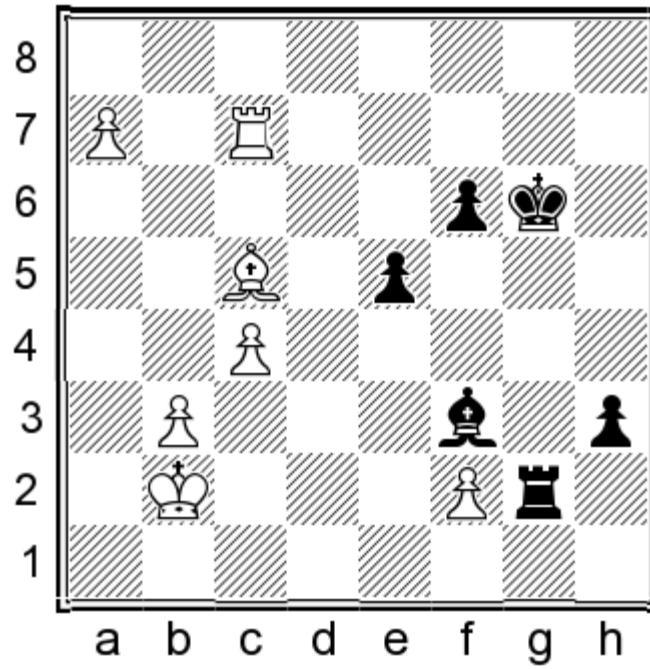
(After 51... ♔xf3 White has 52. ♔g1! h2 53. ♔xh2 ♖xh2+ 54. ♔c3 and the game is unclear. White is ready to push b4-b5 c5-c6, while Black will have more trouble mobilizing his pawns, as ...e4 does not work.)

52.fxe4 h1=♚ 53.a8=♚ ♖h2+ 54. ♖d2! The only move to stay in the game.

(54. ♔a3 ♚a1+-+; 54. ♔c3 ♚e1+ mate.)

54...♖xd2+ 55. ♔c3 ♖d7+ and Black has excellent winning chances. 47...♔e4 leads to the same draw as the 45.b4 line. Both sides have to play the following moves: 48. ♖c8 ♔h7 49. ♖c7+ ♔g6 50. ♖c8=

48.a6 h3 49.a7 ♔f3



White seems to be in trouble as the h-pawn cannot be stopped, while the f3-bishop controls the a8-square, but a resourceful move saves him!

50.♖d7!!

50.♖c8 loses to 50...♔h7! 51.♖c7+ and Black is not forced to play ...♔g6, but rather 51...♖g7! wins.

50...h2 51.♖d5!

blocking the bishop's diagonal.

51...♕xd5 52.cxd5 h1=♔ 53.a8=♔

Black has a small material advantage, but his king is too exposed. He cannot give a check at the moment, while the queen and bishop's co-operation is ready to give perpetual check... The draw is inevitable.

53...♖g1 54.♖g8+ ♔f5 55.♖e6+ ♔g6 56.♖g8+

An instructive endgame!

1/2

GAME 15

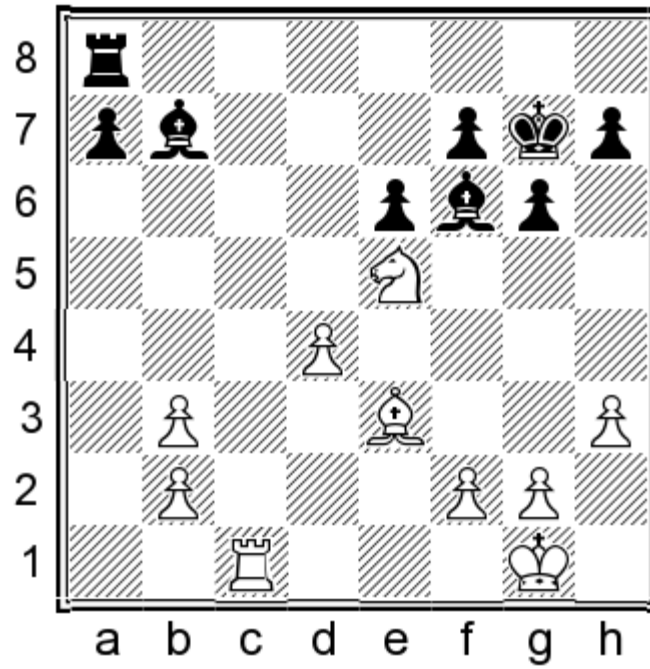
L. Aronian (2804)

B. Gelfand (2740)

London

16.03.2013

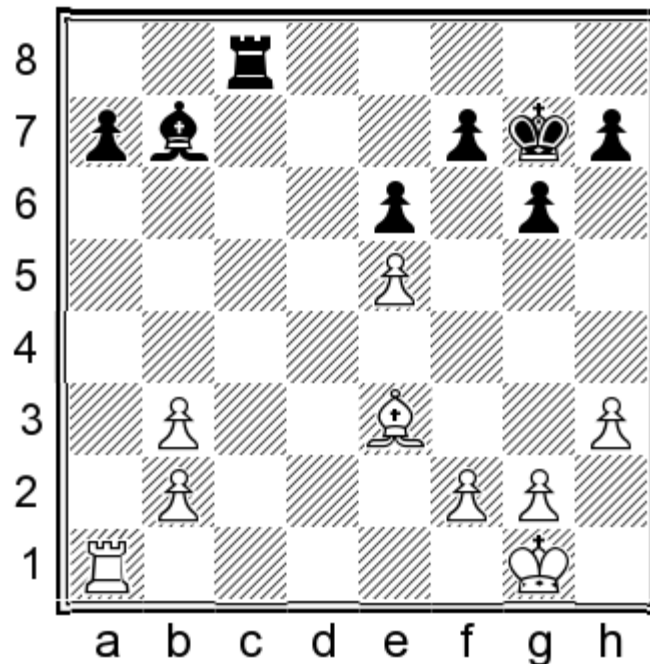
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



The first win of the Candidates tournament was scored by Aronian. Here White has an extra pawn, but Black has high hopes for a draw with the pair of bishops and the doubled b-pawns. Even in such a “dry” position, tactical elements might play a key role.

24...♔d8

A slightly dubious move. 24...♖c8 was much more logical as the exchange of the rooks would hugely increase Black’s defensive chances. White must leave the open file to maintain his advantage 25.♖a1! (25.♖xc8 ♔xc8 without the rooks, all the opposite-colored bishops endgames would be just dead drawn.) 25...a6 (25...♙xe5 26.dxe5



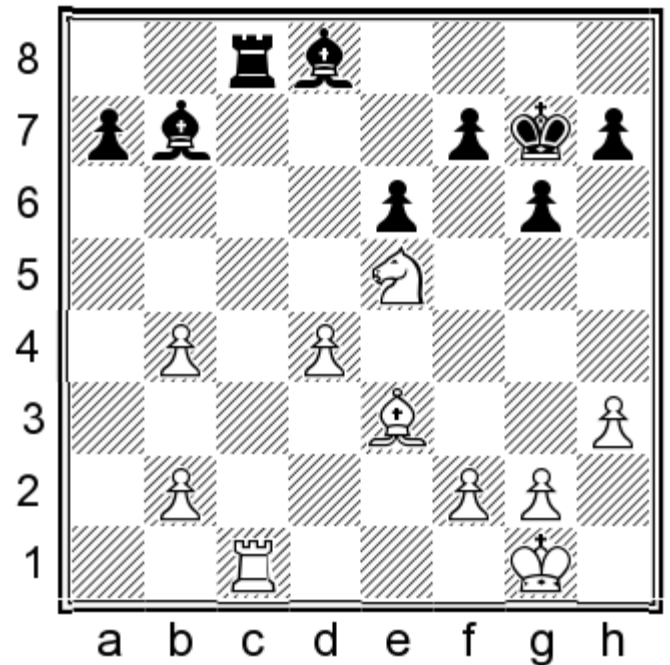
26...a6 This is an instructive position. It seems like a dead draw, but the Black king is horrendously placed, which gives White decent chances to convert his advantage. 27.♙g5! The bishop is going to f6. The next step will be to activate the rook. It could be most easily achieved by ♖a4 and invading via the 4th rank, for instance with ♖b4. 27...h6 28.♙f6+

♔h7 Black would like his king to escape with ...g5 and ...♔g6, so the next move is very important! 29.h4! and on 29...g5 Black tries to get his king out even at the cost of a pawn, but White should not be greedy and play instead 30.h5! when ♖a4 is coming next.) 26.♘c4 White can continue pressing. Or 26.♞a4 as Aronian pointed out at the press conference.

24...♙d8 25.b4!

with the idea of b5 and ♘c6, trying to make the doubled pawns more useful. Black now makes a decisive mistake.

25...♞c8?



25...♙d5 should have been played, although White is better after 26.b5 and ♘c6 next.

26.♙h6+!!

An amazing trick, which was clearly missed by Gelfand. The game turns into a tactical battle.

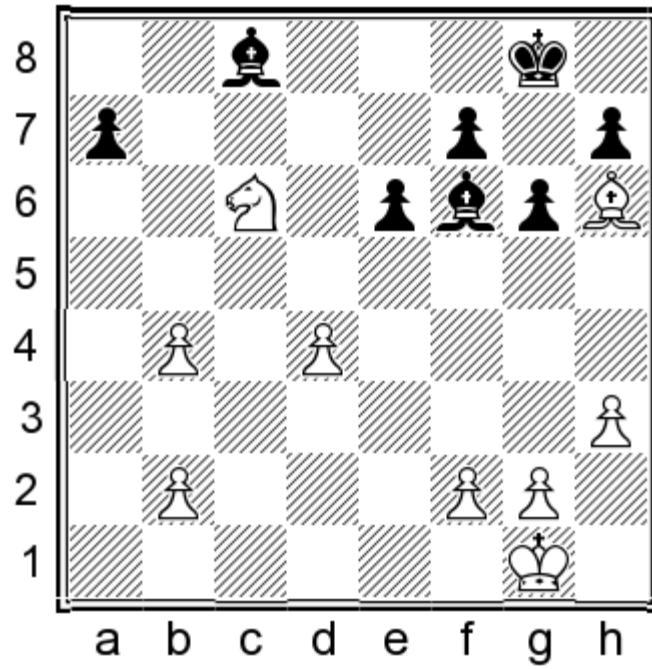
26...♔g8

This is a sad necessity. The king now finds himself poorly placed and this becomes the main reason for Black's quick collapse. On 26...♔f6 White continues the hunt of the king with 27.♙g5+! Black is forced to take this time, but the endgame is hopeless. 27...♔xg5 28.♘xf7+ ♔f6 29.♞xc8 ♙xc8 30.♘xd8+- with two extra pawns. 26...♔xh6 loses to 27.♘xf7+ ♔g7 28.♞xc8 ♙xc8 29.♘xd8+-

27.♞xc8 ♙xc8 28.♘c6!

Black must control the e7-square and therefore cannot reach the b6-square, which was the idea behind 24...♙d8.

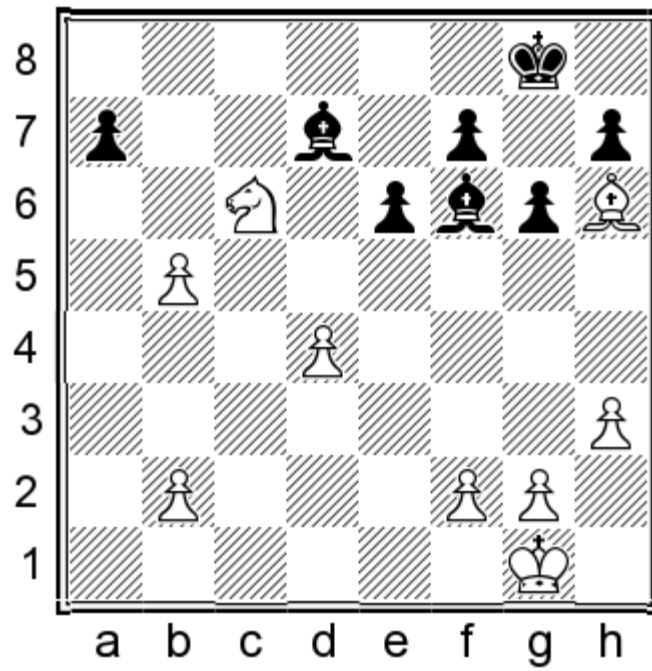
28...♙f6



29.b5!

White blocks a7 so it will not run away. It is important to keep the knight on c6 to paralyze Black's bishops. The king is also trapped. After the greedy 29.♖xa7 Black gets chances for survival. 29...♙b7 30.♙e3 The d4-pawn had to be protected, but it allows the king to escape. 30...♗f8!

29...♙b7



30.g4!!

Another brilliant move! Black has no good defense against g5, after which the f6-bishop has no good square to leave.

30...g5

The saving idea 30...a6 misses by just one tempo. 31.g5! The bishop is trapped, since 31...♙h8 is met with a nice mate. (31...axb5 drops a piece after 32.♘b8! ♕xd4 33.♘d7 ♕xb2 34.♕f8!+- The bishop gets activated after gaining a decisive material advantage.) 32.♘e7#

31.h4!

It is obligatory for the win to get the pawn to g5, so the pawn sacrifice is justified!

31...gxh4 32.g5 ♕xc6

This is tantamount to resignation, but there was nothing better... 32...♕g7 33.♕xg7 ♔xg7 34.♘xa7+- wins easily.

33.bxc6 ♕d8 34.♔g2

and White collects the h4-pawn and then heads to the queenside to support the promotion of the c-pawn.

34...♕c7 35.♔h3

Black resigned. Great technique by Aronian!

1-0

GAME 16

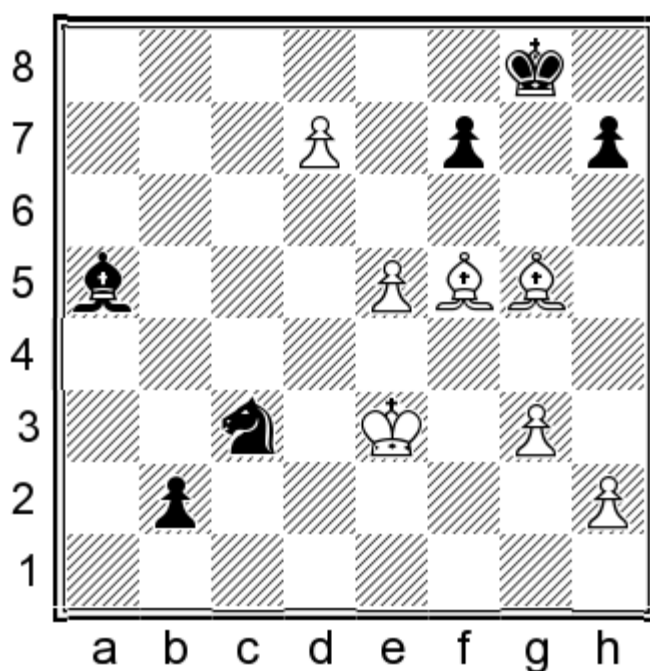
V. Kramnik (2810)

L. Aronian (2809)

FIDE Candidates

20.03.2013

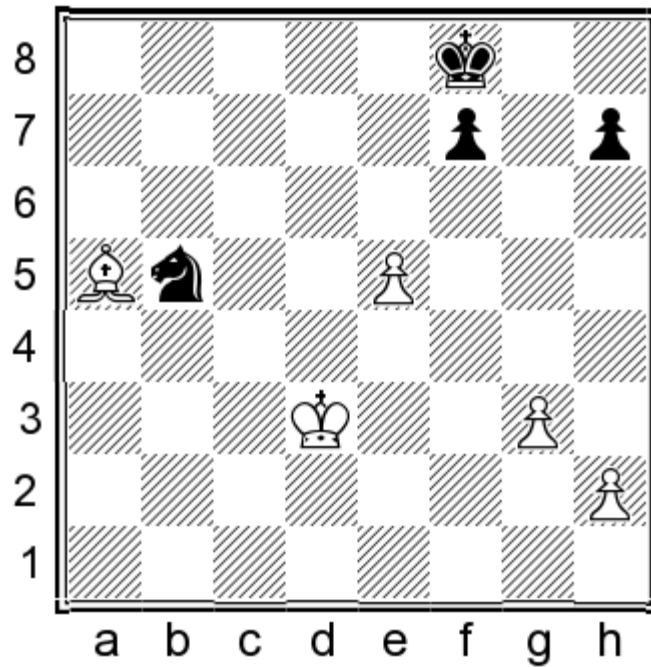
Annotated by Csaba Balogh



Kramnik played great chess, but somehow, in the first half of the tournament, he was unable to convert his advantages. Here Black has a really unpleasant endgame, but Aronian finds a miraculous defense and holds the draw with flawless technique.

41...f6!!

This leads to an opposite-colored bishop endgame, which seems to be hopeless at first sight. However, Aronian has evaluated the arising position much deeper. 41...b1=♔ seems to be possible as well. 42.♙xb1 ♖xb1 43.d8=♔+ This keeps more winning chances. (43.♙d3 is quite a tricky alternative, trying to trap the knight. 43...♜c3! is the only move, after which Black seems to survive. (Other moves like 43...♙f8 lose after 44.d8=♔+ ♙xd8 45.♙xd8 ♜a3 46.♙a5! ♜b5



47.♙b6! and Black cannot avoid losing his knight. 47...♙e8 48.♙c4 ♜a3+ 49.♙b3 ♜b5 (49...♜b1 50.♙e3!+- and ♙b2 next move.) 50.♙b4+-) 44.♙c4 ♜e4 45.♙e7 ♙g7 46.♙b5 ♙c7 47.♙c6 ♙a5= and the a5-d8 diagonal is long enough for the Black bishop to hold it.) 43...♙xd8 44.♙xd8 ♜c3 45.♙d4 It is hard to judge if this position is winning or drawn. The knight has serious difficulties finding a way back home. If it could get to e6, or wherever in his own camp, White would have no chance to promote his extra pawn -but the knight is very far away.

41...f6!! 42.♙xf6!

The critical continuation. 42.e6?? is a blunder. 42...♜d5+ 43.♙d4 ♜e7 and Black wins a piece. While 42.exf6 leads to an easy draw. 42...♙b6+ 43.♙d2 b1=♔ 44.♙xb1 ♖xb1+ 45.♙c2 ♜a3+ 46.♙b3 ♜b5 and White has to win back the piece with f7 and d8=♔, but of course, with 2 vs 1 pawns on the kingside, the position is dead drawn.

42...♜d5+

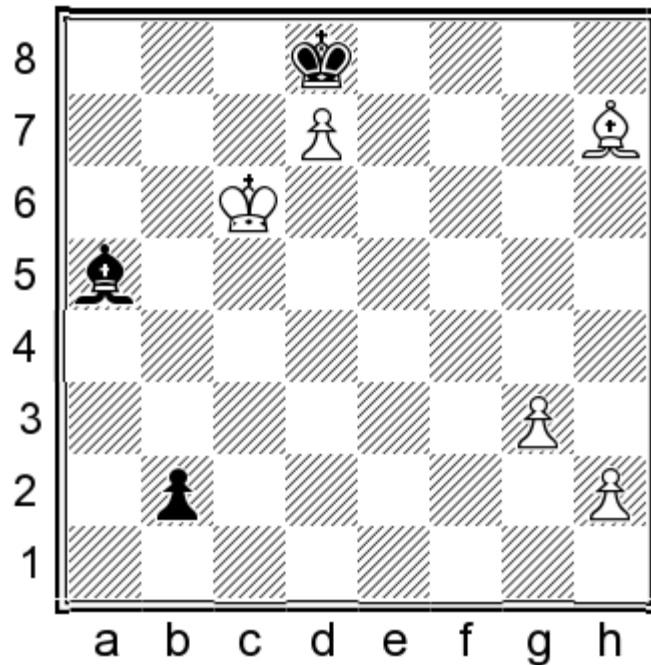
This was the point of 41...f6. Black escapes into an opposite-colored bishop endgame.

43.♙d4 ♜xf6 44.exf6 ♙f7!

Otherwise, White would have simply driven his king to c8 to promote his pawn... But now it looks like giving up the h7-pawn and creating connected passed pawns is a kind of hopeless attempt. However, the facts support a different outcome.

45.♙xh7 ♖xf6 46.♗d5 ♗e7 47.♗c6 ♗d8!

Black needs to keep his king ahead of the d-pawn.



47...♗d8 loses easily after 48.♙b1+— followed by advancing the h-pawn, which lures the Black king to the kingside after which White can continue his plan with ♗b7-c8.

48.g4

White, sooner or later, had to play this move, since this is the only way to make some progress. Unfortunately for him, the h4-h5 plan does not work because it drops a pawn to ♗e1. However, this move allows the Black bishop to stand between the pawns. It is important to mention that the game is drawn only because of the unfortunate placement of the h7-bishop — if it was anywhere on the b1–f5 diagonal, White would be winning. We will soon understand why...

48...♗e1!

The bishop heads to h4! 48...♗d2? would allow White to reach the h5-square with his pawn, which is enough to win the game. 49.h4 ♗e1 50.h5 ♗d2 51.♙b1 ♗c1 52.♗d6 ♗d2 53.♗e6 ♗e3 54.♗f5! Just as in the game, White needs to place his bishop on f5 and then he can support the pawns with his king. 54...♗d2 55.♗f6 b1=♚ Black has traded the b-pawn for the one on d7, but in comparison to the game, he is unable to save things here. 56.♙xb1 ♗xd7 White needs to be careful, since the h8 corner does not match the color of the bishop. 57.♗g7! ♗e6 58.h6 ♗c3+ 59.♗g8+— and the h-pawn promotes.

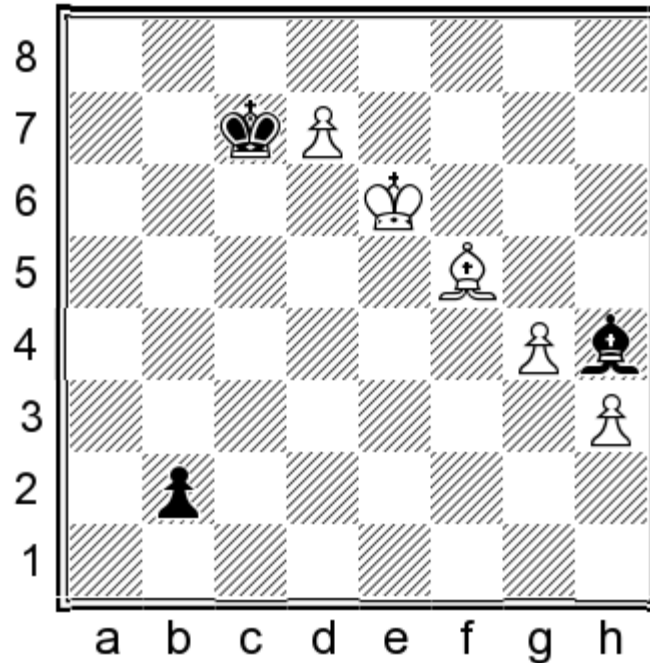
49.h3

49.g5 does not work. 49...♗h4! and g6 blocks the diagonal, so Black could promote his pawn. This is the reason why the bishop is badly placed on h7.

49...♗h4 50.♗d6 ♗e7+ 51.♗e6 ♗h4

The Black bishop has occupied an excellent defensive position. Before White tries his only chance to make progress, Kramnik completes the 60 moves time control by passing with the bishop in order to gain 15 additional minutes.

52.♖b1 ♜c7 53.♙e4 ♜d8 54.♙c2 ♜c7 55.♙b1 ♜d8 56.♙e4 ♜c7 57.♙d3 ♜d8 58.♜d6 ♙e7+ 59.♜e6 ♙h4 60.♙f5 ♜c7



61.♜f7

With the idea of ♜g6 and advancing the pawns. Black needs to trade the b-pawn for the one on d7 in order to be able to add his king to the defense.

61...b1=♚ 62.♙xb1 ♜xd7 63.♙a2!

This is the correct diagonal for the bishop, where it cuts the Black king off from reaching the corner after sacrificing his bishop for the g-pawn. 63.♜g6? is a much worse attempt. 63...♜e7 64.g5 ♙xg5! 65.♜xg5 ♜f7=

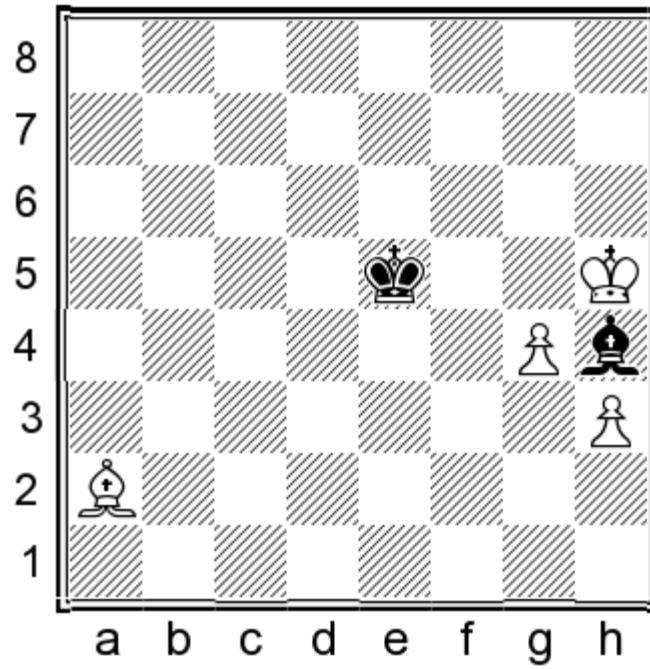
63...♜d6!

Aronian shows a great defensive method by taking his king behind the pawns. Actually, this is the only way for Black to save himself! Passing with 63...♙d8 leads to defeat after 64.♜g6 ♜e8 65.g5! ♜f8 (65...♙xg5 is not enough now. 66.♜xg5 ♜f8 67.♜g6! The Black king does not reach the corner, thanks to the excellent placement of the a2-bishop.) 66.h4 ♙e7 67.♜h7!+- followed by g6.

64.♜g6 ♜e5!

64...♜e7 loses similarly to the previous line with 63...♙d8. 65.♜h5 ♙f2 66.g5 ♜f8 67.♜h6 ♙e3 68.h4+- and ♜h7 is coming next, followed by g6.

65.♜h5



65...♖e7!!

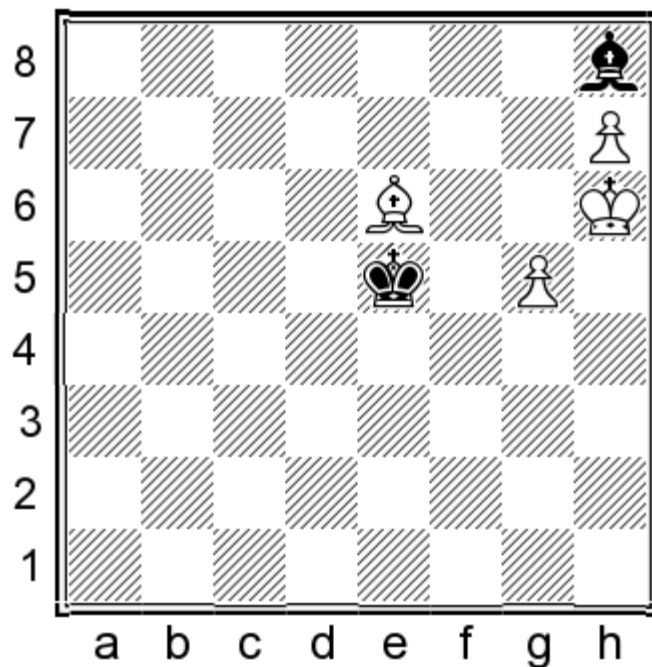
Another only move! We will soon understand its point! 65...♖d8 is refuted by 66.g5 ♖f4 67.g6 ♖f6 68.♖h6 ♖g3 69.♖e6+— wins. 65...♖f2 also loses after 66.g5 ♖f4 67.g6 ♖d4 68.♖h6 ♖g3 69.♖e6+—

66.g5 ♖f4 67.h4

The point is that after 67.g6 Black has 67...♖f8! and suddenly the White king is squeezed to h5. Black only plays ...♖g7-f8 from now on, and White cannot make progress. This is the reason why taking the bishop to e7 was the only move.

67...♖g3!

Yet another only move! Black could not let the king escape from h5. 67...♖f8 is refuted by 68.♖g6! ♖b4 69.h5 ♖c3 70.h6 ♖g4 71.h7 ♖h8 when White can create a zugzwang! 72.♖e6+ ♖f4 73.♖h6 ♖e5



74. ♖h3+– This is the zugzwang. White does not threaten g6 because of ...♔f6, and the draw is inevitable, since the bishop proceeds to move between g7-h8 forever. However, Black needs to move his king now, after which g6 already wins the game.

68. ♖c4 ♕f8!

The final difficult ‘only’ move! 68...♕c5 loses to 69.g6 ♕d4 (69... ♕f8 70. ♔g5! and h5 wins.) 70. ♔g5 wins.

69. ♖e2 ♕g7

Black now intends to wait with ...♕g7-f8. White cannot make progress.

70. ♖c4

70. ♔g6 ♔xh4!= is the key!

70... ♕f8 71.g6

White intends to play ♔g5 and h5, but Black is in time to squeeze the king to h5!

71... ♔f4! 72. ♖a2 ♕g7

and here the draw was agreed! A fantastic defense from Aronian and, on the other hand, a very sad and unlucky draw for Kramnik!

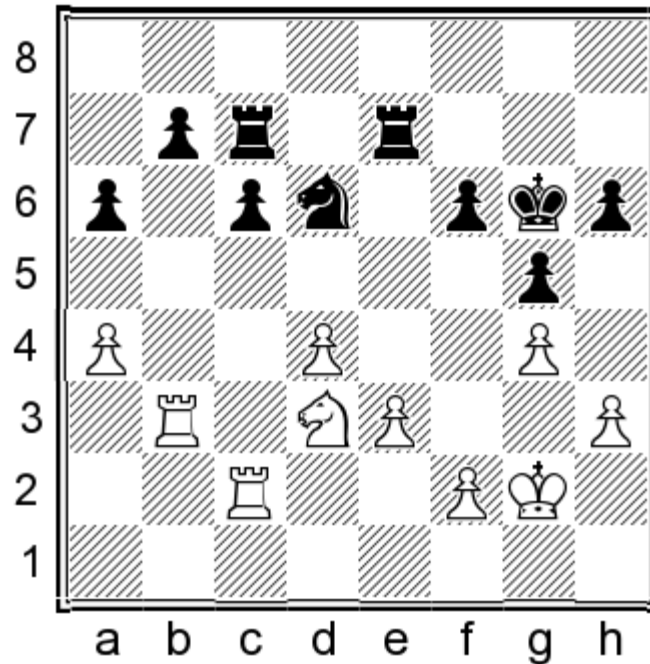
1/2

GAME 17

V. Ivanchuk (2757)

T. Radjabov (2793)

FIDE Candidates,



After move 40 and a little time-trouble, we have the endgame before us. It is clear that White is pushing, but is it enough to win the game?

41. ♖c5 h5

A very logical move. As the defender, it is always good to exchange an extra pawn.

42. ♜b1

I am not sure about this move as Black is now able to exchange the knight. 42. ♔f3 Not allowing the Black knight to go to e4 looks very logical to me. The White king could go to d3 via e2.

42... ♞e4!

I think the correct decision. Black's position will be very passive, but very solid.

43. ♞xe4 ♜xe4 44. ♔f3 ♜ee7

Black is going to hold everything together on the 7th rank.

45. e4

White centralises as much as possible. The a5 move won't run away.

45... ♜cd7 46. ♔e3 ♜d5 47. f3 ♜d6

Black cannot do much more than wait.

48. ♜b6

I am not sure whether this move was right, as now the White rook must remain passive on d2. White could have tried to keep both rooks active, e.g. 48.a5!? ♖d5 (48...♗ed7 does not work now 49.♗b4 followed by ♗b2.) 49.♗c5 ♗xc5 50.dxc5 ♗e5 51.♕d4 ♗e7 Black might hold this, but White is clearly better...

48...♗ed7 49.♗d2 hxg4?

What a mistake! Black plays very logically, exchanging a pawn, but White now gets the h-file, and this is deadly. 49...h4 would lead to a very passive position, but one which is very difficult to break.

50.hxg4 ♕f7 51.a5

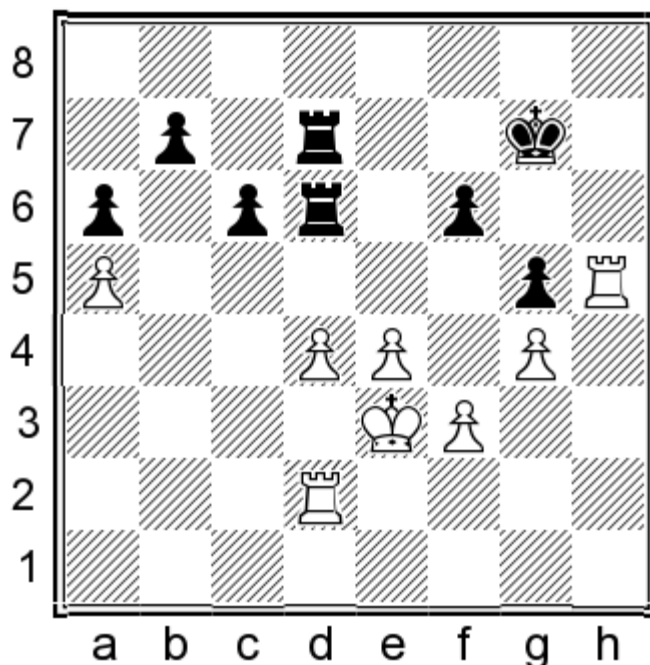
White has achieved the maximum he could expect, and now it is time to try to find a winning plan.

51...♕e7 52.♗b1 ♕f7 53.♗h1

Over to the h-file! It is definitely an idea. 53.♗b4? would seem to be a good move (with the idea of playing ♗db2) but Black always counts on 53...c5! with, probably, just a draw.

53...♕g7 54.♗h5

What can White's idea be now? To play e5 or to play ♗dh2 at a good moment.



54...♗d8

Black was probably afraid of playing 54...♕g6 to make sure that the pawn on g5 is protected against White's e5-push, because of 55.♗h8! The White rook enters the position. 55...♕g7 56.♗b8 and White has clearly obtained a lot! An exchange of rooks would be bad for Black because the d5-move would be possible.

55.♗d1

White takes the rook away from the 2nd rank, in order to be able to play ♗dh1 and have the escape ♕f2-♕g3 against Black's ...♗xd4, without allowing him to play ♗d2+ and ♗xh2, exchanging the rooks. 55.e5! would have been strong as

well, but we will see a similar continuation just the next move.

55...♖8d7

This move is losing, but it is hard to give Black good advice here... It does not help much to play 55...♔g6 56.♖dh1 ♖xd4 57.♖h7 with mate next move.

56.e5!

The final blow...

56...♖d5 57.♖dh1 ♔f7

This loses on the spot. 57...♖xd4 58.e6! and Black is losing a rook. 58...♖d3+ 59.♔f2 ♖d2+ 60.♔g3+—

58.♖h7+

We are now in the technical part of the game.

58...♔e6 59.♖xd7 ♔xd7 60.♖h7+ ♔e6 61.♖h6!

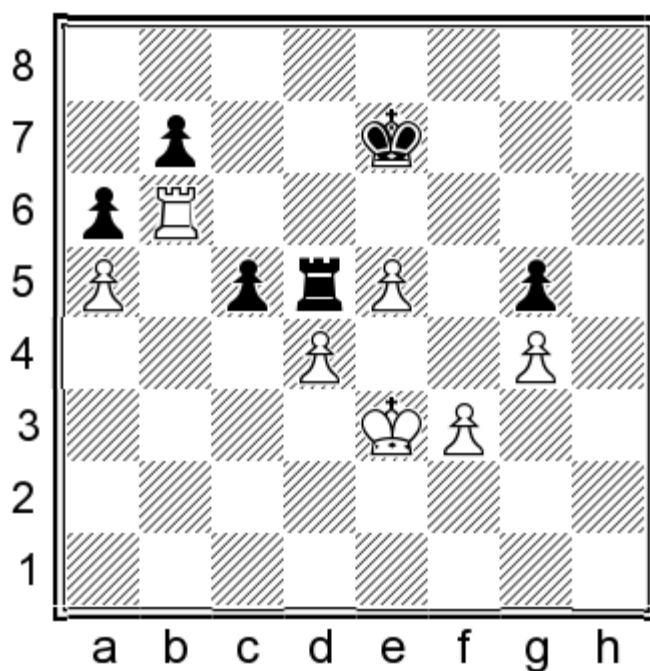
There is no reason for White to get seduced by the b7-pawn... the f6-pawn is much sweeter.

61...c5

Probably the best chance for Black, but it is simply too little, too late...

62.♖xf6+ ♔e7 63.♖b6!

The last exact move. From now on, things are very easy...



63...♖xd4

63...cxd4+ 64.♔e4 and the game is over.

64.♟xb7+ ♔e6 65.♟g7

capturing the g5-pawn away and, with it, winning the game.

65...♞a4 66.♟xg5 ♞xa5 67.f4

The 3 pawns start their march.

67...♞a3+ 68.♔d2 ♞a2+ 69.♔c3 ♞f2

trying to create a “hole” in the pawns, but it is too late for anything.

70.♟g6+ ♔d5 71.♞d6+ ♔e4 72.♞f6

White can even choose which pawn to push, e- or g-.

72...a5

The e-pawn is closer to the promotion square on the 8th rank :)

73.e6 ♔d5 74.f5 ♞e2 75.♞f8 ♔d6 76.f6

Really great endgame technique from White!

1–0

GAME 18

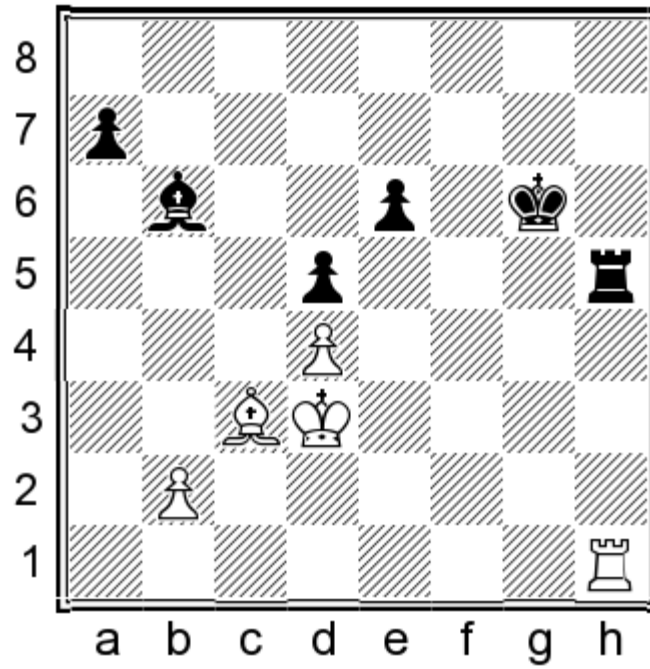
Vachier M. Lagrave (2718)

C. Balogh (2644)

European Championship

11.05.2013

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



I managed to reach an endgame with an extra pawn, but to convert it is extremely difficult because of the limited material left on the board. Black can only create a passed pawn with the ...e5 break, but it leads to further exchanges.

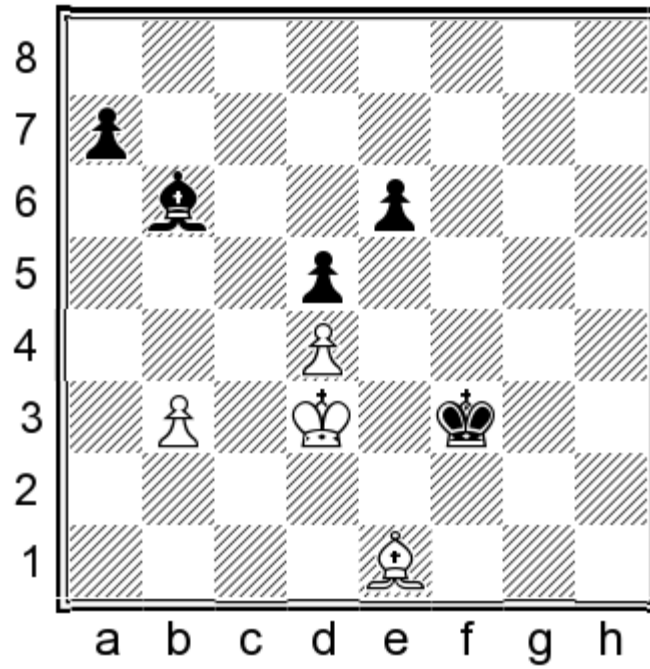
48. ♖xh5

White trades the rooks, as he does not see how can Black break through, although it looks at first sight that it going to be much more difficult for him to defend... In my opinion, if White keeps the rooks on the board, that should hold as well, but of course Black can try to win for a very long time by heading with his king to the queenside.

48... ♔xh5 49. b3

A principled move, putting the pawn on a light square where the Black bishop cannot attack it.

49... ♔g4 50. ♕d2 ♖f3 51. ♕e1



Black's only chance to win the game is to get behind the b3-pawn. It looks impossible to get there, but things are not so easy.

51...♔g2

The king is heading to the e1-square, but of course, it will not be easy to get the bishop out from the diagonal.

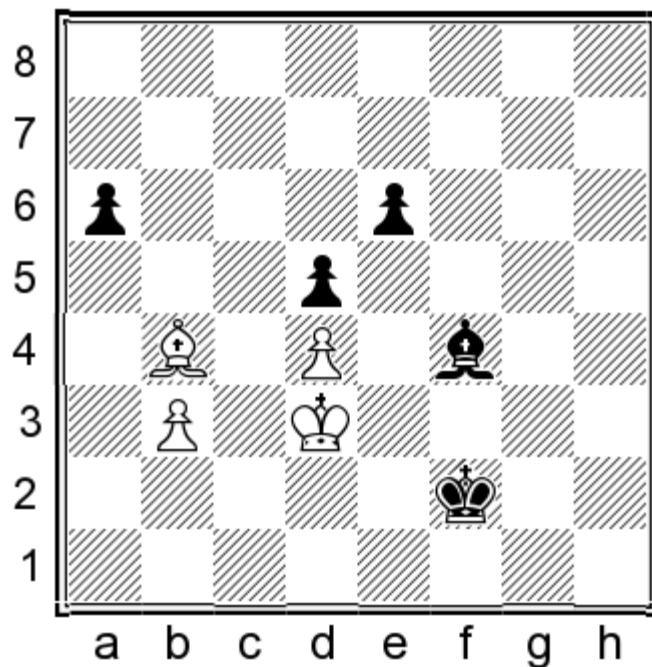
52.♙d2 ♕f2 53.♙b4 a6

I also put my pawn on a light square to avoid getting attacked later on. There was a nice trick, for example, after 53...♕f1 when White cannot trap the bishop with 54.♙c5 with the idea of paralyzing Black, because of 54...e5! 55.♙xb6 e4+! This intermediate check wins the game. 56.♕e3 axb6—+

54.♙d2 ♙c7

Black does not need to hurry to make progress, since White can only pass with his bishop...

55.♙c3 ♙f4 56.♙b4



56...♔f1!

Getting ready to drive the bishop to e1 in order to send White's away from the e1–a5 diagonal.

57.♖c3 ♗g5 58.♖b4 ♗h4 59.♖a5 ♗e1 60.♖d8

White transfers his bishop to the h4–e1 diagonal this time, but this is one square shorter than e1–a5, and it is enough for Black to get him into zugzwang!

60...♖b4 61.♖h4 ♖a3 62.♔d2!

Good prophylaxis against the ...♖c1 threat. 62.♖g3 would have been met by 62...♖c1 63.♖h4 ♖f4! and White is in zugzwang. If the king moves, ...♔e2 comes closer, while on any bishop move, ...♔e1 is possible.

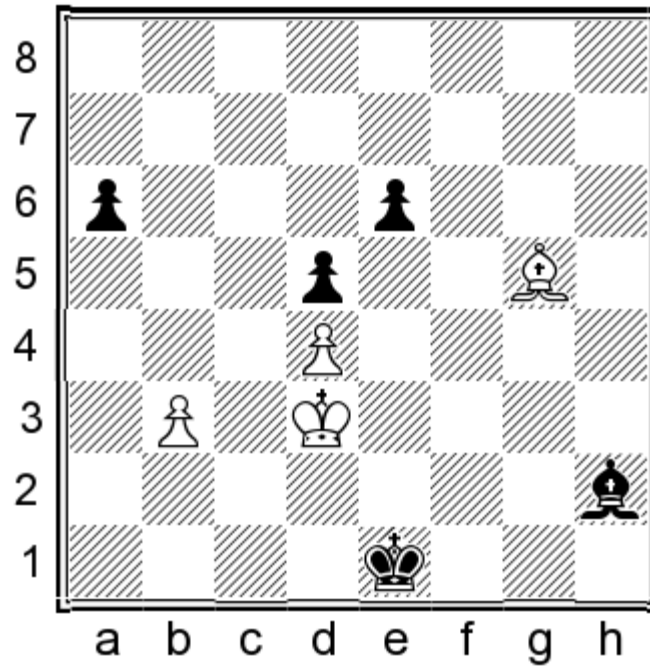
62...♖d6 63.♔e3 ♖h2

White is in zugzwang. He must allow Black to play ♔e1!

64.♖g5

64.♔d3 ♖f4 and ♔e1 next. 64.♔d2 ♖f4+ 65.♔d3 ♖h6 and again, ...♔e1 next.

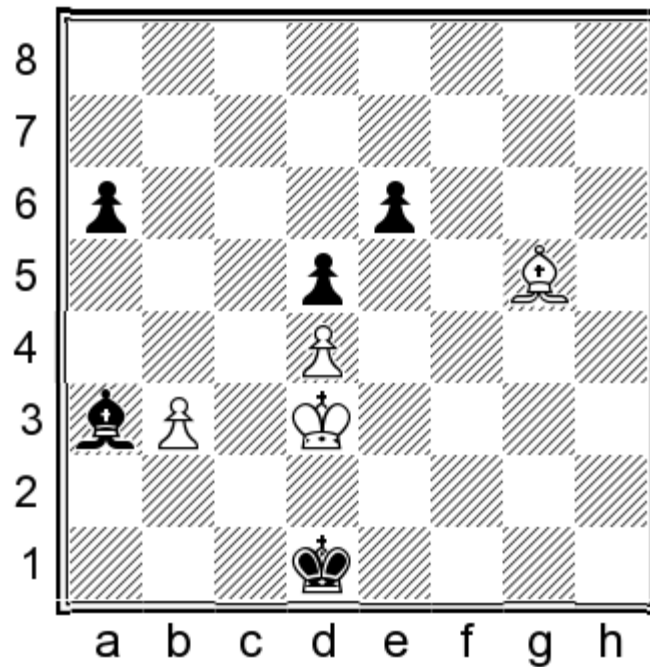
64...♔e1 65.♔d3



65...♔d1

I am closer to my aim of getting my king to b2, but this time I need to drive the bishop away from the c1–h6 diagonal. It can only be done if I transfer my bishop to c1.

66.♞d2 ♞d6 67.♞g5 ♞a3



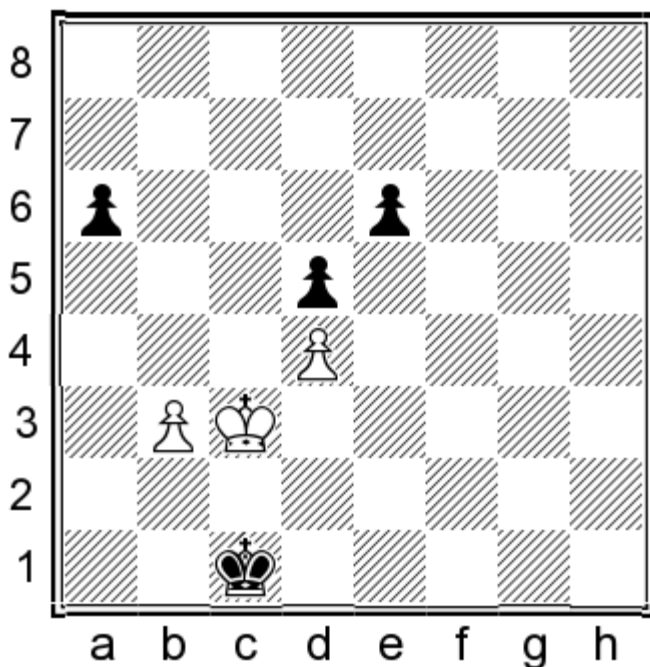
68.♔c3!!

Brilliant defense by my opponent! Only this hidden idea saves White from a loss! If White continues waiting, then 68.♞f4 ♞c1 69.♞d6 ♞d2 70.♞c5 ♞e1! This is the key and it wins for Black. ...♔c1 is threatened now, because after ♞a3,

Black has ...♖b1. White is forced to play 71.♙a3 but Black can create a zugzwang with a triangulation! 71...♙f2 72.♖c3 ♙g3 73.♖d3 (73. ♙b2 loses to 73...e5!-+ and e4 next, as the pawn cannot be taken.) 73...♙e1 Here we are! Only the bishop can move now. 74.♙b2 (74. ♙d6 ♖c1-+ wins.) 74...♙b4 and here is another zugzwang. Black wins. 75.♙a1 ♖c1-+

68...a5

I was very unhappy making this move, putting my pawn on a dark square, but I could not make progress otherwise. The point of the 68.♖c3 move is that after 68...♙c1 White has 69.♙xc1!! ♖xc1



70.b4! and the pawn endgame is drawn. White holds the draw by keeping the opposition with the king. 70...♖b1 71.♖b3 ♖a1 72.♖a3 ♖b1 73.♖b3 ♖c1 74.♖c3 ♖d1 75.♖d3 ♖e1 76.♖e3 ♖f1 77.♖f3 ♖g1 78.♖g3 ♖h1 79.♖h3= Wherever the king goes, White just follows him. 68...♖e2 would have been another way to progress, but this time White can trap the bishop by 69.b4! The only move to rescue it from the threat of ♖b3 is 69...♖d1 but now 70.♖b3 ♙c1 71.♙xc1 ♖xc1 72.♖c3= and we have the same draw.

69.♖d3 ♙c1

With the pawn on a5, I already cannot win the game, as White has a target there.

70.♙d8 ♙d2 71.♙e7!

Another only move to have ♙a3 check on ...♖c1.

71...♖c1 72.♙a3+ ♖d1 73.♙e7 ♙b4

73...♙e1 The triangulation no longer helps. 74.♙g5 ♙g3 75.♙d8 and White can force the bishop back to e1...

74.♙g5

Here I had to admit that my opponent had defended perfectly and agreed to a draw.

GAME 19

D. Jakovenko (2731)

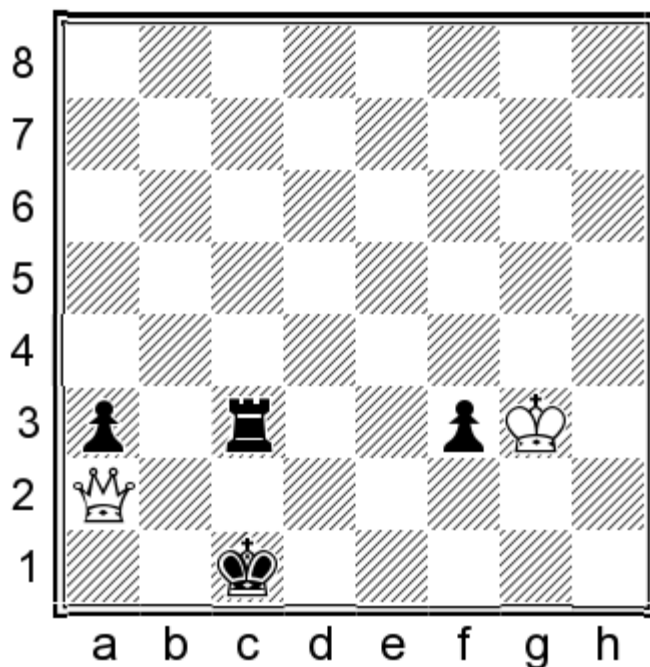
A. Goganov (2552)

14th Euro Indiv 2013,

Legnica POL (8.36)

13.05.2013, [B48]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



We are in quite a funny position. The main question is whether White is winning or if it is a draw? At first sight, Black has excellent drawing chances. The two pawns on the 3rd rank plus the a-pawn seem to even give Black good play?! But in fact, he needs to be very accurate to lead the game towards a draw.

118.♔f4!

A good move. Black wanted to play ...f2 and ...♖c2+. Now the white king wants to get to d4 and the rook on c3 will simply have no good squares.

118...f2!

A great rescue attempt by Black! In case of a slow move such as 118...♔d1 119.♔e4 ♔e1 120.♔d4 White's king would push the rook away from the 3rd rank. 120...♖c7 121.♔d3! and the game is over...

119.♔e4!

White uses his best chances. 119.♞xf2 would lead to a simpler draw, e.g. 119...♔b1 and even if White wins the rook on c3, it would still be a draw after Black's ...a2 move.

119...f1=♞!

An excellent move from Black again, and it was so easy to go wrong. For example: 119...♖c2?! would almost give White the full point after 120.♞a1+ ♔d2 121.♔f3! White's king is hunting down the f-pawn. 121...f1=♞+ 122.♞xf1 a2

123.♚a1 and it seems as though White has good winning chances here.

120.♚a1+ ♔c2 121.♚xf1 ♔b2

Black's dream came true. The white queen cannot get to a1, which means that if Black manages to play ...a2 now, the position would be just a draw.

122.♚e2+ ♔b3 123.♚b5+ ♔c2 124.♚a5 ♔b2

It seems like White cannot improve the position of his queen anymore, so it is time to come a little bit closer with the king.

125.♔d4 ♚b3

The only move that does not lose.

126.♔c4

It seems like the game is over. The white king is very close and Black's a-pawn has not reached the a2 square, but...

126...♔a2!

Black defends excellently, making a lot of 'only' moves. The black rook is going to take up a perfect square on b2.

127.♚d5 ♚b2 128.♔c3+ ♔a1

And it might seem funny, but this position is a draw! White can do nothing to break Black's little fortress. The remaining moves prove this, and there is no need for comment! What a great defense by Black from the starting position!

129.♚d4 ♔a2 130.♚d1 ♚b1 131.♚d5+ ♔a1 132.♚d6 ♔a2 133.♚e6+ ♔a1 134.♚d6 ♔a2 135.♚d5+ ♔a1 136.♚d3 ♚b2 137.♔c4 ♔a2 138.♚c3 ♚b1 139.♚c2+ ♚b2 140.♚a4 ♚b1 141.♔c3 ♚b2 142.♚e4 ♚b3+ 143.♔c2 ♚b2+ 144.♔c1 ♔a1 145.♚d4 ♔a2 146.♚d3 ♚b4 147.♚d5+ 1/2

GAME 20

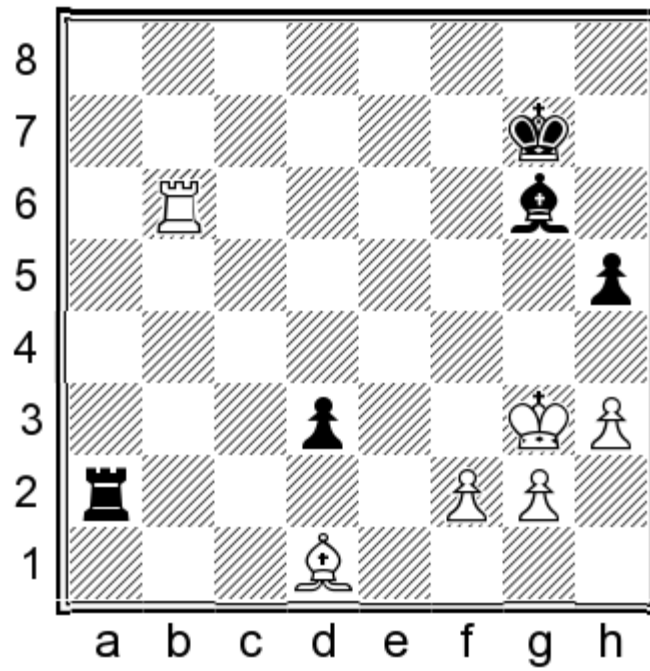
M. Carlsen (2864)

V. Kramnik (2803)

Tal memorial

13.06.2013

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

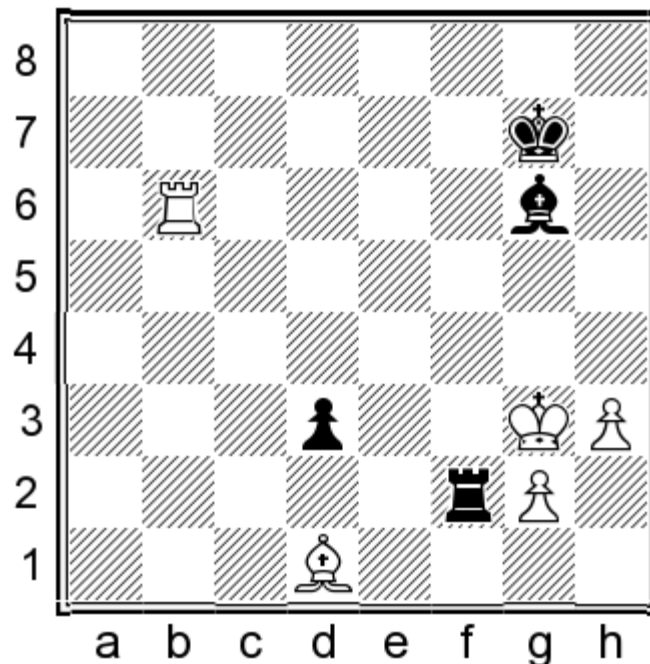


White has an extra pawn, but the strong d-passer and the active pieces give Black excellent drawing chances. However, after a long think, Kramnik simplified the position into an instructive bishop endgame, which he thought was drawn, but was in fact losing.

42...h4+?

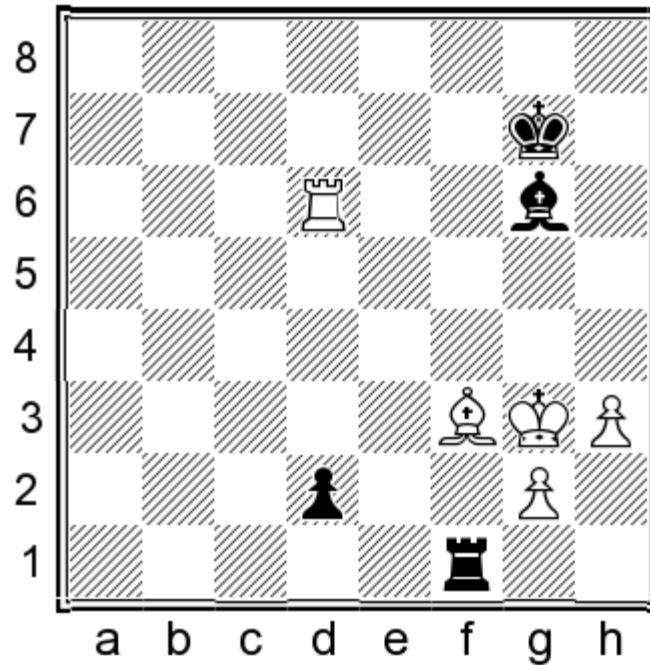
It is a positional mistake to help White create the g-h passers, which was exactly his idea. Kramnik made this mistake because of a faulty evaluation of the arising bishop endgame. 42...♖a1 43.♔f3 ♖a4! was the right defence with the idea of pushing ...h4, when White's task to create connected passed pawns would be much more difficult. Black's drawing chances are better than White's winning chances.

42...h4+? 43.♔xh4 ♖xf2 44.♔g3



44...♖f6?

Kramnik wanted to get his rook behind his d-pawn. 44...♖f1 was the better practical chance 45.♕g4!± is an important resource, followed by ♜d6 stopping the pawn. After that, White puts his bishop on f3 and starts to advance his pawns. (However the most obvious 45.♕f3? allows Black a nice survival trick, viz: 45...d2! 46.♞d6



46...♕e4!! 47.♞xd2 (47.♕g4 ♜g1 48.♞xd2 ♜xg2+! 49.♞xg2 ♕xg2 50.♕xg2 and the position is a draw because of the wrong promotion square on h8.) 47...♕xf3 48.gxf3 with a theoretical draw.) 45...♕e4 46.♞b4 ♕c6 47.♞d4 Black cannot go for the g2-pawn because 47...♜g1 48.♕f3! ♕xf3 49.♕xf3 ♞d1 50.♕e3 ♜g1 51.♜g4++- wins for White.

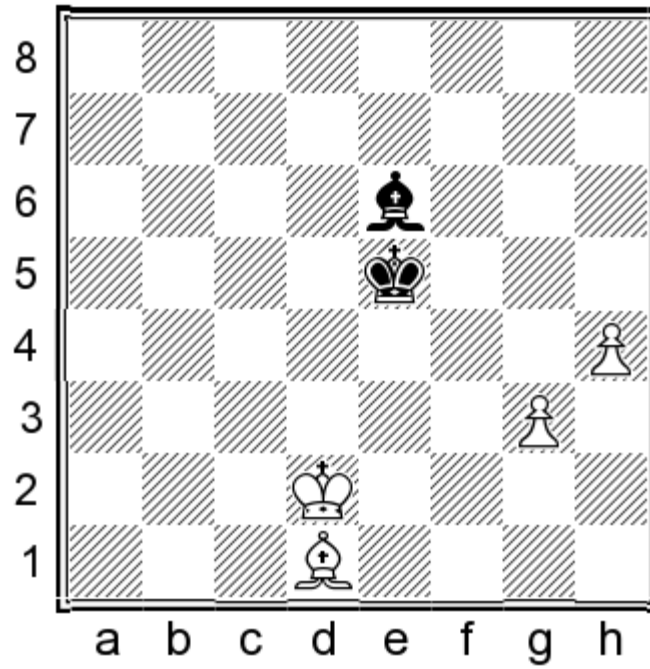
45.♞xf6 ♕xf6 46.♕f4

White inevitably wins the d3-pawn after ♕e3 and ♕b3-c4, but this was all included in Kramnik's calculation. We will discuss his reasons a few moves later.

46...d2 47.♕e3 ♕e5 48.g3!

Preventing the black king from getting to g3.

48...♕f5 49.h4 ♕e6 50.♕xd2



Here we are! Kramnik thought that this endgame was drawn, since whenever White pushes g4 (which seems to be necessary to convert the advantage) Black sacrifices his bishop and then runs to h8 with his king — with a theoretical draw. However, Carlsen will show some really subtle technique to win the game.

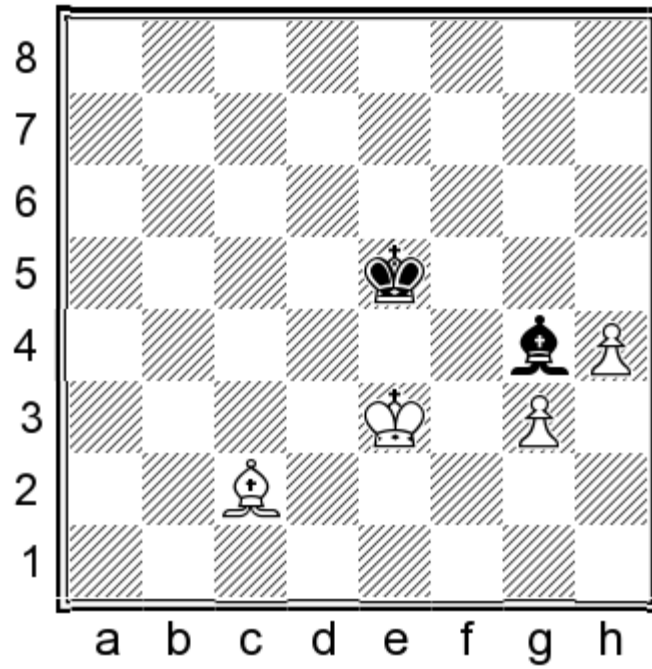
50...♖e4 51.♗e2

White wants to occupy the e3-square with the king and he prepares to push back the king with ♔c2.

51...♙g4+ 52.♗e1 ♙e6 53.♗f2

♔c2 is inevitable now.

53...♖e5 54.♗e3 ♙d7 55.♔c2 ♙g4

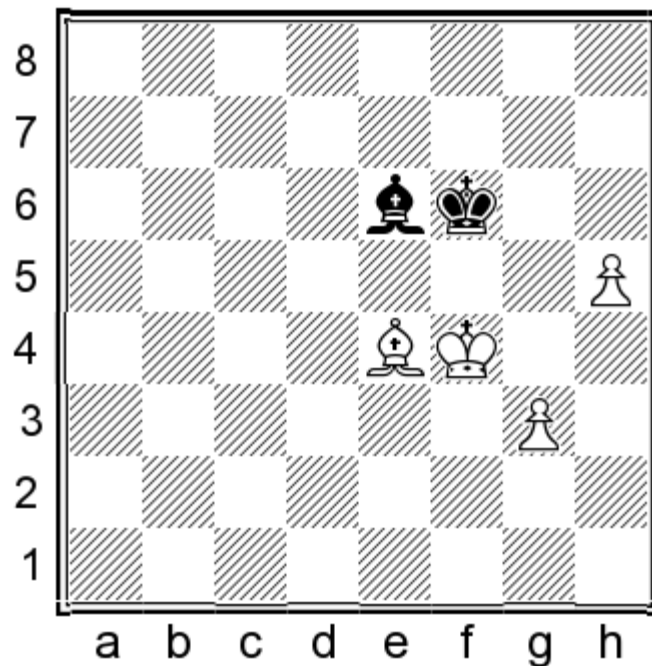


White is basically forced to find the winning plan, since there is no way to make progress other than putting the bishop on g6 and then playing h5.

56. ♖g6! ♜d7 57. h5 ♔f6

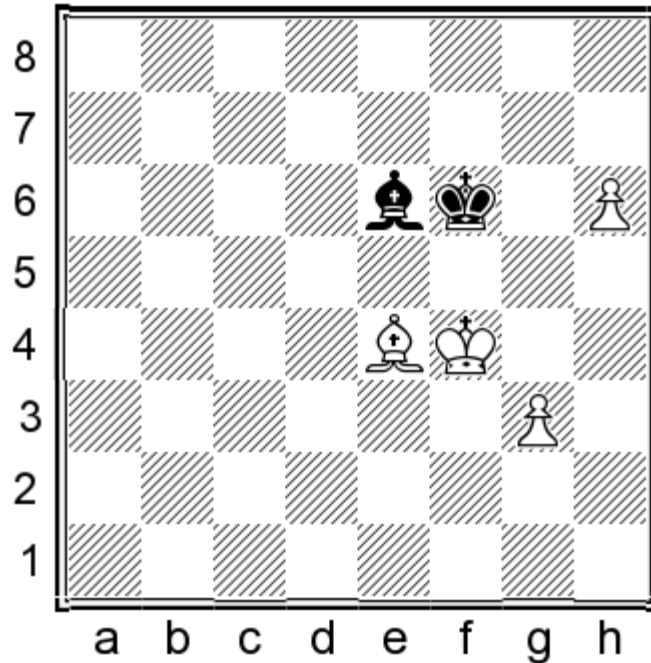
This allows White to improve his king. 57... ♜e6 waiting with the bishop does not help either: 58. h6 ♔f6 59. ♜b1 followed by ♔f4, which transposes to the game, using the fact that Black cannot get his king between the pawns with ... ♔g5 because of h7.

58. ♔f4 ♜e6 59. ♜e4



59... ♔g7

If Black starts to wait with his bishop by playing 59...♖d7 then White proceeds with 60.h6! ♖e6



61.g4! This is the key move and Black cannot sacrifice his bishop now: 61...♖xg4 62.♗xg4 ♖f7 63.♖h7! Using this known method of preventing the king from getting to the corner. White wins easily now. 63...♗f6 64.♗h5 ♖f7 65.♗g5 ♗f8 66.♗f6 ♖e8 67.♖g6+ ♖f8 68.h7+—

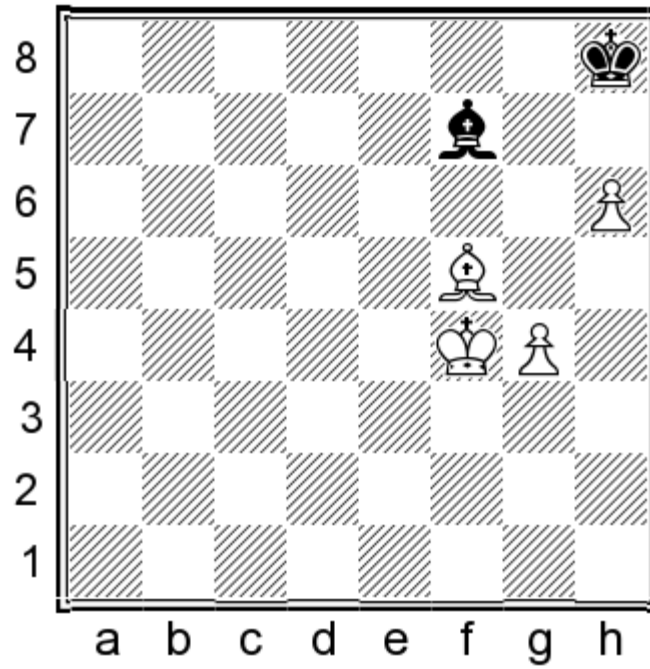
60.♗g5 ♖d7 61.h6+ ♖h8

The king is in the corner now, so White needs to be careful with advancing the g-pawn.

62.♗f4 ♖e6 63.♖f5!

The pawn is ready to go now.

63...♖f7 64.g4



64...Rh5!

A very nice trick to get a theoretical draw. Even with 5 h-pawns the game would be drawn.

65.g5!

Unfortunately for Black, White is able to keep his g-pawn.

65...Kh8 66.Be6+ Kh7 67.Kf5 Bg6+ 68.Kf6 Kh8!

The last stalemate tricks from Black, but White can easily parry them.

69.Bd7

69.Bf7 Be4 70.g6? Bxg6 is still a draw.

69...Rh5

69...Be4 If the bishop stays on this diagonal, White wins by playing 70.Bf5+- followed by g6.

70.Bc6

Black cannot move his bishop now.

70...Kh7 71.Bd5 Bg6

71...Be8 72.Bf7+- followed by g6-g7 wins. 71...Kh8 72.Bf7 wins again. 72...Bg6 is not stalemate as White has 73.Bxg6+-

72.Bg8+!

An instructive endgame!

GAME 21

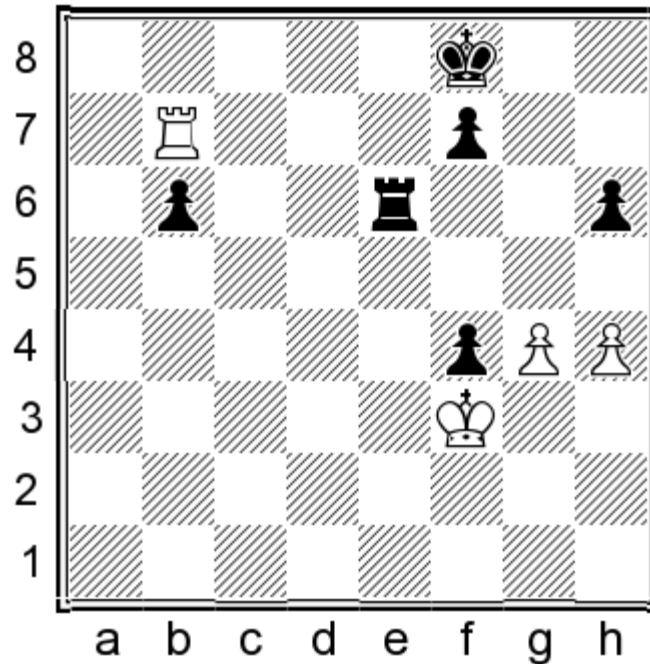
M. Carlsen (2864)

F. Caruana (2774)

8th Tal Memorial,
Moscow RUS (3.3)

15.06.2013, [A07]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



We find ourselves in an interesting rook endgame now. Usually Carlsen is the one who is pushing, but this time he has to defend. If we remember, in his game against Wang Hao he lost a rook endgame which contained very good drawing chances — and this time the story repeats itself. Let's take a closer look.

38...♖f6 39.g5!

A very good move. White tries to exchange a pawn and at the same time win the f4-pawn back.

39...♖c6

Of course after 39...hxg5 40.hxg5 ♖c6 41.♔xf4 the position is a very simple draw. White has nothing to fear and can just “keep on waiting” as he has a great rook on b7.

40.♔xf4

40.gxh6? ♖xh6 would give Black some winning chances, which is very unnecessary for White.

40...h5

Black's only chance is to keep as many pawns on the board as possible.

41.♔f5 ♔g7

Before bringing the rook to the b-file, Black improves his king's position.

42.♖b8 ♜c5+ 43.♔f4 ♜b5 44.♔e4 ♜b1 45.♔f5 ♜b2 46.♔f4

White keeps on waiting...

46...♜b4+ 47.♔e5 ♔g6 48.♜g8+

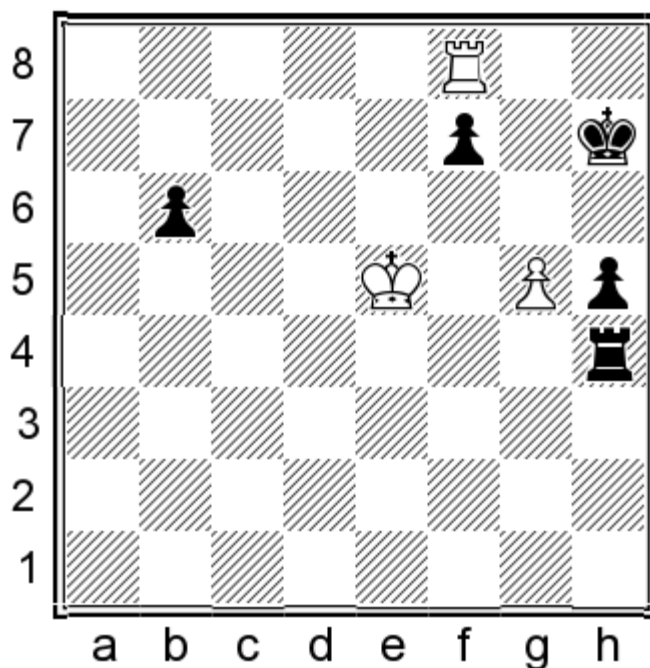
White pushes the Black king back.

48...♔h7 49.♜f8??

What a terrible mistake. This kind of move is even difficult to explain. 49.♜b8 A passive defense would just lead to a draw. Let's take a look at what would happen in case Black tries to push his pawn to b2: 49...♔g7 50.♔f5 ♜b1 51.♜b7 b5 52.g6 The easiest way of making a draw, but passive defense would lead to the same result. (52.♔f4 b4 53.♔f3 b3 54.♜b6 b2 After this move, the position is a draw, but not playing the b2-move is simple impossible. (54...♔f8 55.♜b7 ♔e8 56.♔g2 and Black cannot progress without playing the b2 move.) 55.♔g2 ♔f8 56.♜b7 ♔e8 57.♔h2 ♔d8 58.♔g2 ♔c8 59.♜b3 ♔d7 60.♔h2 ♔e6 61.♔g2 ♔f5 62.♜b5+ ♔e4 63.♜b8 ♔d3 64.♜d8+ ♔c3 65.♜c8+ And the position is a simple draw.) 52...♜f1+ 53.♔g5 ♜g1+ 54.♔xh5 Draw.

49...♜xh4!

Caruana doesn't miss his chance.



50.♜xf7+ ♔g6 51.♜f6+ ♔xg5 52.♜xb6

So is this position a draw or a clear win for Black?! It is not so easy to say at first sight, but Caruana will show us the right result...

52...♜a4!

The white king should be cut off on the 5th rank.

53.♜b8

White can't prevent Black from advancing his h-pawn.

53...♙g4 54.♞g8+ ♕f3 55.♞f8+ ♙g3 56.♞g8+ ♕h2

The h-pawn is ready to move forward.

57.♕f5 h4 58.♞b8 h3 59.♕g5

59.♞b2+ didn't help: 59...♕g3 60.♞b3+ ♕h4

59...♞e4!

The final precise move.

60.♕f5 ♞e2

Now Black can let the white king come a bit closer as the position is totally winning.

61.♞g8

61.♕f4 was losing too after 61...♕g2 62.♞g8+ ♕f1

61...♞g2 62.♞d8 ♞f2+

Followed by ...♕g2. A very tough loss for Carlsen, but blunders happen even to the greatest players!

0–1

GAME 22

B. Predojevic (2616)

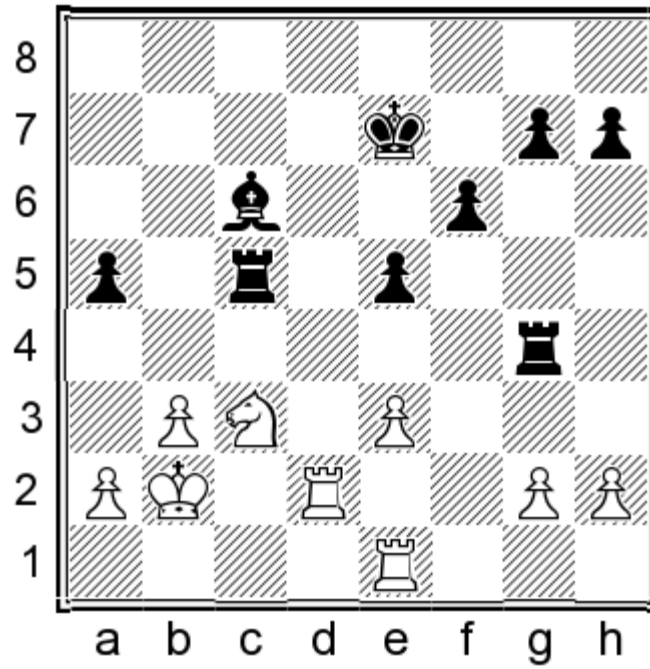
M. Carlsen (2864)

Rapid Match,

Lillehammer NOR (3)

29.06.2013, [B40]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



We are in the mini rapid match of 4 games between Carlsen and Predojevic — a match which ended 2.5–1.5 in favour of the World Number 1. The only decisive game happened in round 3. As we can see, White is defending a slightly unpleasant endgame and Magnus shows us once again how strong he is in endgames where he is a little bit better. We can only watch and learn! :)

35.e4 h5!

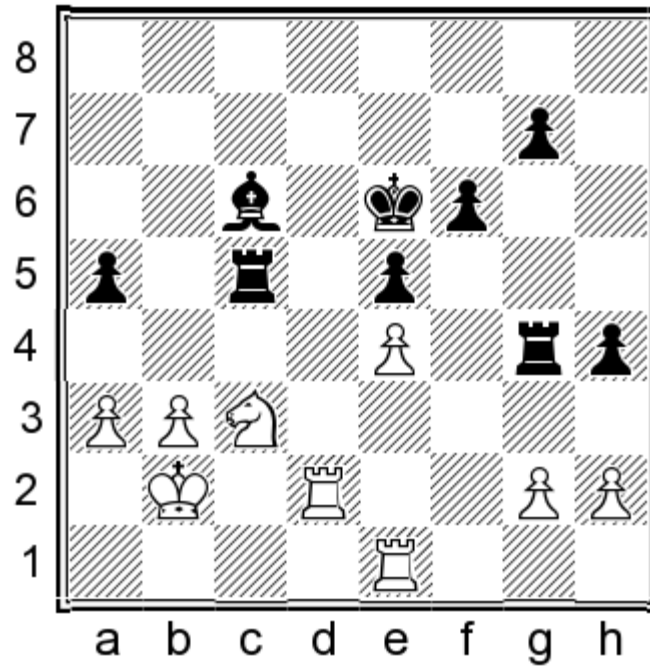
A strong positional move. Before starting the action in the center, Black brings his pawn to h4, which could make a difference in many endgames. The pawn on g2 is a potential weakness, so by putting a pawn on h4, Black fixes it as a future target.

36.a3 h4 37.♖e3

White keeps on passing. It is very hard to find an active idea for him. But maybe he ought to have tried something more active, like 37.b4 axb4 38.axb4 ♖c4 39.♔b3 ♖d4 40.♖de2 with the idea of playing b5 next, and maybe at some moment ♖a2. Black is of course better, but maybe from a practical point of view Black would not have had such easy play as in the game.

37...♔e6 38.♖e1

All the black pieces have taken up perfect spots and it is time for the next step:



38...g6!

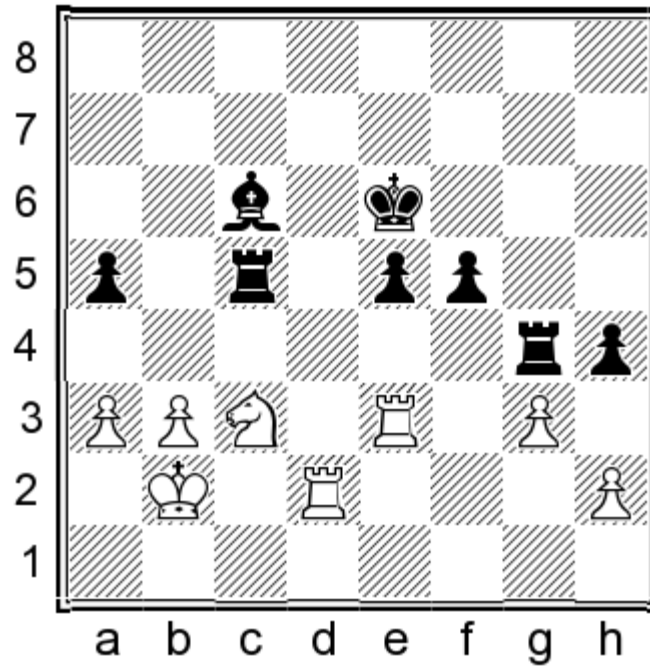
Another good move by Carlsen. By playing ...f5, Black will not only gain control over the center, but the white pawn on g2 will also be in serious trouble.

39.♖e3

White prepares the g3 move.

39...f5 40.exf5+ gxf5 41.g3

White is very passive, but still holding on. Black has several ideas. One of the ideas could be to play ...h3-♔g2 and then ...f4, but there is no reason to hurry with it. White cannot do much, as to play gxh4 is clearly in Black's favour, so Black really has quite some time.



41...♔h1!?

A very unpleasant move to face in rapid chess. On the one hand Black wants to play ...♖c8-♖cg8 next and White doesn't have many useful moves, which makes it very hard to play in rapid chess.

42.♘e2

White wants to play ♘f4 or ♘d4 next.

42...♞d5!

Another very strong move from Black. If a pair of rooks was exchanged, ...f4 would become almost deadly.

43.♞c2

43.♞xd5 ♔xd5 followed by ...f4, with an almost winning position. 43.♘f4+? does not work because of 43...♞xf4 44.♞xd5 ♞f2+-+

43...♔e4

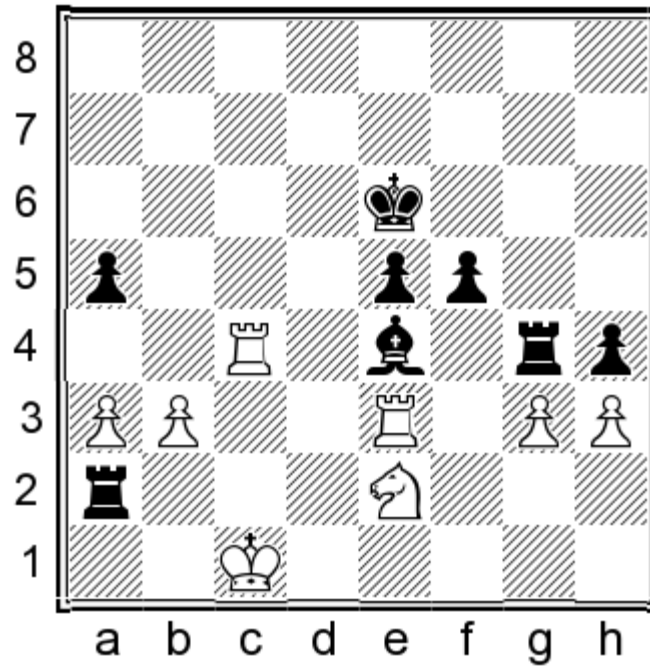
The black rook now reaches the second rank.

44.♞c4 ♞d2+ 45.♔c1 ♞a2

White's position looks almost hopeless. All the black pieces are perfectly placed and this is what makes Magnus Carlsen the best player in the world -he knows where to put which pieces! It seems as though Black did nothing special, but out of a better endgame, we have reached an almost winning one in just 10 moves.

46.h3

White panics, but Predojevic had probably had enough of slow play and suffering.



46...♖xe2!

The last small tactical blow. Black gets too many pawns for the exchange, especially as the bishop on e4 is worth at least a rook.

47.♖xe2 ♜xg3

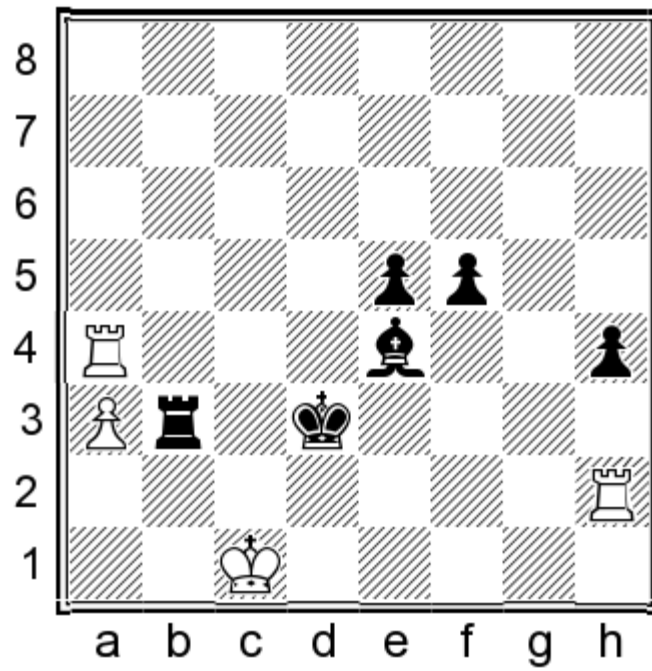
Both the h3 and b3 pawns are now hanging. There is no hope anymore.

48.♖c5 ♜xh3 49.♖xa5 ♜xb3

The black h-pawn is very dangerous.

50.♖a6+ ♔d5 51.♖a5+ ♔d4 52.♖a4+ ♔d3 53.♖h2

By giving checks, White has managed to capture the black h-pawn, but the black king is now very active and the black central pawns will start to advance.



53...f4 54.♖xh4 ♔e3

Threatening mate on b1.

55.♗b4 ♗xb4

The easiest move. White cannot stop the f-pawn.

56.axb4 f3 57.♗h1

What superb endgame technique! I especially liked the ...h5-h4 manoeuvre and of course 41...♗h1!? — a very strong practical move.

0–1

GAME 23

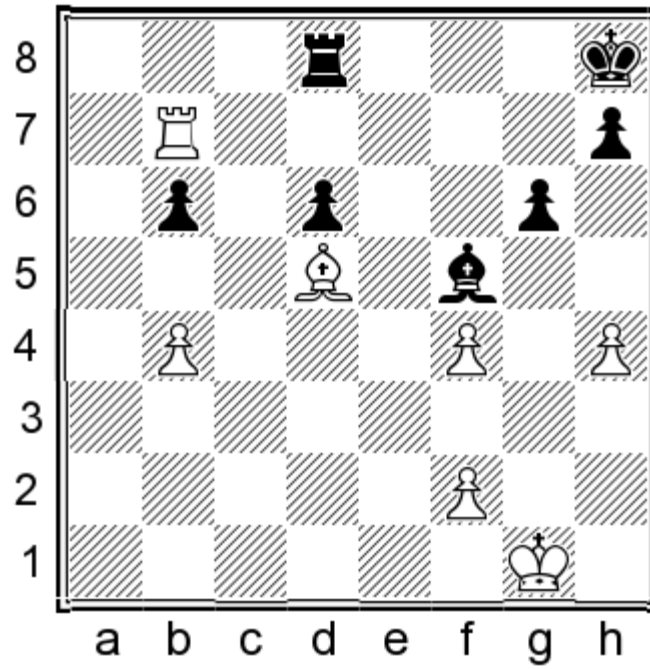
G. Kamsky (2763)

V. Topalov (2767)

Grand Prix, Beijing

06.07.2013

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



Black seems to be in big trouble here, as he will inevitably lose the b-pawn, which means an extra pawn for White and dominating pieces. However Topalov finds a fantastic defence to save the game by transposing into a rook endgame.

43...♖e8! 44.♖xb6 ♖e1+!

Activating the rook, which forces White to trade the bishops.

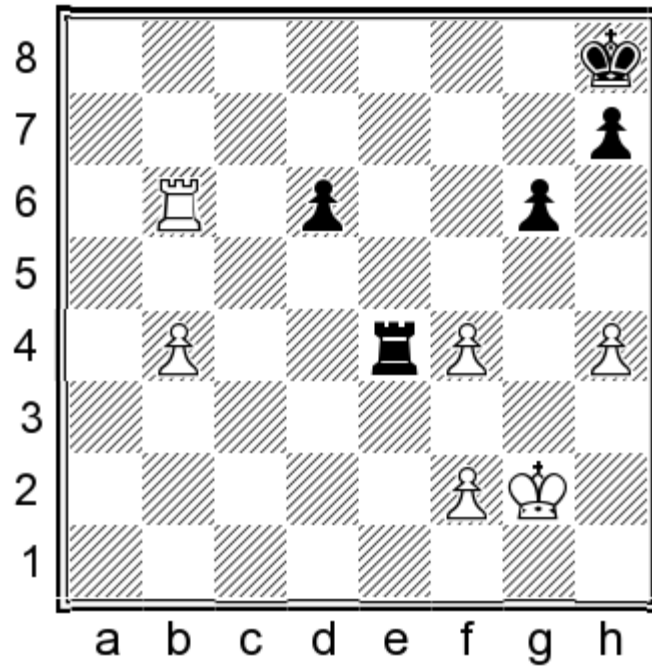
45.♔g2

45.♔h2 ♕e4 46.♖xd6? allows perpetual check: (46.♕xe4 leads to the game.) 46...♖h1+ 47.♔g3 ♖g1 and this is why Black has to play 44...♖e1 first.

45...♕e4+!

Black has to try this move, even if it is losing. With the bishops on board, the b-pawn promotes automatically.

46.♕xe4 ♖xe4



47.♔f3

47.♞xd6? This move is, of course, never an option for White — his hopes lie in the b-pawn. 47...♞xb4 Even with a healthy pawn structure the 3 vs 2 would be a theoretical draw, but of course White has zero chance here.

47...d5!

As we will see, the d-pawn plays a very important role in the defence.

48.♞b7!

Kamsky also plays well, cutting off the king along the 7th rank, otherwise the escape of the king with ♔g7 would have seriously eased the defence.

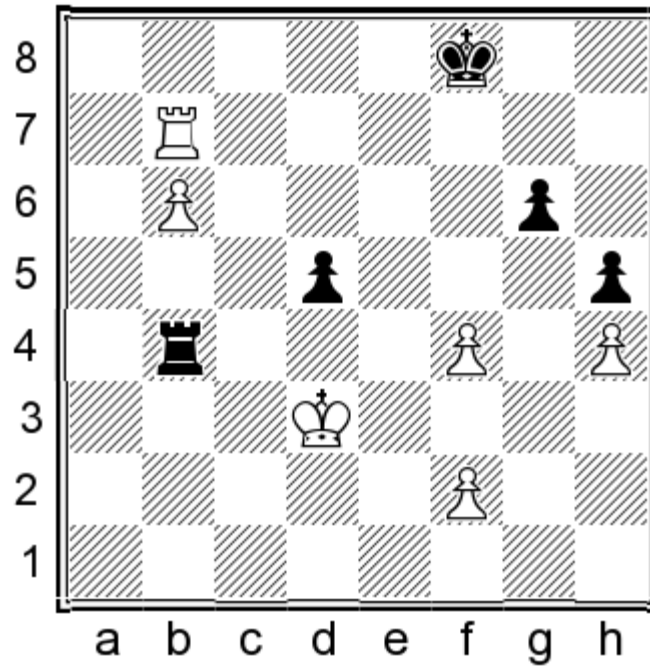
48...h5 49.b5

White is ready to leave with his rook, so the next move is forced!

49...♞b4! 50.♔e3 ♔g8

Black has no other moves left other than to pass with the king on the back rank, but how can White make some progress?!

51.b6 ♔f8 52.♔d3



52...d4!

A necessary move to prevent ♔c3! 52...♔g8? loses to 53.♔c3 ♖c4+ (53...♞b5 54. ♔d4 And the king penetrates after ♔e5.) 54.♔b3 and the b-pawn will promote soon... 54...♞c6 55.♔b4 d4 56.♔b5+-

53.♔e4 ♔e8

Black continues by playing ♔f8-e8. The problem with White making progress is that whenever he moves forward with his king, Black advances his d-pawn and gets adequate counterplay.

54.♔d3

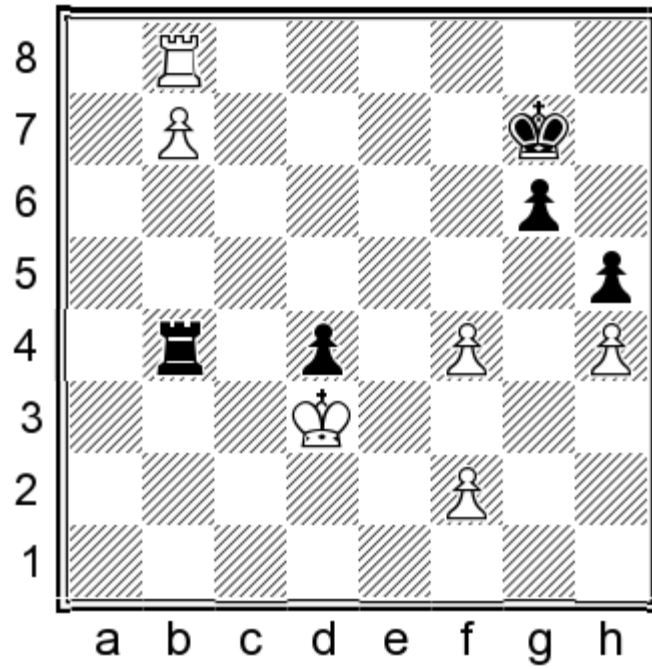
54.f5 allows 54...gxf5+ 55.♔xf5 d3;

White cannot play for mate with 54.♔e5 d3 55.♔e6 because of 55...♞e4+! and ...d2 next move.

54...♔f8 55.♞b8+

55.f3 makes no difference: 55...♔e8 56.♞b8+ ♔f7 57.b7 ♔g7 Transposing to the game.

55...♔g7 56.b7



56...♔h7!

After the pawn has reached the 7th rank, Black can only wait with his king on the g7- and h7-squares. 56...♔f7? does not work anymore, because of the following well-known trick: 57.♞h8! ♞xb7 58.♞h7++-

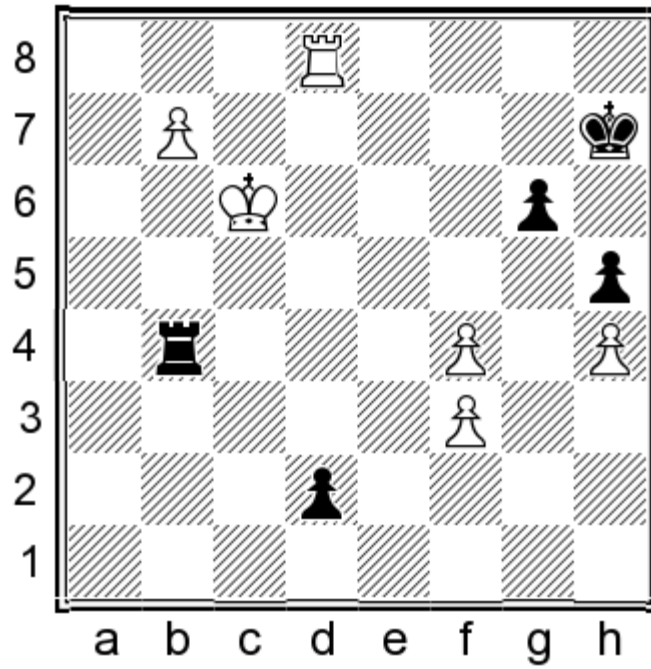
57.♔e4 ♔g7 58.f3 ♔h7

White realizes that there is no way to progress, and therefore tries his last chance.

59.♔d5

But it allows the d-pawn to run!

59...d3! 60.♔c6 d2 61.♞d8



61...Rc4+!

An important intermediate check to send the king to a bad square. 61...Rb2 immediately loses to 62.Rxd2!+-

62.♔b6

62.♔b5 Rc2! and White cannot promote his b-pawn now because of Rb2.

62...Rb4+ 63.♔a6 Rxa4+ 64.♔b5

64.♔b6 Rb4+ 65.♔c7 Rc4+ 66.♔b8 Rc2= is the same as the game.

64...Ra2!

Topalov defends accurately! He checked the king until it got to the b-file and now he can protect his d-pawn.

65.Rd7+ ♔h6 66.Rd4

Unfortunately, White cannot avoid the checks with Rb4 because the d-pawn is too far advanced.

66...Rb2+ 67.♔c6 Rxc2+ 68.♔d6 Rb2 69.f5

A last attempt, but after the loss of the b-pawn, the outcome is no longer in question. 69.♔c7 Rxc2+ 70.♔b8 Rb2 leaves nothing to do for White.

69...Rxb7 70.Rxd2

All moves lead to a draw now, but Topalov finds a way to exchange everything.

70...g5 71.♔c6 Rf7 72.Rd6+ ♔h7 73.hxg5 Rxf5 74.Rh6+ ♔g7 75.Rxh5 Rxf3

A great defence and more proof that — even in seemingly hopeless positions — one can always try to look for

salvation in rook endgames.

1/2

GAME 24

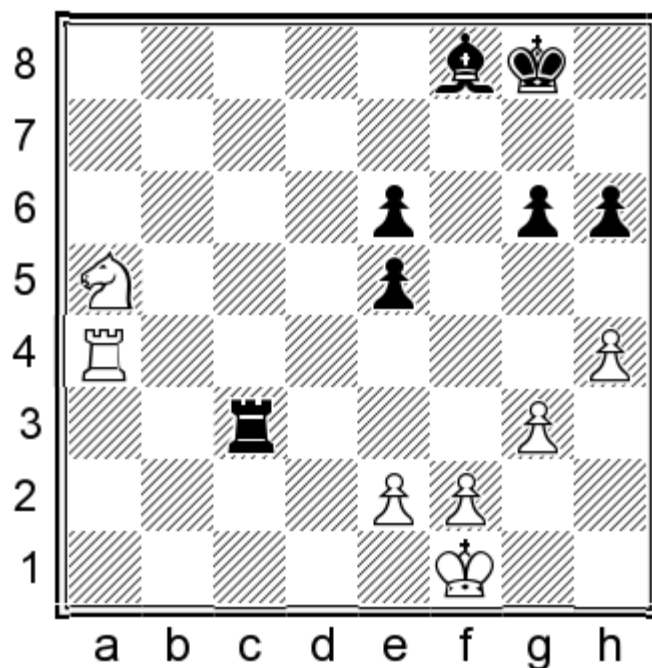
Wang Yue (2705)

Wang Hao (2752)

Grand Prix, Beijing

10.07.2013

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



Despite the limited amount of pieces and the current material balance, White has excellent winning chances in a practical game, thanks to the doubled e-pawns and the knight's superiority over the poor bishop.

32. ♖c4 ♗g7

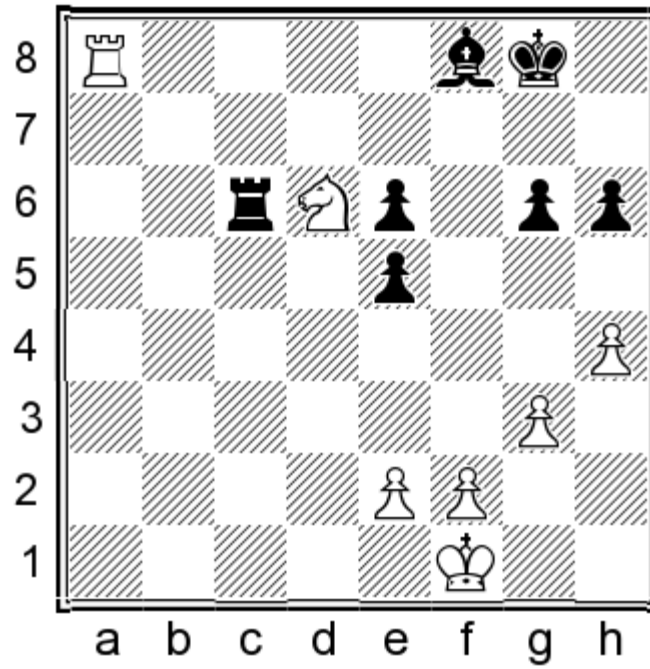
The bishop is doomed to passivity. A push of the e-pawn would quickly lead to its loss after 32...e4 33.e3 followed by ♖d2.

33. ♖d6

White transfers his knight to e4. It was probably even stronger to activate the rook first in order to misplace the black king a bit. 33. ♖a8+ ♔h7 34. ♖d6 is similar to the game.

33... ♖c6 34. ♖a8+ ♗f8!

Black keeps some co-ordination between his pieces, since in comparison to the 33. ♖a8 line, the e5-pawn is not hanging.



35. ♖e4 ♜c4 36. ♘d2

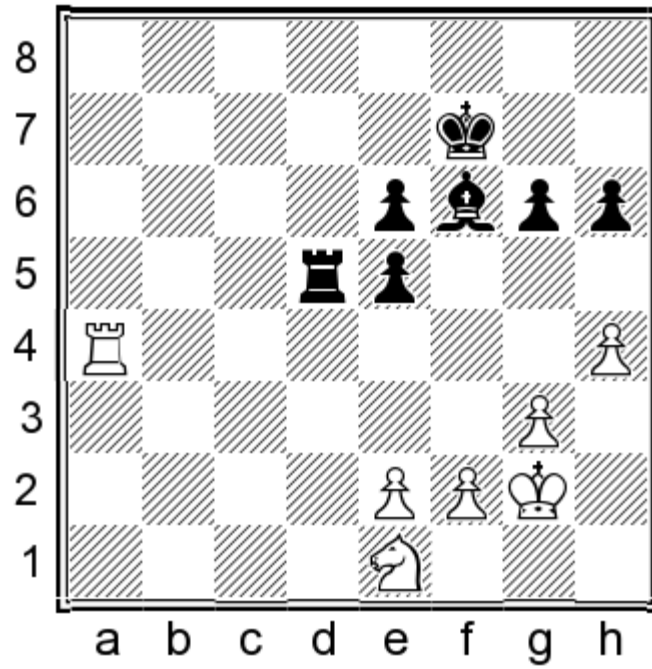
White does not need to hurry with a plan, since Black can only wait. 36.f3 was also possible, but Wang Yue did not want to decide yet, which changes he should make to the pawn structure.

36... ♞d4 37. ♘f3 ♞d5 38. ♞a4

White was in some time-trouble and in the following moves he just wants to reach move 40: after getting the extra hour he will start to think about how to proceed.

38... ♜f7 39. ♜g2 ♜g7 40. ♘e1 ♜f6

The time-trouble phase is over so let's see how a great strategic player like Wang Yue converts his advantage.



41.♔f3

Firstly, White just wants to get his knight back to e4.

41...♞d7 42.♘d3 h5 43.♘c5 ♞c7 44.♘e4

The first step is complete. The second should be to activate the rook.

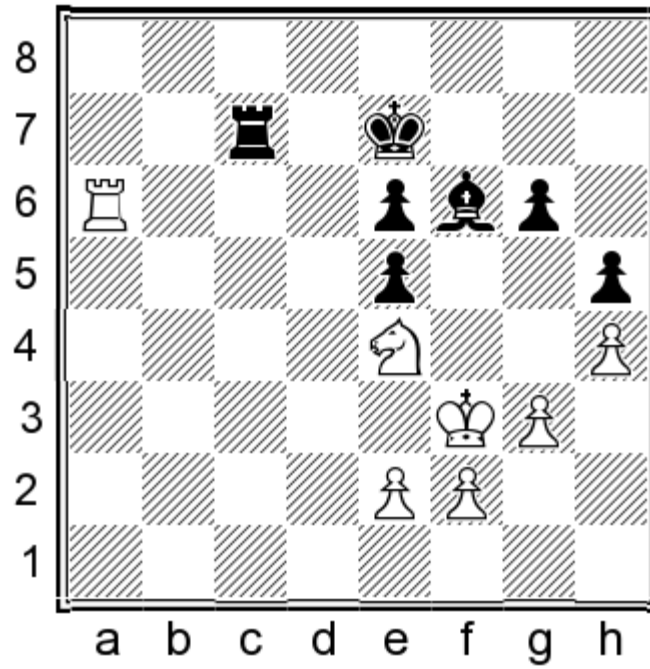
44...♔e7 45.♞a5 ♙g7

Black will never have anything more constructive to do in this game than passing with the pieces.

46.♞a6

Creating the first threat of winning the pawn with ♘g5.

46...♙f6



47. ♖b6

White does not need to hurry and now he creates a small zugzwang. The pawns cannot move, the bishop neither (because of ♘g5) and on ...♞a7 or ...♞d7 then ♘c5 decides, while after rook moves on the c-file ♞b7 wins. So there is only one move left.

47... ♔f7! 48. e3

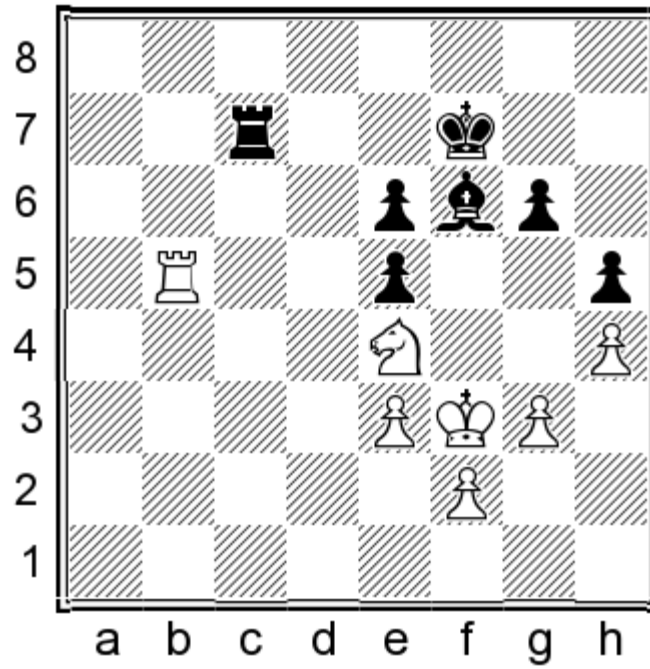
I believe this is the right placement of the pawns in order to have everything protected.

48... ♕e7 49. ♞b5 ♕f6 50. ♔g2

This move is just a kind of ‘power demonstration’, the right plan is to bring the king to the other side, as we saw in the 50...♕e7 line.

50... ♞c6

Wang Hao decides to give up the 7th rank, but it actually just eases the task of his opponent. 50...♕e7 51. ♔f3 ♔f7



52.♔e2! White should try to trade off the rooks, because the knight versus bishop endgame is automatically winning (after the regrouping of putting the king to e4 and the knight to c4) as the e5-pawn will fall. 52...♔e7 53.♕d3 ♕f7 54.♖c5 ♖d7+ 55.♔c4 followed by the invasion of the king and the idea of trading the rooks on the 7th rank.

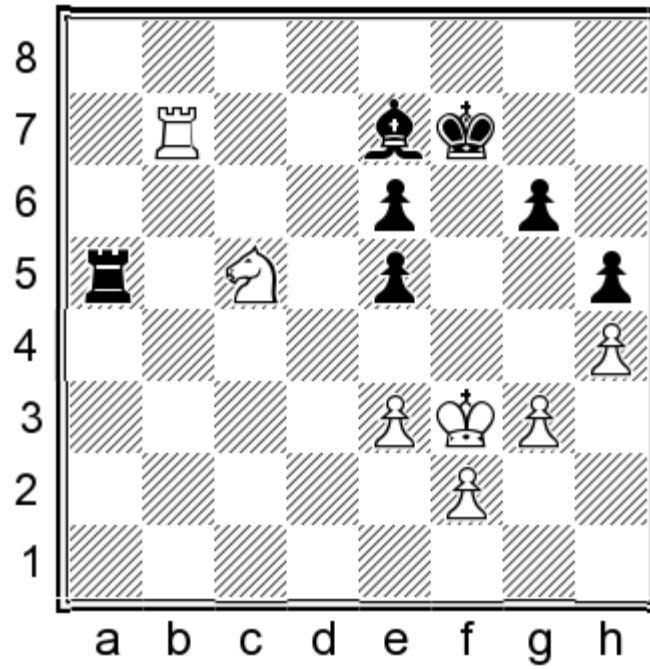
51.♖b7+ ♔e7 52.♔f3!

Black is in zugzwang now. Let's see what happens:

52...♖a6

52...♔f8 53.♖b5 just wins the pawn as ...♕f6 is no longer possible. On 52...♖c2 — or other rook moves on the c-file — 53.♘g5+ ♔f6 54.♖b6 wins the pawn.

53.♘c5! ♖a5



53...♖d6 54.♘d7+– ♖d5 55.♙e4 wins the pawn and the game.

54.♘d7!

and Black is helpless against ♙e4!

54...♙e8 55.♙e4 ♘d6

55...♖a2 Searching for counterplay does not help: 56.♘xe5 ♖xf2 57.♖b8+ ♘d8 58.♘c6+–;
55...♖a4+ 56.♙xe5+–

56.♘f6+ ♙f8 57.♘h7+!

and Black decided to end his suffering in view of 57.♘h7+ ♙e8 (57...♙g8 58.♘g5+–) 58.♘g5+– and the first pawn falls. The others would just have been a question of time.

1–0

GAME 25

H. Wang (2752)

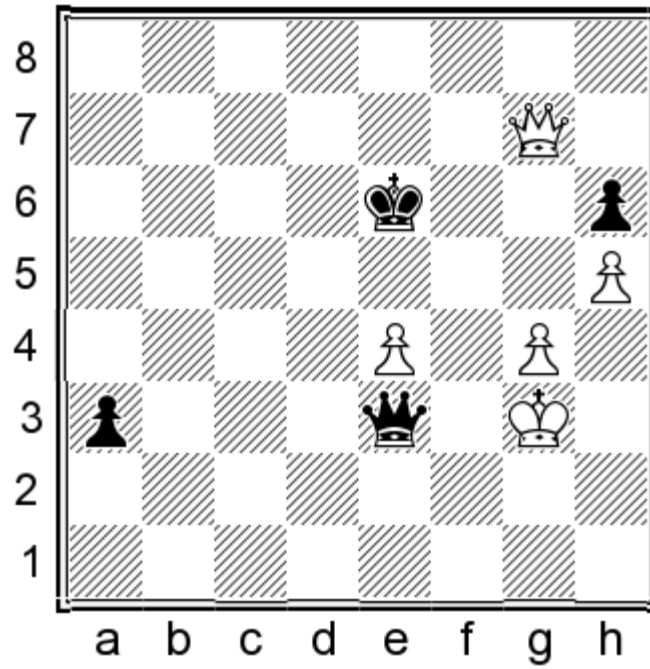
B. Gelfand (2773)

FIDE GP Beijing,

Beijing CHN (9)

14.07.2013, [A35]

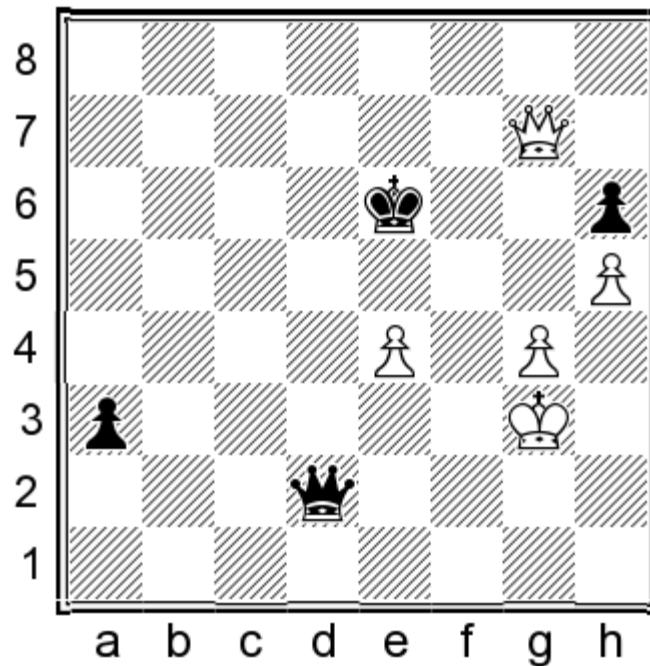
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



This game is a great example of how easy it is to make a decisive mistake in queen endgames. From the start, we are faced with a winning position for Black.

67. ♔h2 ♚g5?

A very logical move, but not the best one. Black could have won quite easily after 67... ♚d2+! 68. ♔g3



68...a2 and now if White starts to give checks, the black king could slowly walk to e2 or f1, after which White would have no more checks left.

68. ♚a7 ♚h4+

Black starts to take the white pawns, but the white king uses this moment to come closer to Black's a-pawn. It was still

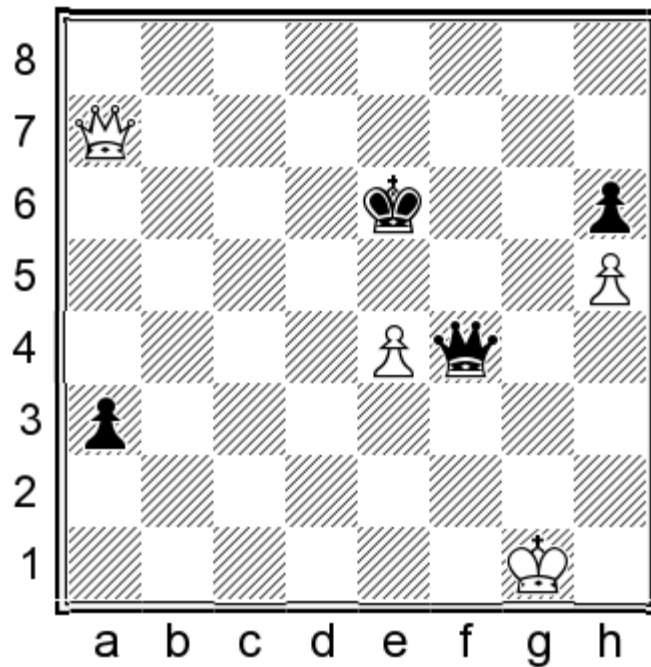
not too late for 68...♞d2+ 69.♔g3 a2 and Black is winning.

69.♔g2 ♞xg4+

The funny thing is that by taking the g4-pawn away, Black is not really doing himself a favour, as the white queen obtains more squares for checking.

70.♔f2 ♞f4+ 71.♔g1

White tries not to give away the e4-pawn with a check.



71...♞g3+!

A very good move! The white king is cut off.

72.♔f1 ♞f3+ 73.♔e1 ♔f6?

It is hard to understand this move... Black should have continued what he started: 73...♞xe4+ 74.♔d2 ♞d5+ 75.♔c3 ♞e5+ 76.♔c2 ♞b2+ 77.♔d3 a2 and the black king will probably escape from the checks, but things are not so simple as White still has some chances to give perpetual check.

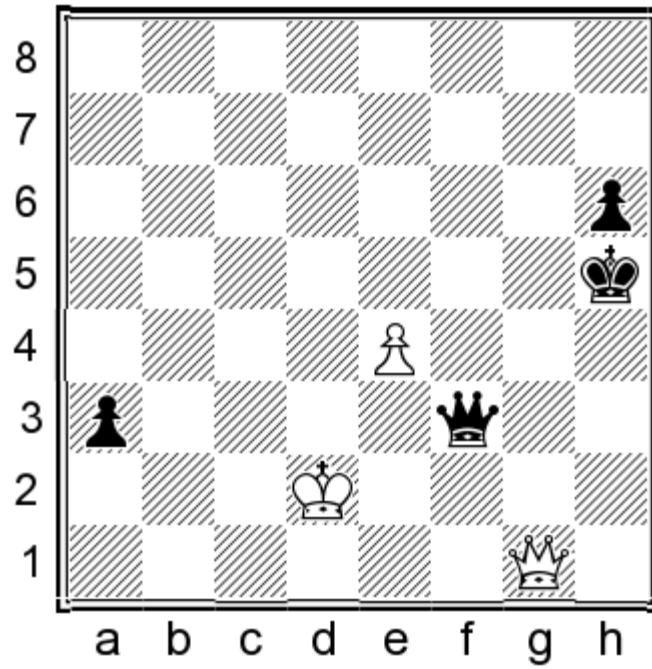
74.♔d2!

White's only chance is to bring his king as close as possible to the free a-pawn.

74...♔g5 75.♞g1+!

A very strong move! The black king cannot escape the checks so easily anymore.

75...♔xh5



76. ♕h2+!

And we can see that, suddenly, there is already perhaps no escape from the white checks anymore!

76... ♖g4

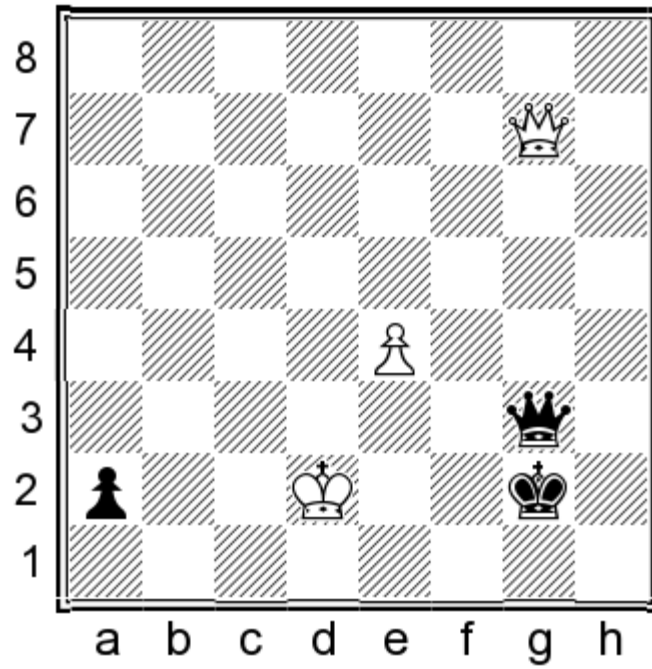
It is not pleasant to give up the h-pawn, but Black had no choice. 76... ♖g4 77. ♕g1+! and it appears that White makes a draw by checking.

77. ♕xh6 a2 78. ♕g7+ ♖h3 79. ♕h8+ ♖g2 80. ♕g7+

White checks the black king and the position seems to be a draw.

80... ♕g3

Black tries his last chance.



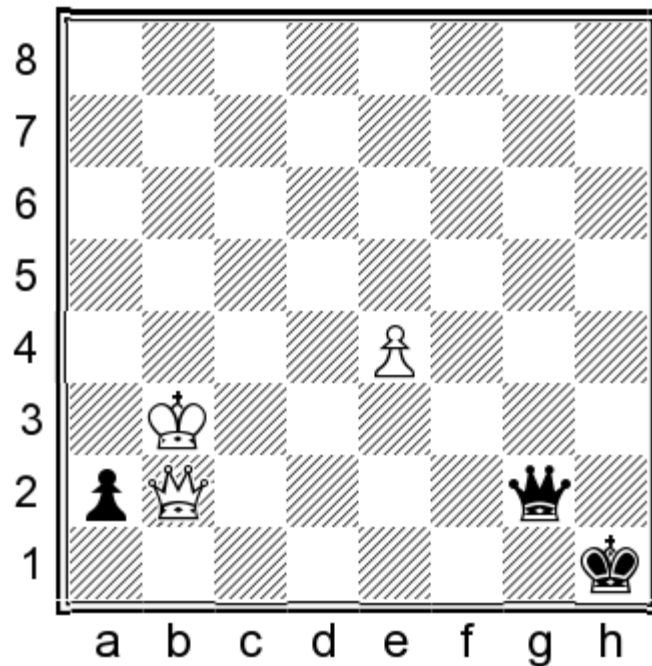
81. ♖b2??

What a blunder! 81. ♖a1 followed by ♔c1 or ♔c2 was an easy draw.

81... ♔h1!!

The only winning move! Now White no longer has ♖a1 because of ... ♖g1 and Black is suddenly winning.

82. ♔c2 ♖g2+ 83. ♔b3



83... ♖xe4??

What a mistake! 83...♖g8+ leads to an easy win: 84.♔c2 ♜c4+ 85.♔d2 ♜f1! and White's position is hopeless.
86.♜xa2 ♜g2+ 87.♔c3 ♜xa2—+ What a game! :)

1/2

GAME 26

V. Kramnik (2784)

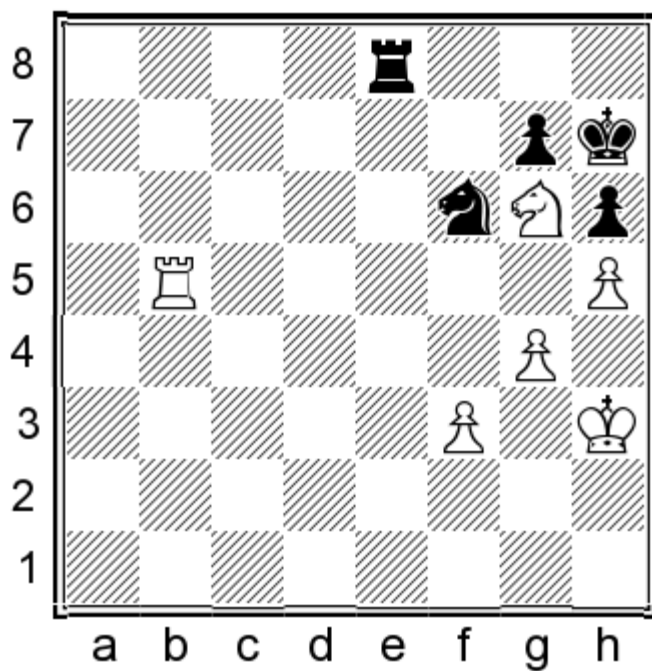
M. Vachier-Lagrave (2719)

FIDE World Cup 2013,

Tromsø NOR (6.2)

27.08.2013, [D17]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



We are in the second game of the World Cup semi-final. Is this a draw or a won position for White?! In the event of a white win, Kramnik would directly proceed to the final, while in case of a draw the players would have to go to a tie-break.

44.♜b7 ♜d8!

A very strong move. White had the idea of playing ♖h4-♖f5, which is now impossible because of ...♜d7. The knight endgame should be a draw, which means White needs to keep the rooks on the board if possible.

45.♔g3

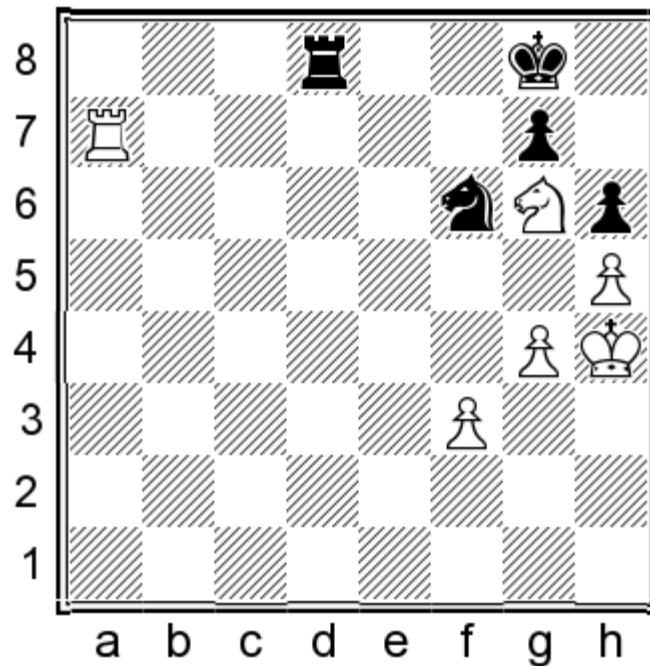
A waiting move just to check what Black wants to play next.

45...♔g8

Another good and solid move. Black continues to wait.

46.♔h4 ♔h7 47.♜a7 ♔g8

As we can see, White cannot really improve anything, so it is time for the last try.



48.f4!

White brings up his last resource, the f4-pawn. Now the move g5 could prove to be quite unpleasant for Black in many different situations.

48...♔h7 49.♖b7

Another waiting move and checking Black's intentions again...

49...♞e4

If 49...♔g8 then 50.♖b4, followed by g5, and here the black king would be better placed on h7...

50.♖b4 ♞e8

Black prepares against g5.

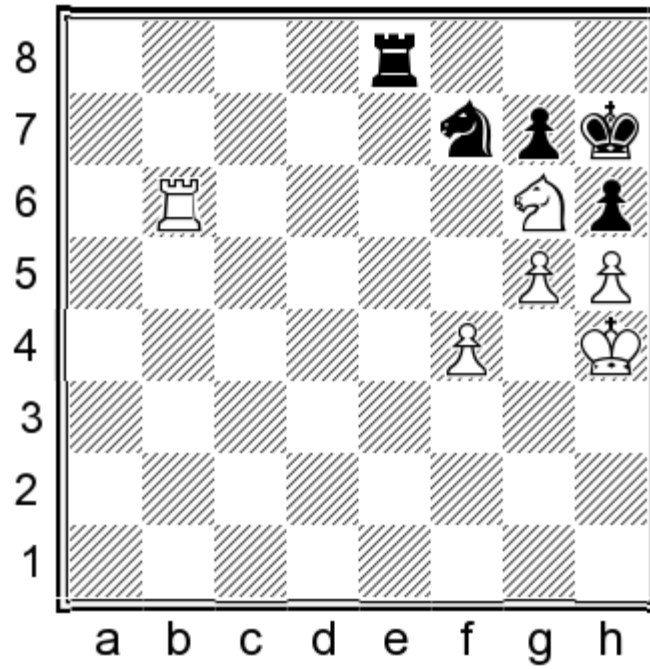
51.g5 ♞d6!

and now he wins control over the 4th rank.

52.♖b6

This is probably White's only try. 52.♔g4 wouldn't lead to anything: 52...hxg5 53.fxg5 ♞e4+ and Black manages to exchange the rooks, which should be a huge step in the direction of a draw.

52...♞f7



53.♖b5!

A very good move! 53.♔g4 hxg5 54.fxg5 would also give Black a chance for 54...♘e5+! trying to find salvation in the rook endgame... 55.♘xe5 ♜xe5 56.♞b7 ♞a5 57.h6 and here only 57...♔h8!! secures a draw! 58.♞xg7 ♞a4+ 59.♔f5 ♞f4+ 60.♔g6 ♞f6+ and the white king cannot escape the checks.

53...♞e1

Maxime goes for a very forced line, which is also very tricky. 53...♞a8 would have been a safer way of playing for a draw, as White cannot really make much progress here. Of course Black still needs to be careful, but it seems to be a draw.

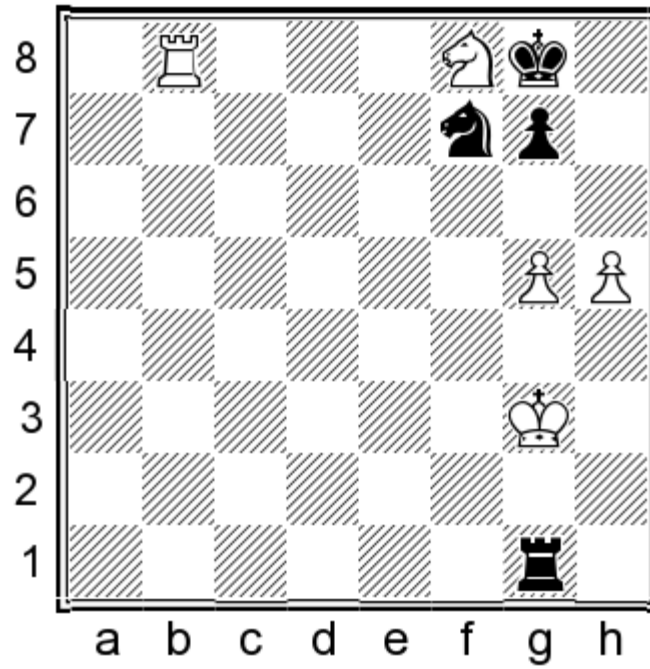
54.♘f8+ ♔g8 55.♞b8

The black king is in a mating net, but it is his move.

55...hxg5+ 56.fxg5 ♞h1+!

The only chance.

57.♔g3 ♞g1+



58.♔f4!

And once again White punts the best practical chance. After 58.♔h2 ♚xg5! secures the draw: 59.♘e6+ ♔h7 60.♘xg5+ ♘xg5 61.♔g3 ♘e4+ 62.♔f4 ♘f6 White is an exchange up, but the position is an easy draw.

58...♚f1+?

This move is already losing! The right move was 58...♘d6! 59.♘g6+ ♔f7 60.♚f8+ ♔e6 with very good chances for a draw.

59.♔e3

And it seems as though Black is completely lost. White wants to play ♘e6 or ♘g6 depending on what Black does next.

59...g6!

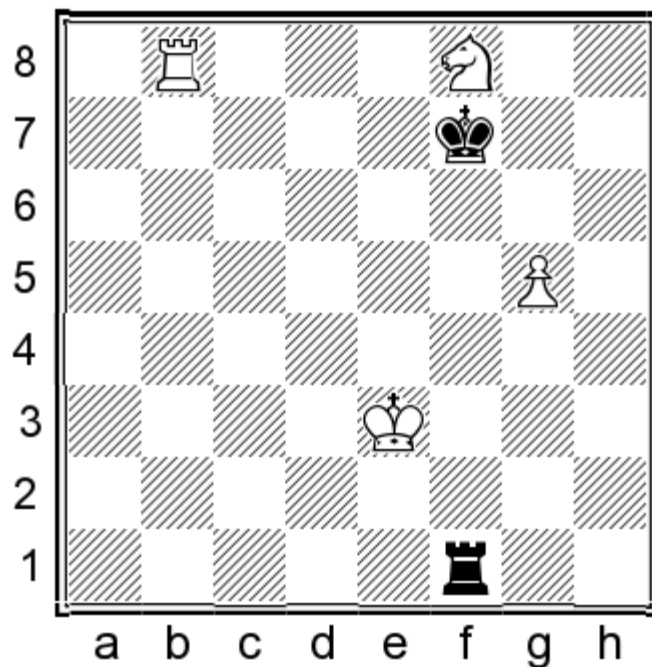
In an already lost position, Black finds the only practical chance.

60.hxg6

Things are not clear after 60.♘xg6+ ♔g7 61.♚b7 ♚f5 with quite some chances to make a draw.

60...♔g7 61.gxf7 ♔xf7

White is a piece and a pawn up, but to defend the pawn on g5 is pretty difficult. Black wants to play ...♚f5 next.



62.♔e4?

With this move White misses the win! 62.♘d7 was the only correct move! 62...♖f5 63.♖f8+ ♔g6 64.♖g8+ ♔f7 and now 65.♔e4! winning an important tempo. 65...♞a5 66.♖f8+ ♔g6 The position still looks like a draw, but White has a great trick again: 67.♘e5+! ♔xg5 68.♖f5+! and no matter where the black king goes to, White will give a check with the knight and take the rook on a5.

62...♞e1+!

And now the position is a draw!

63.♔f3 ♖f1+ 64.♔g3 ♖g1+ 65.♔f4 ♖f1+ 66.♔e3 ♖e1+ 67.♔f3 ♖f1+

The white king cannot escape from the black checks.

68.♔g2

And once the white king is on the 2nd rank Black has

68...♖f5! 69.♘h7

69.g6+ ♔g7 and the g-pawn is lost.

69...♔g6

Forcing the white rook to come to the 7th rank.

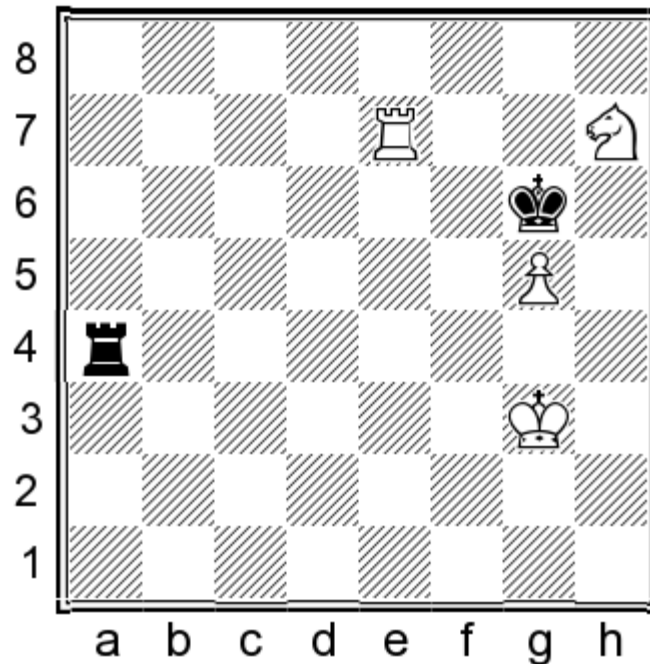
70.♖b7 ♖f4!

Black cuts the white king off.

71.♔g3 ♖a4

It is funny, but White cannot improve his position.

72.♖e7



72...♖g4+

A funny move! :)

73.♔f3 ♖a4 74.♖b7 ♖h4

Black finally decides to take the g5-pawn, but just waiting on the 4th rank was also fine.

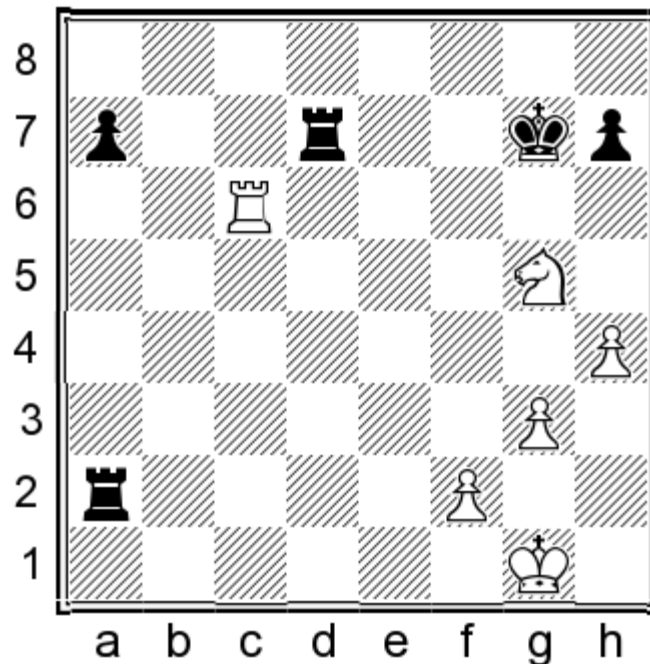
75.♘f6 ♔xg5 76.♘e4+ ♔f5 77.♖e7 ♖h8

and this is a theoretical draw. The rest of the game doesn't really require any comment, as the position is just too easy to hold...

78.♔e3 ♖d8 79.♖f7+ ♔e6 80.♖h7 ♖d1 81.♘c5+ ♔f5 82.♖f7+ ♔e5 83.♘d3+ ♔e6 84.♖a7 ♖h1 85.♔e4 ♖h4+ 86.♘f4+ ♔d6 87.♖a6+ ♔c5 88.♖g6 ♔c4 89.♖c6+ ♔b5 90.♖c1 ♖h8 91.♔e5 ♖h4 92.♖c8 ♖h1 93.♘e6 ♖h5+ 94.♔d6 ♖h6 95.♖c1 ♔b4 96.♔d5 ♖h5+ 97.♔e4 ♖h4+ 98.♘f4 ♔b5 99.♔e5 ♖h8 100.♖c2 ♖h4 101.♖f2 ♔c4 102.♔e4 ♖h8 103.♖c2+ ♔b5 104.♘g6 ♖h1 105.♘e5 ♖e1+ 106.♔d4 ♖d1+ 107.♘d3 ♔b6 108.♖c3 ♖b1 109.♔d5 ♖b5+ 110.♘c5 ♖b1 111.♘d7+ ♔b5 112.♖d3 ♖b4 113.♘e5 ♖b1 114.♘c4 ♔b4 115.♘d2 ♖b2 116.♔c6 ♖c2+ 117.♔b6 ♖b2 118.♔c6 ♖c2+ 119.♔b7 ♖c3 120.♖d8 ♖c5 121.♘e4 ♖c4 122.♖e8 ♖c2 123.♔b6 ♖e2 124.♔c6 ♖e1 125.♘d6

What a dramatic draw!

1/2



White is slightly behind in material, but the black king is somewhat 'squeezed'. His only hope of winning the game, the a7-pawn, is very far from the promotion -especially considering the fact that anytime Black pushes ...a5, White plays ♖a6 and advancing the pawn becomes very difficult. All these facts tell us that the game should end in a draw, but Wang Hao found a brilliant idea to make progress!

35.h5!

White not only pushes the king to the back-rank, but he also fixes the h7-pawn, which is attacked by the knight.

35...♖e2!!

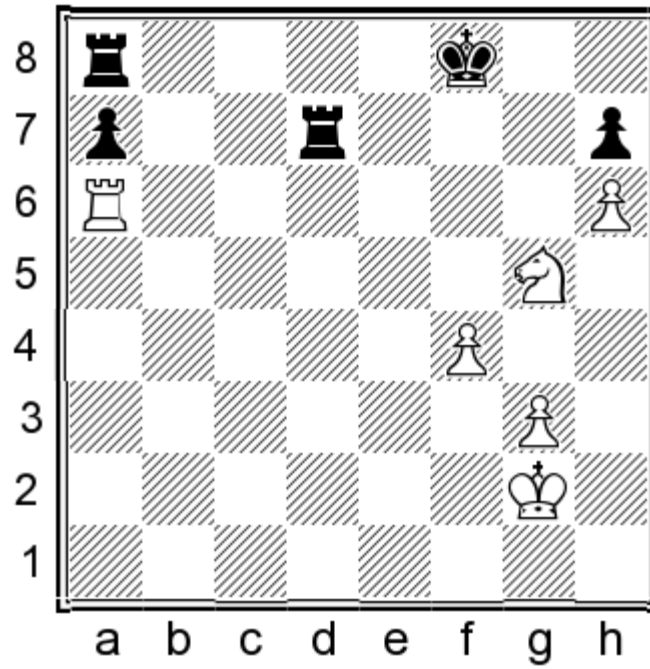
The beginning of the brilliant plan! Black transfers his rook to a8, from where it perfectly supports the a-pawn and also defends against the back-rank mate.

36.h6+

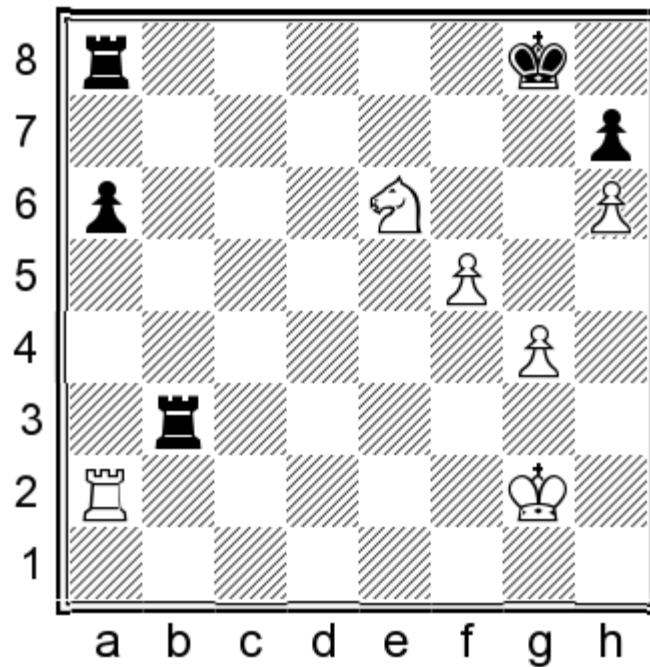
If White prevents ...♖e8 with 36.♖c8 then 36...♖e5! is strong and the h5-pawn falls, or after 37.f4 ♖e2 the white king is suddenly in a mate net.

36...♔f8 37.♖f6+?

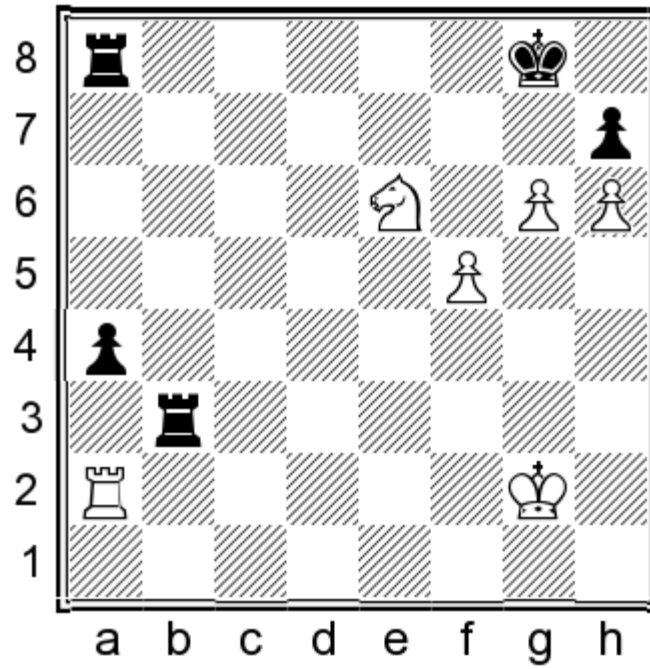
White loses a very important tempo with this unnecessary check. He ought to have played as in the game, but without the ♖f6 move. 37.♔g2! ♖e8! 38.f4! White needs to look for counterplay by advancing the kingside pawns. 38...♖a8 39.♖a6



39...Rb7! This is the key! Black kicks out the blockading rook by playing ...Rb6. 40.f5 and here comes the critical tempo, as Black now needs to waste a move on protecting the h7 pawn in order to play Rb6. This is the reason why 37.Rf6 was bad; he just sent the king to g8! 40...Kg8 41.Qe6 Rb6 42.Ra5 a6! Slowly but surely Black advances his pawn. He is ready to play ...Rb5 now. 43.g4 Rb5 44.Ra2 Rb3



(Unfortunately for Black he cannot push his pawn immediately: 44...a5? 45.Qc7) 45.g5! White must focus on his counterplay. (45.Ra5? loses to 45...Rc8! when Black suddenly changes his mind and plays for the mate.) 45...a5 46.g6 a4



47. Rf2! The only move, but it allows White to hold. 47...a3 48. f6 hxg6 49. f7+ ♔h7 50. f8=♚ ♜xf8 51. ♜xf8 ♜b6 Black grabs the h6-pawn and the game is drawn. 37. ♜c8+? is met by 37... ♜e8!

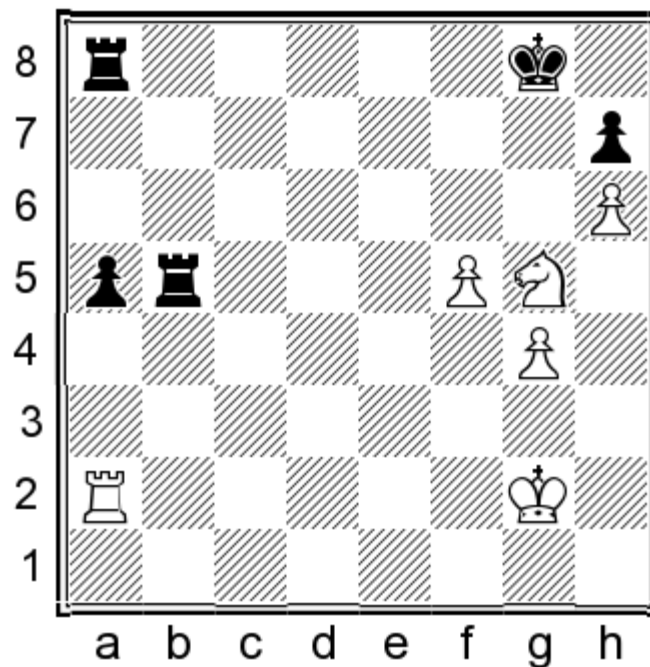
37... ♔g8 38. ♔g2 ♜e8!

We are already familiar with all the ideas from the 37. ♔g2! line.

39. f4 ♜a8 40. ♜a6 ♜b7!

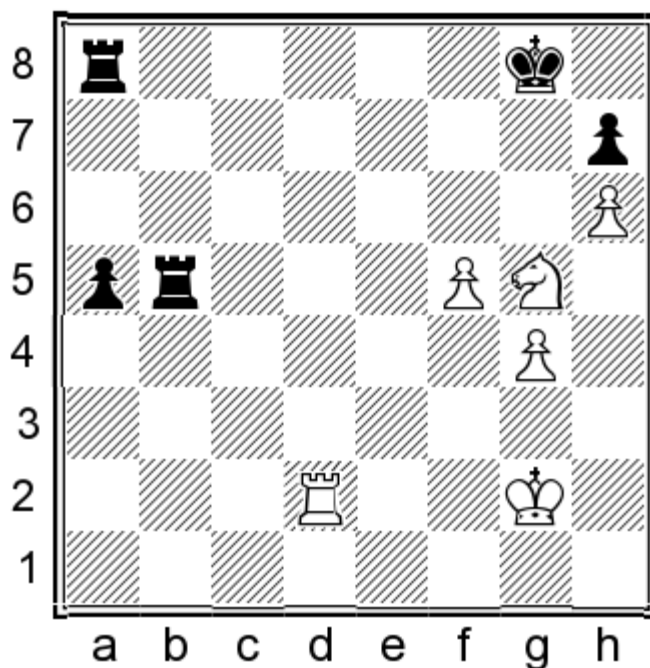
It was not easy to foresee this plan from our initial position.

41. f5 ♜b6 42. ♜a5 a6! 43. g4 ♜b5 44. ♜a2 a5



45.♖d2

White looks for counterplay by activating the rook, so Black must be careful.



45.♗e6 ♜b4! Black must waste a move in order to avoid the ♗c7 threat. 46.g5 a4 47.g6 a3 White is not in time to play ♜f2 and f6, as ...♜b2 comes too fast. 48.♔g3 ♜b2 49.♞a1 a2 50.♗g5 hxg6 51.fxg6 ♜b1—+ Black wins as White cannot promote his pawns.

45...♜b6!

An excellent defensive move, attacking the h6-pawn. After 45...a4?? 46.♞d7 White even wins the game.

46.♗e6

46.♞d7 ♜xh6—+

46...a4 47.♞d7 a3

Despite his attacking pieces, White is unable to create a serious threat.

48.♗c7

48.♞g7+ ♔h8 49.♗g5 ♜xh6—+

48...a2

White resigned in view of 48...a2 49.♗xa8 ♜b2+! Black saves his rook. 50.♔g3 a1=♞—+

0–1

GAME 28

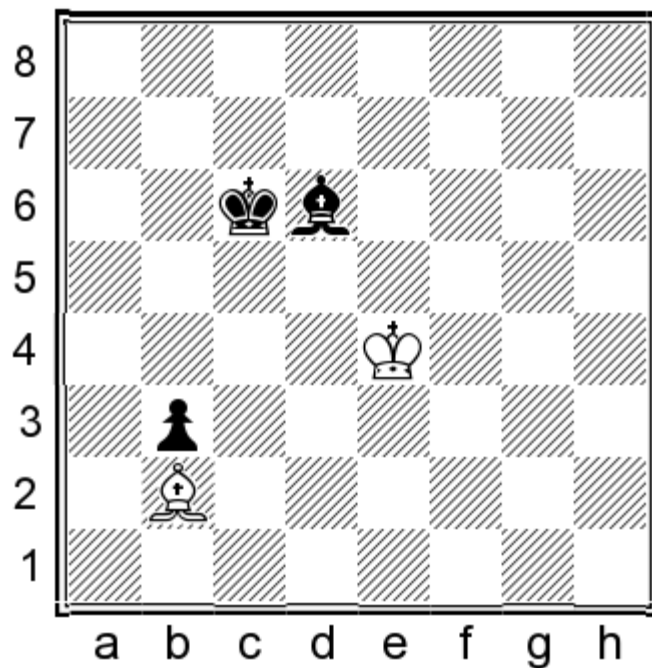
V. Nevednichy (2590)

I. Saric (2628)

Danube rapid

02.11.2013

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



This position looks like a dead draw, but actually White needs to defend precisely in order to save the game.

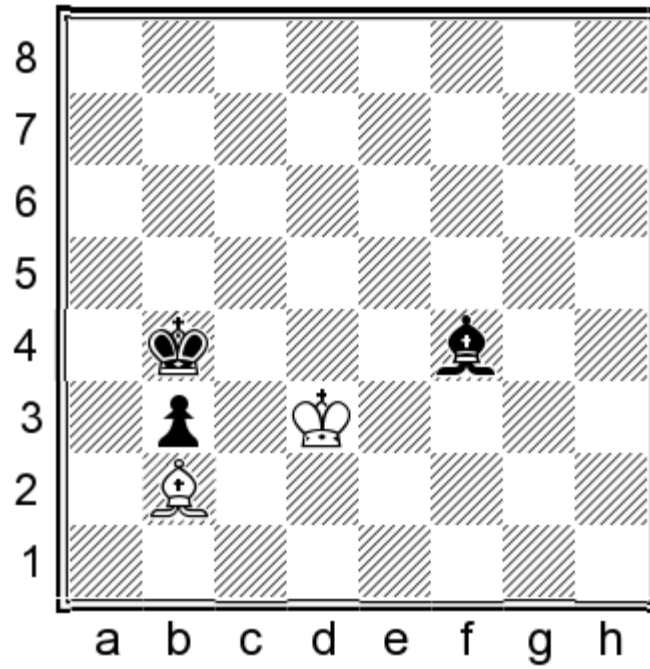
60...♔b5 61.♔d3

White would like to get his king to b1 to achieve an easy draw.

61...♔b4 62.♔d2 ♚f4+!

Otherwise White plays ♔c1–b1.

63.♔d3



63. ♔d1 ♔c4 will transpose to the game.

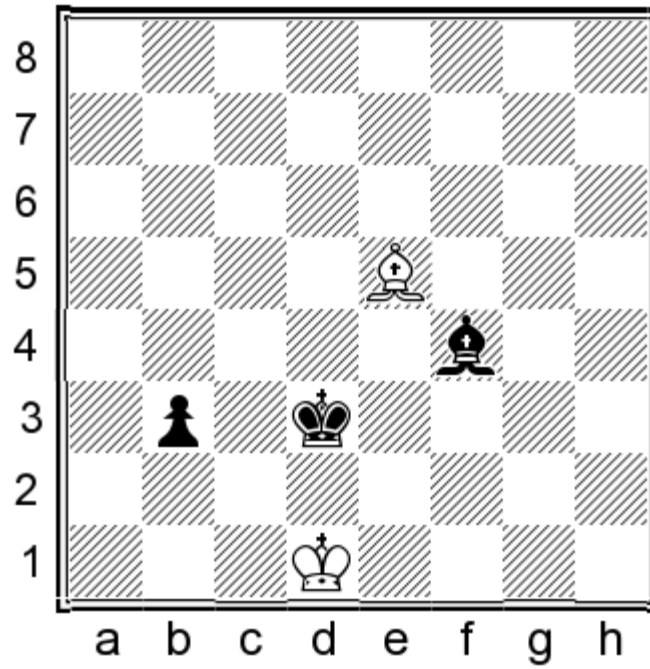
63... ♖g5!

White gets into zugzwang and now he needs to make the first difficult decision.

64. ♔e2!

The correct defence! White drives his king to d1 in order to be ready to play ♔c1–b1. 64. ♔e4? loses to 64... ♔c4! The next step for Black is to transfer his bishop to c3 and White cannot parry this. 65. ♖d4 ♖d2 66. ♖b2 ♖c3 67. ♖a3 ♖f6! Black frees the c3-square for his king. 68. ♔e3 ♔c3 69. ♔e2 ♔c2–+ and ... ♖e7 next deflects the bishop allowing Black to promote his pawn. 64. ♖e5? also loses after 64... ♔a3! 65. ♔c4 ♔a2 Black sends the bishop away from the a1–h8 diagonal and wins the game automatically. 66. ♔b4 (66. ♖d4 does not change anything: 66... ♖c1 67. ♖e5 ♖b2 68. ♖f4 ♖f6 69. ♖c1 ♖e7–+ followed by ... ♖a3 and Black is winning.) 66... ♖c1 67. ♔a4 ♖b2 68. ♖d6 ♖f6 69. ♖a3 ♖g5–+ White is now in a decisive zugzwang as ♔b4 loses to ... ♖e7.

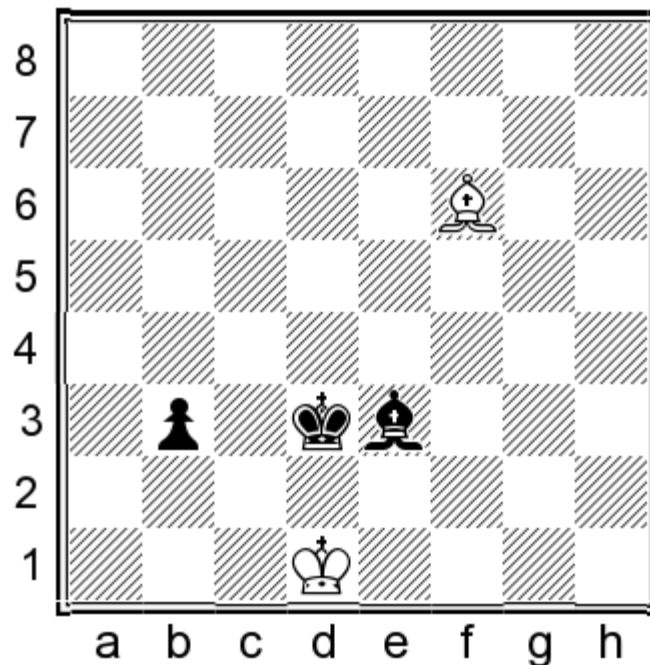
64... ♔c4! 65. ♔d1 ♔d3 66. ♖e5 ♖f4!



We have reached the critical position. In order to save the game, White needs to find a mutual zugzwang position!

67. ♖b2?

And White fails! He is lost after this move! The point is that in the position where the white bishop is on b2 and the black one on e3, we have a mutual zugzwang. In that position, if Black is to play the game, is drawn, while if White is to play he loses. Let's try to understand the reasons why. 67. ♖f6 or any other bishop move along the a1–h8 diagonal holds the draw, only ♖b2 loses. Black needs to send away the bishop from the long diagonal. 67... ♗e3 (67... ♗d2 does not threaten anything and White can continue waiting, since after 68. ♗e5 ♗c3 the pawn endgame is drawn. 69. ♗xc3! ♔xc3 70. ♔c1=)



And when the bishop goes to e3, White must play ♗b2 with the idea of 68. ♗b2! ♗d4 69. ♔c1!= White easily holds the draw.

67...♙e3!—+

The game is over now! Saric demonstrates it with good technique.

68.♙a3

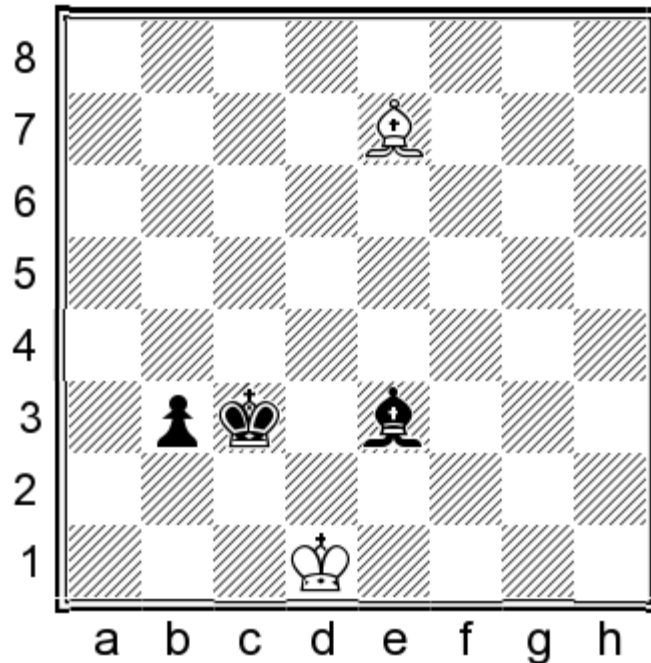
68.♙a1 ♙d4 69.♙xd4 ♔xd4 The pawn endgame with the king on d4 is winning, despite the fact that White can temporarily take the opposition. 70.♔d2 ♔c4 71.♔d1 ♔d3! 72.♔c1 ♔c3 73.♔b1 b2—+;

68.♙e5 ♙d4—+

68...♔c3!

White is in zugzwang again.

69.♙e7



69.♔e2 ♙c5 70.♙c1 ♔c2—+

69...♔b2!

Black drives his king to a2 and he wins with the technique we know from the 64.♙e5 line.

70.♙f6+ ♔a2 71.♙c3 ♙c5

The bishop is heading to b2!

72.♙e5 ♙a3 73.♙c3 ♙b2 74.♙d2 ♙f6 75.♙c1 ♙e7

White resigned as ...♙a3 is coming next. 75...♙g5 was also good enough. A very instructive practical endgame.

0–1

GAME 29

A. Morozevich (2727)

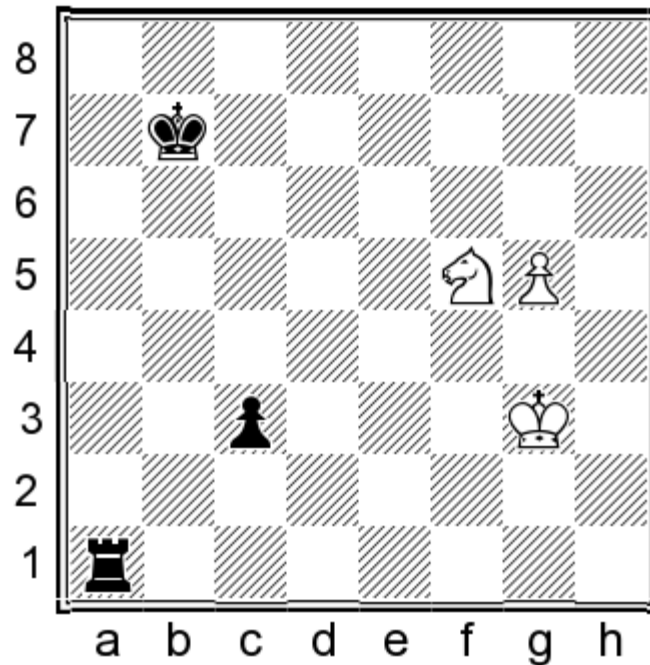
R. Van Kampen (2618)

19th European Teams

Warsaw POL (8.3)

16.11.2013, [C67]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

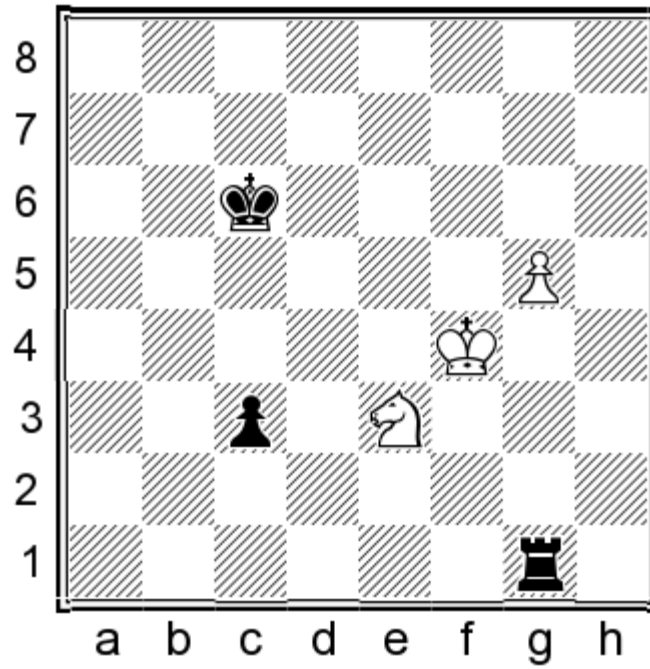


We are in the 8th round and the final game remaining between Russia and the Netherlands. At the moment the score is 2–1 for Russia, so Van Kampen has to win the game and his position is indeed totally winning. It is never easy to play under big pressure, but for a professional chess player this is one of the important things you must be able to do.

51. ♖e3 ♔g1+

Black has a lot of winning moves but this move looks to be the simplest one. The g5-pawn is attacked by the rook and Black has enough time to bring the king closer.

52. ♕f4 ♔c6



53.♔f5!

Morozevich takes his practical chance.

53...♔d6?

This move is still winning, but it is a bad practical decision. In winning positions it is important to win as fast as possible to give yourself no chances of going wrong. 53...♖g3! would end the game on the spot. 54.♘c2 (54.♔f4 didn't help either: 54...♖g2 Followed by c2.) 54...♖g2 55.♘e3 ♖e2 Black is winning.

54.g6

Now White at least has some theoretical chances for a draw. White's idea is to give back the g6-pawn and quickly run back to d3 with the king.

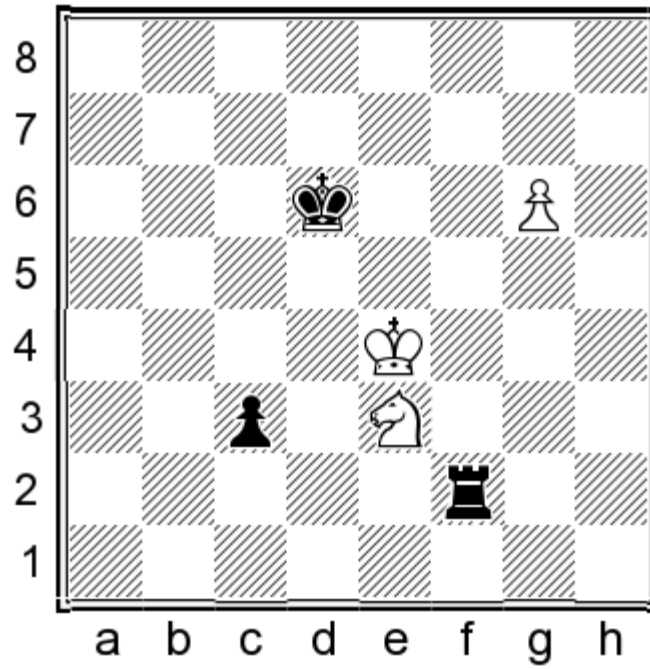
54...♖g3

The usual idea.

55.♘c2 ♖g2 56.♘e3 ♖f2+!

Van Kampen chooses the right path. White cannot stop Black from playing ...c2 next.

57.♔e4



57...♔e6??

What a shocking mistake. I have to admit that the arising position looks totally winning, which can be ‘a little excuse’, but I think that Robin’s team mates had a bit of a heart attack when they saw this move. To win the game Van Kampen had only to make a small calculation: 57...c2 58.g7 the moves are forced. 58...c1=♚ 59.g8=♚ ♚b1+ 60.♔d4 ♚d2+ with mate to follow in a few moves.

58.g7

White pushes the black king as far away as possible.

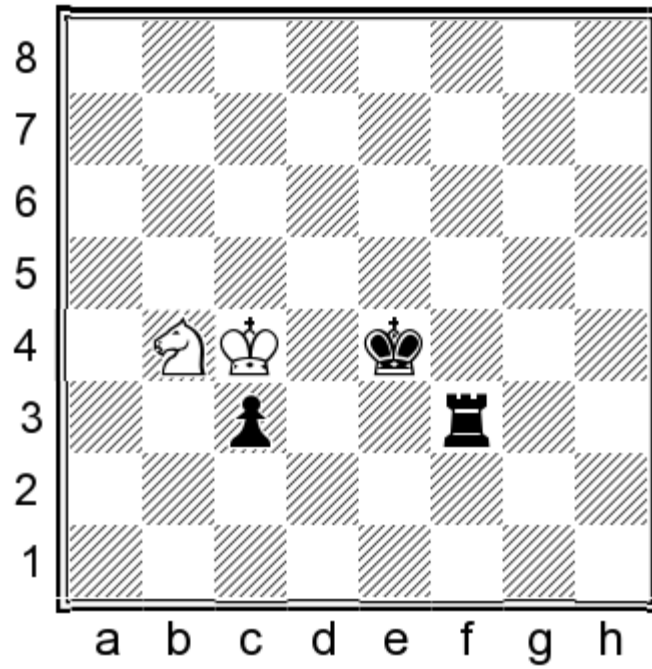
58...♔f7 59.♔d3 ♚f3

I guess Van Kampen thought that this position should be easily winning, but in fact it is already a draw!

60.♔d4 ♔xg7 61.♞c2 ♔f6 62.♔c4

We have a funny position. White cannot win the c-pawn, but on the other hand the black king cannot come closer, except via the g3-square, which would give White enough time for ♔b3-♞b4 and ♞d5. What a dramatic finish to the game.

62...♔e5 63.♞b4 ♔e4



64. ♖c2 ♜h3 65. ♗b4 ♝g3 66. ♗c2 ♝f3

Van Kampen tries, but he can't cross the 3rd rank with his king.

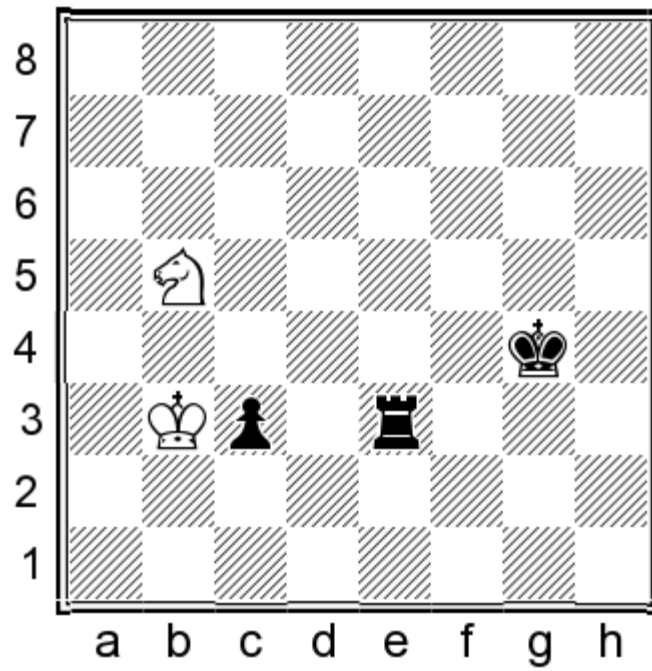
67. ♗b4 ♔f5 68. ♗c2 ♔g4

Now that the black king is far away, White is in time to win the c-pawn.

69. ♗d4 ♝g3 70. ♔b3

Black can do nothing against ♗b5-♗xc3 next.

70... ♝e3 71. ♗b5



71...♔f4 72.♘xc3 ♔e5 73.♔c4

And of course there are no practical chances of winning such an endgame at all.

73...♞h3 74.♘b5 ♞h8 75.♘c3 ♞c8+

Van Kampen keeps on playing for a few moves just to let the air out.

76.♔d3 ♞d8+ 77.♔c4 ♞d4+ 78.♔c5 ♞d3 79.♔c4 ♞xc3+ 80.♔xc3

What a lucky end for the Russian team and a big disaster for Van Kampen!

1/2

GAME 30

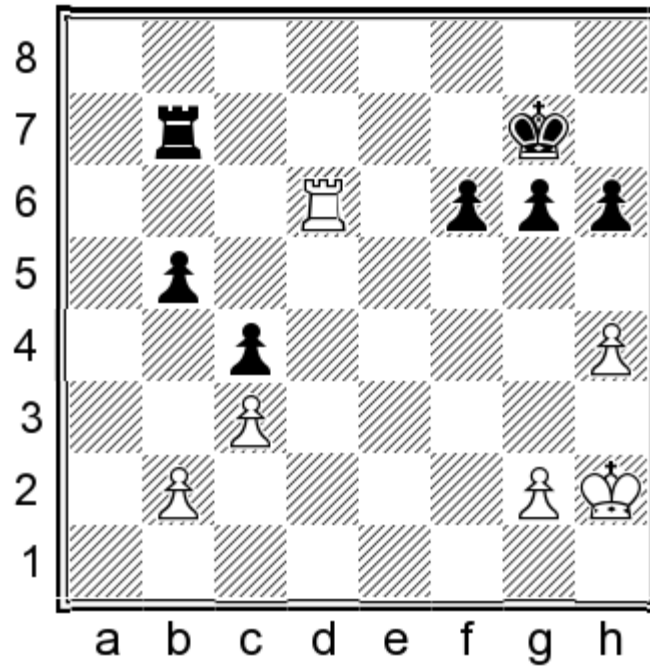
V. Anand (2775)

M. Carlsen (2870)

WCh 2013 Chennai

16.11.2013

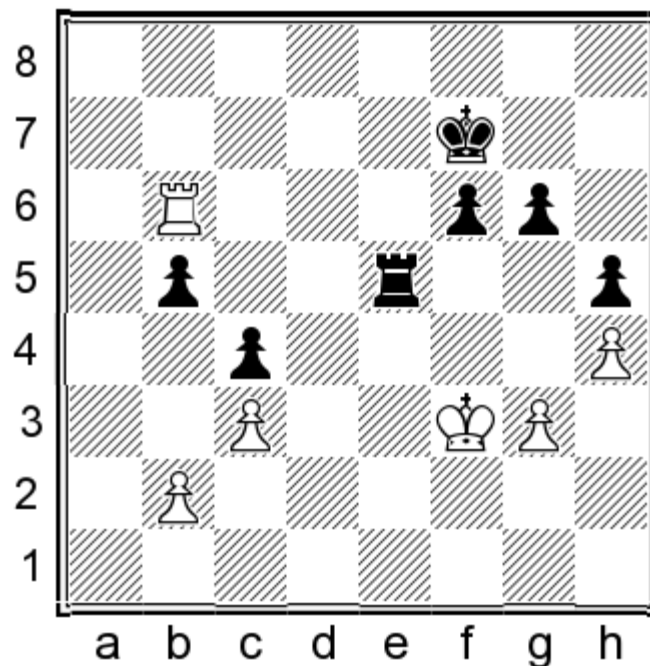
Annotated by Csaba Balogh



This interesting endgame was reached after passing the first time-control. Black has a healthy extra pawn, but his rook is passive. On the other hand the white rook is excellently placed on the 6th rank. It attacks the pawns and remains ready to attack the b5-pawn as well if Black tries to activate his rook. White should be able to hold this.

43...♔f7

43...h5!? was a better chance according to Carlsen and he admitted that he'd missed Anand's move in the game... 44.♔g3 ♔f7 45.♔f3 ♖e7 This was the idea in Black's mind. He transfers his rook to e5, which is a serious improvement obviously, but still it should not be enough to win the game... 46.♖b6 ♖e5 47.g3



Followed by waiting with ♔f2-f3. It will be very difficult for Black to make further improvements.

43...♔f7 44.h5!

A clever pawn sacrifice to destroy the healthy pawn structure. White will only temporarily be two pawns down...
 44.♔g3 was also possible when Black has nothing better than transposing to the 43...h5 line at some point.

44...gxh5

44...g5?! is not advisable because it fixes his own pawn on h6. 45.♔g3 ♖e7 46.♜b6 ♜e5 47.♔f3= White plays g4 next and Black cannot make progress.

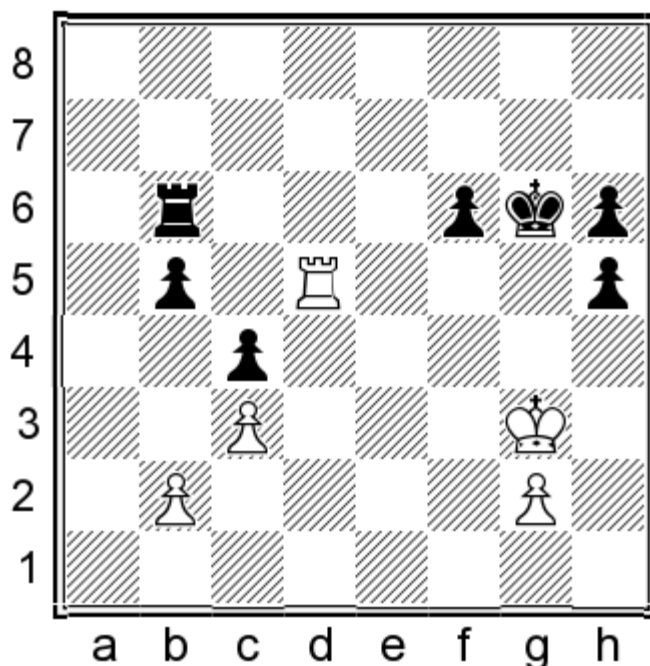
45.♞d5!

Otherwise Black transfers his rook to e5 and preserves both extra pawns.

45...♔g6

45...b4 with the idea of ...bxc3 and ...♞b3 is always met by 46.♞c5!= winning the c4-pawn and achieving a draw.

46.♔g3 ♞b6



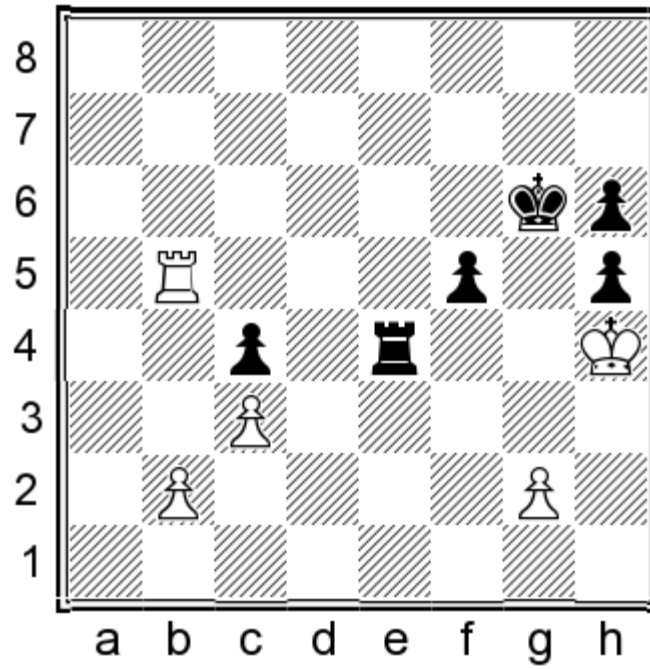
47.♞c5!

A strong waiting move, using the fact that Black has no useful move of his own. If he wants to do something, he must give one of his pawns back.

47...f5 48.♔h4 ♞e6

There was really no more improvement to be made, so Carlsen decides to give up his b5-pawn in order to activate his rook. 48...f4 49.♞xh5=

49.♞xb5 ♞e4+

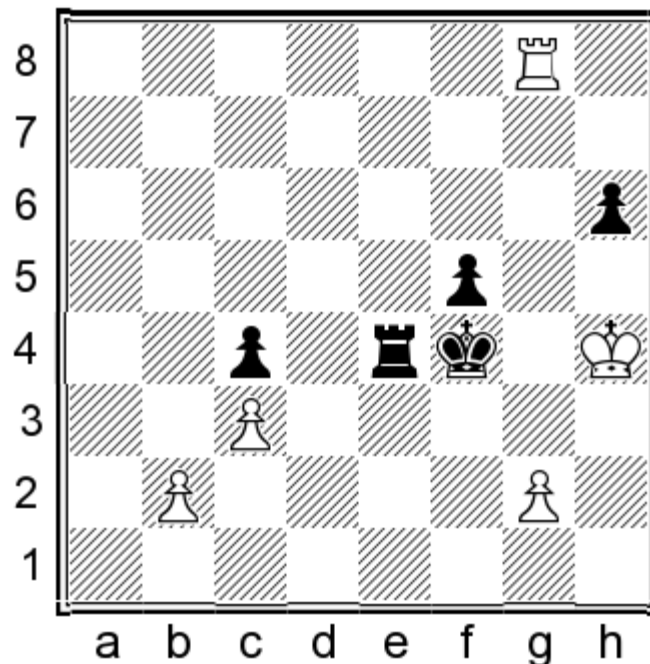


50.♔h3

The game should be an easy draw and I still find it hard to believe that the World Champion simply lost it. Black has two extra pawns on the kingside, but the double isolated h-pawns can hardly be counted as full pawns. Anand was probably expecting a quick finish here, but Carlsen had a very deep last attempt in mind...

50...♙g5 51.♖b8 h4 52.♖g8+ ♔h5

52...♙f4 53.♖c8 (53.♙xh4? is bad in view of



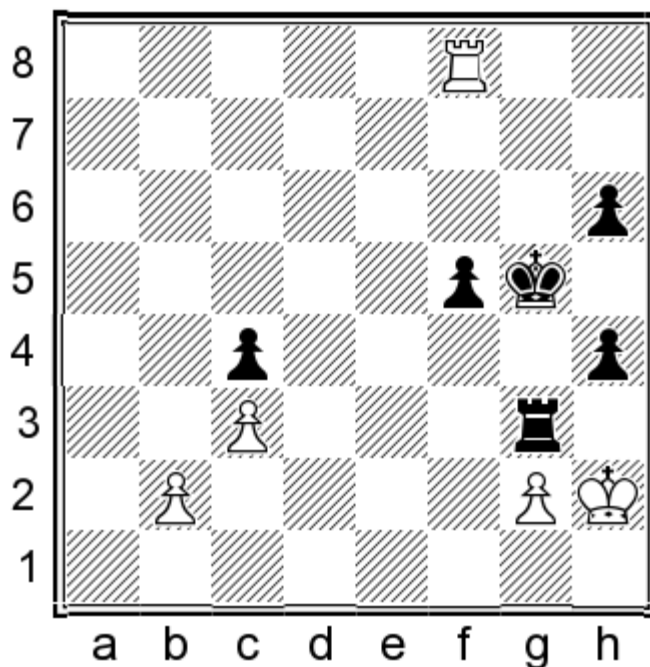
53...♖e1! Threatening ♖h1. 54.♔h5 (54.g3+ ♔f3 55.♔h5 loses to the tactical 55...f4! Black creates a passed pawn, because the f4-pawn cannot be taken: 56.gxf4 ♖h1+ 57.♔g6 ♖g1+ 58.♔h7 ♖xg8 59.♔xg8 ♔xf4—+ and the h-pawn

promotes...) 54...♖e2! 55.♔xh6 ♜xb2 Black plays ...♞c2 next, while after 56.♞c8 ♞xg2 57.♞xc4+ ♔e3 the f-pawn runs and the white king is poorly placed.) 53...♔e3 54.♞c5 ♞f4 55.♞d5= White holds easily.

53.♞f8 ♞f4 54.♞c8

Anand curiously waits to see how Black intends to make progress... White could always play 54.♞b8 followed by b3. White should also take care of ...♞f1–h1 and rook checks along the 3rd rank, but both can be prevented with the simple ♔h2.

54...♞g4 55.♞f8 ♞g3+ 56.♔h2 ♔g5



57.♞g8+?

Anand misses the fantastic idea of Carlsen... Both players said this was the decisive mistake at the press conference. However the computer would still have saved White with some miraculous line... White should simply have forced the rook back to g4. 57.♞c8 ♞g4 58.♔h3= and a draw would have been agreed soon.

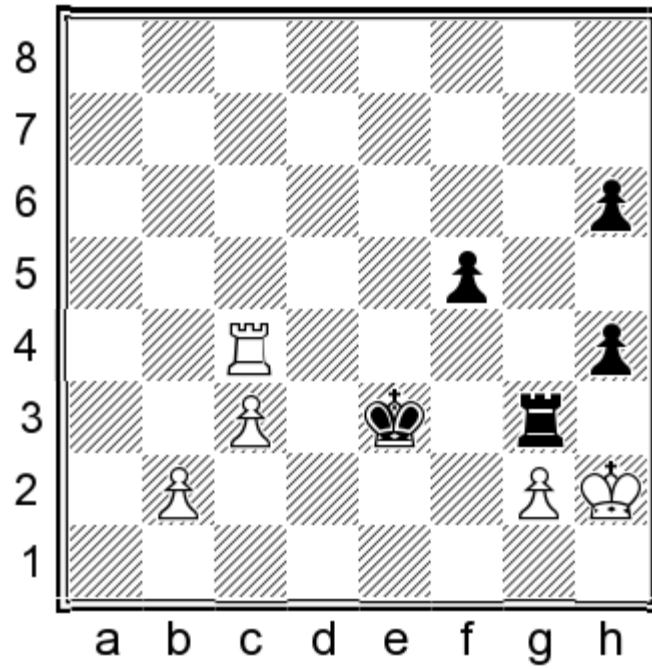
57...♔f4!!

Brilliant! At first sight it looks like a blunder because White obtains connected passed pawns after ♞c8, but Black is able to create a passed f-pawn, which turns out to be much more relevant than the white ones.

58.♞c8!

58.♞e8? loses to 58...h3! 59.gxh3 ♞e3 and suddenly White is in serious trouble... 60.♞c8 ♞e2+ 61.♔g1 ♔g3 62.♔f1 ♞xb2 63.♞xc4 f4–+ wins.

58...♔e3 59.♞xc4

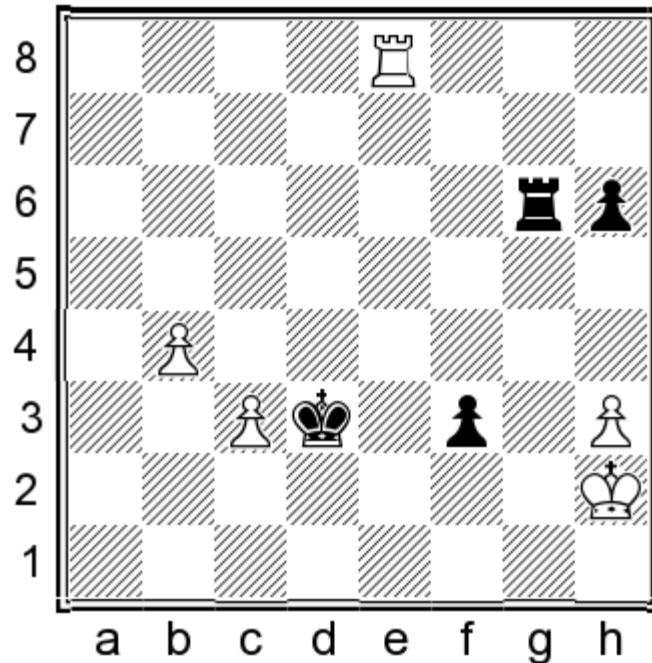


59...f4!

White cannot avoid ...h3! and suddenly the f-pawn becomes extremely dangerous. What a change in the game in just 2 moves. Instead of agreeing to a draw, Black has decisive threats!

60.♖a4?

This is actually the decisive mistake. The machines found the study-like salvation for White with 60.b4! The only move! 60...h3 61.gxh3 ♖g6 62.♖c8 f3 63.♖e8+ ♔d3

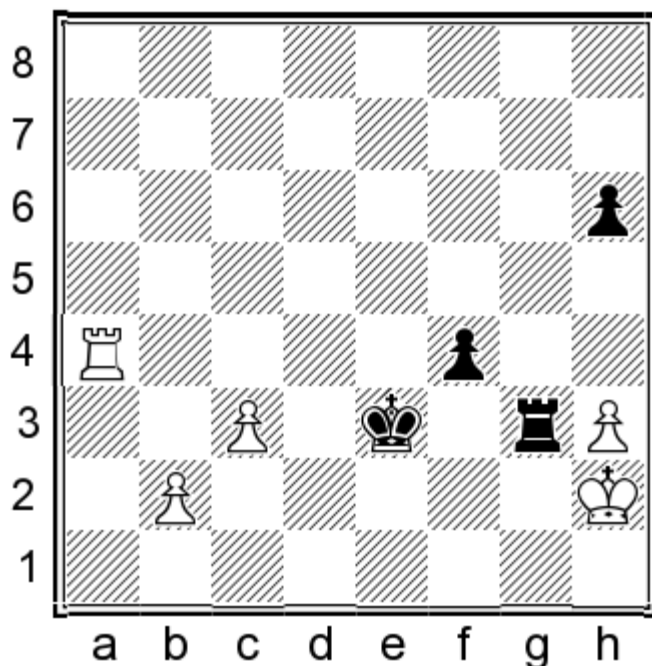


64.b5! f2 (64...♖g2+ 65.♔h1 ♖b2 The king must be cut along the g-file and not on the 2nd rank, because now 66.♔g1! holds. In comparison to the lines after 60.♖a4, the black king always stands on e3 and there he wins after ...♖b1 and

...f2, as White does not have ♔f2...) 65.♖f8 ♕e2 66.♗e8+ ♕d2 (Black cannot make progress after 66... ♕f1 67.c4 ♗g2+ 68.♕h1 ♗g1) 67.♖f8=;

60.♗c8 immediately loses to 60... ♕f2! 61.♖f8 ♗xg2+ 62.♕h3 f3 63.b4 ♗g3+ 64.♕xh4 ♕g2—+

60...h3! 61.gxh3



61...♗g6!

Black is ready to advance his f-pawn. A very interesting situation, because without the c- and b-pawns White could easily hold by giving side checks. However, White is unable to get rid of the pawns...

62.c4

62.b4 f3 63.♗a8 ♗g2+ 64.♕h1 ♗e2! loses as in the 63.♗a8 line.

62...f3 63.♗a3+

63.b4 f2 transposes to the game. Now 63.♗a8 loses to 63... ♗g2+ 64.♕h1 ♗e2! 65.♗e8+ (65. ♕g1? ♗e1+ 66. ♕h2 f2) 65... ♕d2 66.♗d8+ (66. ♗f8 f2 67. ♕g2 ♕e1—+) 66... ♕e1 67.♗a8 ♗e5—+ freeing the e2-square for the king and ...f2 next wins.

63...♕e2 64.b4 f2 65.♗a2+ ♕f3 66.♗a3+ ♕f4

White should continue checking with his rook, but his pawns are preventing this. Really shocking...

67.♗a8

67.♗a1 loses to 67... ♗e6! and ♗e1 next. 68.♕g2 (68. ♗f1 ♕f3—+) 68... ♗e1—+

67...♗g1!

White resigned. A really painful loss, especially in such an important game. Probably only Carlsen believed that he

could still win this endgame.

0-1

GAME 31

A. Grischuk (2785)

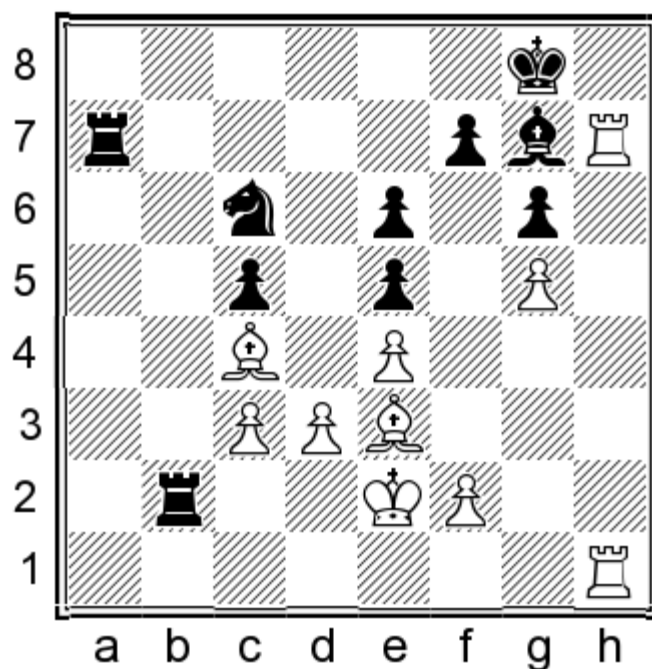
Xiangzhi Bu (2683)

World Teams 2013

Antalya TUR (3.4)

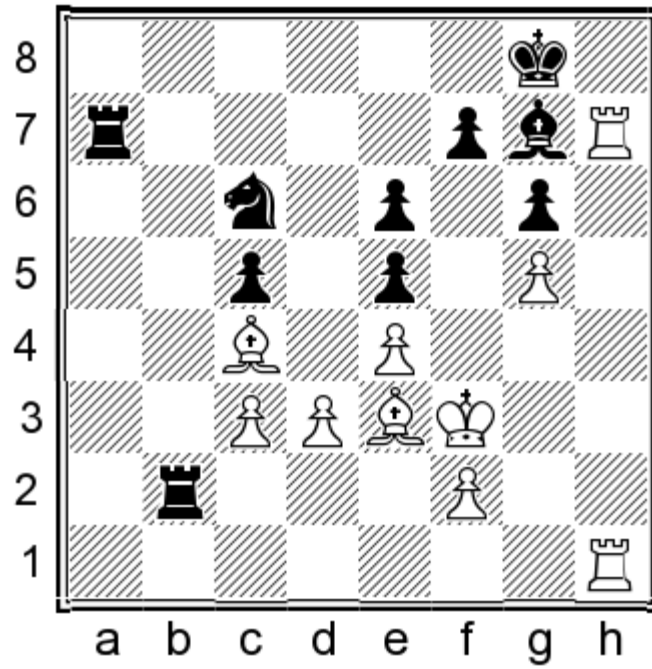
28.11.2013, [B30]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



Grischuk has been applying a little pressure all-game-long and Black's position still seems to be a bit worse. White has the bishop pair and theoretically, if he managed to bring the rook from the h-file to the a-file, he would obtain some winning chances.

42. ♖f3



42...Nd4+!!

What a fantastic piece sacrifice! Black creates a fortress.

43.cxd4

White has to take the piece...

43...cxd4 44.♙c1

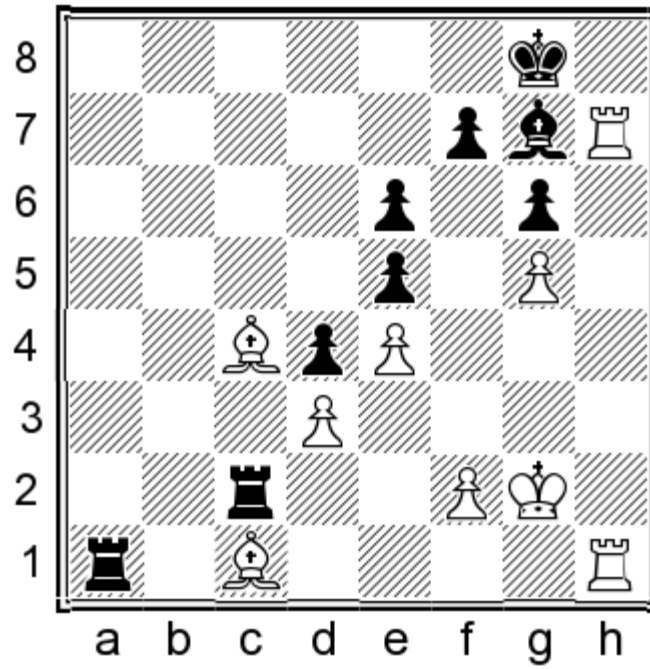
The white bishop has no square other than c1.

44...♖c2!

And the black rook takes up a perfect position on c2.

45.♔g2 ♜a8

All Black needs to do now is keep on waiting on the a-file. It is a bit shocking, but White cannot improve his position. After ♔g3, with the idea of playing f4, Black has the very unpleasant ...♜a1 move, and White no longer has the idea of ♙f4 because of ...exf4 check. It would of course have been a blunder to play 45...♜a1?



46. ♕f4! A move which is not too difficult to see. 46... ♖xh1 47. ♖xg7+ ♔xg7 48. ♕xe5+ ♔g8 49. ♔xh1 and White is easily winning.

46. ♕b3 ♖c3 47. ♕c4 ♖c2

Black continues his waiting policy, and White just cannot improve his position!

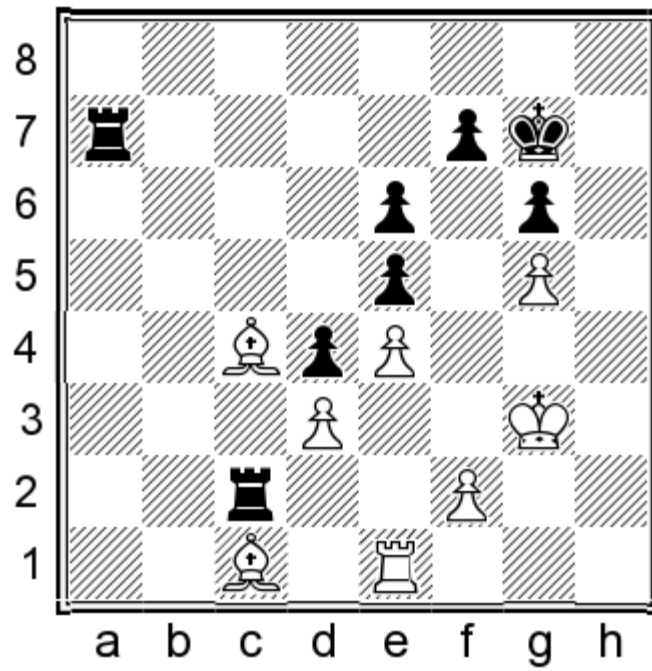
48. ♖xg7+

This does not change much.

48... ♔xg7 49. ♖e1 ♖a7

Black again waits patiently.

50. ♕b3 ♖c3 51. ♕c4 ♖c2 52. ♔g3



52...♖b7

It was also possible to continue waiting on the a-file.

53.♔h3

53.♔a3? was of course not possible because of the following nice little trick: 53...♗xc4! 54.dxc4 ♖b3+

53...♖b6

What a surprising fortress from the Chinese player Bu!

1/2

GAME 32

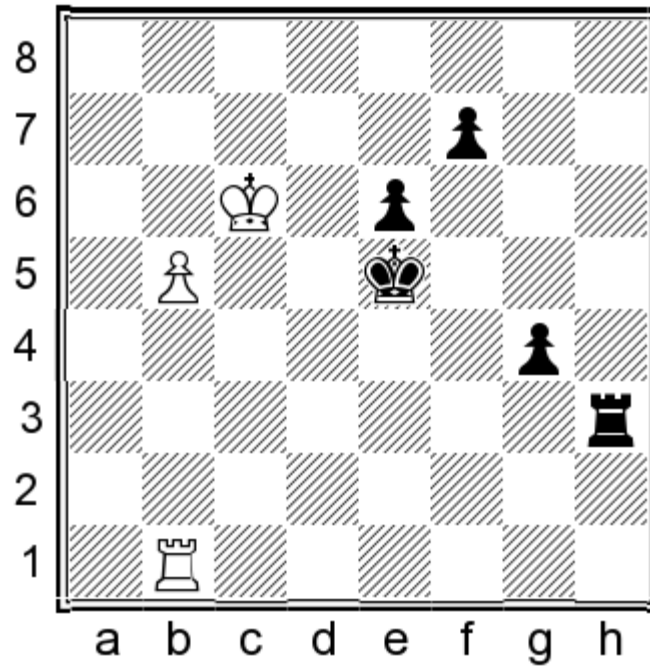
A. Czebe (2451)

A. Horvath (2531)

Hungarian Championship

10.12.2013

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



The following extremely interesting endgame arose between two very good friends of mine, where Black is very close to victory, but White also has his hopes thanks to the b-pawn. The winning technique should be to advance the pawns, then to sacrifice the rook for the b-pawn, and then promote one of the passers with the help of the king... Such positions are very good exercises to improve our calculating skills. In the game Black was living off the half-minute increments, which of course makes his task much harder.

56...f5!

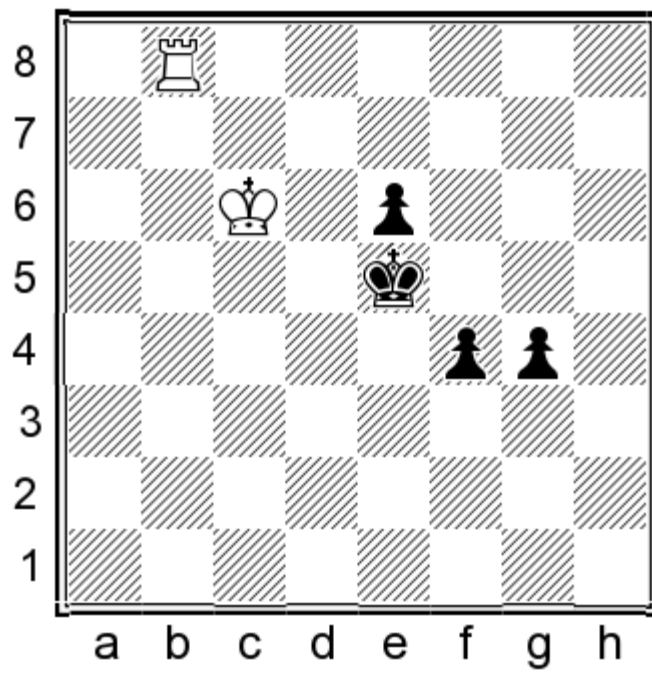
The pawns should be advanced together.

57.b6 f4

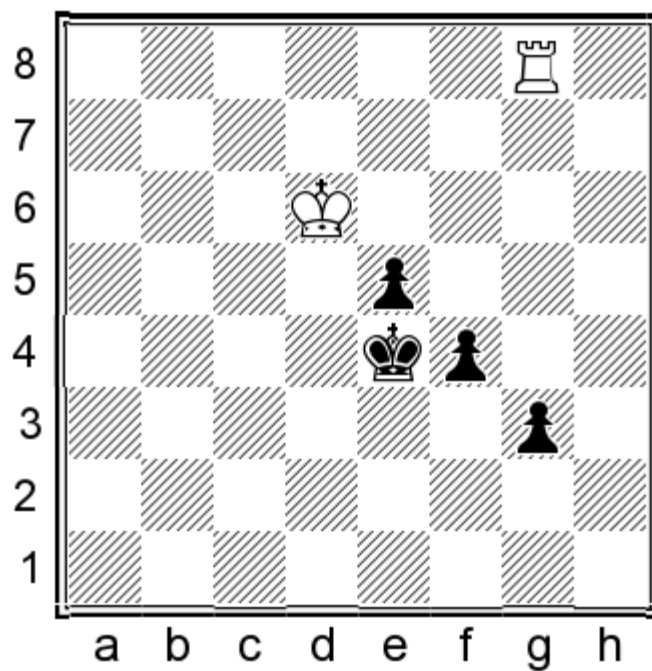
It seems to be over, as b7 loses quite easily, but White finds a very tricky attempt to complicate matters:

58.♖b5+!

The endgame after 58.b7 ♖h8 59.b8=♚+ ♖xb8 60.♖xb8 is losing for White because of



60...f3! The only winning move! (60...g3? 61.♖g8 ♔e4 62.♔d6 e5 (62...f3 63.♖g4+! forces the king into the pin 63...♔e3 64.♖xg3=)

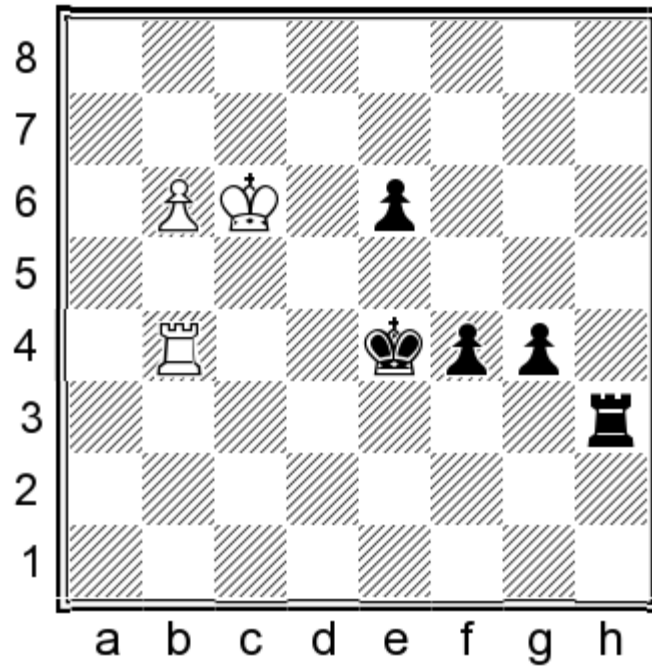


63.♔e6! And this position is a draw as the following lines show: 63...f3 (63...♔d4 64.♔f5=) 64.♖g4+! ♔e3 65.♖xg3=) 61.♖f8 (61.♖g8 f2 62.♖f8 g3-+) 61...♔e4 and ...g3 next. 62.♖g8 f2 (62...♔f4 63.♖f8+ ♔e3-+ is also good enough.) 63.♖xg4+ ♔e5 64.♖g5+ ♔f6 65.♖g8 ♔f7-+

58...♔e4 59.♖b4+ ♔f5

Black repeats twice to gain some time.

60.♖b5+ ♔e4 61.♖b4+



61...♔f5

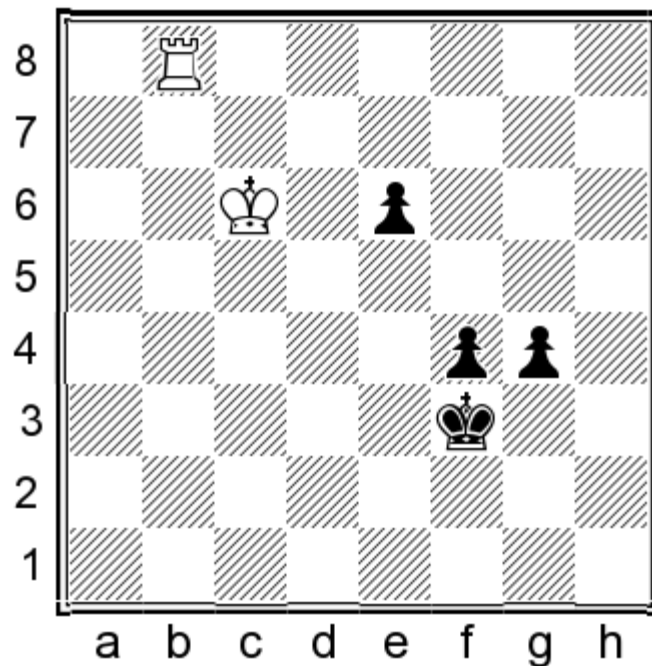
61...♔f3! was the best way to win. 62.b7

(On 62.♖b3+ ♔f2 63.♖b2+

(63.♖xh3 loses because the pawn promotes with check. 63...gxh3 64.b7 h2 65.b8=♚ h1=♚+-+)

63...♔g3 White has no more checks and ...f3 is coming next 64.b7 ♖h8 65.b8=♚ ♖xb8 66.♖xb8 f3 67.♔d6 f2 68.♖f8 ♔g2+-+)

62...♖h8 63.b8=♚ ♖xb8 64.♖xb8



It is a nice exercise to calculate the win for Black: 64...♔g3!

(64...g3 also wins, but only if Black finds 65.♔d6 ♕g2!!—+ The f-pawn must be advanced!

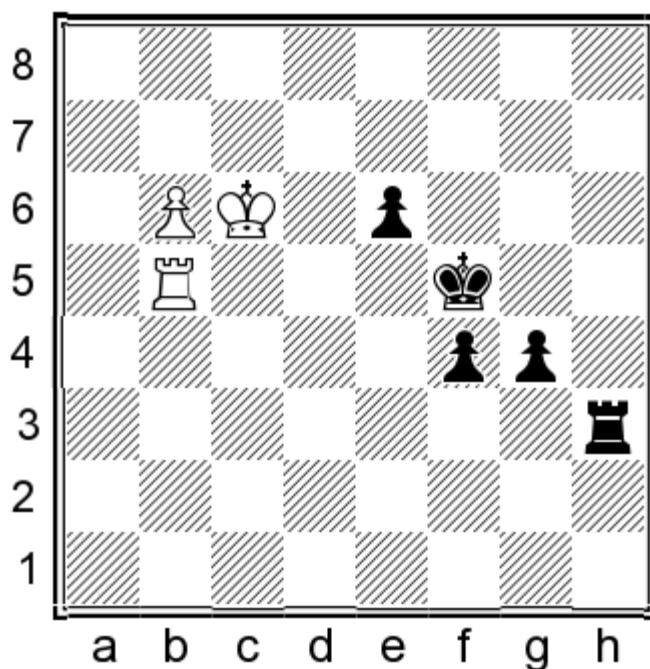
(65...g2? spoils the win because of 66.♖g8 ♕f2 67.♕e5! f3 68.♕e4 e5 69.♖g7= and White just waits with the rook and holds the draw.))

65.♕d6 f3 66.♕xe6

(66.♕e5 does not change anything, Black wins after 66...f2 67.♖f8 ♕g2 68.♕e4 g3—+ and f1=♖ next.)

66...f2 67.♖f8 ♕g2 68.♕e5 g3 69.♕e4 f1=♖ 70.♖xf1 ♕xf1—+

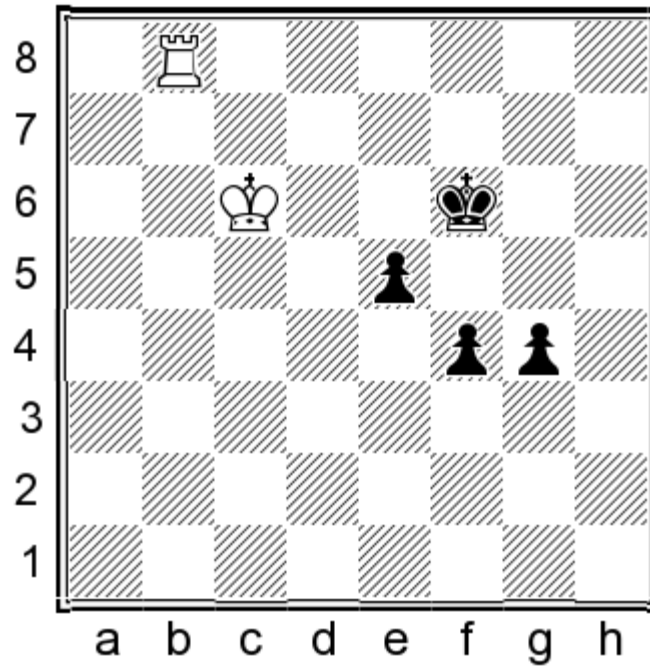
62.♖b5+



62...e5?

Surprisingly this most logical of moves spoils the win... 62...♕e4 would have been best, to transpose to the ♕f3 lines, but here it already moves into threefold repetition. Therefore the last winning move was the very strange and non-human 62...♕f6!! 63.b7

(63.♖b4 e5 64.b7 ♖h8 65.b8=♖ ♖xb8 66.♖xb8



In the game they reached the same position — except that the king was on f5 — and that is drawn, while now Black is winning... It is very difficult to understand chess sometimes. 66...g3!

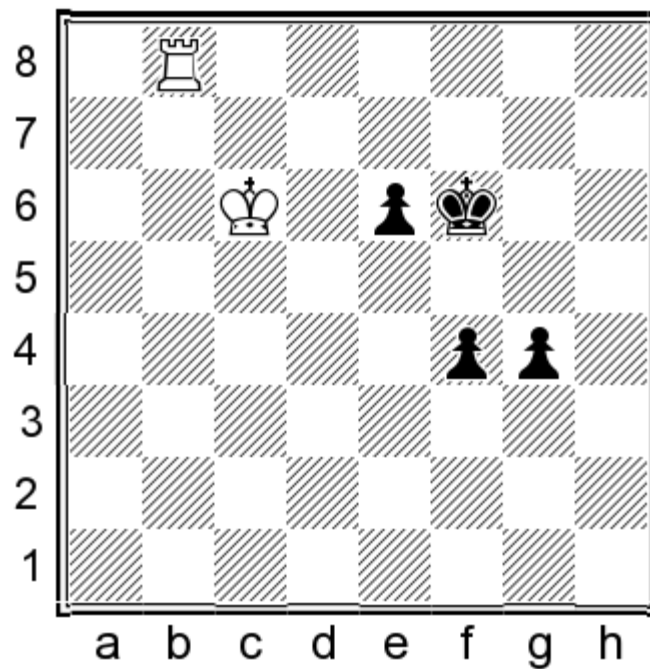
(66...f3? 67.♔d5=)

67.♔d5 g2 68.♖g8

(Here is the difference to the game: 68.♖f8+ Now Black is not forced to go to g4, but plays 68...♔g7—+)

68...f3 69.♔e4 f2—+)

63...♖h8 64.b8=♖ ♖xb8 65.♖xb8



If Black had provoked the move e5 with 63.♖b4, g3 was the only winning move, while with the pawn on e6 only f3 wins! Amazing! 65...f3!

(65...g3? draws now as after 66.♖g8 ♔f5 67.♔d6 e5 68.♔d5 White holds.)

66.♔d6

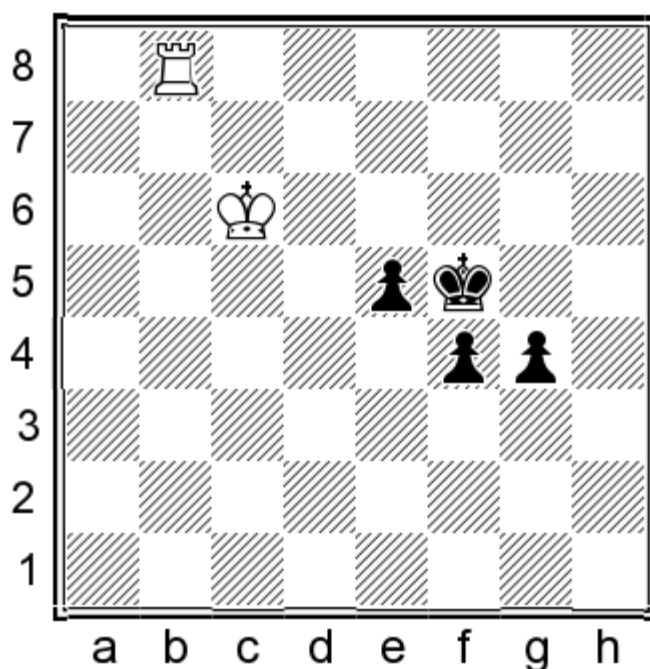
(66.♖g8 ♔f5 67.♔d6 ♔f4 68.♔xe6 f2 69.♖f8+ ♔e3—+ g3 next. 66.♖f8+ ♔e5 67.♔d7 ♔e4 68.♔xe6 g3—+ and one of the pawns promotes. 66.♔c5 ♔e5! Sheltering the king and threatening ...f2 after leaving from ♖f8. 67.♖f8 ♔e4 and g3 next. 68.♖g8 f2! 69.♖xg4+ ♔e5 70.♖g5+ ♔f6 71.♖g8 ♔f7—+)

66...♔f5! 67.♖f8+

(67.♖b5+ e5! 68.♖xe5+ ♔f4—+)

67...♔e4 68.♔xe6 g3—+

63.b7 ♖h8 64.b8=♖ ♖xb8 65.♖xb8



And White holds now in all the lines:

65...g3

65...♔e4 66.♖b4+! It is important to let the white king approach to the pawns. 66...♔e3 67.♔d5=;

65...f3 66.♔d5 g3 (66... ♔f4 67.♖b4+! ♔g3 68.♔xe5 f2 69.♖f4=) 67.♖f8+ ♔g4 68.♔e4 f2 69.♔e3 ♔h3 70.♖xf2! Just in time, otherwise White loses. (70. ♔e2? ♔g2 71.♖f7 e4 72.♖f8 ♔g1! 73.♖f7 e3!—+ and g2 next.) 70...gxf2 71.♔xf2 ♔g4 72.♔e3=

66.♔d5! g2

66...f3 transposes to the 65...f3 line

67.♖f8+!

The only move once again.

67...♔g4 68.♖g8+ ♔f3 69.♔xe5 ♔f2 70.♔xf4 g1=♖ 71.♖xg1 ♔xg1

A nice save by White! In such endgames we can only play well if we calculate flawlessly; there is no theoretical position to learn, only pure calculation!

1/2

GAME 33

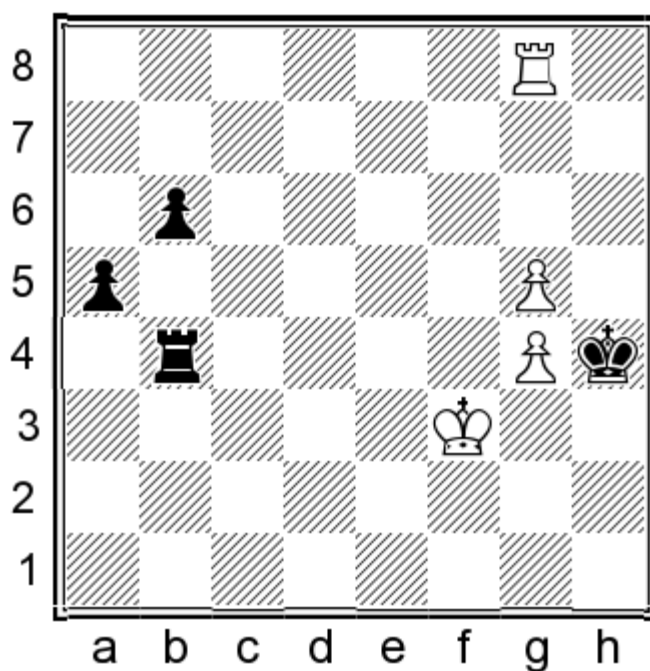
L. Van Wely (2672)

S. Karjakin (2759)

Wijk aan Zee NED (1.2)

11.01.2014

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



In the following endgame, despite the material equality, White has to fight very hard to save the game. First of all the connected passed pawns are much more useful than the doubled g-pawns. The black rook is excellently placed to support his own pawns and to cut the white king off along the 4th rank. The last fact is that whenever White pushes g6, Black catches the pawn with ...♔g5, g7, ...♔g6 and then the rook has no good square to move to in order to promote the pawn. Van Wely finds a very clever idea to maintain his drawing chances.

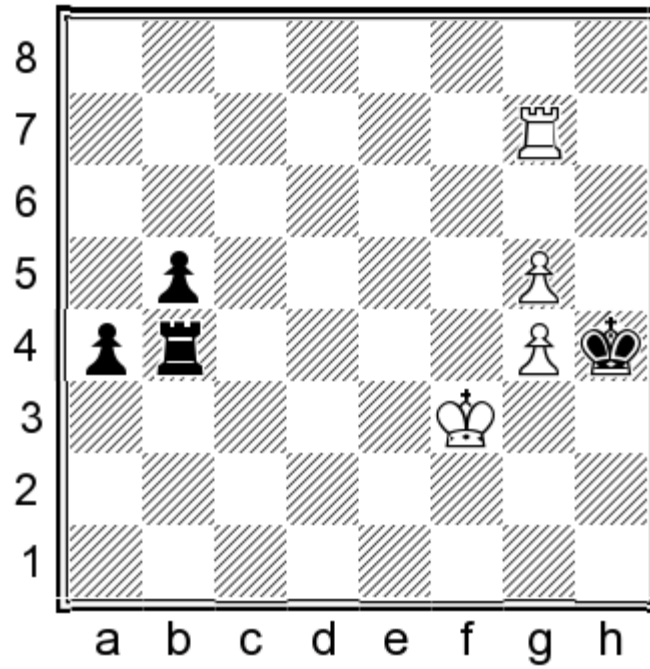
49.♟g6!

White waits until Black runs out of useful moves. Black will soon have to either advance his pawns, which might become targets, or to leave the excellent position on b4 with his rook. At the moment 49.g6 was simply bad in view of 49...♔g5 50.g7 ♔g6 and White cannot move his rook to attack something.

49.♟g6! a4 50.♟g7!

Van Wely is right in realizing that he must have his rook on g8 when the black pawns are on b5 and a4.

50...b5



50...♖xg4?? obviously does not work because of 51.♖h7+ ♔xg5 52.♖g7++- The pawns cannot be advanced separately because they fall: 50...a3? 51.♖a7 ♖b3+ 52.♕f4 and White is threatening mate on h7.

51.♖g8!

Here we are! Black is in zugzwang.

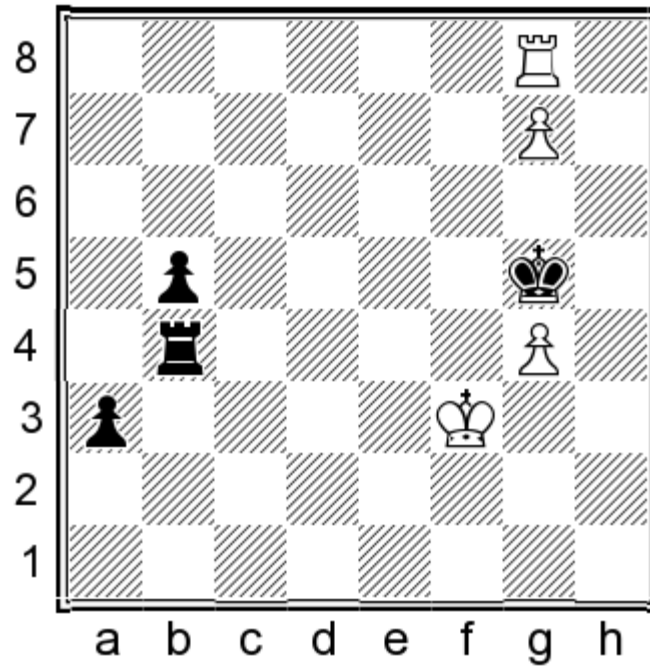
51...a3!

Karjakin tries his best chance. 51...♖b1 allows the white king to advance to the 4th rank. 52.♕f4! threatening mate. 52...♖f1+ 53.♕e5 and the draw is unavoidable. In any case White advances his g5-pawn and trades it for one of the queenside pawns... 53...♕xg4 54.g6 ♕g5 55.g7 ♕g6 56.♖b8 ♕xg7 57.♖xb5= As soon as the rook leaves its protection of the b-pawn, White forces the draw by playing 51...♖c4 52.g6 ♕g5 53.g7 ♕g6 54.♖b8 ♕xg7 55.♖xb5=

52.g6?

This is where White goes wrong...he could have held the draw after 52.♖a8! ♖a4! (52...♖b3+ makes no sense now because of 53.♕f4 and as usual, White is threatening mate.) 53.♖xa4 bxa4 54.g6 a2 55.g7 a1=♚ 56.g8=♚ when Black can still try playing on, but White must hold.

52...♕g5 53.g7



53...Rb3+!

This is the problem. White does not have ♔f4 with the mate threat anymore and Black succeeds in protecting both of his pawns. He is ready to catch the g-pawn with his king.

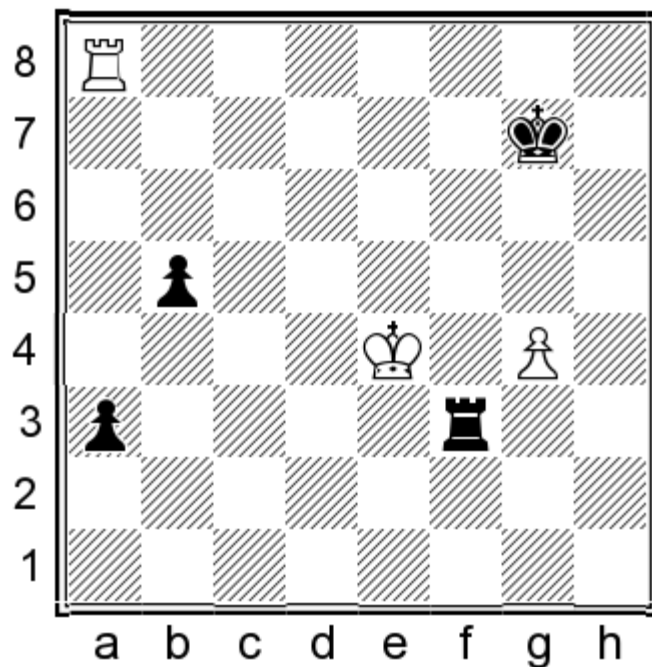
54.♔e4 ♔g6 55.Ra8

This is the best chance: give up the pawn and try to activate the king to support the other pawn.

55...♔xg7 56.♔f5

White is threatening the unpleasant ♖a7 check, which would force the king to the back rank. Black needs to act precisely.

56...Rf3+! 57.♔e4



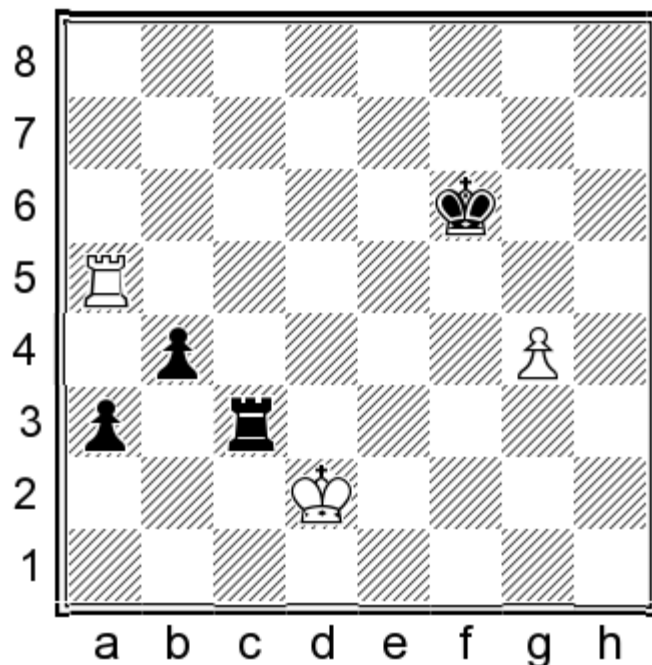
57.♔g5 is bad as Black has time to consolidate with 57...b4 58.♖a7+ ♜f7—+

57...♞c3!

Karjakin improves the position of his rook -we will see the point in the next move.

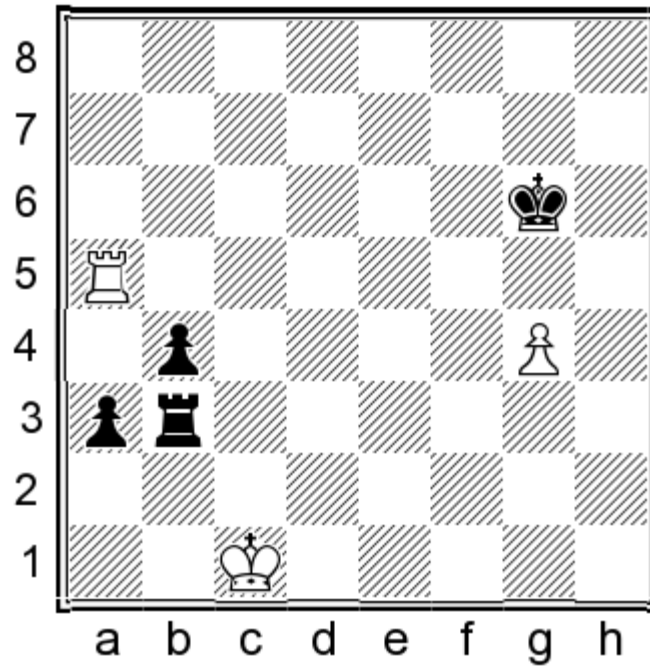
58.♕f5 ♞c5+! 59.♕f4?

A blunder at the end, but the game was lost anyway. 59.♕e6 b4—+ is hopeless. White could have tried 59.♕e4! b4! (Now after 59...♞c4+? 60.♕d3 The white king is in time to catch the a-pawn in case of ♞a4... 60...♞xg4 61.♕c3! b4+ 62.♕b3 with an excellent blockading position.) 60.♕d3 ♞c3+ 61.♕d2 ♕f6 62.♞a5



62...♕g6! and White is in zugzwang. 63.♞a4 (63.♕d1 loses to 63...b3! 64.♞xa3 b2 65.♞a6+ ♕g5 66.♞b6 ♞c1+—+)

63...♖f3 Black creates the threat of a2 as it cannot be taken because of ...♖f2. 64.♔c1 (64.♔c2 b3+--+; 64.♖xb4 is refuted by the following well-known motif: 64...a2! 65.♖a4 ♖f1! 66.♖xa2 ♖f2+--+) 64...♖b3 65.♖a5



65...♖b2!—+ White is in zugzwang again. He is forced to allow the black king to g5 and then his position automatically collapses.

59...♖c4+ 60.♔f5 ♖a4

White resigned. Another difficult rook endgame.

0–1

GAME 34

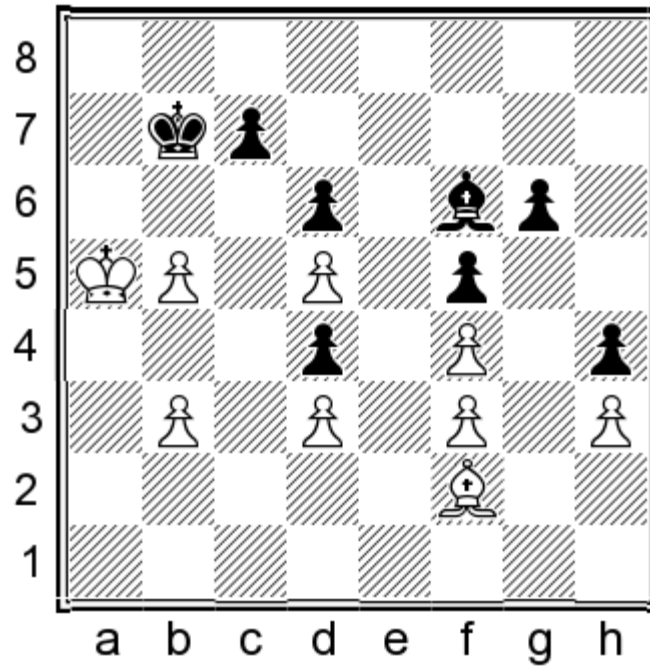
L. Dominguez Perez (2754)

F. Caruana (2782)

76th Tata Steel Masters Wijk aan Zee NED (4.3)

15.01.2014, [C84]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



63...♙d8

Have you ever seen a position with triple doubled pawns?! I can't remember any! It is clear that White is much better, but the win is still far away. Dominguez shows us how it is done with great technique!

64.b6!

A great move! By giving up a pawn White gets his king to b5.

64...cxb6+ 65.♚b5

White's main idea is to put Black into zugzwang and one is not enough to win the game, two zugzwangs are needed!

65...♙f6 66.b4

and here is the first one! Black can't defend both the h4- and d4-pawns.

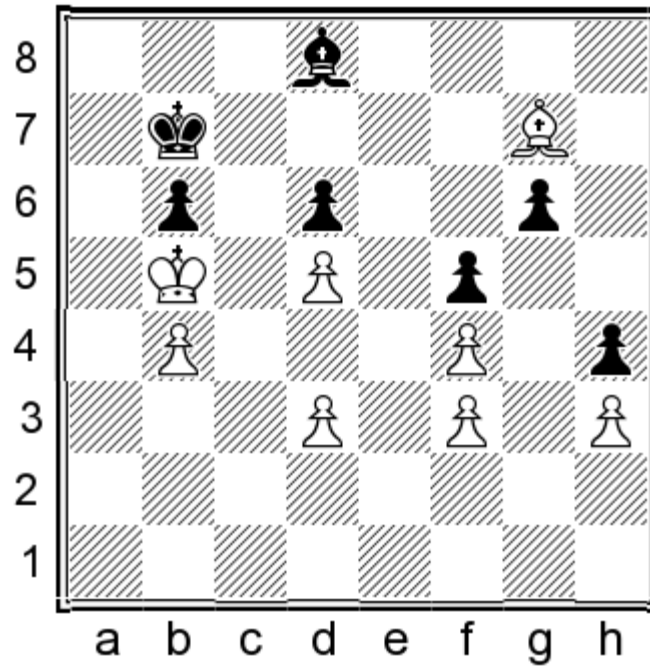
66...♙e7 67.♙xd4

The d4-pawn is gone...

67...♙d8 68.♙c3

68.♙f2 would immediately lead to the next zugzwang, but there is no need to hurry for White.

68...♙e7 69.♙g7 ♙d8



70. ♕d4

And here comes the next zugzwang...

70... ♕e7

70... ♕c7 71. ♕f6 White is just winning here.

71. ♕xb6 ♕f6 72. ♕f2

White has won two pawns, but it is still not an easy win!

72... ♕c3

And this is what would happen if Black kept on waiting: 72... ♕e7 73. ♕d4 ♕d8 74. ♕g7 ♕e7 75. ♕h6 followed by ♕g5, collecting the h4-pawn.

73. ♕xh4

White is 3 pawns up, but it is still not so easy to finish the game. The next stage is to bring the white king from b5 to the kingside.

73... ♕d2 74. ♕f2 ♕xf4 75. ♖a4 ♖a6 76. b5+

Fixing the black king on the b7 square.

76... ♖b7 77. ♖b3 ♖c7 78. ♖c2

And now the white king starts his walk...

78... ♖b7 79. ♕d4 ♕g3 80. ♕e3 ♕e5 81. ♖b3 ♖c7 82. ♖a4 ♖b7 83. ♖b4 ♕g3 84. ♖c4 ♕e5 85. ♖b3 ♕g3 86. ♖c2 ♕e5 87. ♖d2

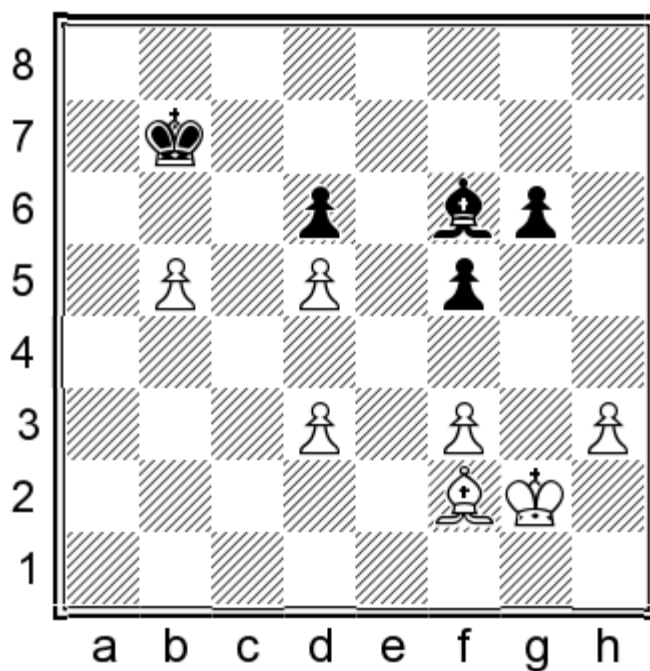
Once again Dominguez does not hurry with the winning plan, which is very normal. Anyway all Black can do is sit and wait.

87...♙g3 88.♚e2 ♜h4 89.♚f1 ♜g3 90.♚g2 ♜h4

So the king is on g2, but what next?!

91.♙f2 ♜f6 92.♙e3 ♜h4 93.♙f2 ♜f6

White repeats the moves twice again before playing the right winning plan.



94.h4!

Dominguez goes for the break through.

94...♚c7 95.♚h3 ♚b7

Black can only keep on waiting.

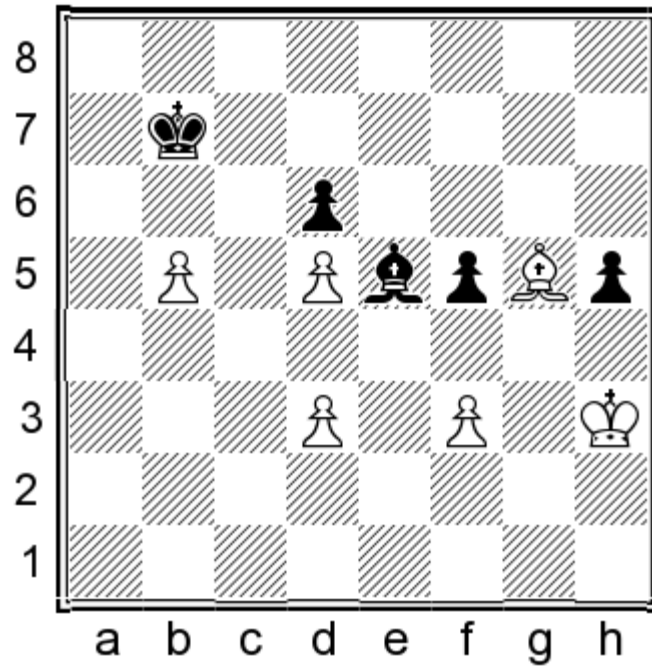
96.h5!

The right move!

96...gxh5 97.♙h4 ♙d4 98.♙e7

Black cannot defend the h4-square and the d6-pawn at the same time.

98...♙e5 99.♙d8 ♚c8 100.♙g5 ♚b7



Before playing ♔h4 White has put his bishop in a very nice position on g5 to make the f4-move easier.

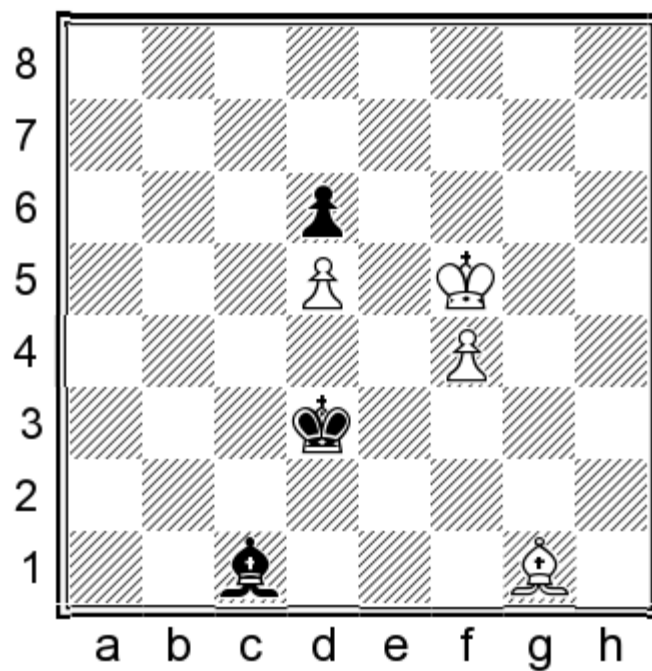
101. ♔h4

Now the white king starts his movement...

101... ♙b6 102. ♗e3+ ♖xb5 103. f4

Both the h5- and f- pawns are going to fall...

103... ♗b2 104. ♖xh5 ♖b4 105. ♖g5 ♖c3 106. ♖xf5 ♖xd3 107. ♗g1 ♗c1



108.♔h2

followed by ♖e6 and f5. A really perfectly played endgame by Dominguez, who showed great technical skills!

1–0

GAME 35

L. Aronian (2812)

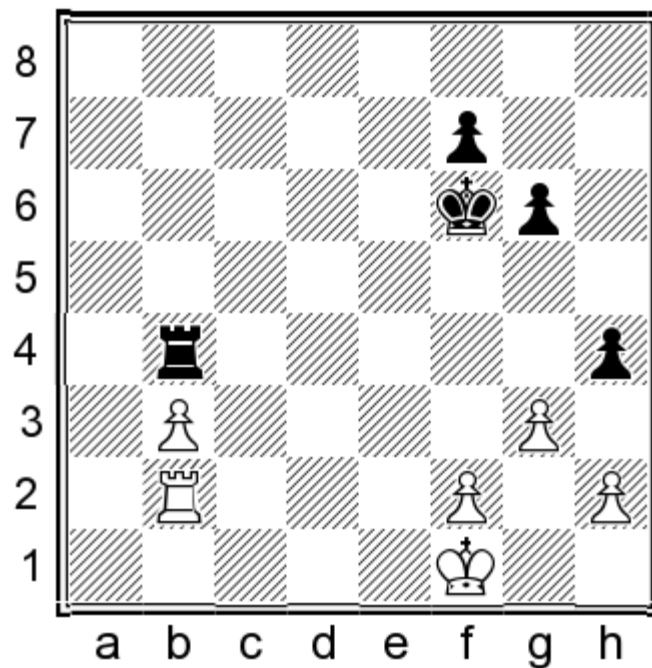
S. Karjakin (2759)

76th Tata Steel Masters

Wijk aan Zee NED (9.4)

23.01.2014, [E15]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



White's position should be winning. As we know, most of the rook endgames with an extra b-pawn are winning, especially when the rook stands behind the pawn. Karjakin attempts an interesting way of making the draw, but very precise play by Aronian brings the game come to a logical conclusion.

47.♔e2

The white king is going to c3.

47...♔f5

47...♔e5 doesn't save Black as after 48.♔d3 ♔d5 49.♔c3 ♔c5 50.♖e2 White should be able to slowly win the endgame by advancing the b-pawn.

48.♔d3 g5

Black tries to get to the h2 pawn.

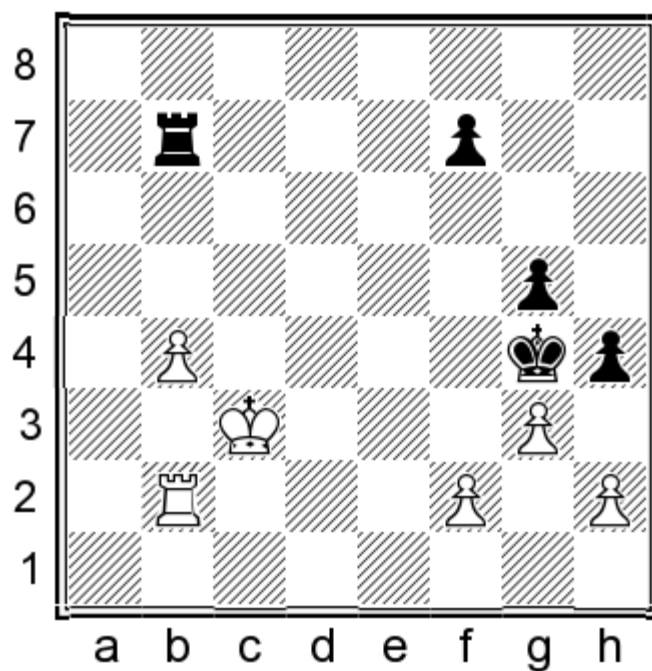
49.♔c3 ♖b7 ...

♖b7, and not ♖b8, in order to stop the white pawn on b6.

50.b4

And the white pawn starts to move.

50...♔g4

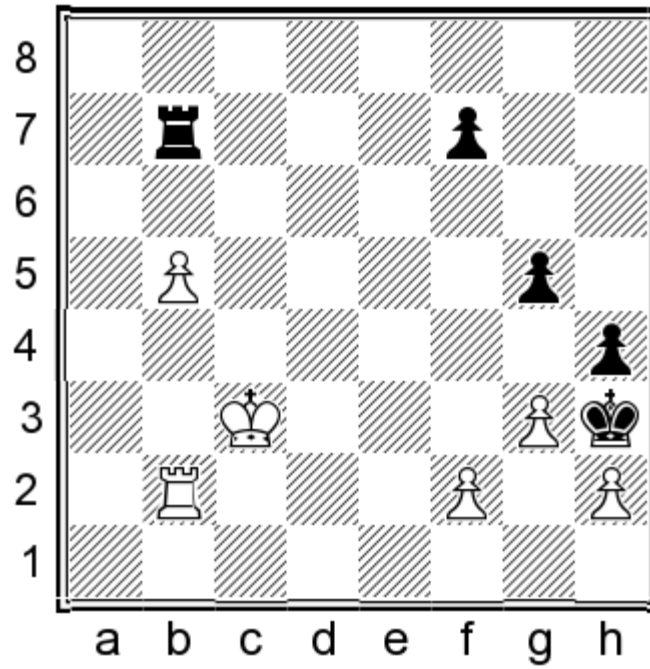


51.b5!

Exactly! The pawn stops the black rook from becoming active.

51...♔h3

It seems as though Black has a real chance to collect the h2-pawn, after which the position would of course be a simple draw, but White has a very strong reply:



52.gxh4!!

This move leads to a clear win for White!

52...gxh4

52...♙xh4 doesn't help either, as after 53.♔d4 ♙h3 54.♔e5 White is easily winning.

53.f4!

The simplest move. White gives up the f-pawn, but promotes the b-pawn. Black is not in time for counterplay.

53...♙g4 54.b6 f5 55.♔d4 ♙xf4

And here comes the final precise move of the game:

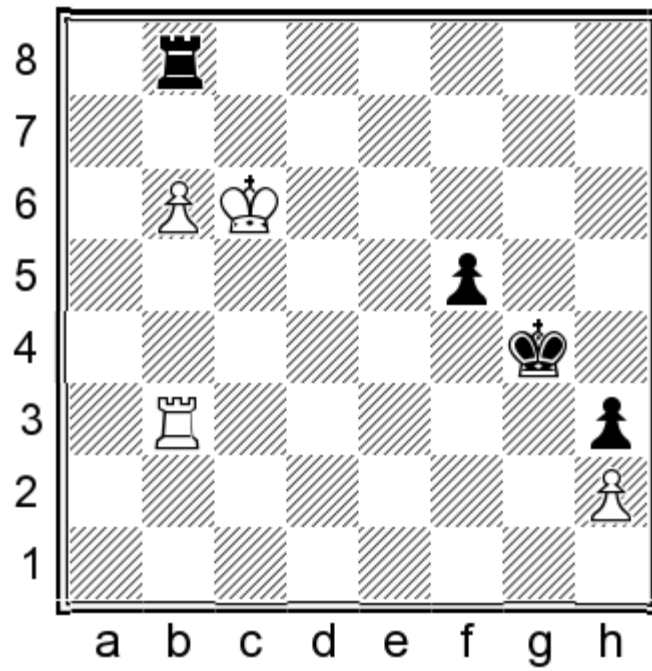
56.♞b3!

Great technique by Aronian, not giving his opponent even the slightest hope.

56...h3 57.♔d5 ♙g4 58.♔c6

The white b-pawn is a queen...

58...♞b8



59.♖g3+

Cutting the black king off on the h-file.

59...♔h4 60.b7 f4 61.♖g7

A really nice win by White and a very useful endgame to know!

1–0

GAME 36

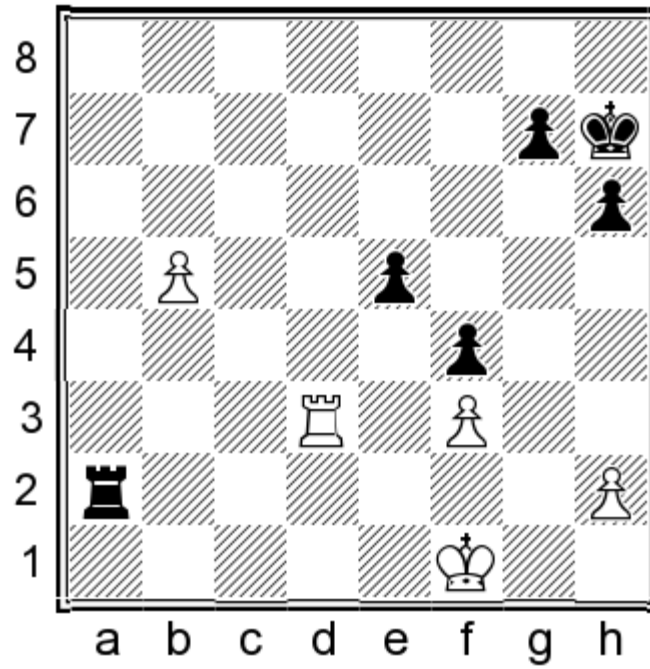
S. Karjakin (2759)

L. Dominguez (2754)

Wijk aan Zee

26.01.2014

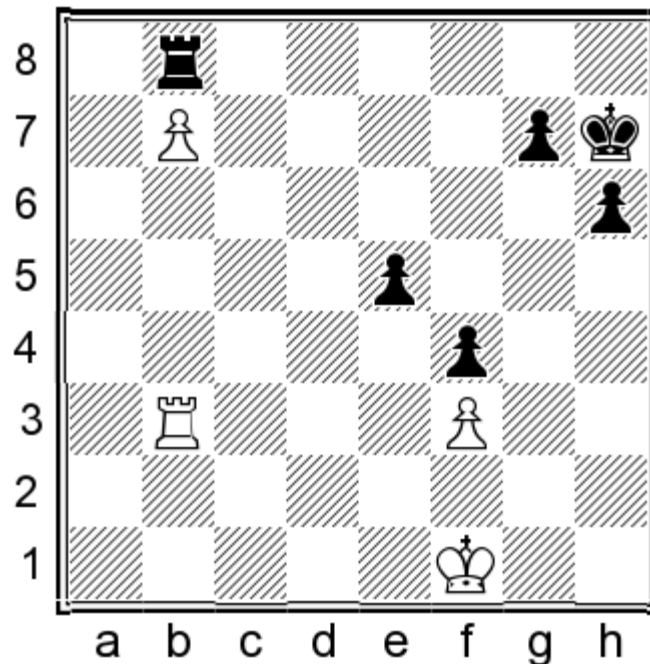
Annotated by Csaba Balogh



Black has an extra pawn and another one is hanging, but the passed b-pawn seems to give White enough counterplay to save the game. Karjakin's holding technique is really instructive.

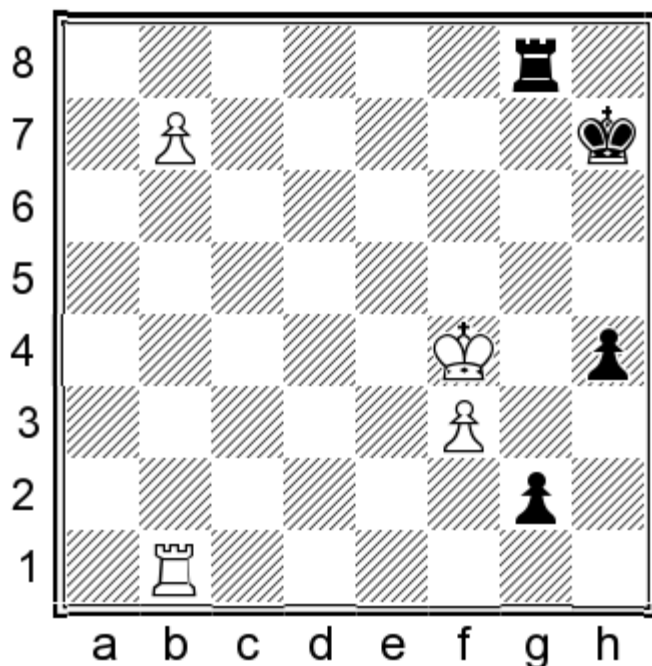
46...♖b2!

In rook endgames both sides should try to place their rooks behind the passed pawn. On the direct 46...♖xh2!? White could reach the ideal position for his rook: 47.♖b3! Black is in time to catch the pawn, but his rook becomes passive. 47...♖d2 48.b6 ♖d8 49.b7 ♖b8



50.♖b6! Cutting the black king off from supporting his pawns with ...♔g6-f5, which could have been followed by ...h5-g5-g4. Now the white king simply goes for the e5-pawn. Black's only chance is to advance the pawns as quickly as possible. 50...g5 51.♔e2 h5 52.♔d3 g4 53.♔e4! White holds the draw by only one tempo: 53...g3 54.♔xe5 g2 55.♖b1 Black's 'bad luck' is the wrong placement of his king. He cannot use the small tactic of ...♖xb7 because White

recaptures with check. 55...♖g8 (55...♔g6 leads to a draw after 56.♕xf4 ♖xb7 57.♖g1 ♖b2 58.♕g3=) 56.♕xf4 h4

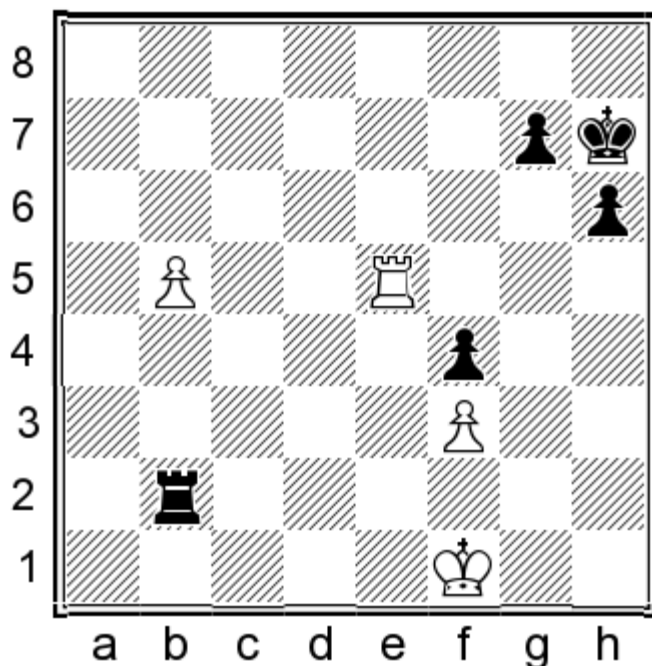


It seems as though Black simply promotes his pawns, but... 57.♖g1!! h3 58.b8=♚! ♖xb8 59.♕g3= saves the game.

46...♖b2! 47.♖d5 ♖xh2

The white rook can no longer occupy its ideal position and the black one returns behind the b-pawn, although it costs Black the e5-pawn to achieve this...

48.♖xe5 ♖b2



White's chances lie with the b-pawn, therefore he must support it with his king.

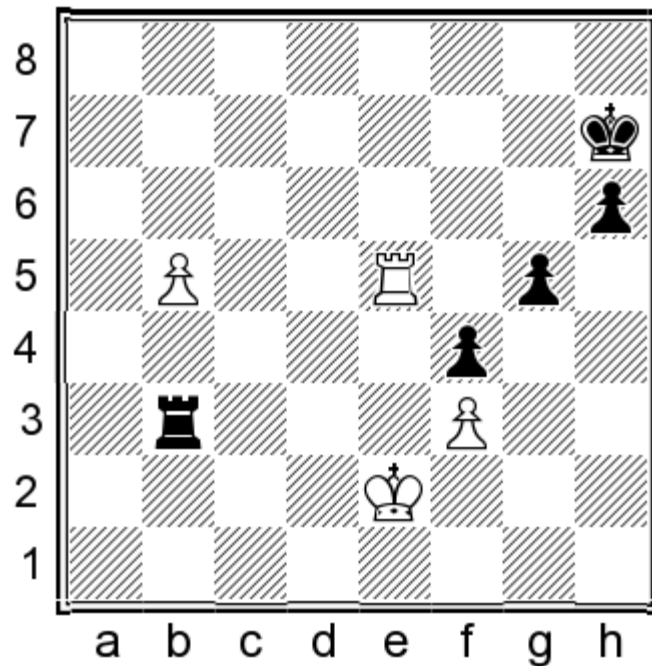
49.♔e1 ♖b3

49...g5 50.♔d1 ♕g6 51.♔c1 ♖b4 52.♕c2 and ♕c3 ♖b1 ♕c2 next will be similar to the game.

50.♕e2

White could have saved a tempo by playing 50.♕d2! on the spot. 50...♖xf3 51.♕c2 Similar to the game.

50...g5



51.♕d2!

Karjakin gives up his f-pawn in order to send away the rook from the b-file and to be able to advance his pawn. The passive defense with 51.♕f2 simply loses to 51...♕g6 52.♖e6+ (52. ♕g2 ♕h5—+ followed by ♕h2, check on the 2nd rank and ♕g3.) 52...♕h5 53.b6 ♖b2+ 54.♕f1 ♕h4! 55.♖xh6+ ♕g3—+ and Black wins!

51...♖xf3

Black could not keep his rook behind the pawn 51...♕g6 52.♕c2 ♖b4 53.♕c3 ♖b1 54.♕c2=

52.♕c2!

Taking control of the b-file. White is now ready to advance his pawn.

52...♖f2+ 53.♕c3 ♖f1 54.♕c2!

Of course White had to prevent ...♖b1.

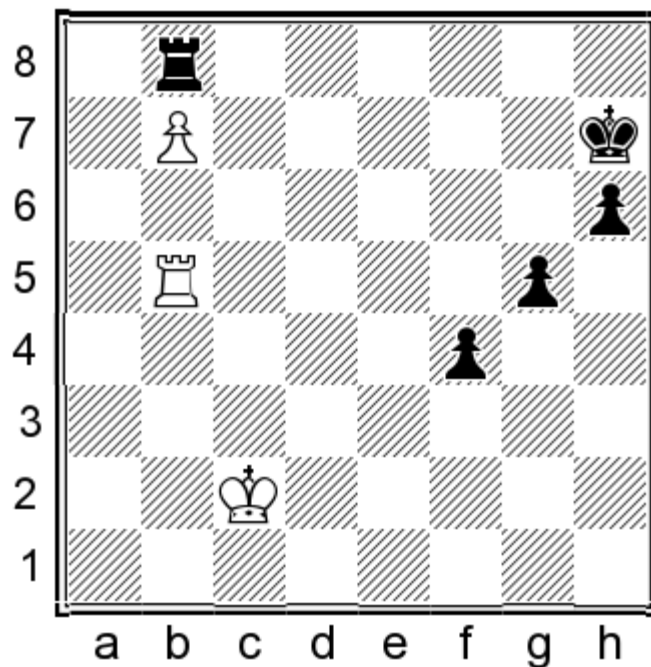
54...♖f2+

Gaining some time...

55.♕c3 ♖f1 56.♕c2 ♖a1

56...f3 would have been met by 57.b6 f2 58.♖f5 when Black is forced to give up the f2-pawn.

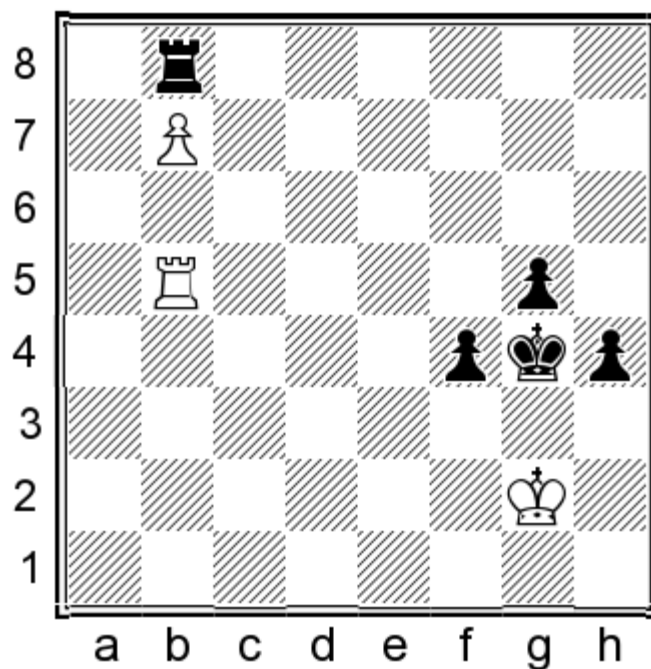
57.b6 ♖a8 58.b7 ♜b8 59.♞b5



We have reached a similar scenario to the 46...♞xh2 line. As we will see, Black cannot win the game without his rook, while catching the b-pawn with the king takes too much time and White therefore succeeds in setting up a defensive position.

59...♞g6 60.♞d3 ♞f6

60...♞h5 61.♞e2 ♞g4 62.♞f2 h5 63.♞g2 h4

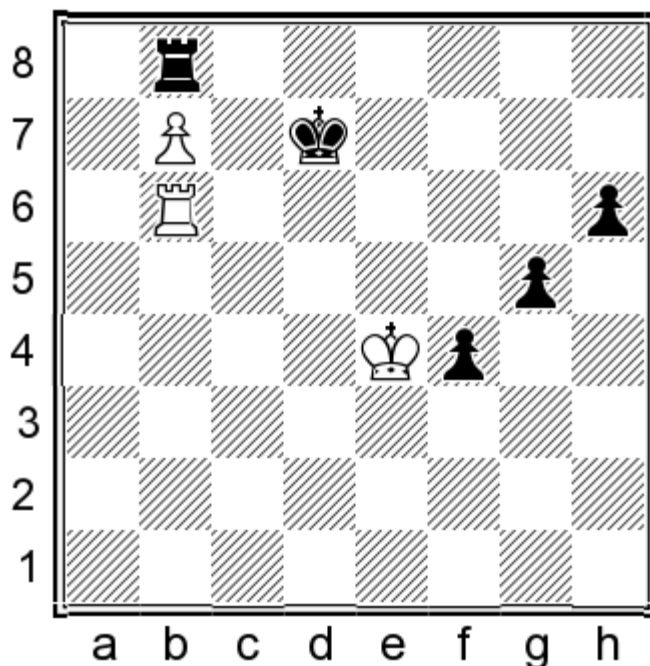


64.♞b3! and the game is drawn as the following lines prove: 64...h3+ (64...f3+ 65.♞f2! h3 66.♞b4) 65.♞h2! Black is in

zugzwang 65...f3 (65...♔h4 66.♞xh3±) 66.♞b4+ ♕f5 67.♔xh3=;

The pawns can easily be stopped if Black just pushes them without support. 60...g4 61.♕e4 f3 62.♕e3 h5 63.♕f2 h4
This is the final destination for the pawns as White now forces a draw with 64.♞b4 ♕f5 65.♞b5+ ♕f6 66.♞b4=

61.♕e4 ♕e6 62.♞b6+ ♕d7



63.♕f5!

Just in time to attack the g5 pawn before taking on h6. The rest is easy.

63...f3

63...♔c7 64.♞xh6 ♞xb7 (64...♞g8 65.♞h7+ ♔b8 66.♕g4=) 65.♕xg5=

64.♞xh6 f2 65.♞h1 ♞xb7 66.♞f1

66.♕xg5= was also good.

66...♔d6 67.♕xg5 ♞f7 68.♕g4 ♕e5 69.♕g3 ♕e4 70.♞xf2 ♞xf2 71.♕xf2

An instructive endgame, with ideas which could be used in our own practical endgames.

1/2

GAME 37

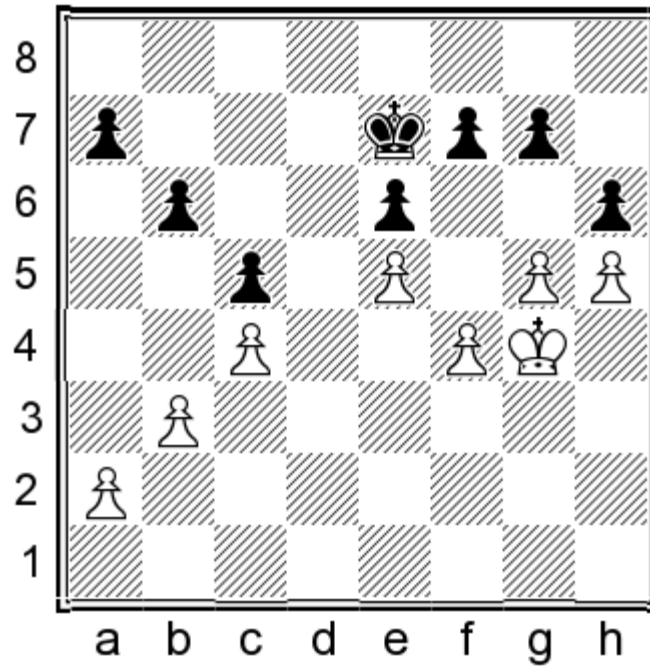
B. Grachev (2669)

S. Tiviakov (2639)

Minsk Open

16.02.2014

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



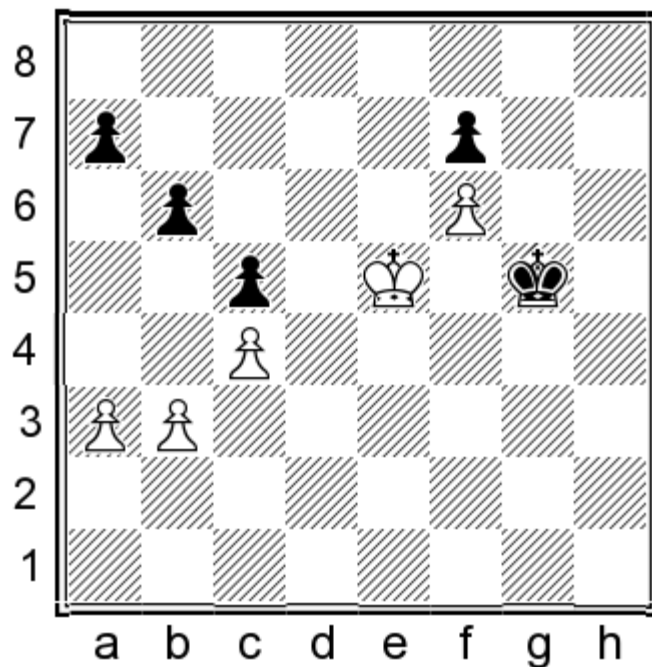
Pawn endgames are always very tricky and require very exact calculation. In the current position White has a big space advantage, but it looks almost impossible to break through as the black pawns are controlling all the invading squares of the king. However White makes a last attempt...

47.f5??

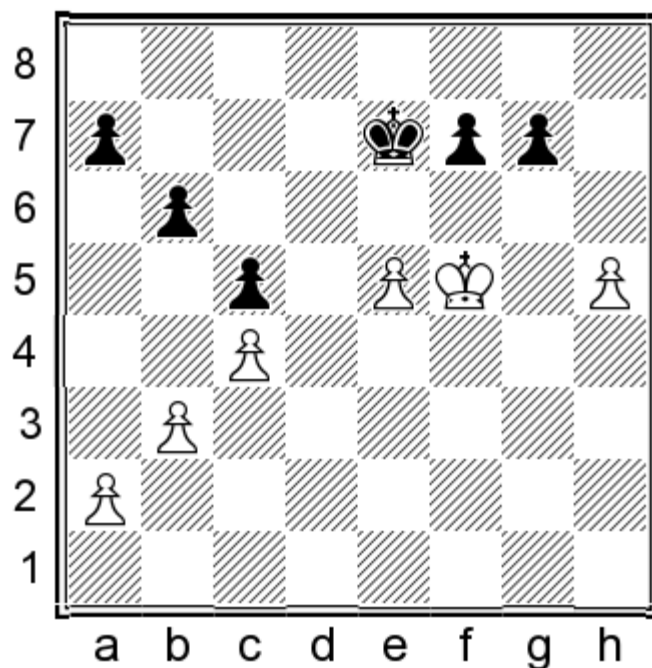
The only attempt to create an invasion square for the king, but it is actually a blunder which could have cost to the game. On other moves, Black would just have waited with the king, e.g. ...♔d7-e7, and held the draw. If White includes 47.gxh6 gxh6 48.f5 he is not threatening to play f6 as the g-pawns are not on the board anymore, which is why Black can simply ignore everything and play 48...♔e8 49.♔f4 ♔d8= With an inevitable draw.

47.f5?? exf5+?

The most natural reaction, but it spoils the sudden opportunity which has presented itself. 47...hxg5! would have won for Black as the following lines demonstrate: 48.♔xg5 (48.f6+ gxf6 49.h6 does not help. 49...f5+ is the simplest, creating a protected passed pawn. (49...♔f8 is also good. 50.exf6 ♔g8 51.♔h5 ♔h7 52.♔xg5 e5 53.♔f5 ♔xh6 54.♔xe5 ♔g5 White loses the f-pawn. A last try could be 55.a3 with the idea to play b4, bxc5 and the king is going to take the c-pawn, thus also obtaining a passed pawn. However Black simply plays



55...a5!—+ followed by waiting with ...♔g6 and then winning the pawn race. (55... ♔g6? 56.b4)) 50.♔xg5 ♔f8 51.♔h5 (51. ♔f6 loses the pawn race by one tempo: 51... ♔g8 52.h7+ ♔xh7 53. ♔xf7 f4 54. ♔xe6 f3—+) 51...♔g8 52.♔h4 ♔h7 53.♔g5 f4!—+ with an easy win. Black takes on h6, creates a new passed pawn with ...♔g6, ...f6 and easily converts the extra pawn.) 48...exf5 49.♔xf5



49...g6+!! This sacrifice is the whole point! Black uses the logic of the distant passed pawn. He deflects the king in order to win the e-pawn. 50.hxg6 fxg6+ 51.♔xg6 (51. ♔e4 leads to the classical distant passed pawn situation. Black wins by sacrificing it: 51... ♔e6 52. ♔f4 g5+ 53. ♔e4 g4 54. ♔f4 g3 55. ♔xg3 ♔xe5 followed by ♔d4-c3 etc, collecting the pawns.) 51...♔e6 The king stands excellently on e6 as it also wins an important tempo by preventing the king's approach to the f-file... 52.♔g7 ♔xe5 53.♔f7 ♔d4 Black is much faster. 54.♔e6 ♔c3 55.♔d6 ♔b2 56.♔c6 ♔xa2 57.♔b7 ♔xb3 58.♔xa7 ♔xc4—+

48.♔xf5 hxg5 49.♔xg5 ♔e6 50.♔f4 ♔d7 51.♔f5 ♔e7

With the king on d7, Black cannot play 51...g6+? because White is not forced to take twice on g6, but instead plays 52.♔f6! gxh5 53.♔xf7 and wins.

52.♔f4

And here a draw was agreed since both sides are just treading water. 52.♔f4 ♔d7 53.♔e4 ♔e6 54.♔f4 ♔e7=

1/2

GAME 38

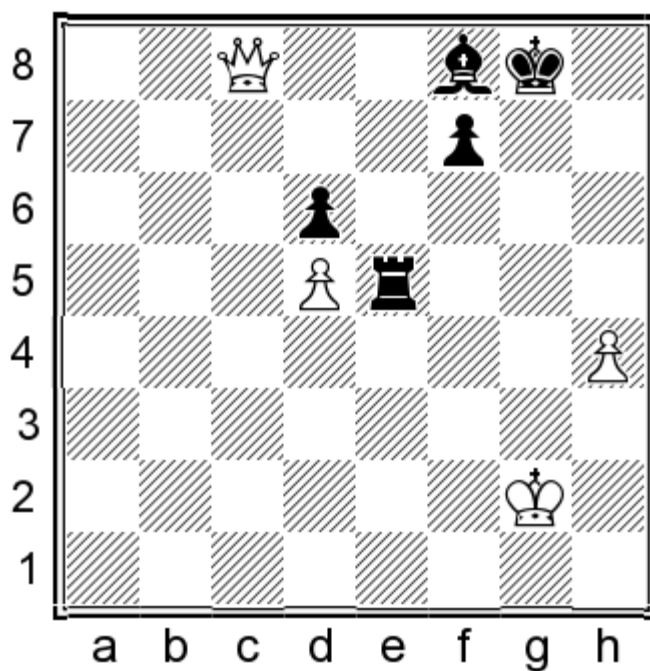
V. Anand (2775)

M. Ragger (2668)

German League

22.02.2014

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



White is materially ahead, but Black is about to build up a successful fortress. The former world champion tries his best chance.

49.h5!

White is going to win the bishop with the help of the h-pawn, and the pawn cannot be taken because of ♔g4+.

49...♞xd5!

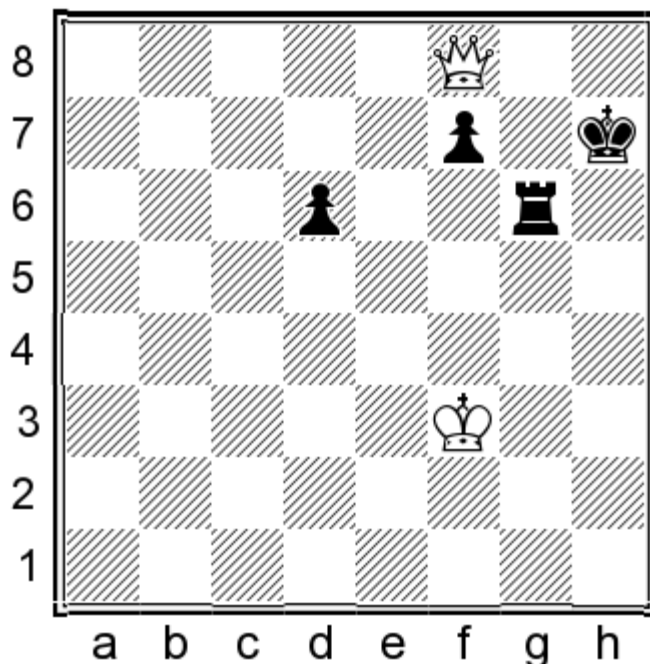
Ragger is ready to give up his bishop and he eliminates the last pawn. There are many theoretical endgames where the weaker side is able to create a successful blockade with a rook and a pawn against the queen.

50.h6

Black cannot parry the h7-threat. A known defensive method with the f7-pawn is to keep the rook on the 6th rank,

cutting the king of from gaining access to the f7-pawn... Black uses this idea and drives his rook to g6.

50...♖g5+ 51.♔f3 ♜g6! 52.h7+ ♔xh7 53.♚xf8



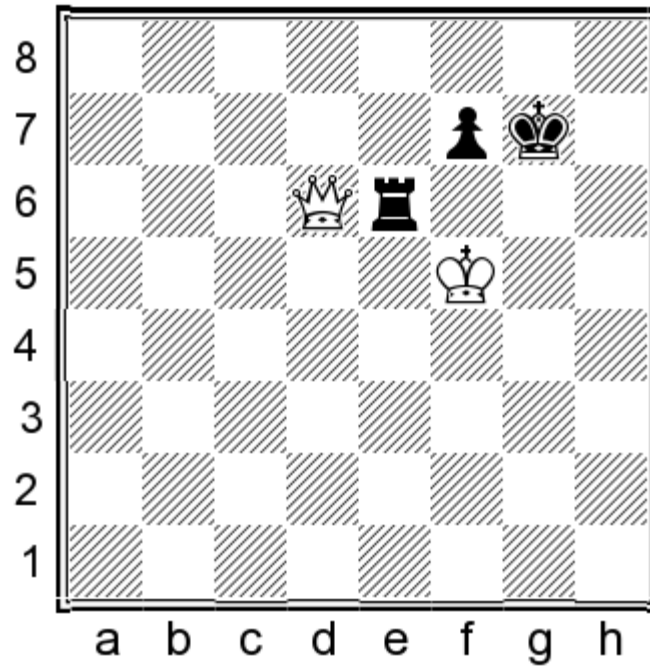
We have reached a much better version of the theoretically-drawn endgame, where the black king stands on g7. Black does not even need his d-pawn in this case. We are going to examine this in the 55.♚xd6 line. However the queen stands excellently on f8, which forces Black to defend accurately to save the game.

53...♜f6+ 54.♔e4

The winning technique of such queen vs rook and pawn endgames is to walk the king in behind the pawn so Anand starts his journey to e7. 54.♔g4 goes in the wrong direction. 54...d5 55.♔g5 ♜f1 The white king should be on the other side of the f-file, here he cannot make progress.

54...♜f1 55.♔d5!

The d-pawn is going to be lost anyway, so for White it is more important to keep his queen on f8 to prevent Black from organizing his defensive setup. 55.♚xd6 illustrates well the famous theoretical endgame: 55...♔g7 56.♔e5 ♜e1+ 57.♔f5 ♜e6=



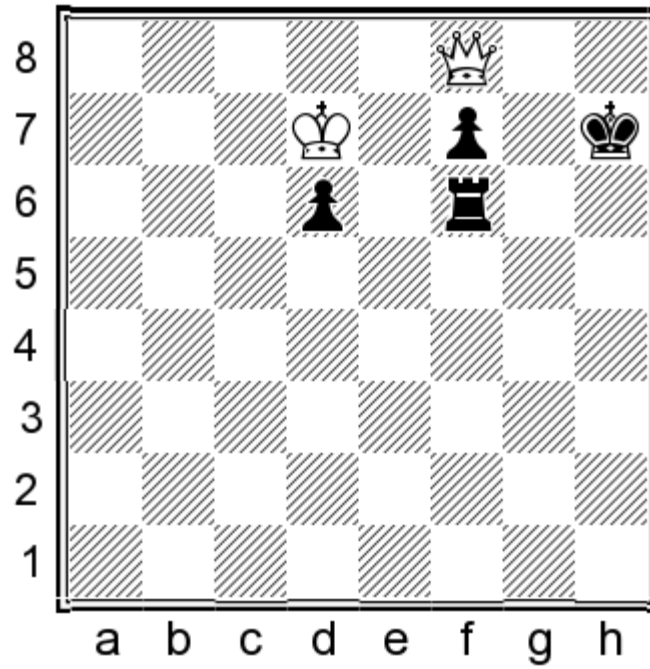
It is very useful to remember this position. Here Black only waits with ♖e6-g6 and White has no chance to break through this fortress.

55...♖f5+

The d-pawn is lost anyway, so there is no point wasting further effort on defending it; Black must only focus on keeping his f7-pawn. 55...♖f6 56.♔c6 d5+ (Stubbornly defending both pawns with 56...♔g6? is a big mistake. This allows White to force the king in front of the pawns. This is usually a bad sign for the defensive side. 57.♕g8+ ♔f5 58.♔d5 ♔f4 59.♕g1 Black always ends up in different kinds of zugzwangs. 59...♔f5 60.♕g7+- Black loses the f7-pawn and the game!) 57.♔xd5 will lead to the same position as in the game.

56.♔xd6

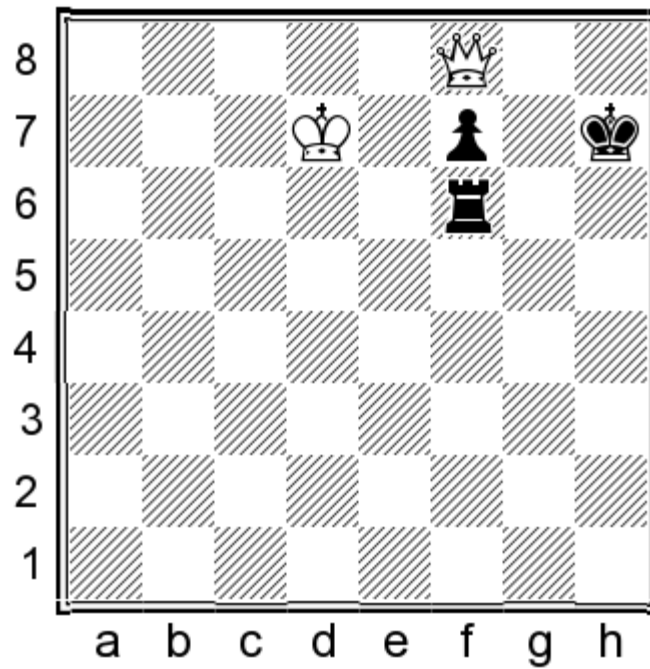
A tricky attempt would have been to keep the d-pawn on the board with the idea of avoiding Black's stalemate ideas. 56.♔c6!? ♖f6 57.♔d7



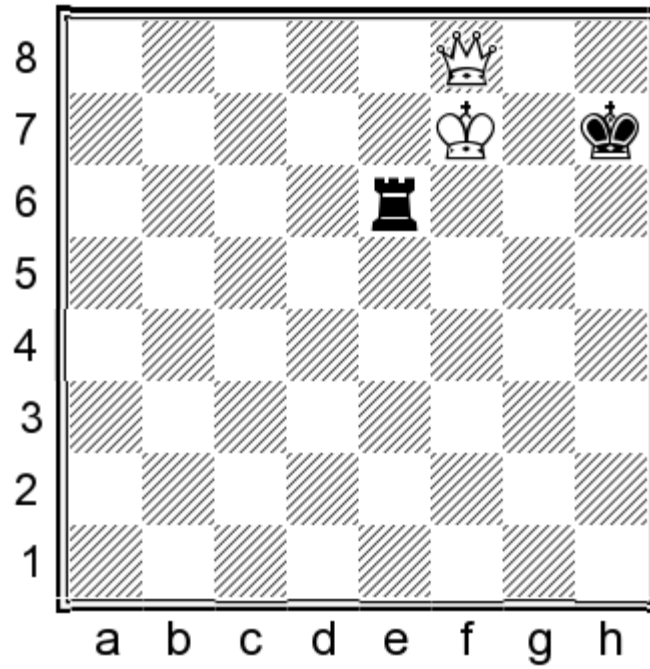
Here the only move to hold the draw is 57...♖g6!! Black is ready to advance his d-pawn (57...d5? 58.♔e8+- and the king goes to f8, squeezes the king out from h7.) The pawn on f7 cannot be taken now because of ...♖g7. ♔e8 runs into ...♖g8 and after 58.♔e7 ♖g8!! traps the queen! This is the only way to save the game. 59.♕xf7+ ♖g7=

56...♖f6+ 57.♔d7

Anand tries to place his opponent in zugzwang.



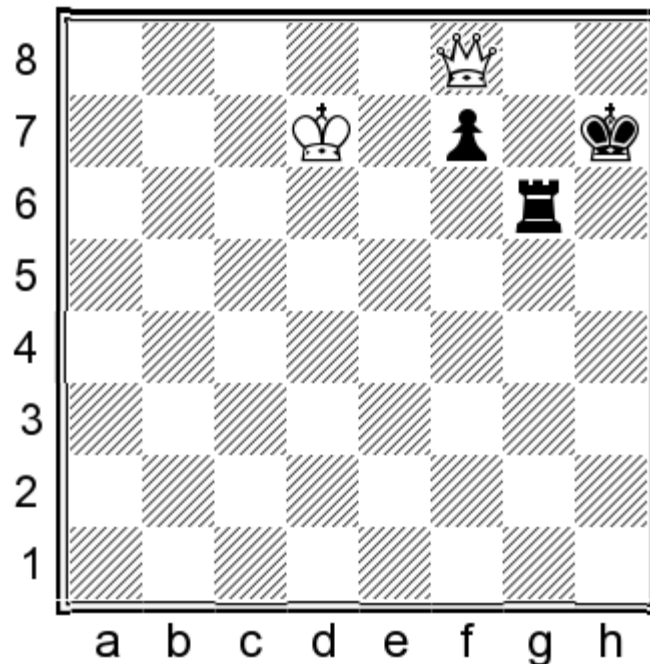
57.♔e7 would allow 57...♖e6+ 58.♔xf7



(58. ♔d7 ♚f6=) 58...♚f6+!! This important stalemate trick is a key resource in Black's successful defence.

57...♚f5?

The losing move. 57...♚g6! was the only move to save the game. The king has passed the 6th rank, therefore Black needs to use another defensive method. ♔e7 is always met by the stalemate ...♚e6 ♔xf7 ...♚f6! The king can never go to the 8th rank because of ...♚g8. And if the queen moves then ...♔g7 followed by ...♚e6 leads to the theoretical draw that we have already discussed. The question is: what happens if it was Black's turn to move? 58. ♔c7 ♚g5 59. ♔d6 ♚g6+ 60. ♔d7



In this case Black waits with ...♚g5-g6!! (60. ♔e5 will transpose to the 60. ♔d7 line. 60...♚e6+ 61. ♔f5 ♚f6+ 62. ♔g5 ♚g6+ 63. ♔h5 ♚f6=) 60...♚g5! and White cannot make progress. 61. ♔e7 ♚e5+ (Or 61...♚g8! is even simpler.) 62. ♔f6 ♚e6+! 63. ♔f5 (63. ♔xf7 ♚f6+!= is always the same!) 63...♚f6+! The stalemate works also with the pawn on f7! 64. ♔g5

♖g6+ 65.♔h5 ♜f6= and Black holds!

58.♞d6!

The king now reaches the f8 square, so the game is over.

58...♞g5

58...♔g7 59.♔e8+- does not change anything.

59.♞f4

59.♔e7+- was also winning easily.

59...♔g6 60.♔e7 ♜f5

The movement of the pawn always means the end of the game. White soon wins after 60...f5 61.♔e6 ♜h5 62.♞b8+-

61.♞g4+ ♞g5 62.♞e4+ ♜f5

Anand uses the standard winning method, putting Black in zugzwang each move. 62...♔g7 63.♞f4+- wins the pawn.

63.♞d3

Other moves are also winning. Anand slowly goes behind the pawn and Black will soon end up in a final zugzwang. 63.♞g2+ ♞g5 64.♞c6+- also wins the f-pawn since ♔g7 ♞f6 is over.

63...♔g5 64.♞g3+ ♔h5 65.♔e8 ♔h6 66.♞g4 ♜f6 67.♔f8

Black resigned!

An instructive endgame about the defensive and winning methods for both sides. What I can say from my own experience is that the position with the pawn on f7, ♔g7 and rook on the 6th rank is a common practical drawn endgame (the same idea works also with the pawn on any other squares on the 7th rank), but as we have seen the game is still drawn even if the white king has passed the 6th rank or if the queen stands on f8, although this requires very precise defence!

1–0

GAME 39

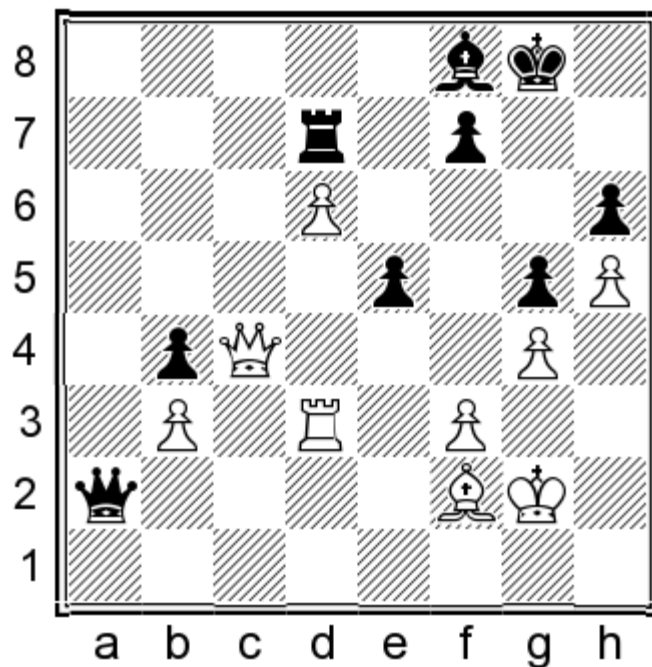
P. Svidler (2758)

V. Kramnik (2787)

FIDE Candidates

15.03.2014

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



This is not the typical endgame which we usually comment on, but an amazing position where in a seemingly hopeless situation Kramnik finds a miraculous defence and saves the game.

41. ♖c6?!

This is objectively a mistake, but who could blame Svidler for missing the following continuation? White seems to be easily winning; his d-pawn supported by all his pieces seems to be decisive. White should have been greedy and grabbed the pawn: 41. ♖xb4! ♖a6 42. ♖d5 ♖xd6 (Keeping the material balance with 42... ♙xd6 is risky due to the pin on the d-file. 43. ♖c4 ♖b7 44. ♖d3+-) 43. ♖xe5± White has a healthy extra pawn and very good chances to win the game.

41. ♖c6?! e4!!

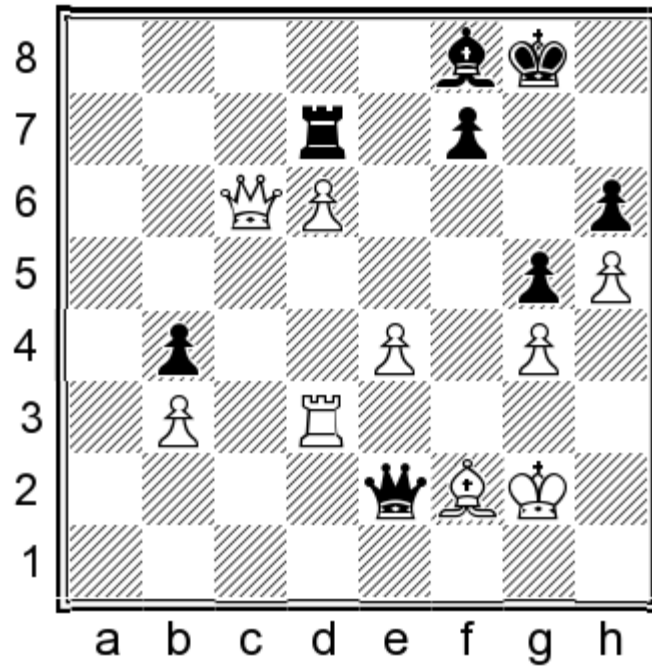
The first shocker by Kramnik. Black weakens the pawn structure in order to be able to create counterplay against the white king. 41... ♖d8 42. d7+- An important detail is that after 41... ♖e2 42. ♖e3! is winning: 42... ♖xd6 43. ♖xd6! ♖xe3 44. ♖xf8+! ♙xf8 45. ♙xe3+-

42. fxe4

There was nothing better than to accept the sacrifice, but now the g4-pawn becomes a target. 42. ♖xe4 ♖xd6= equalizes.;

42. ♖xd7 exd3 43. ♖c8 d2 Black's d-pawn is faster.

42... ♖e2!

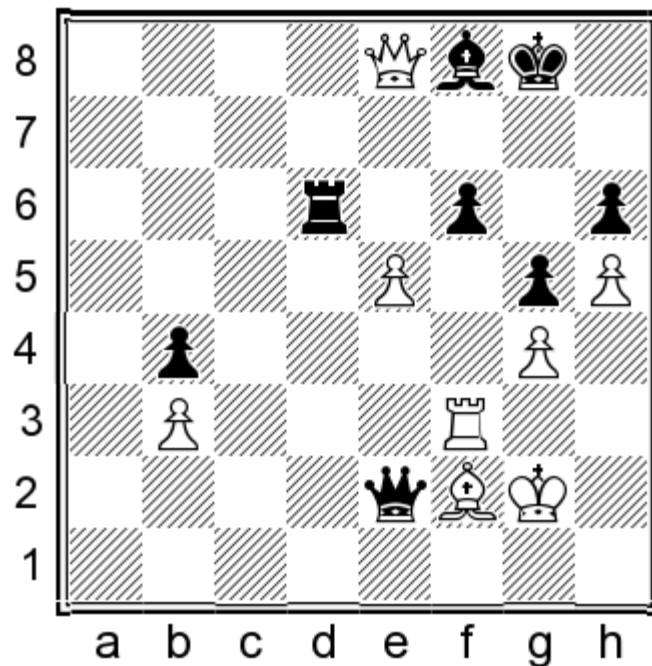


43. Rf3!

Svidler had to give up his strong d-pawn, but suddenly the black king becomes vulnerable after the opening of the f-file. 43. ♖xd7 ♜xd3 44. e5 ♜e4

43... ♜xd6 44. ♜e8 f6 45. e5!

Svidler had probably foreseen this position long ago and thought that he was going to win soon. However the real cold shower is just about to come.



45. ♜g6+ ♚g7 Black holds.

45...f5!!

What a brilliant idea in combination with the next move! The point is that 45...♞xe5 is refuted by 46.♞xe5 fxe5 47.♞xf8+! ♔xf8 48.♙c5 ♔e7 and White has a decisive tempo available as the black king leaves the pin... 49.♙xb4! ♔e6 50.♙xd6 ♔xd6 51.♔f3 ♔d5 52.♔e3+— With an easily won pawn endgame using the distant passer. White gives up his b-pawn and collects e5 in return and simply runs faster towards the kingside pawns. 45...♞a6 46.♞c8+— leaving the pin also wins for White. 45...♞e4 46.♞g6+! is another important nuance. 46...♞xg6 47.hxg6 fxe5 48.♞xf8+! ♔xf8 49.♙c5+— and the g-pawn promotes.

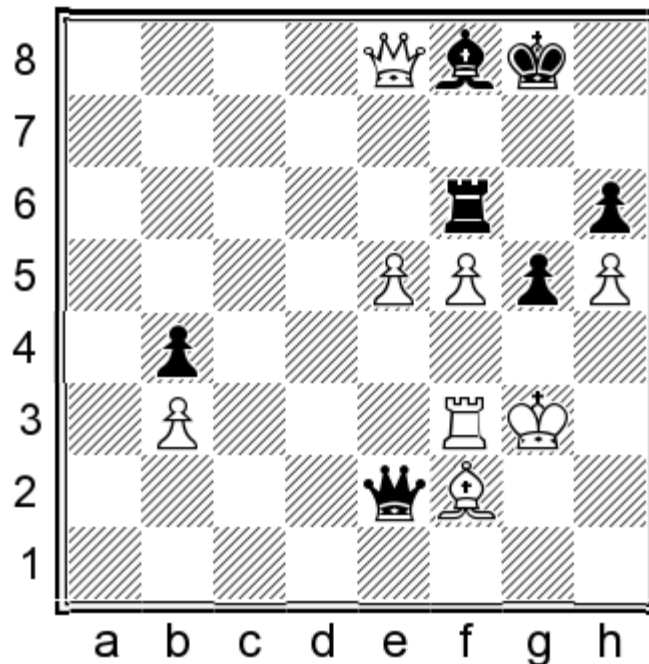
46.gxf5

46.♞xf5? ♞xg4+

46...♞f6!!

Just amazing! Another only move by Black and suddenly he is safe. The white king is too exposed to be able to make progress. 46...♞e4 was also tempting, as in comparison to the 45...♞e4 line, White cannot trade queens, but here White wins after 47.e6 ♞g4+ 48.♔h2 ♞xf3 49.♞f7+ White collects all the material with checks! 49...♔h8 50.♞xf8+ ♔h7 51.♞f7+ ♔h8 52.♞f6+ ♔g8 53.♞g6+ ♔h8 54.♞xh6+ ♔g8 55.♞xg5+ ♔h7 and here the winning move is 56.♙h4! ♞e2+ 57.♞g2 ♞xh5 58.♞e4+— and Black has no adequate defence against the march of the pawns. He runs out of checks after ♞d2 ♔g3.

47.♔g3



Trying to free the bishop by leaving the pin, but Black has another only move! The white queen had no good square available to depart from the pin on the e-file.

47.♞c8 ♞xe5;

47.♞b8 is met by 47...♞xf5! 48.♞xf5 ♞g4+;

47.e6 ♞e4 and Black holds in all lines.

47...♞e4!

A final exact move and Black has nothing to worry about anymore. ...♖h4 ♔g2 ...♗e4 is threatened and White has no useful move. Somehow all his pieces are immobilized and they are lacking any harmony.

48.♟c5

48.♞b8 ♜xf5

48...♞e1+ 49.♟f2 ♞e4 50.♟c5 ♞e1+ 51.♟f2

What a defence by Kramnik!

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GAME 40

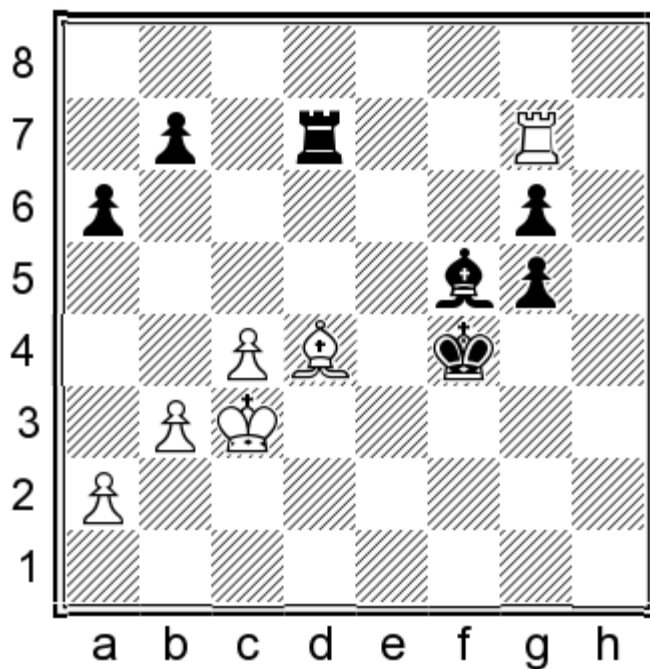
P. Svidler (2758)

S. Karjakin (2766)

FIDE Candidates

22.03.2014

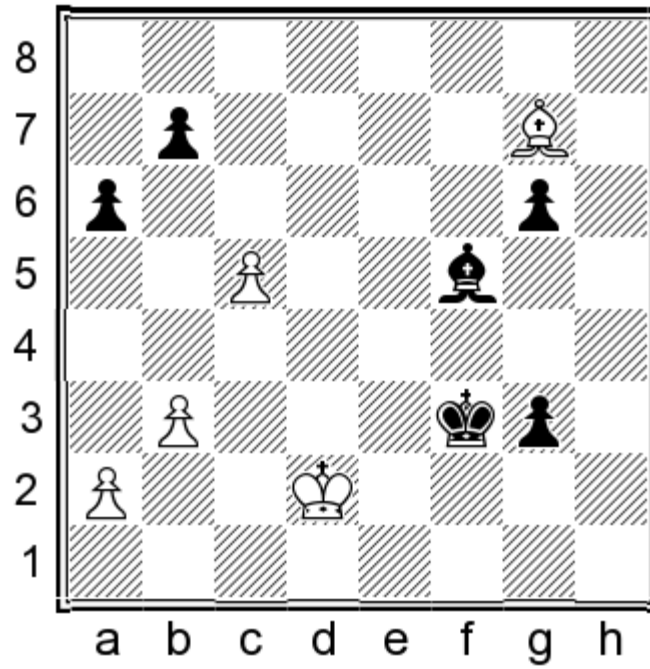
Annotated by Csaba Balogh



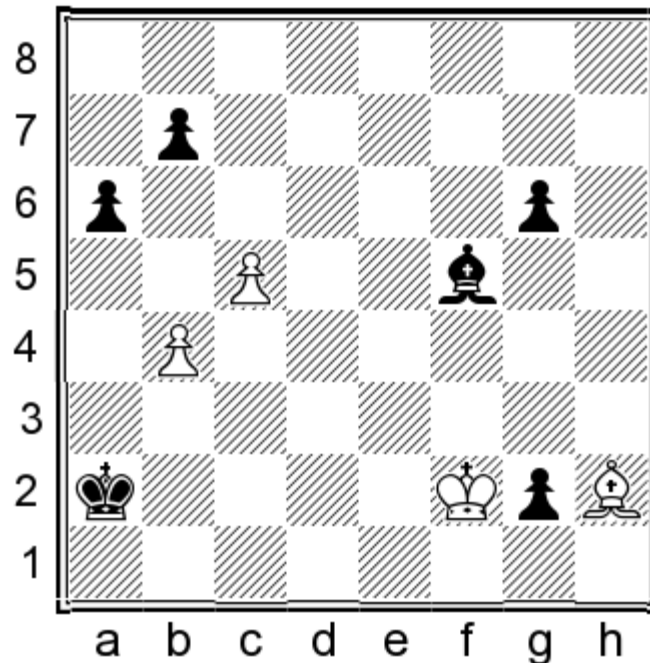
Black has an extra pawn, but the doubled g-pawns can hardly be called a decisive factor, while the opposite-colored bishops also increase the chances of the defensive side. However Karjakin finds a brilliant way to convert his advantage.

64...♜xd4!!

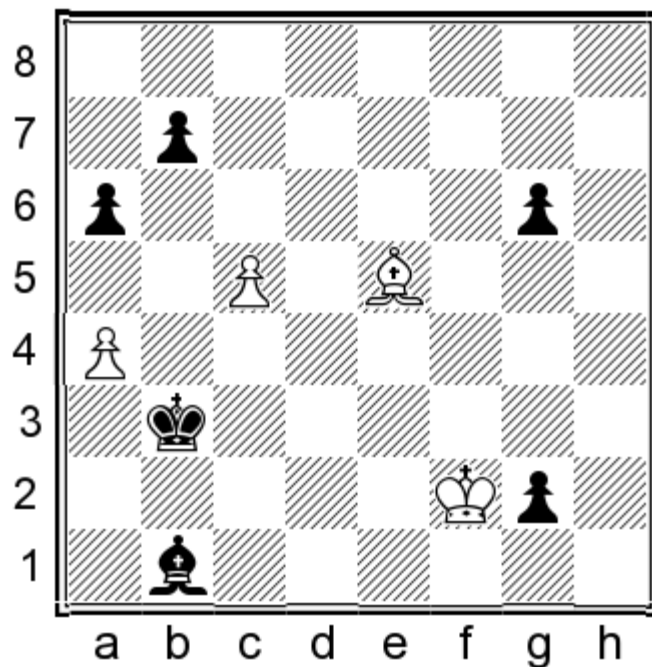
Black eliminates the bishop and now the doubled g-pawns turn out to be fatal. It is interesting to study the consequences of the bishop endgame: 64...♜xg7 65.♟xg7 g4 (It is important that Black cannot try to cut off the white king's path towards the g-pawn with 65... ♔e3 because of 66.♟h6!) 66.♔d2 g3 67.c5 White puts his pawns on dark squares to prevent them from being attacked by the bishop. 67...♔f3



(67...g2 68.♔d4 ♕g3 69.♕g1 makes no difference.) 68.♕e1! Only in this way can White hold. (68.♔d4 instructively loses to 68...♕g2! 69.♕e1 ♕h1!-+ and the pawn promotes.) 68...g2 (Now on 68...♕g2 69.♕e5! this is the key and the king can neither go to h1 nor to f2. 69...♔d3 70.b4 ♕h3 71.a3 g2 72.♕f2=) 69.♔d4 and it looks as though White has created a successful blockading position! The only attempt would be to go for the queenside pawns with the king. 69...♕e4 70.♕g1 ♕d3 71.♕f2 ♕c3 72.♕h2 ♕b1 (On 72...♕b2 the easiest draw is 73.b4 ♕xa2



74.♕f4! ♕b3 75.♔d2= followed by ♕e1 and waiting with ♕g1-f2. Black cannot create a passed pawn on the queenside, which would be obligatory for the win.) 73.♕e5+ ♕c2 Here the situation is more tricky, but White can achieve a study-like draw by playing 74.a4! ♕xb3

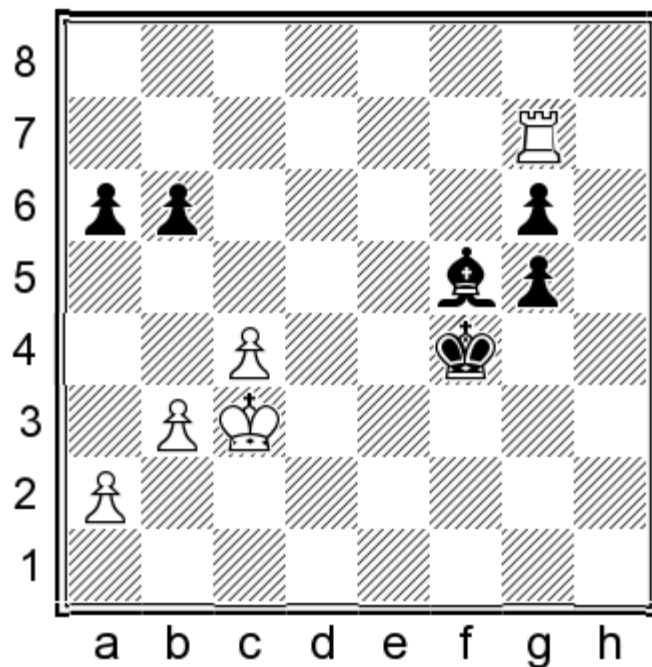


75.a5! This is of course logical, followed by putting the bishop to b6 and then passing with the king, but it is far from over because Black can create a zugzwang. 75...♙e4 76.♙c7 ♖b4 77.♙b6 g5 78.♖g1 g4 79.♖f2 g3+ 80.♖g1 ♙c6 Here it is! White is forced to give up one of his pawns. 81.♙c7 ♖xc5 82.♙b6+ ♖c4 White is forced to move again with the bishop, which allows Black to create his passed pawn. 83.♙d8 b5! 84.axb6 ♙b7 It seems to be over, but actually the game is drawn because Black cannot promote his a-pawn as White then sacrifices his bishop and a stalemate arises. 85.♙e7 a5 86.♙d6 a4 87.♙e7 ♖b3 88.♙d6= and ...a3 is met by ♙xa3. Black can only avoid stalemate by giving up his g2-pawn, but then g3 also falls and there will be no winning material left on the board.

64...♞xd4!! 65.♞xd4 b6!!

Another very cool move! Karjakin does not hurry with pushing his passed pawns, but rather spends a tempo on protecting the important b-pawn. 65...g4 is met by 66.♞xb7 g3 67.♞e7 g2 68.♞e1 ♖f3 69.b4 White gets his counterplay! 69...♖f2 70.♞c1 g1=♚ 71.♞xg1 ♖xg1 72.b5 axb5 73.cxb5 and the game is drawn by force. 73...g5 74.b6 ♙c8 75.♞e5 and Black loses the g-pawn in any case. 75...g4 (75...♖f2 76.b7! ♙xb7 77.♞f5=) 76.♞f4= followed by b7.

66.♞c3



White has no time to go for the b-pawn: 66.♖b7 g4 67.♖xb6 g3—+ and ♖e6-e1 does not work now. 66.♖e7 g4 67.♖e1 ♕f3 68.b4 g3—+ The pawn inevitably promotes and White is unable to create any counterplay. A very nice example where the bishop simply dominates the rook.

Svidler tries to get his king behind the g-pawn, but another brilliant move is on its way from Karjakin...

66...♔e3!!

After cutting off the king, Black need only push his pawn. Svidler tries his last chance...

67.♖b7 g4 68.♖xb6 g3 69.♖d6

Hoping for the same salvation as in the 65...g4 line, but things are different now because the white king stands further from the g-pawn.

69...g2 70.♖d1 g5

70...♔f2 will lead to the same.

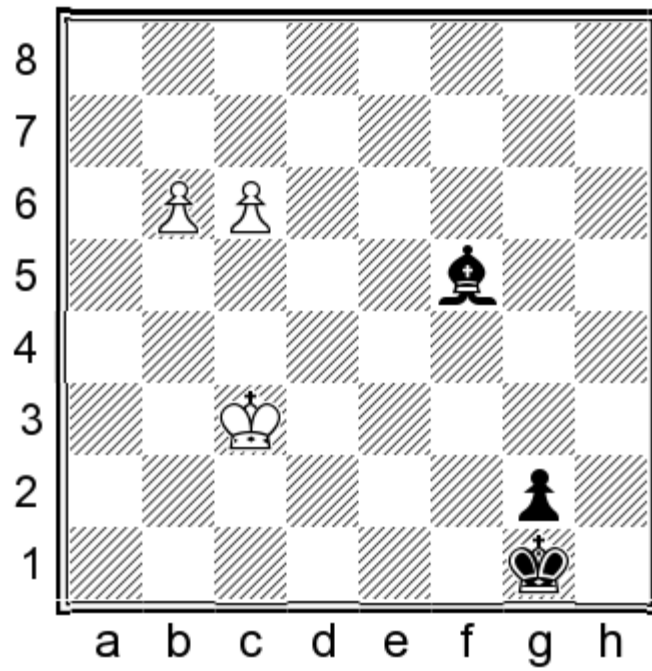
71.b4 ♕f2 72.a4

White tries a kind of pawn race, but he is slower... 72.b5 also fails in view of 72...axb5 73.cxb5 g1=♚ 74.♖xg1 ♔xg1 75.♔d4 g4 76.♔e5 ♔c8 77.♔f4 ♔f2—+ White is missing one tempo, he should play b7 now...

72...g1=♚ 73.♖xg1 ♔xg1 74.b5 axb5 75.axb5 g4 76.c5 g3 77.c6

77.b6 is worse because after 77...♔e4 White cannot advance his pawns.

77...g2 78.b6



78...♔f2!

The only winning move! The point becomes clear 3 moves later.

79.b7 ♕g1=♖ 80.b8=♖ ♖c1+ 81.♔d4

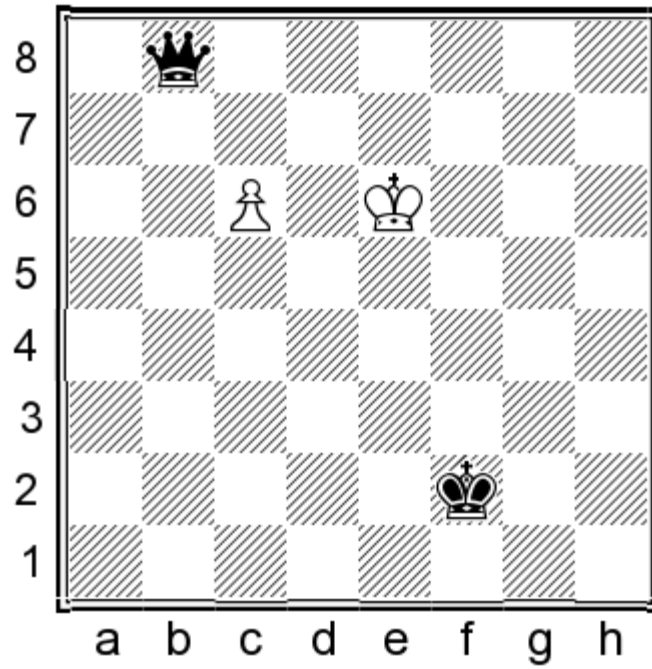
Otherwise White loses his queen immediately.

81...♖e3+!

The winning check! That is why the king must stand on f2!

82.♔c4

82.♔d5 also drops the queen after 82...♕e6+ 83.♔d6 ♖f4+ 84.♔xe6 ♖xb8—+



85.♔d7 If the pawn gets to c7, the game would be a theoretical draw, but Black can avoid it by playing 85...♚b5! (After let's say 85...♔e3?? 86.c7 ♚b5+ 87.♔d8 ♚d5+ 88.♔c8 the king heads to the corner. 88...♔d4 89.♔b8 ♚d6 90.♔a8!= and White is saved by the famous stalemate idea! The same stalemate idea also works with an a7, c7, f7 and h7 pawn, but with the b7, d7, e7 and g7 pawns Black is winning.) 86.♔d6 ♔e3 and now c7 does not work anymore because of 87.c7 ♚e8—+

82...♔e6+

White resigned as ♚b3 is coming next! Brilliant endgame technique by Karjakin!

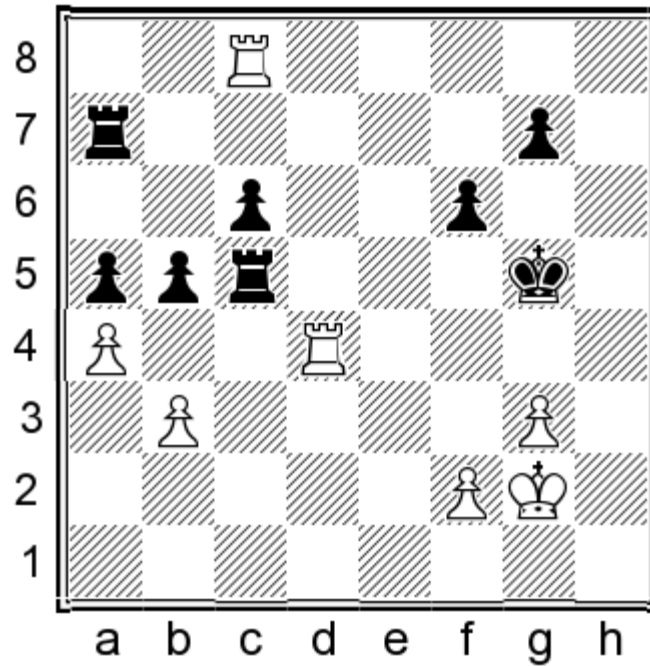
0–1

GAME 41**R. Wojtaszek (2716)****P. Eljanov (2732)**

Gashimov memorial

21.04.2014

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

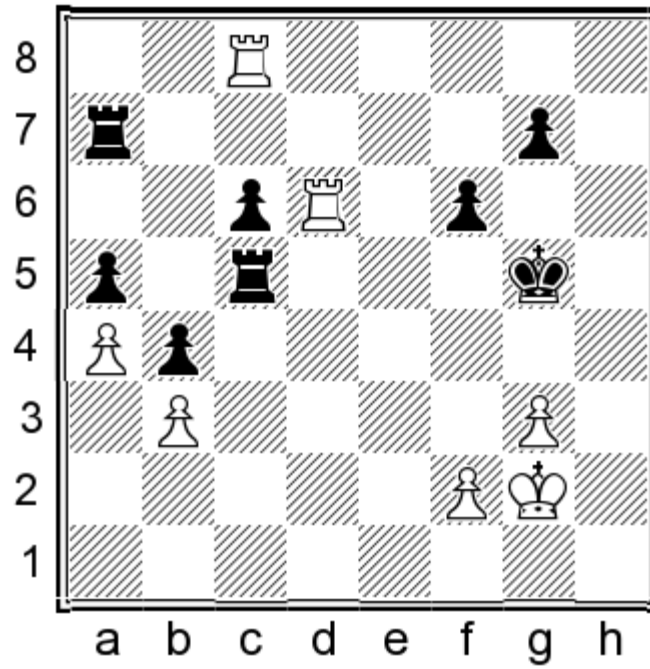


Here Black has an extra pawn, but as we know in rook endgames the defensive side might always hope for salvation. However, Eljanov realizes his material advantage with perfect technique!

42...b4!

Black fixes the weakness on b3, so after it falls he obtains a very strong protected passed pawn on b4.

43.♖d6



43...♔f5!!

An excellent move! Black gives back his material advantage, but he activates his king. It is heading towards the b3-pawn. 43...♖c3 is a much worse version after White plays 44.♖xc6! ♖xb3 45.♗a6! ♖xa6 46.♗xa6; The passive 43...♗a6 does not come into consideration because 44.♖c7= yields enough compensation.

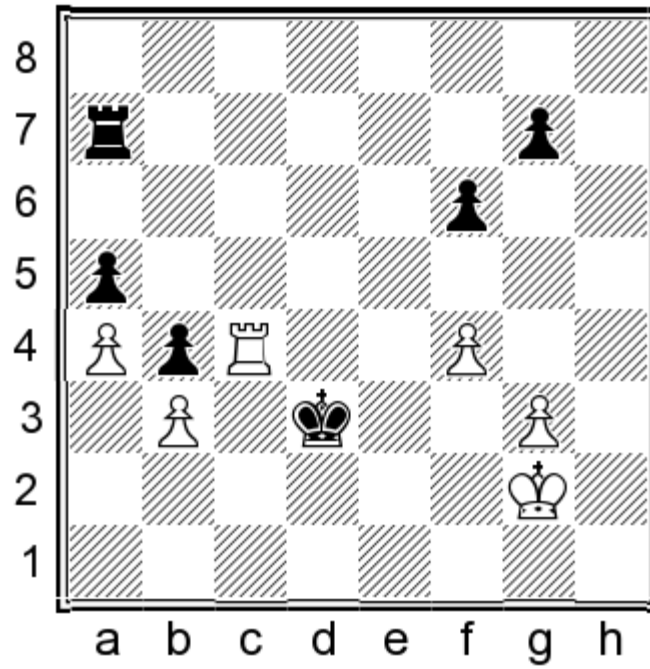
44.♗dxc6 ♖xc6 45.♗xc6 ♔e4!

The idea is to win the b3-pawn with ...♗d7-d3. At the same time White will collect the a5-pawn, but Black's king will provide excellent support to his own passed b-pawn.

46.♗c4+

White tries to prevent the ...♗d7-d3 idea by luring the king to the d-file. 46.g4 does not change much: 46...♗d7! 47.♗c5 ♗d5 48.♗c4+ ♔d3 49.♔g3 ♔d2 and ...♗d3 next. It will be similarly hopeless as the game continuation. The problem is that after 46.♗c5 ♔d4 White cannot maintain his rook on c5. He must either give up control over the c3-square or the attack on the a5-pawn.

46...♔d3 47.f4



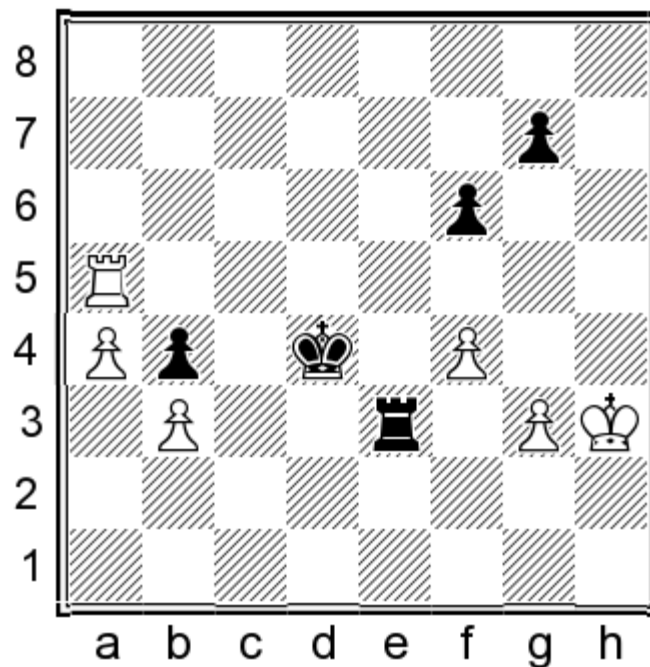
47...Re7!

The black king has prepared to support the b-pawn, therefore it is time to collect the b3-pawn with the rook.

48.Rc5 Re3 49.Kh3

49.Rxa5 is equally hopeless if Black plays the right plan. 49...Kc3 50.Ra7 Kxb3 51.Rxg7 Ka2! This is the key! Black should not be greedy by taking on a4, because that pawn actually gives perfect shelter to the king against the checks along the a-file. Black need only advance his b-pawn and it automatically promotes. 52.a5 b3 53.a6 b2 54.a7 Ra3—+

49...Kd4 50.Rxa5



50...♖e7!!

Another very subtle — and brilliant — move by Eljanov, which deprives White of any kind of counterplay. Black inevitably collects the b3-pawn with ...♙c3 and the 7th rank is also protected. 50...♖xb3 51.♖a7 is less clear. For instance, after 51...♖b1 52.♖xg7 b3 53.♙g4 b2 54.♖b7 ♙c3 55.♙f5= This is the right defensive strategy for White. He tries to eliminate all the pawns and sacrifice his rook for the b-pawn. Afterwards he starts to advance his own pawns and saves the game.

51.♖b5

51.♙g4 ♙c3 52.♙f5 ♙xb3—+ followed by ...♙a2 and pushing the pawn. White cannot create a passed pawn to get some counterplay.

51...♙c3 52.a5 ♖a7 53.f5

53.a6 ♖xa6 54.♖b7 could be met by 54...g6 and ...f5 next. This is the reason Wojtaszek decided to fix the g7-pawn with his 53rd move.

53...♙xb3 54.a6 ♖xa6 55.♖b7

White does everything he can to save the game. He plays with the correct strategy and wins a pawn on the kingside, in order to create a passed pawn himself, but unfortunately Black is progressing too quickly.

55...♙a3 56.♖xg7 b3 57.♖b7 b2 58.g4

58.♙g4 would be the principled idea, to bring the king to g6 and push the g-pawn to avoid getting cut off, but Black has 58...♖a4+ 59.♙h5 ♖b4—+ and White cannot give up his rook for the b-pawn.

58...♖a4!

The final strong move and White resigned in view of 58...♖a4 59.♖xb2 Black was threatening to play ♖b4. 59...♙xb2 60.♙h4 ♙c3 61.♙h5 ♙d4—+ White is just too slow. What a flawless performance from Black!

0–1

GAME 42

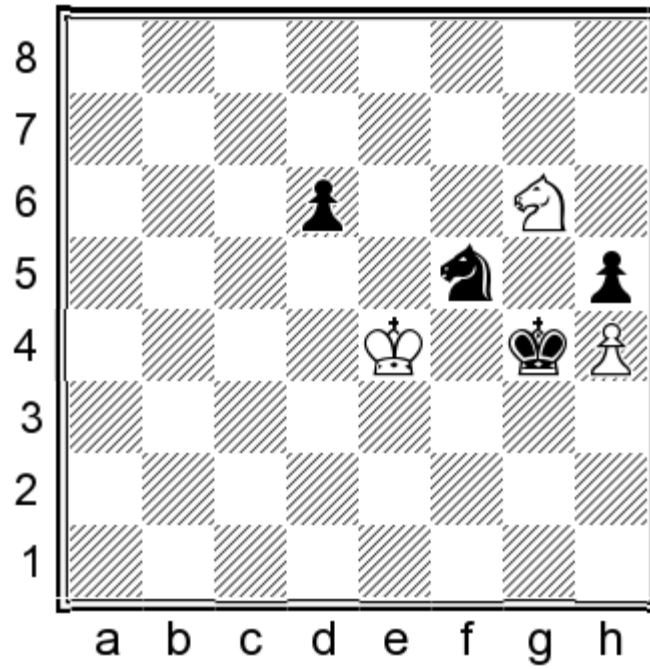
E. Safarli (2656)

P. Eljanov (2732)

Gashimov memorial B

24.04.2014

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



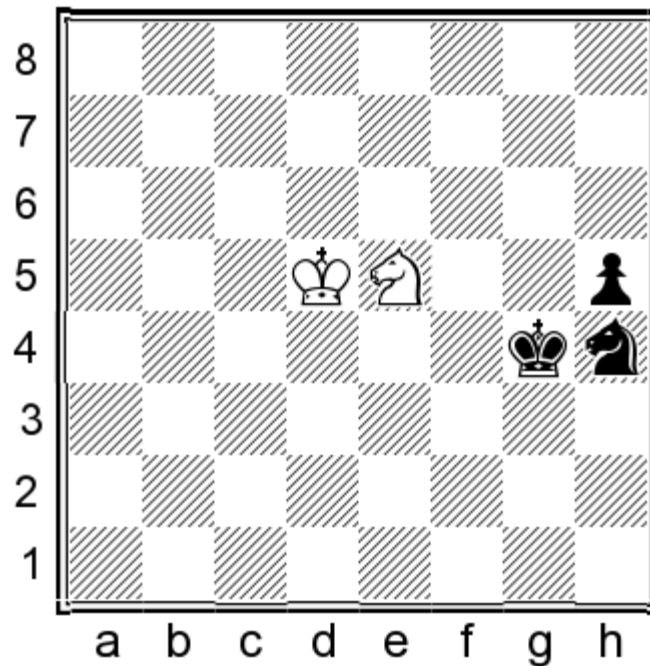
Despite the limited material here, Black is able to realize his advantage and Eljanov does it showing perfect technique!

65...d5+!

This is the only way! We will see that is very important to drive the white king as far away as possible from the h-pawn. 65...♞xh4 leads to a draw after 66.♞f4 ♞f5 (66...d5+ can now be met by 67.♞xd5 and Black cannot avoid losing his h-pawn.) 67.♞xh5 ♔xh5 68.♕xf5 holds.

65...d5+! 66.♕xd5 ♞xh4 67.♞e5+

White should sacrifice his knight for the pawn, therefore he must try to work with his pieces in harmony.



67.♞e7 quickly loses to 67...♞g2 and Black inevitably advances his h-pawn, because 68.♞g6 runs into 68...♞f4+

69. ♖xf4 ♔xf4—+

67... ♔f4!

It is very important to keep the white king away from the pawn. 67... ♔g3 would have been a big mistake because of 68. ♔e4 ♖g2 69. ♖g6 and Black cannot make progress.

68. ♔e6

Another try is 68. ♖d3+ but Black wins after 68... ♔g3 69. ♔e4 ♖g2! controlling all the important squares and the pawn is ready to be advanced. 70. ♖e5 h4 71. ♖f3 h3—+ White finds himself in zugzwang! His king cannot move, while all the knight moves allow ...h2.

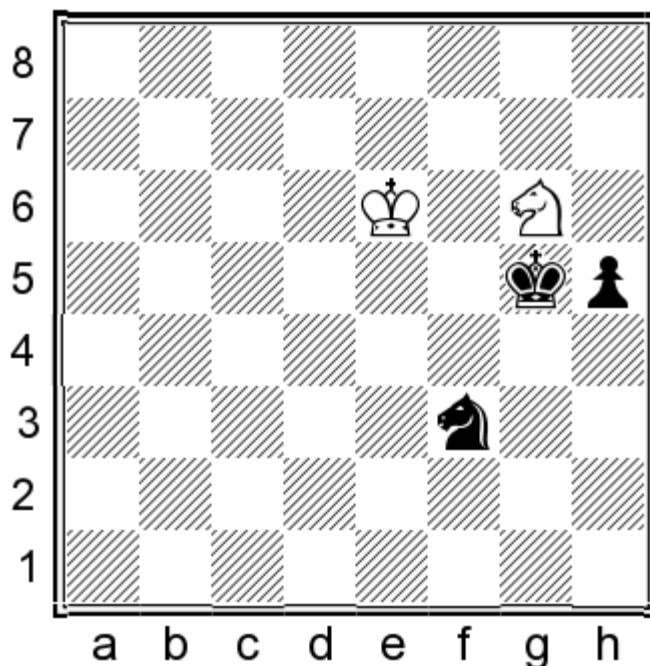
68... ♖f3!

Again the only way to win! Black sends the centralized knight away from e5. 68... ♖g2 makes no sense because after 69. ♔f6 the h-pawn cannot be pushed in view of ♖g6.

69. ♖g6+

69. ♖d3+ ♔e3—+ and the knight is too far from the pawn. ...h4 is coming next.

69... ♔g5



70. ♔f7

This is the best defensive attempt. When the pawn reaches the 3rd rank, it basically automatically promotes due to different kinds of zugzwang. White must try to keep his knight on g6, but with nice maneuvering Eljanov succeeds in making progress.

70... ♖d4! 71. ♔g7 ♖e6+ 72. ♔f7

The point is that 72.♔h7 is refuted by 72...♖f8+! 73.♖xf8 h4 74.♖e6+ ♔g4—+ and the pawn cannot be stopped.

72...♖f4

The human way to deflect the knight from g6. Actually 72...♖f8!? was winning here too. 73.♖e5 (73.♖xf8 h4 74.♖e6+ ♔g4—+ is over again.) 73...♔f4! 74.♖d3+ ♔g3!—+ and again the pawn promotes automatically.

73.♖e5 ♔f5!

The pawn could not be pushed at once.

74.♖f3 ♔g4 75.♖e5+ ♔g3!

Very well played and Black is now finally ready to push his pawn.

76.♔f6 h4 77.♔g5 h3 78.♖g4

The difficult part of the job is already done. The rest is easy. All the plans are winning for Black....

78...♖e6+

78...♖d3 79.♔f5 ♖f2 is also good, with the same technique as the pawn has reached the 3rd rank. 80.♖e3 ♔f3 81.♖f1 ♔g2 82.♖e3+ ♔g1—+

79.♔h5 ♖f4+

Eljanov was in time pressure, therefore he gains some extra time by repeating with the 30 secs bonus increment per move. This is the right technique in general.

80.♔g5 ♖g6 81.♖e3

81.♔h5 ♖e5—+;

81.♔f5 ♖e5!—+ is elegant! 82.♖e3 ♔f2 83.♔f4 h2—+

81...♔f2 82.♖g4+ ♔f3

Black decides to win by triangulation. Other moves were also good enough. The end is near.

83.♖h2+

83.♔h5 ♔g3 84.♔g5 ♖e5 85.♖e3 ♔f2 86.♔h4 h2—+

83...♔g2 84.♖g4 ♖e5 85.♖e3+ ♔f2

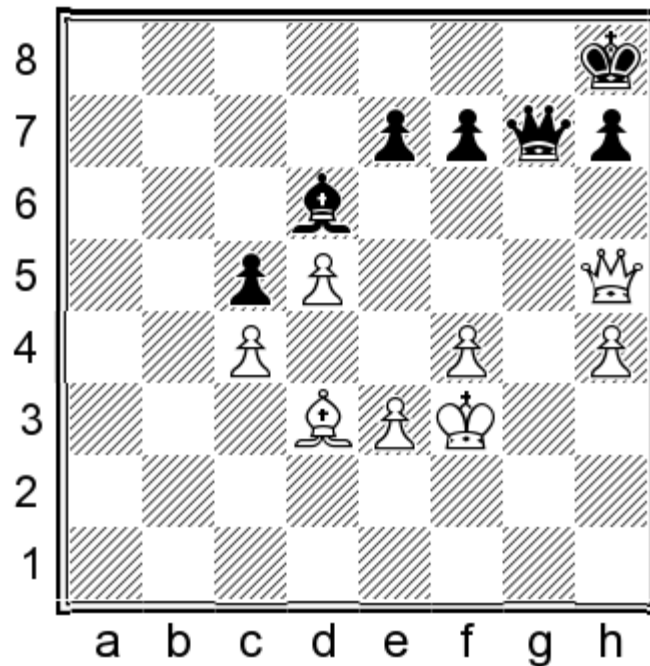
White resigned. It is a bit surprising to me, but White could not improve his defence — he was lost after 65...d5!

0–1

GAME 43

S. Mamedyarov (2760)

F. Caruana (2783)



All-game-long White was applying pressure and he has finally reached an opposite-colored bishop+queen endgame, a pawn up and with good winning chances. However, it is hard to find a way to break through Black's defences. Mamedyarov shows us perfect technique based on very exact calculation.

61.e4!!

A fantastic move. Of course White's main idea is to play e4-e5, but now the black queen becomes very active and White will be forced to give up a full piece!

61...♔c3

Letting White play e5 was of course not an option.

62.♚xf7 ♚xd3+ 63.♔g4

This is the key idea behind White's play. White is a piece down for 2 pawns, but the mating threat of playing ♚f8 next, and the future idea of playing e5, seriously complicate Black's life.

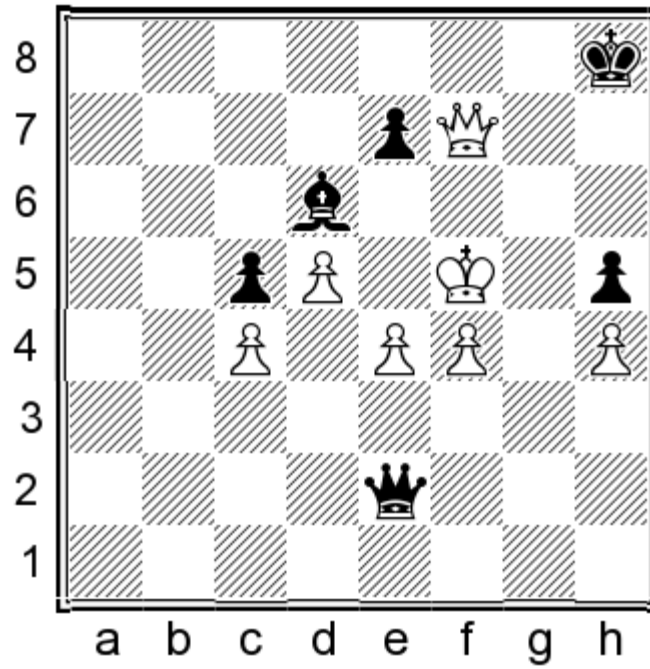
63...♚e2+!

Caruana finds his best defensive chances.

64.♔f5 h5!

Black at the same time defends against ♚f8 mate and wants to play ...♚g4.

65.♚f8+ ♔h7 66.♚f7+ ♔h8



67. ♖g6

White is pushing very hard, but is the position really winning?!

67... ♜xc4?

A mistake. The only chance to fight is to play 67... ♜f3! attacking the f4-pawn. 68. ♖g5 Things look bad for Black, but another beautiful move seems to save the game. 68... ♔h7! Not giving White the chance to play ♔g6, and it is hard to see how White can improve his position here.

68. ♖xh5+

Now the game is almost over by force.

68... ♔g7 69. ♖g6+

A good move. The white king is going to take up a great position on e6 and ♖g6 is needed to protect the e4-pawn.

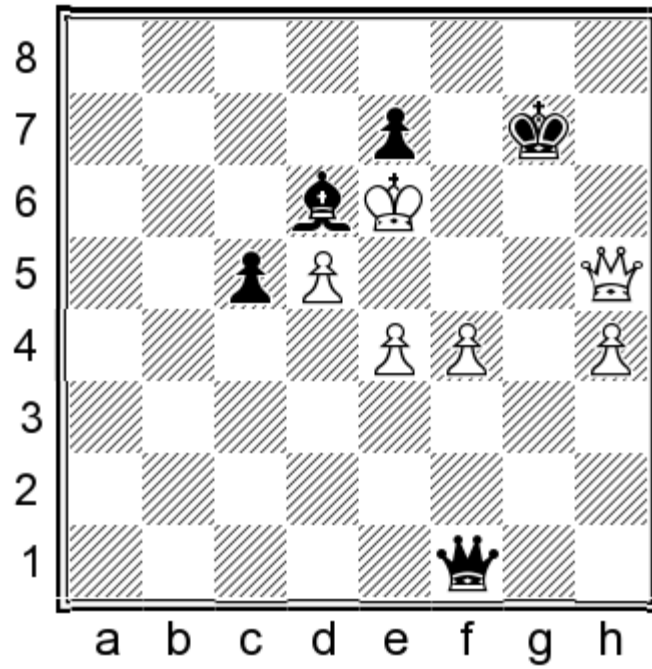
69... ♔h8 70. ♔e6 ♜f1

There is no more real hope for Black.

71. ♜h6+ ♔g8 72. ♖g6+ ♔h8 73. ♜h5+

Probably in a bit of time-pressure, White first decides to give a couple of checks before playing the final e5 push.

73... ♔g7 74. ♖g4+ ♔f8 75. ♜h5 ♔g7



76. ♕g5+

The white queen finally takes up her best position.

76... ♖f8 77. e5 ♗b1

Nothing can save Black anymore.

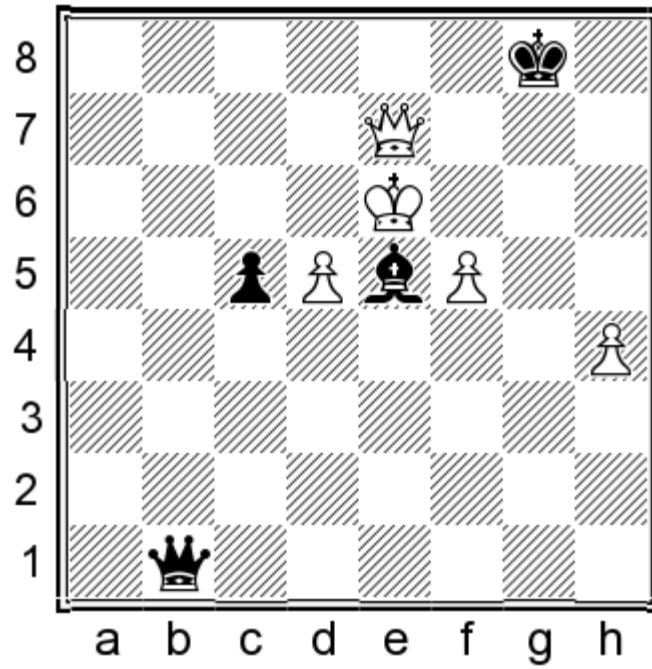
78. ♗h6+ ♔g8 79. ♗g5+

The simple 79.exd6 also seems to give White a totally winning position.

79... ♔f8 80. f5

But of course f5 is very strong. White not only wants to play exd6 but f6 is also a deadly threat.

80... ♕xe5 81. ♗xe7+ ♔g8



82.♔xe5

Black's only hope now is to give a perpetual check, but there are clearly not enough checks for that.

82...♚b2+ 83.♔e6 ♚e2+ 84.♔f6

and the white king has escaped. A very important victory for Mamedyarov to get back into the tournament after his bad start.

1–0

GAME 44

E. Bacrot (2722)

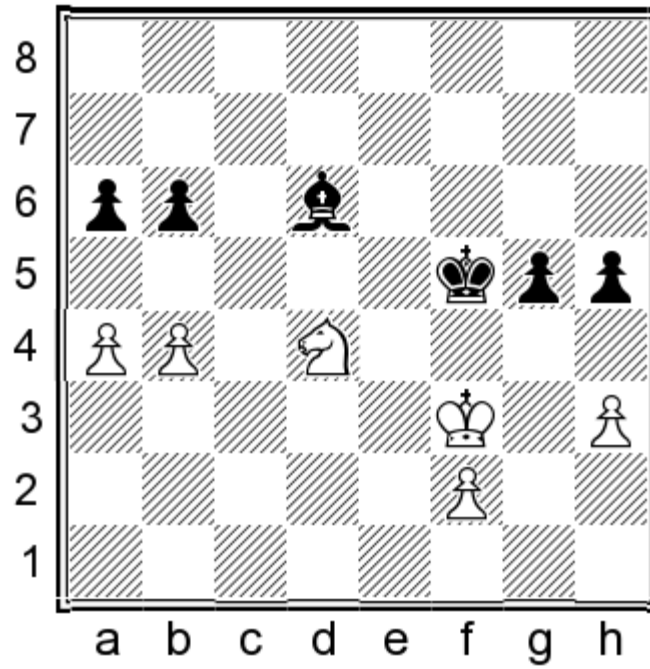
P. Eljanov (2732)

Vugar Gashimov Mem B 2014

Shamkir AZE (7.3)

27.04.2014, [D43]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



After a really passive and not particularly good game, Etienne has reached a very difficult endgame. Maybe at first sight White's position looks pretty "holdable" but in fact he is faced with huge problems. As we know, a bishop is much stronger than a knight in a fight covering both sides of the board. The black king is also very nicely placed on e5 and can reach both the queenside and the kingside pawns. Another idea for black could be to exchange his g-pawn against White's h-pawn to get a passed pawn on the h-file. All this makes it difficult for White to lead this endgame into a draw.

41...♔e5 42.♖c2

White tries to cover the squares in the middle of the board so as not let the black king pass the 4th rank.

42...♗c7

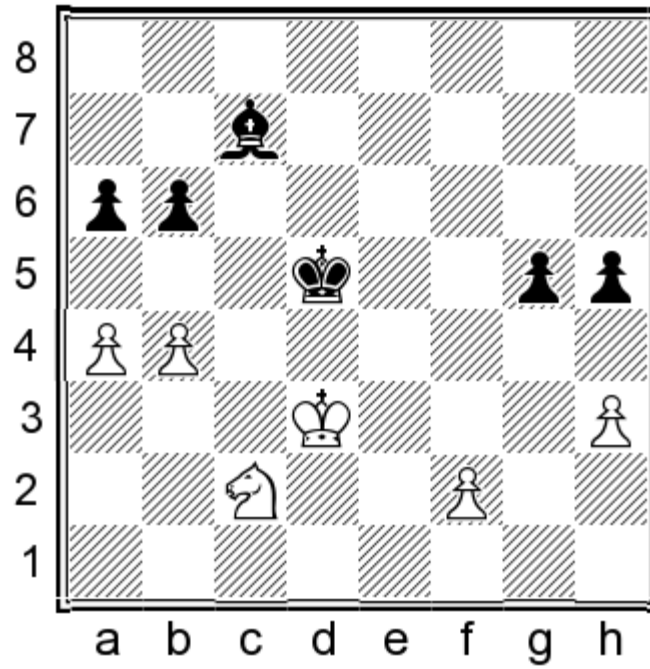
A tricky waiting move. It is of course too early for 42...♔d5 43.♖e3+! as after 43...♔d4 White has 44.♖f5+!

43.♔e3

White needs to keep the opposition.

43...♔d5 44.♔d3

and here comes another waiting move by Black:



44...♔d8!

Another very unpleasant waiting move by Eljanov who is checking what White will do next. White also needs to be very careful about Black's ...g4-push at some opportune moment, with the idea of hxg4 ...h4!

45.f3

A very human move, but now Black's idea of playing ...♔e5-♔f4 becomes very real. 45.♘e3+ didn't help much. 45...♔e5 and Black's next move could be ...♔f4. And after 45.♘d4 ♕f6 46.♘c2 ♔e5 47.♔e3 ♕e7 White finds himself in some sort of zugzwang. Depending on White's move, the black king could try to cross the 5th rank and the white knight on c2 is now totally tied to protecting the b4-pawn.

45...♕e7

45...♔e5 is premature now since after 46.♘d4 Black can't play 46...♔f4?? because of 47.♘e6+ followed by ♘xd8.

46.♘e3+

White needs to do something as no more waiting moves are possible in this position.

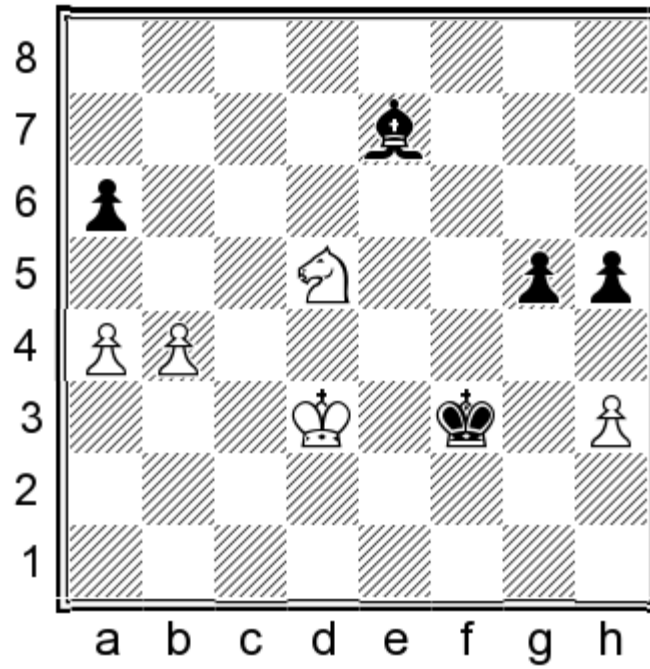
46...♔e5 47.♘c4+

Bacrot tries to rescue the game with some forcing play. Black would probably have had to work much harder after 47.♔c4 ♕d8 48.♘g2 and of course White's position is on the verge of being lost, but it is not so easy to see how Black should break through.

47...♔f4

Now things are pretty forced.

48.♘xb6 ♔xf3 49.♘d5



49...♖d6

Pawns are equal, but we can see how much stronger the black bishop is than the white knight. Black has two major ideas here; to play ...g4 hxg4 and ...h4 or just to play ...♔g3-♔xh3. 49...g4! leads to a much quicker win. 50.hxg4 h4 51.♗xe7 h3 and White can't stop the h-pawn. I guess Eljanov saw this line, but decided that the move in the game would also lead to a winning position and why risk miscalculating something..?

50.♗f6

White heads for the h-pawn.

50...♖xb4 51.♗xh5 ♕g2

Things are still pretty forced. It is bad luck for White that the a1-square is black, otherwise he could give up the knight for the g5 pawn...

52.♔e4 ♕xh3 53.♔f5

White is missing only one tempo to play ♗f6 next, creating a fortress on the g4 square.

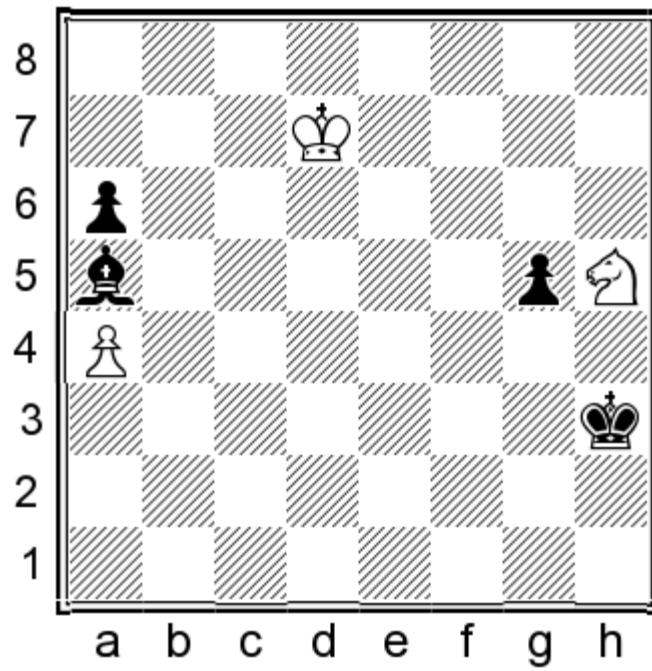
53...♖e7!

The only winning move in the position! After 53...g4?? 54.♗f4+ ♕g3 55.♗d5 ♕f3 the position seems to be winning, but it is a draw. 56.♗xb4 g3 57.♗d3! The white knight is just in time to stop the g-pawn from promoting. 57...g2 58.♗e1+

54.♔e6

White's position is lost as Black threatens to simply play ...g4-g3-g2.

54...♖d8 55.♔d7 ♖a5



56. ♖f6

White is hoping for a trick...

56... ♗e1

But there is no fooling Eljanov! After 56...g4?? 57. ♖xg4! ♜xg4 58. ♜c6 ♜c3 59.a5! followed by ♜b7 and ♜xa6, the game is a draw.

57. ♜c8

The last chance. White wants to play a5 next.

57...a5!

The game is over. What great technique from Eljanov and a very important win given the tournament situation.

0-1

GAME 45

S. Karjakin (2771)

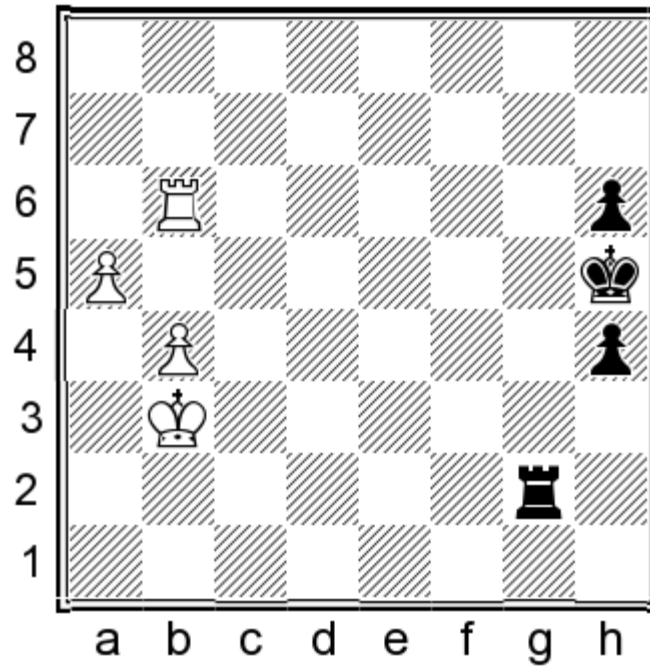
V. Kramnik (2783)

2nd Norway Chess 2014

Stavanger NOR (8.5)

12.06.2014, [D35]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



After a long fighting game, where White was pushing for many moves, the victory is finally close to hand. White has 2 passed pawns supported by the king on b3, so the position should just be winning, but exact calculation is still needed. Black's h4-pawn is very dangerous and White cannot protect it in the usual way, from h8, because of the second black pawn on h6. Let us take a look at how precisely Karjakin converts his advantage.

57.a6!

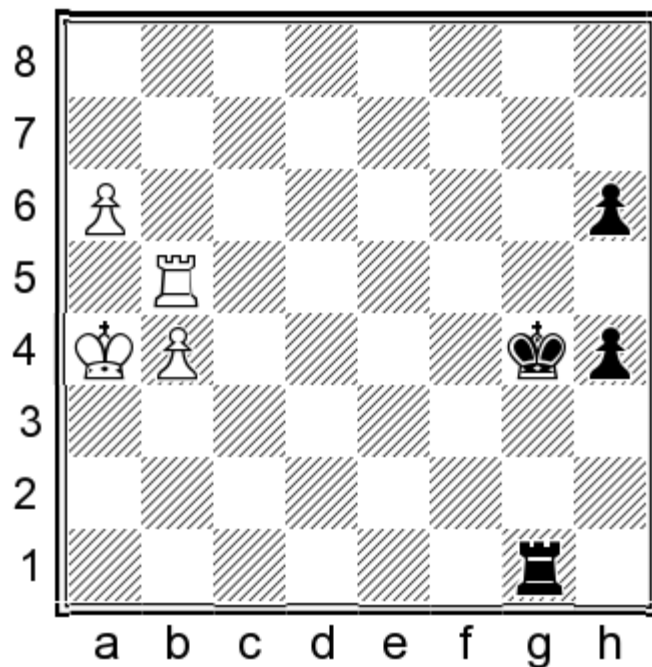
It is always a good idea to push your own pawns as far as possible.

57...♖g3+!

Black is also trying to make things as hard as possible for White. Before bringing the h-pawn into action, he tries to maneuver the white king into a bad position.

58.♔c4

The right decision. 58.♔a4? would lead to a crazy position. Now Black has the very strong 58...♖g1! The black rook is going to take care of the a-pawn from a1. 59.♖b5+ It seems like White already doesn't have anything better. 59...♔g4



60.♖a5 White protects against ...♗a1. 60...h3 Now both sides queen. 61.a7 h2 62.a8=♚ h1=♚ Of course White cannot be worse here, but it is hard to say if he has winning chances.

58...♗g4+

Before trying to stop the a-pawn, Black attempts to drag the white king away from the pawns a bit.

59.♔d3 ♗g8

59...h3 loses on the spot: 60.a7 ♗g3+ 61.♔e2 ♗a3 62.♗b5+ ♔g4 63.♗a5

60.♗b5+

White chooses the simplest way. The white rook is going to a2 to stop the black pawn from moving.

60...♔g4 61.♗a5 h3 62.♗a2

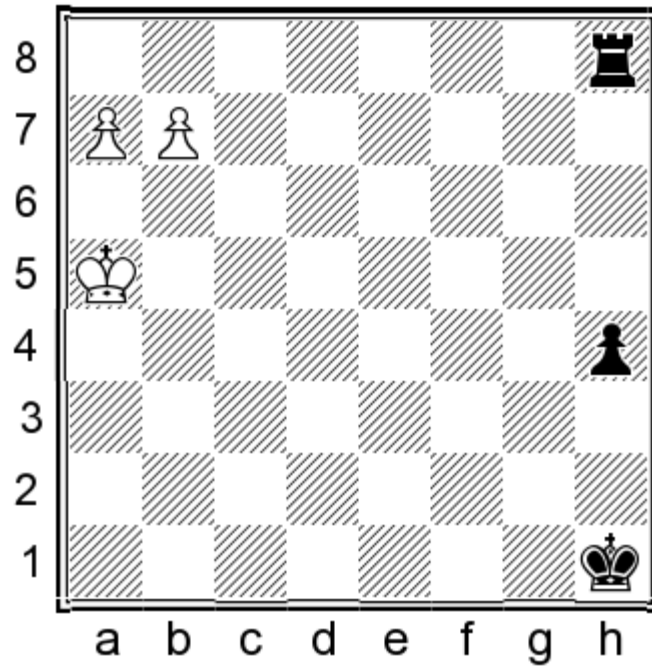
Things are still very forced because Black has 2 h-pawns.

62...♗a8 63.b5 h5

and now the double h-pawns run.

64.♔e3

Karjakin continues to play very well. 64.♔c4 seems to win a tempo, but it is a dangerous move to make in a practical game. 64...♔g3 65.♔b4 h2 66.♗a1 ♔g2 67.♔a5 h1=♚ 68.♗xh1 ♔xh1 69.b6 h4 70.b7 ♗h8 71.a7



71...h3 and White is only winning because of 72.a8=♔!

64...♔g3

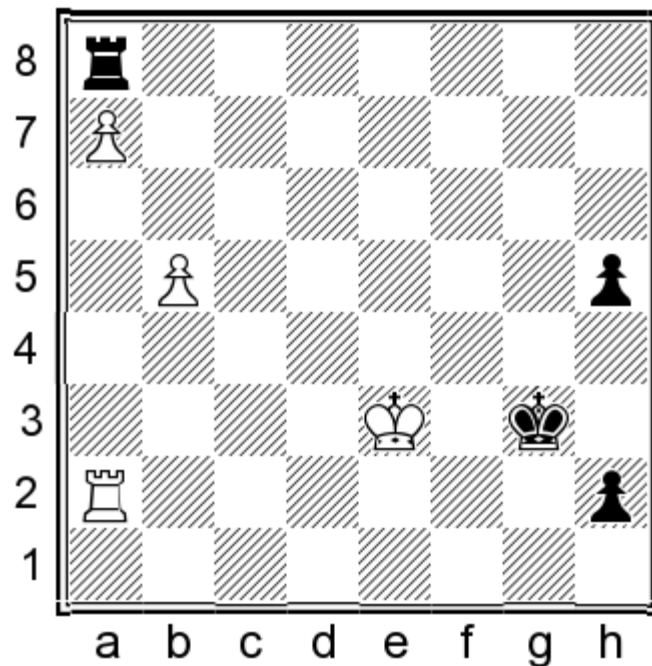
Black needs to try and force h2.

65.a7!

The last important move. After this things are too easy to miss.

65...h2

Black doesn't have a choice since b6 was coming.



66.♖xh2

This was the idea behind 64.♔e3.

66...♕xh2

66...♖xa7 leads to a totally lost rook endgame: 67.♖xh5

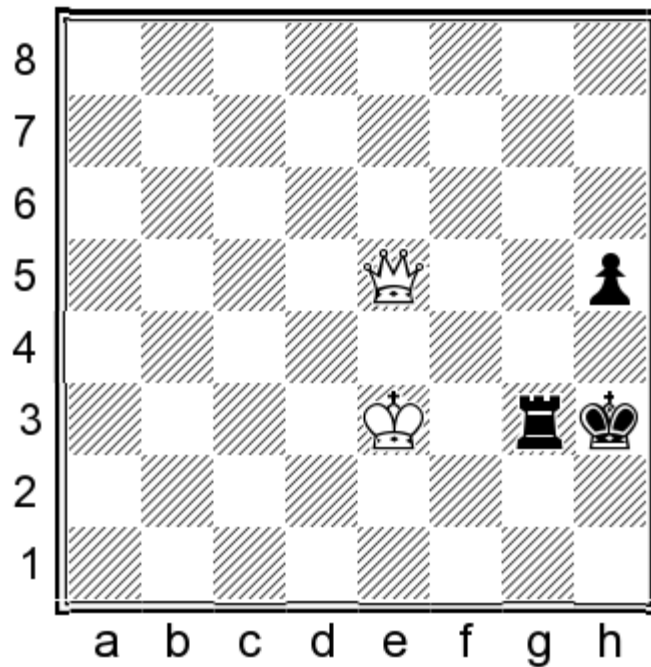
67.b6 ♕h3

Kramnik tries to create a fortress.

68.b7 ♖xa7 69.b8=♚ ♖g7

Black's position is hopeless, as there are no drawing chances with a pawn on h5. But still perhaps White would have to show a bit more technique in case of 69...♖a3.

70.♚e5 ♖g3+



71.♔f2 h4 72.♚e4

and the game is over. The black rook has no more squares left and Black is losing the pawn, which leaves him with no chances to survive the game. A great demonstration of exact play from the beginning until the end by Karjakin.

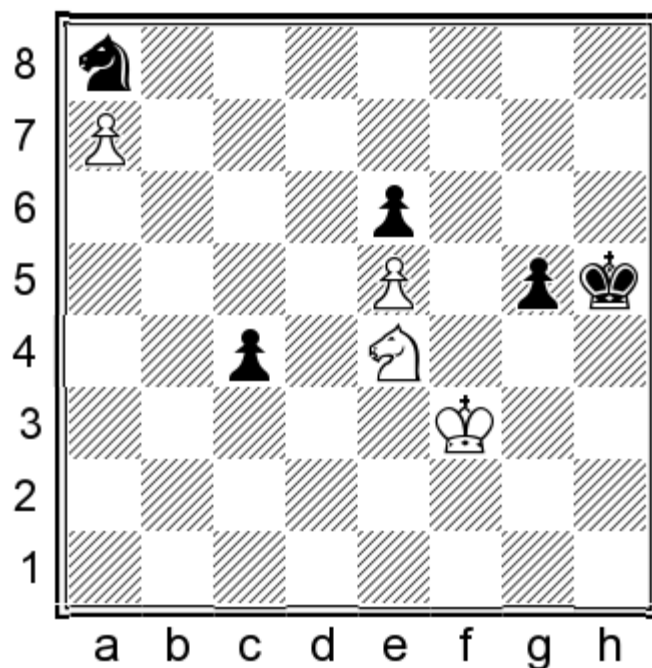
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GAME 46

E. Tomashevsky (2695)

M. Matlakov (2689)

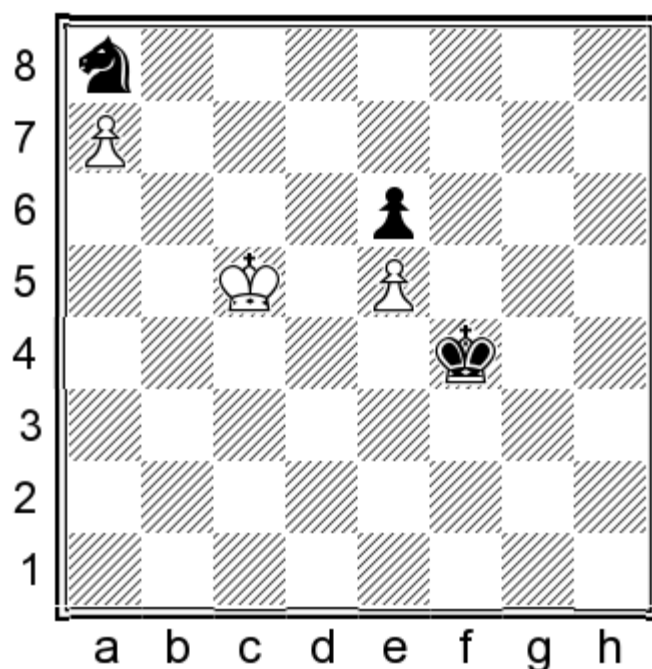
Russian Higher league



I have just seen the following fantastic study-like endgame. White is a pawn down, but if we take a deeper look he is the only one who can play for a win if he goes with his king to the queenside to collect the c-pawn and then to trap the knight on a8. He will sacrifice his own knight for the passed g- pawn.

57.♔e3! ♕g4!

An amazing position arises from the line 57...g4 58.♔d4 ♕h4 59.♔xc4 g3 60.♖xg3 ♕xg3 61.♔c5 ♕f4



Here we are! The white king should go to b7, but if he does so immediately, the black king squeezes him into the corner with ...♕e5-d6-c7. However we must realize that the position when the white king is on c6 and the black one is on e5 is

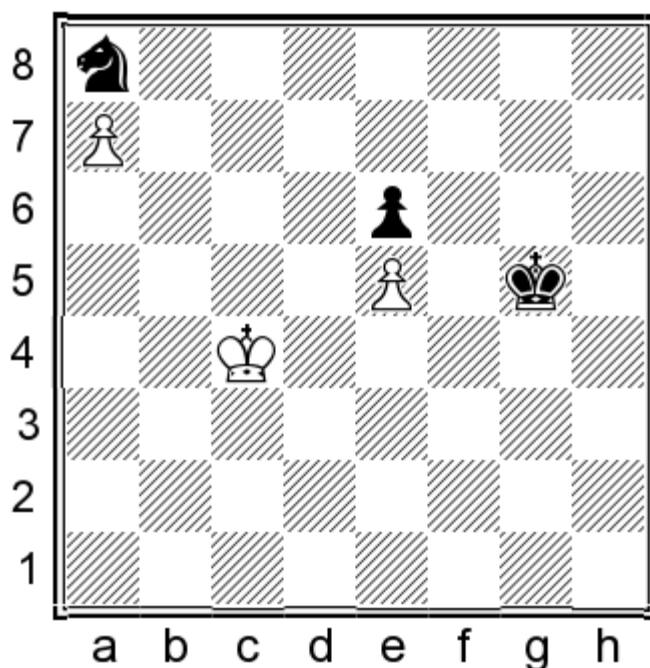
one of 'mutual zugzwang'. If it is Black's move, he must move his king, but then after ♖b7 he does not have ...♗d6-c7 anymore. White only needs to work out the execution of the winning plan. 62.♗d6! (62.♗c6? ♗xe5 63.♗b7 ♗d6 64.♗xa8 ♗c7=) 62...♗f5 and here comes the shocking move: 63.♗d7!! ♗xe5 64.♗c6!+- and zugzwang. ♗b7 wins next.

58.♗d4 ♗f4 59.♗xg5!

White's strategy is the same as in the 57...g4 line.

59...c3

59...♗xg5 is actually the simpler way to draw, but only in a study-like way again. 60.♗xc4



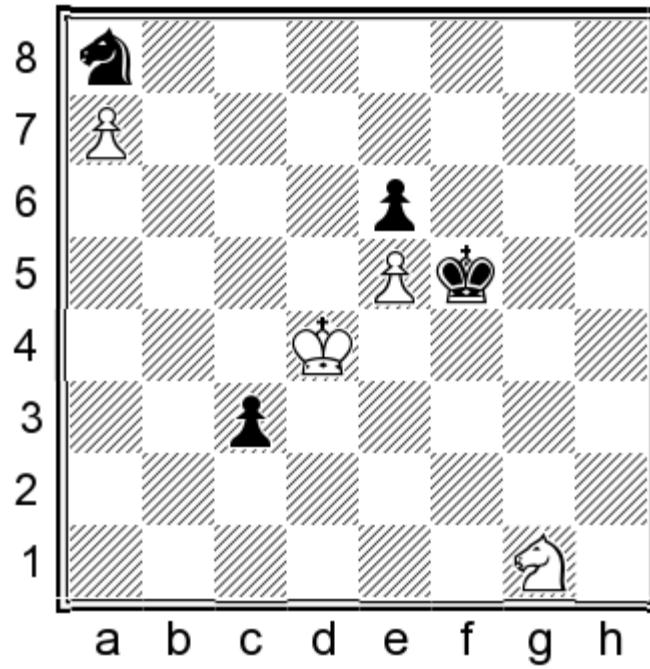
60...♗g6!! Only this move holds. If we already know the motifs, this move is easy to find. Black must take his king to c7 by the shortest route, without getting into zugzwang with the king on e5... (60...♗f4? 61.♗c5 ♗xe5 62.♗c6+-) 61.♗c5 ♗f7 62.♗d6 (On 62.♗c6 Black is in time to play 62...♗e7 63.♗b7 ♗d7 64.♗xa8 ♗c7=) 62...♗e8 63.♗xe6 ♗c7+ and the game is drawn, because 64.♗d6 is not possible in view of 64...♗b5

60.♗h3+ ♗f5!

60...♗g3? loses to the same motif again, as the black king strays too far... 61.♗xc3 ♗xh3 62.♗d4 ♗g4 63.♗c5 ♗f4 64.♗d6!+- and we have reached the same position as in the 57... g4 line. 64...♗f5 65.♗d7!! ♗xe5 66.♗c6+-

61.♗g1!

The tasks of the white pieces are the same as before. The knight must stop the passed pawn and the king should head for the knight on a8.

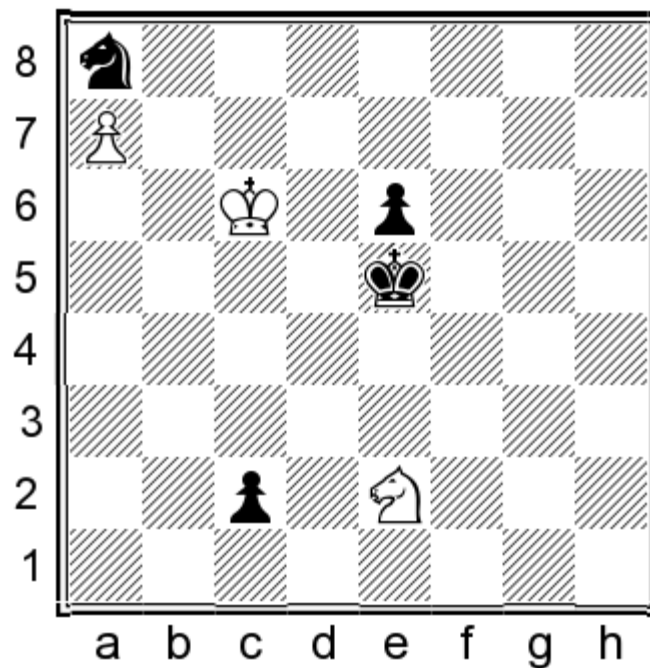


61...♞c7?

The decisive mistake. It was very difficult to calculate the lines, especially with only seconds on the clock... 61...c2 62.♞e2 ♞g6!! should have been played. We actually have the same position like that without the e2-knight and c2-pawn on board. We will soon understand why... 63.♞c5 (63.♞c3 ♞f5=) 63...♞f7 64.♞c6 ♞e7 65.♞b7 ♞d7 66.♞xa8 ♞c8= and the game is drawn because the knight cannot leave the c1-square and Black only plays ...♞c8-c7.

62.♞c5 ♞xe5 63.♞e2! c2 64.♞c6 ♞a8

We have reached the same position again as without the c2- and e2-pieces on board. We already know that Black is in zugzwang now, therefore the next move is obvious.



65.♖c1!!

and here Black resigned because of the zugzwang — ♔b7 comes next. 65.♔b7? would have spoiled the win again in view of 65...♙d6 66.♙xa8 ♔c7=

1–0

GAME 47

M. Carlsen (2881)

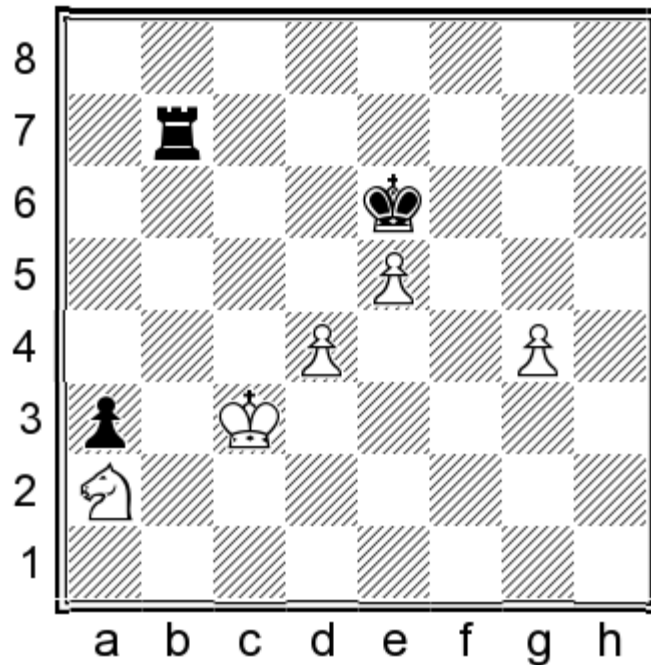
V. Anand (2785)

FIDE World Rapid 2014

Dubai UAE (12.1)

18.06.2014, [D10]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



Carlsen was better for most of this game, but after a terrible blunder Anand obtained excellent winning chances.

44...♜b8!

Black's position looks winning, but White still has a lot of pawns and all White needs to do is to win the a3-pawn after which the game would be a draw. With the silent 44...♜b8! Anand is putting White into a first zugzwang.

45.g5

What else to do?! 45.♖c1 doesn't help. 45...♜c8+ 46.♔d2 ♔d5 and Black is easily winning since the white king is cut off on the c-file.

45...♔f5

Black starts to collect the white pawns.

46.d5

Once again White has nothing better than this.

46...♙xe5 47.g6

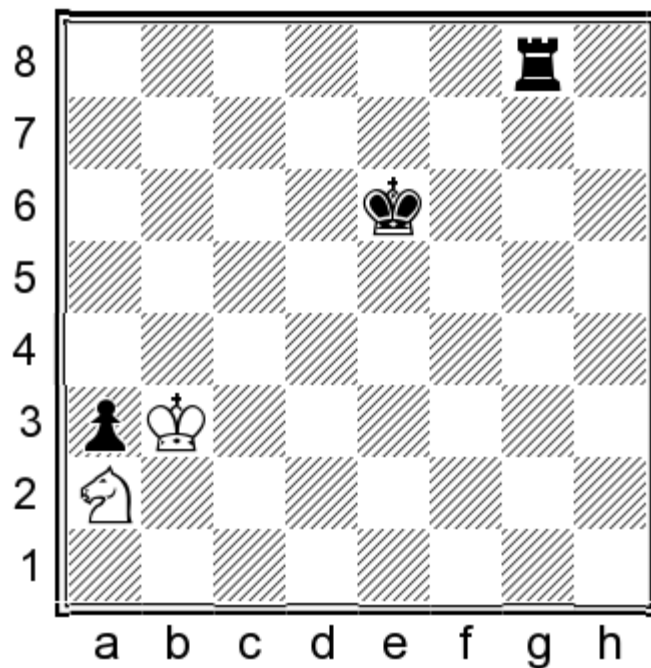
By giving away the pawns White manages to lure the black rook away from the b-file, which will allow him to play ♙b3.

47...♙xd5 48.g7 ♙e6

Black wants to collect the last pawn by playing ...♙f7.

49.g8=♚+ ♖xg8 50.♙b3

The white king has finally managed to get to b3, but does it save the game?!



50...♖g3+!

The most precise way of winning the game. 50...♖a8 was probably also winning. 51.♘c3 ♙e5 52.♙a2 ♙d4! The black king has to get to b4. 53.♘b5+ ♙c4 Black is just in time to win the game: 54.♘xa3+ ♙b4

51.♙b4

51.♘c3? doesn't work because of 51...a2

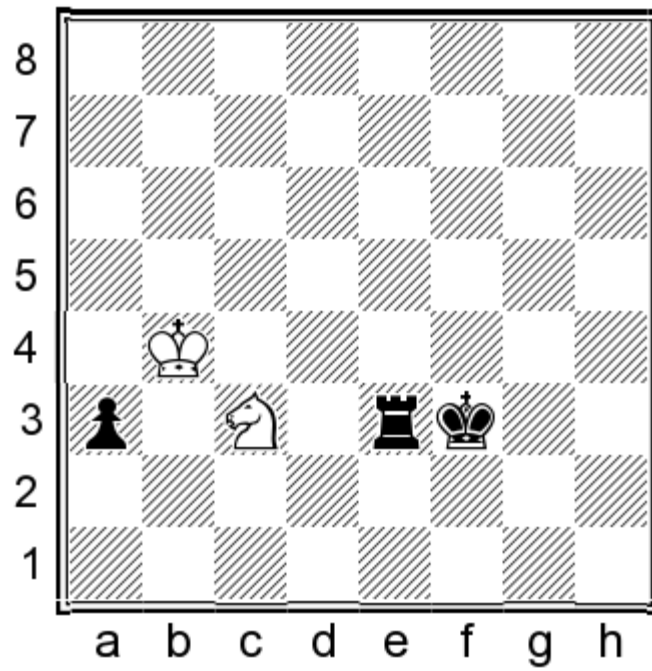
51...♙e5 52.♘c3

All Black needs to do now is to bring his king to b1 to end the game.

52...♖e3

Preparing the march of the king. The rook on e3 will cut out the white knight's checks.

53.♔c4 ♕f5 54.♔b4 ♕g4 55.♘a2 ♔f3 56.♘c3



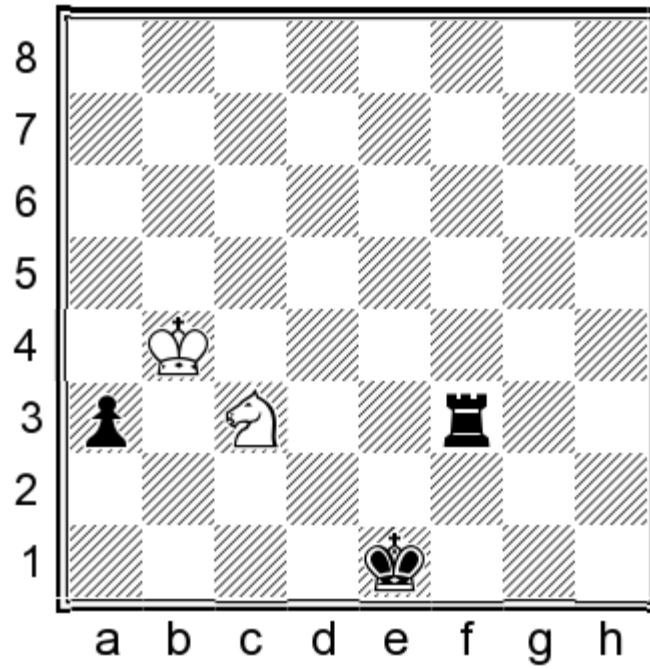
56...♔g2

Avoiding the trap... 56...♔f2? would have been a huge mistake. 57.♘d1+ ♔e2 58.♘xe3 a2 59.♘c2 and the white knight is just in time to stop the a-pawn.

57.♘d5 ♜f3 58.♘c3 ♔f1

The black king finally comes closer.

59.♔c4 ♔e1 60.♔b4



60...♔h3

White can do nothing about ...♕d2 next. The position is hopeless. Carlsen managed to win the Rapid and the Blitz Championship in a very convincing manner anyway, but I guess that Anand was very happy about his win, particularly because of the upcoming World Championship match in November.

0-1

GAME 48

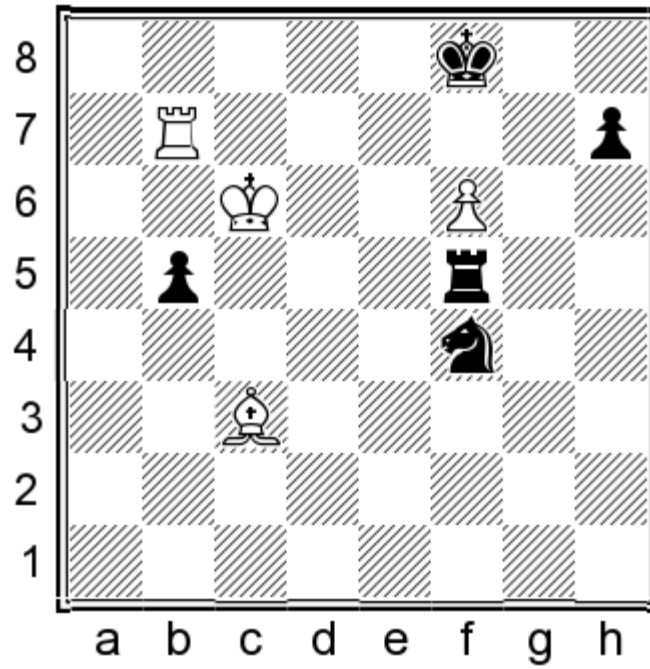
P. Harikrishna (2726)

D. Dvirnyy (2549)

Greek league

30.06.2014

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



The following study-like position was reached. Black's last move was ...♖d5-f5 to avoid the promotion of the pawn after ♕b4 check, followed by f7-f8. Despite being a pawn down, and the limited amount of pieces, White is able to create brilliant threats...

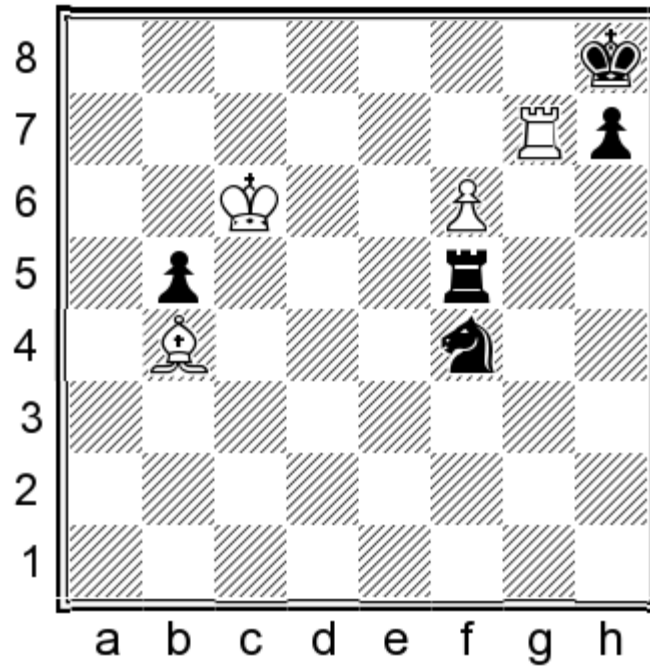
56. ♕b4+! ♔g8

56...♔e8 immediately loses to 57.f7+! ♖xf7 58.♖b8#

57. ♖g7+!

Squeezing the king into the corner, but the key is the next move...

57...♔h8

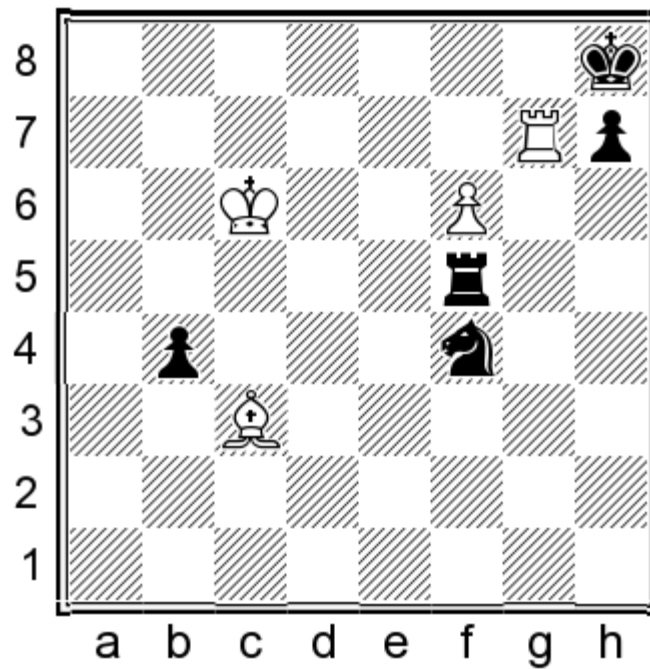


58. ♖c3!

As simple as that! This battery on the a1–h8 diagonal creates beautiful threats... Black has only one move here to survive, which he did not manage to find. I recommend everyone to stop here for a while and try to calculate the lines.

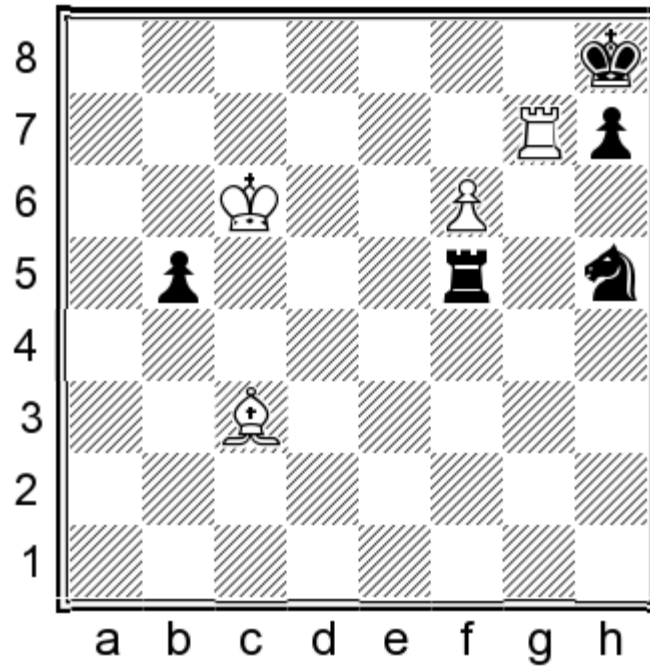
58... ♘e6?

58...b4 is refuted by



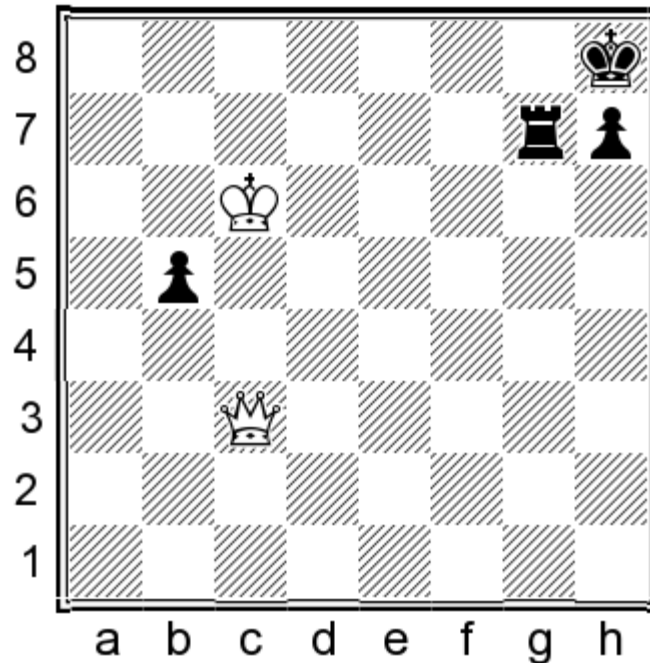
59. f7! bxc3 60. ♖g8#;

58... ♘h5 is the most natural, but White wins after the shocking

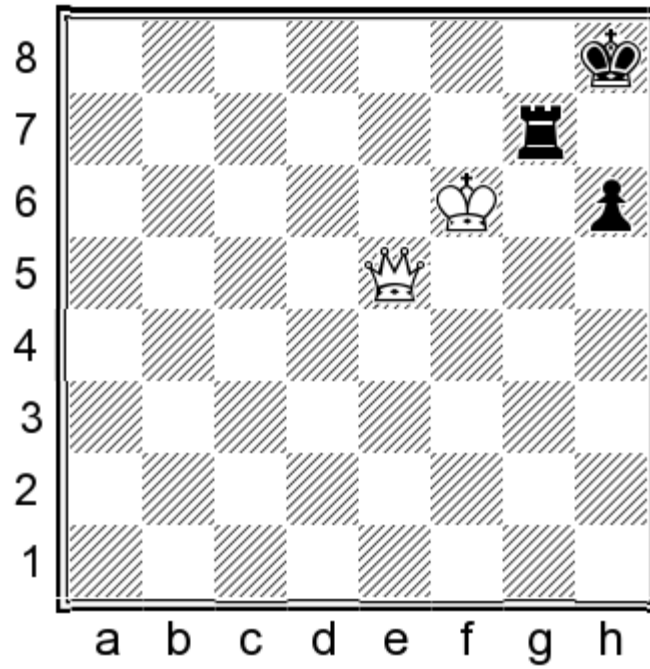


59. Rg5!! Rxf6+ and the trick is that White is not forced to take the rook, but he simply leaves from the check and then both the knight and the rook are going to fall. (59... Rxc3 60. f7+-) 60. Qxb5+-;

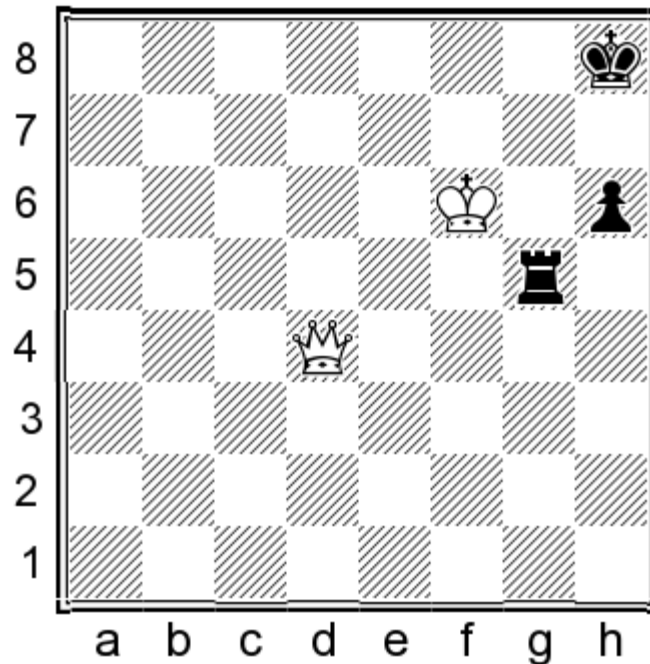
The only defence was 58... Nd5! which leads to an important theoretical endgame after 59. Rg5 (59. f7 now runs into 59... Rxf7!! Another only move! 60. Rxf7+ Qxc3 and Black survives.) 59... Rxc3! Other moves were losing again. (59... Rxf6+ 60. Qxd5+-) 60. f7+ Qxc3 61. f8=Q+ Rg8 62. Qf6+ Rg7 63. Qxc3



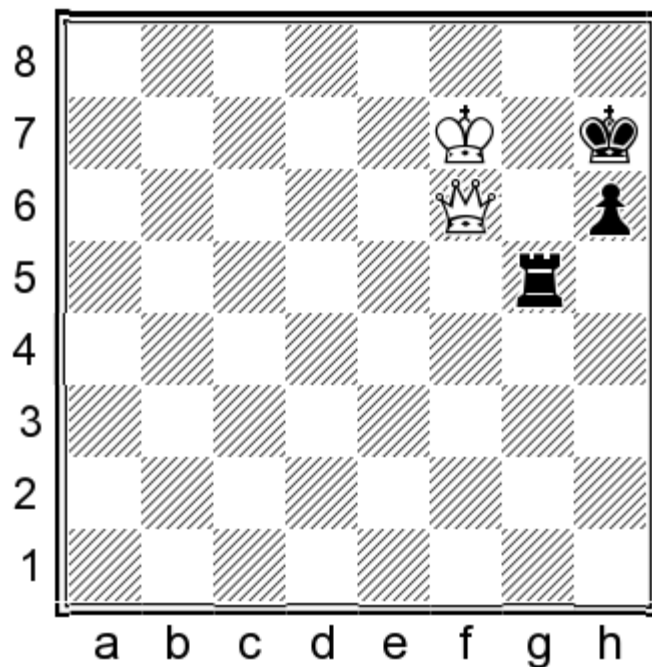
Here we are! This position is a theoretical draw (of course the b-pawn does not matter). Black has to put his pawn on h6. 63... h6 64. Qxb5 Qh7 65. Qc6 It is very important that Black should not let the white king pass the 7th rank and reach the f8-square. If he gives a check, White goes Qd7-e8 and at the end, there will be no check on g7. Therefore the right defence is to wait with the king. 65... Qh8! 66. Qd6 Qh7 67. Qe6 Qh8 68. Qf6 Qh7 69. Qe5 Qh8



This is the maximum that White can reach and now he cannot make progress if Black defends accurately. Let's check some attempts: 70. ♕e8+ ♔h7 71. ♕h5 (71. ♕f8 ♖g6+ 72. ♔f7 ♗g5 and the king will be forced to retreat by checks due to the unfortunate situation of the queen. Actually the f8-square is the only place where the white queen controls both the g7- and the g8-squares, but he still cannot win. He is in a kind of zugzwang: White is forced to retreat with the queen, but then Black sends back the king too with checks...) 71... ♗g5 72. ♕f7+ ♔h8 Actually the position Black must be careful about is the one with the king on f7 and queen on f6, which is winning for White and let's examine the reasons why: 73. ♕e8+ ♔h7 74. ♕e4+ ♔h8 75. ♕d4 (75. ♔f7 is still useless because of the checks: 75... ♗g7+)



Here the only move is: 75... ♗g7!! Avoiding ♔f7! and then continuing with the same policy as before. (Other moves are losing, for instance 75... ♔h7 76. ♔f7 ♗g8 77. ♕f6 ♗g5



This is the winning position for White and the method is very subtle: 78.♔e6!! puts Black in a decisive zugzwang. The rook has 3 protected squares, on g5, g7 and g8, but soon he loses all of them... 78...♖g8 79.♕f5+ ♔h8 80.♕f6+ ♔h7 81.♕e6! Another zugzwang in order to let the white king reach the ideal f8 square! 81...♖g5 82.♔f8+- This is the end, because the black rook is forced to go to a square where it is not protected... 82...♖g7 (82...♖g1 83.♕e4+ ♔h8 84.♕d4+ ♔h7 85.♕xg1+-) 83.♕f5+ ♔h8 84.♕f6+-)

59.♖e7!

White not only threatens to play f7, but also backrank mate on e8.

59...♖c5+ 60.♔d6 ♔g8

60...♖xc3 61.♖e8+ ♔f8 62.♖xf8#

61.♔d2

Black resigned. There was nothing left to do.

1-0

GAME 49

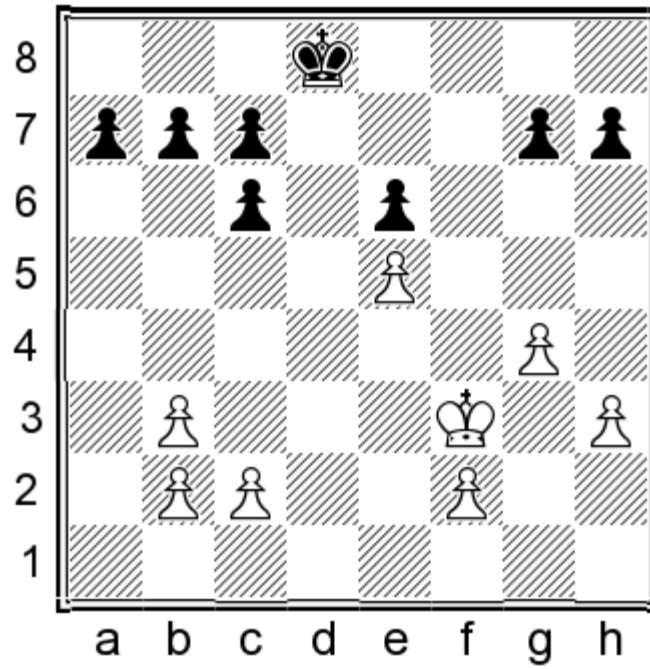
G. Kamsky (2717)

K. Priyadharshan (2433)

World Open

03.07.2014

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



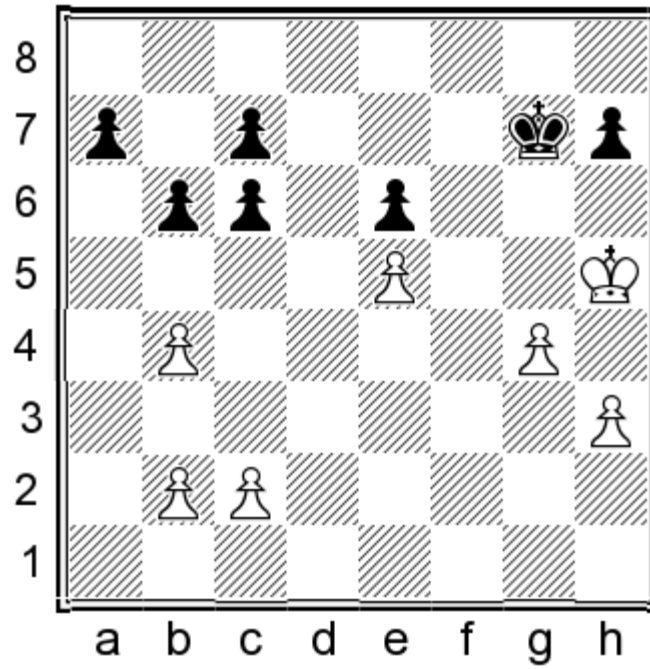
We have reached a typical Berlin pawn endgame. If Black plays for a draw and aims for simplifications at any cost, he might end up in this lost pawn endgame. The point is the following: White has 4 vs 3 pawns on the kingside and he can easily create a passed pawn with f4-f5, while on the other side, Black has 4 vs 3 too, but due to the doubled c-pawns he is unable to create a passed pawn. The only chance for Black is to create a fortress somehow, but as we will see, he is unable to do it successfully. This factor decides the outcome of the game and Kamsky's technique is very instructive.

27.b4!

This is a strong positional move, to fix the black pawns on the queenside. At a later stage, when the time comes to break through on the kingside, all tempi will be very important. White has time to take these prophylactic measures before starting his own plans, because Black cannot do anything anyway.

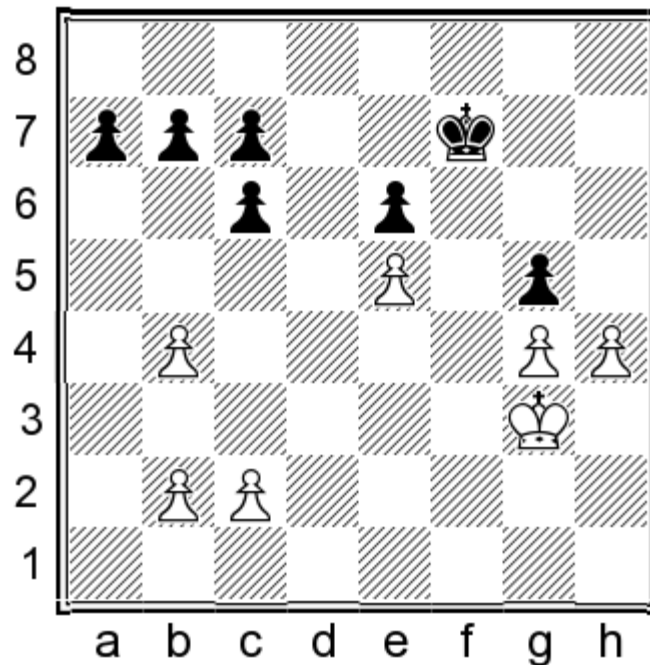
27...♙e7

27...g5 does not prevent White from creating a passed pawn. White would continue with 28.♙g3 ♙e7 29.f4! h6 This is the best chance to try and keep the kingside closed, but White manages to invade with his king anyway... (29...gxf4+ 30.♙xf4 ♙f7 loses easily to 31.♙g5 ♙g7 32.♙h5 b6



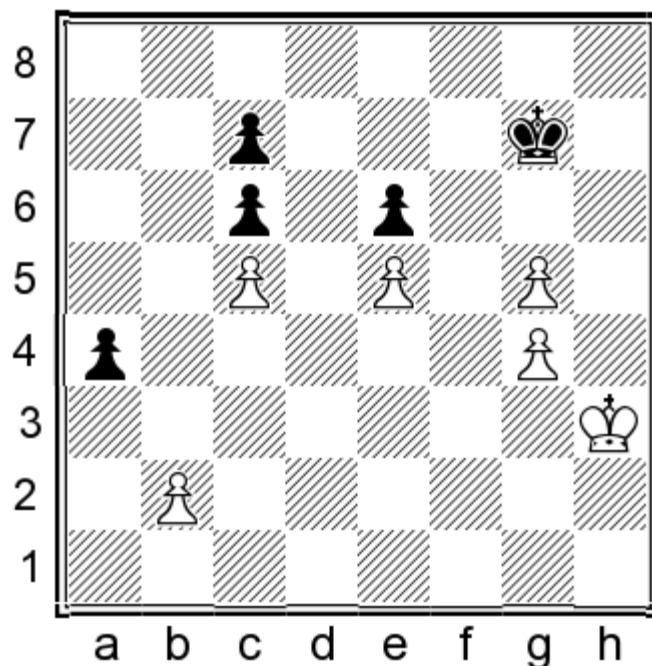
33.g5+- Black soon runs out of tempi, he will be forced to move his king, but then ♔h6 followed by g6 wins, because White gets access to the e6-pawn.)

30.h4 ♔f7 (30...gxf4+ 31. ♔xf4 ♔f7 loses easily again. This time, White does not have ♔g5-h6, but he wins after 32.h5! ♔g7 33.g5 b6 34.gxh6+ ♔xh6 35. ♔g4+- Again with the same method. Black soon finds himself in zugzwang and, when he moves with his king, ♔g5-f6 will decide the game.) 31.fxg5 hxg5

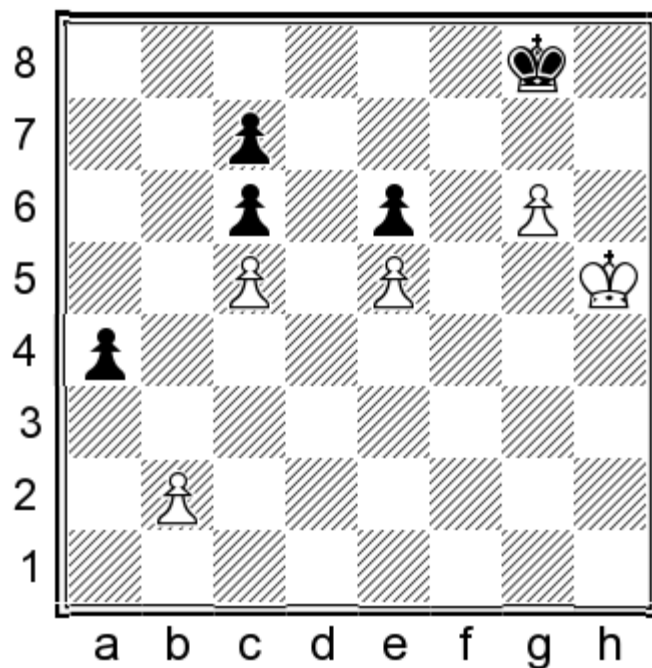


32.hxg5! This looks like a dubious decision at first sight, but actually White must open a route for his own king to invade on the kingside. 32...♔g6 33.♔h4 b6 34.c4 It is time to spend all the tempi on the queenside for both sides and then the 'king manoeuvres with zugzwang' part begins... 34...a5 35.bxa5 bxa5 36.c5 a4 White is the first who gets into zugzwang, otherwise if he could have played ♔h5 and g6, then it would have been over immediately. However, losing one of the g-pawns does not change anything, White wins after 37.♔h3 ♔g7 A tricky attempt to keep a fortress. (37... ♔xg5 38. ♔g3 ♔h6 39. ♔h4 ♔g6 40.g5 ♔f5 Other moves transpose to the 37...♔g7 line. 41. ♔h5 ♔xe5 42.g6

♔f6 43. ♕h6+-)



38.g6! This is the only way to break through. Otherwise Black waits with his king on h7-g7 and when White goes ♕h4, Black replies with ♕g6. 38...♕xg6 39.♕h4 ♕h6 40.g5+ ♕g6 41.♕g4 ♕f7 42.♕h5 ♕g7 43.g6 ♕g8



This is a very important position! We can use this motif in many pawn endgames. White wins by a method known as triangulation, giving the tempo to his opponent... 44.♕h4! Or 44.♕g4 is also good with the same idea. (White should not fall into the trap with 44.♕h6 ♕h8 45.g7+?? when 45...♕g8 46.♕g6 a3 leads to stalemate!) 44...♕h8 (44...♕g7 45.♕g5+- is over as White invades on f6!) 45.♕g4! ♕g8 46.♕h5! The triangulation is complete! Black cannot play ...♕g7 in view of ♕g5 and zugzwang, and after 46...♕h8 47.♕h6! ♕g8 48.g7+- there is no longer a stalemate. Black must play ♕f7, but then ♕h7 wins.

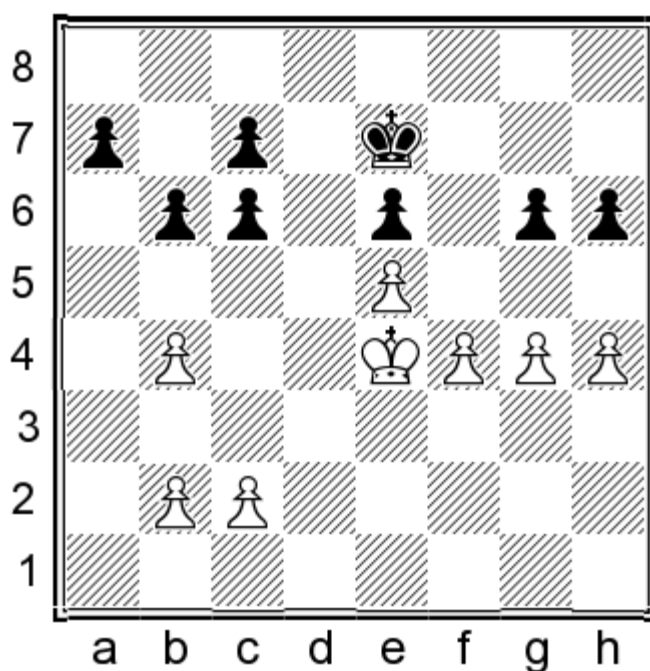
28.h4

Kamsky improves the circumstances before executing his plan of f4-f5.

28...g6

If Black decides to stick to a waiting policy with 28...♔f7 29.♕e4 ♕e7 30.f4 ♔f7 31.f5 ♕e7 32.♕f4 ♔f7 then White wins after 33.♕g5 ♕e7 (33...h6+ creates a hole on g6. 34.♕h5+– Black soon runs out of tempi again and then ♕g6 wins.) 34.h5! ♔f7 35.h6!+– and the king invades.

29.♕e4 h6 30.f4 b6



31.f5!

The time has come for the final break. It is important to mention that White saves all his tempi on the queenside for the later stage of the game, when he needs to put Black into the final zugzwang.

31...g5

This is the only chance to temporarily keep the white king away from the camp, but it does not help either... 31...gxf5+ 32.gxf5 ♔f7 33.fxe6+ ♕xe6 34.h5+– wins easily. Black soon needs to move with this king and then ♕f5 wins. White does not even need his tempi here, because ♕f4-e4 is another way to force Black into zugzwang.

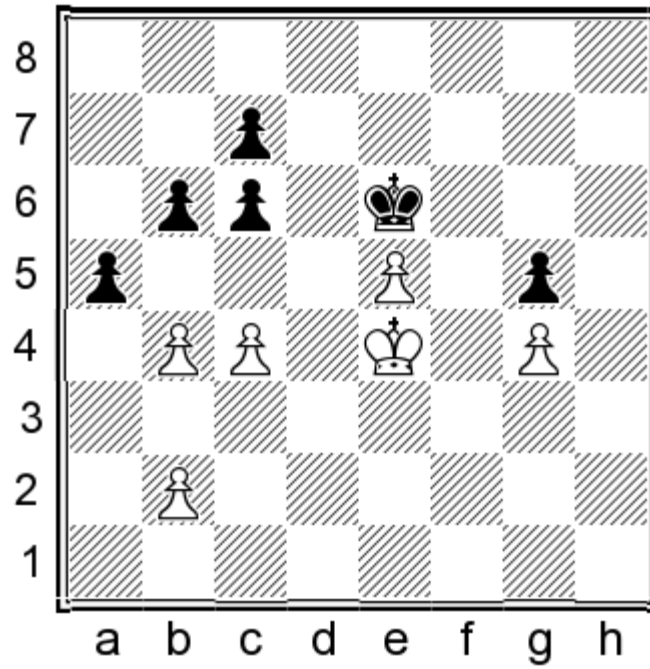
32.hxg5 hxg5 33.fxe6! ♕xe6

This is the moment when perfect calculation is required. White must count how to spend the pawn moves to place Black in zugzwang and let his king invade on f5.

34.c4!

Black loses after all moves:

34...a5



34...a6 is met by 35.c5! bxc5 (35...b5 36.b3+–) 36.bxc5 a5 37.b3+–;

34...c5 35.b5+–;

34...b5 35.c5! a6 36.b3!+– in all lines Black gets into zugzwang and ♔f5 wins next.

35.b5!!

The last accuracy! 35.bxa5 spoils the win, because after 35...bxa5 36.c5 a4 it is White who gets into zugzwang... 37.♔d4 ♔f7=

35...cxb5

35...c5 36.b3+–

36.cxb5 a4

White is in zugzwang again, but the huge difference to the 35.bxa5 line is that White has gained another invasion square for his king, so now he can enter to the black camp through d5!

37.♔d4! ♔e7 38.♔d5 ♔d7 39.e6+ ♔e7 40.♔e5

Black resigned! An instructive endgame and flawless technique from Kamsky!

1–0

GAME 50

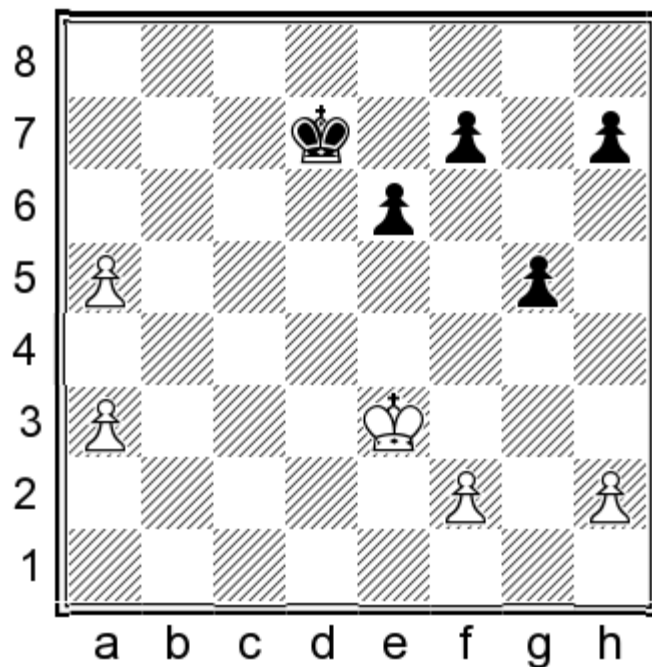
K. Shanava (2563)

A. Ipatov (2614)

Olympiad

04.08.2014

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



We will now examine a study-like pawn endgame. White seems to be completely winning, as he can sacrifice his distant passed pawns to lure the black king away from the kingside, and meanwhile he might collect the pawns one-by-one with his king. However Ipatov finds a brilliant idea to save the game...

48.♔d4 h5!!

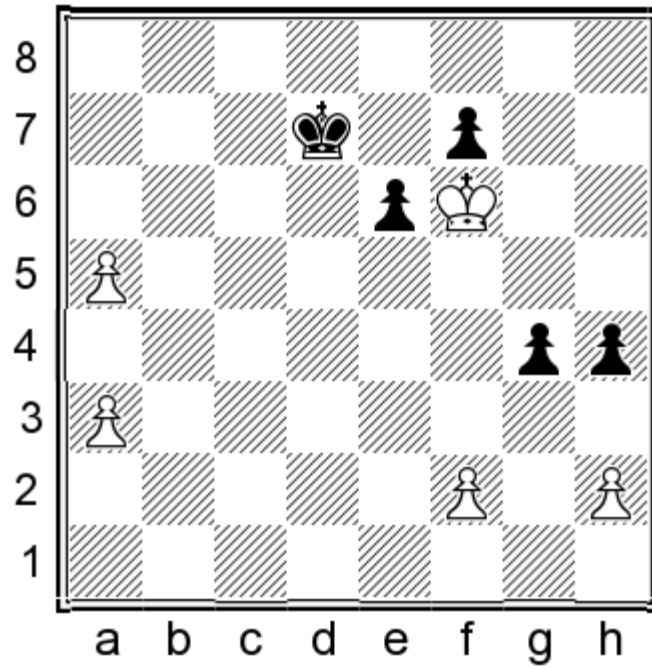
This is the start of a fantastic plan, in which Black needs to find several only moves to hold the draw. Other moves are losing, for instance: 48...♔c6 49.♔e5 ♔b5 50.♔f6 g4 51.♔xf7 ♔xa5 52.♔xe6+- and the black king is too far away. Black cannot block the king's path with 48...♔d6 because of 49.a6! ♔c6 50.♔e5+-;

48...f6 does not help either 49.♔c5 ♔c7 50.a6 g4 51.a7 ♔b7 52.♔d6 e5 53.♔e6 h5 54.♔xf6+- and in comparison to the game, Black is a tempo down and it turns out to be critical.

49.♔e5 h4!!

The only move again! Even if Black finds the right idea, he must execute it in the correct move-order. 49...g4 loses to 50.♔f4! with the threat of ♔g5! 50...f6 51.♔g3! Collecting the h5 pawn first. 51...♔c6 52.♔h4 ♔b5 53.♔xh5 f5 54.♔g5 ♔xa5 55.♔f6+-

50.♔f6 g4!



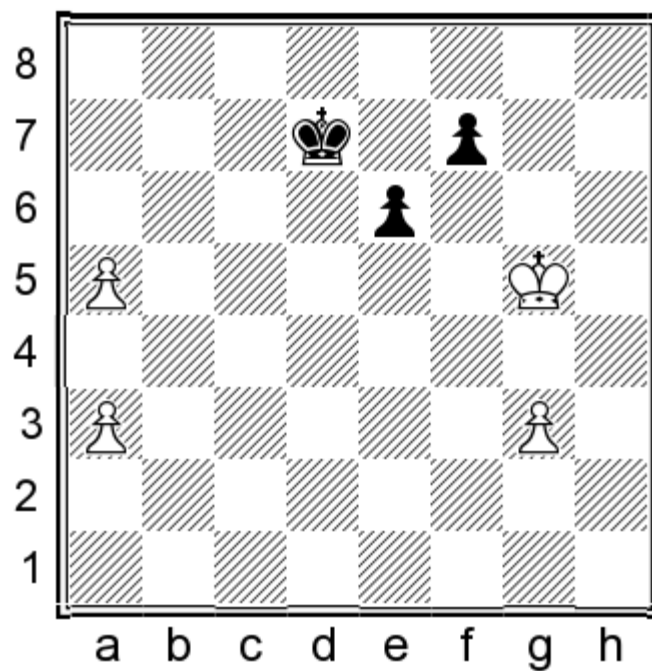
51.♔g5!

White also needs to be careful now. 51.♔xf7?? even loses the game, because Black is able to create a passed pawn with 51...e5! 52.♔f6 e4 53.♔f5 e3 54.fxe3 g3—+

51...g3! 52.fxg3

Of course not 52.hxg3?? h3—+

52...hxg3 53.hxg3



53...e5!

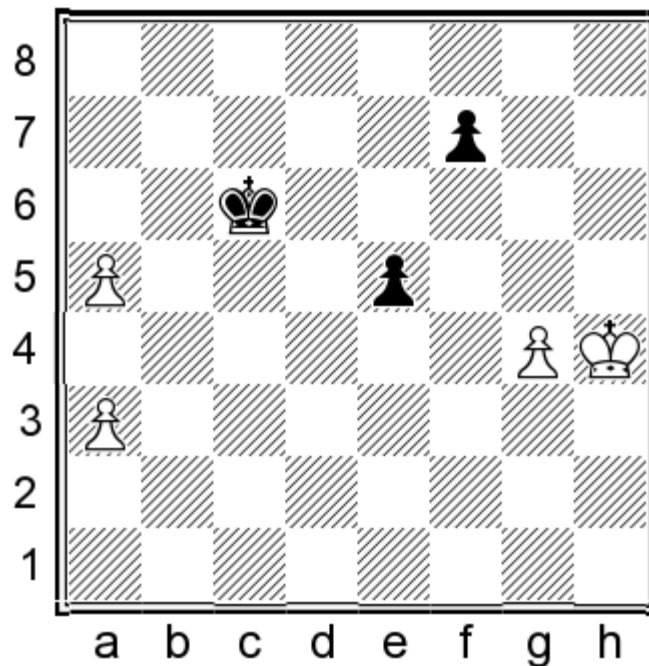
Another very important move! By sacrificing the g-pawn, Black has successfully created a protected passed e-pawn, but it has to be as far advanced as possible. 53...♙c6? loses in view of 54.♙f6 ♙b5 55.g4! ♙xa5 56.g5 ♙b5 and White promotes his pawn faster after 57.♙xf7! e5 58.g6 e4 59.g7 e3 60.g8=♚+– This is the reason why Black should reach the 5th rank with his pawn.

54.g4

54.♙f5 f6= will be the same as the game.

54...♙c6 55.♙h4!?

A last tricky attempt to win the game, but Ipatov continues to defend perfectly. Now in case of 55.♙f5 f6 56.♙xf6 the pawns promote at the same time 56...e4 57.g5 e3 58.g6 e2 59.g7 e1=♚ 60.g8=♚= Black can either give perpetual check or just simply take on a5 when the a3-pawn remains useless. 60...♚xa5



55...f6!

The last accuracy! All the excellent previous moves would have turned out to be useless if Black plays 55...♙b5? as the point of 55.♙h4 was to put the pawn on g5 to avoid Black protecting his e-pawn with f6, so 56.g5! ♙xa5 57.♙g4 ♙a4 58.♙f5+–

56.g5

There was nothing else left to try. Black was ready to collect the a-pawns, so White also has to get rid of the kingside pawns...

56...fxg5+ 57.♙xg5 ♙b5 58.♙f5 ♙xa5 59.♙xe5 ♙a4 60.♙e4 ♙xa3

An awesome resource by Black! We can see, that in pawn endgames (also in other types of endgames) passed pawns are playing a very important role. White seemed to have all the winning chances due to his a-pawns, but Black found

salvation in creating a passed pawn too...

1/2

GAME 51

M. Carlsen (2877)

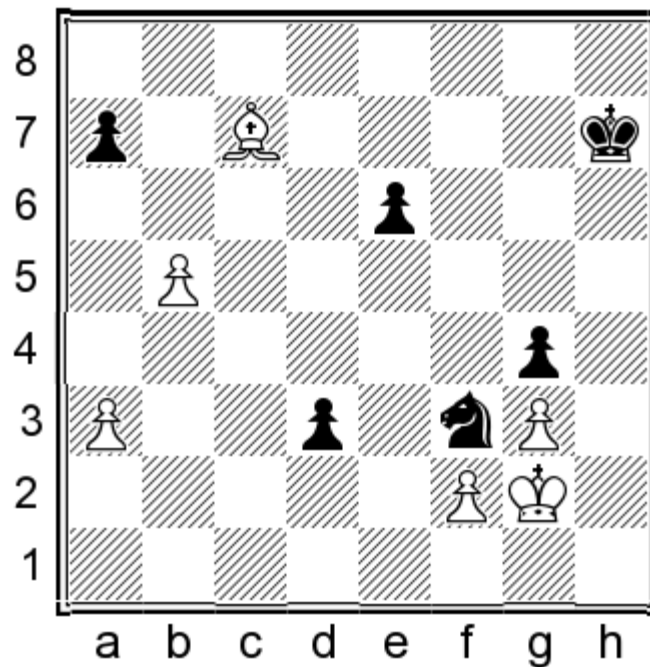
A. Naiditsch (2709)

41st Olympiad Open 2014

Tromsø NOR (7.1)

09.08.2014, [E21]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



It is never easy to annotate your own game and especially such an emotional one as this against the current World Champion, but I will try to stay objective. I didn't play too well in the opening and was quickly a pawn down in a bad endgame, but strangely enough Carlsen started to give me chances, and before the time-trouble we already had a very messy position. With very little time on the clock, my opponent played few "uncontrolled" moves, which finally led to the position we see on the board.

41. ♖f1

There is no other move to stop Black from playing ...d2.

41... ♜d4

The time-trouble phase was over, so I took a fresh look at the position. With the calculations not being too complicated, I could see that I was going to be a pawn up — but it was still hard to judge whether this endgame was winning or drawn?! I was very motivated to give my absolute best as it is not often I have a chance of beating the best chess player in the world...

42. ♖e1

This move is also forced as I wanted to play ...d2.

42... ♜xb5

The white pawns are falling.

43.♖b8

The bishop is attacking the a7-pawn which prevents Black from playing ...e5 now because of a4.

43...♟xa3 44.♗d2

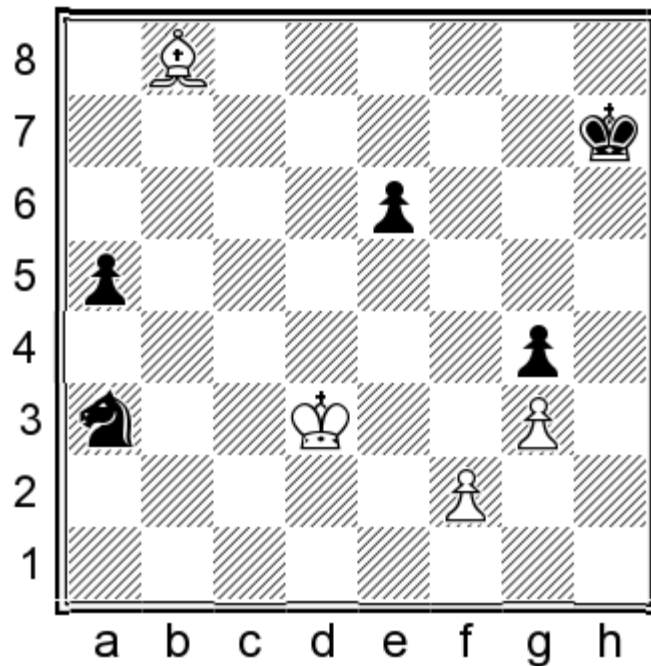
44.♖xa7 was losing to 44...♟c4 and the black king goes to f3.

44...a5

In any case I need to push the a-pawn.

45.♗xd3

So far things have been pretty forced, but now I had a couple of moves to choose from.



45...♗g6!?

The right decision. I don't need to hurry with the ...a4 move, based on the line in the next variation.

46.♗e4

This is White's only chance. 46.♗c3 was losing as after 46...♗f5 we will see why 44...♗g6!? was the right decision: 47.♗b3 It seems like White has caught the black knight, but... 47...♟b5 48.♗c4 and now comes the very important 48...a4! 49.♗xb5 a3 The white bishop from b8 can't stop the a-pawn. 50.♖a7 e5 and Black is winning.

46...a4

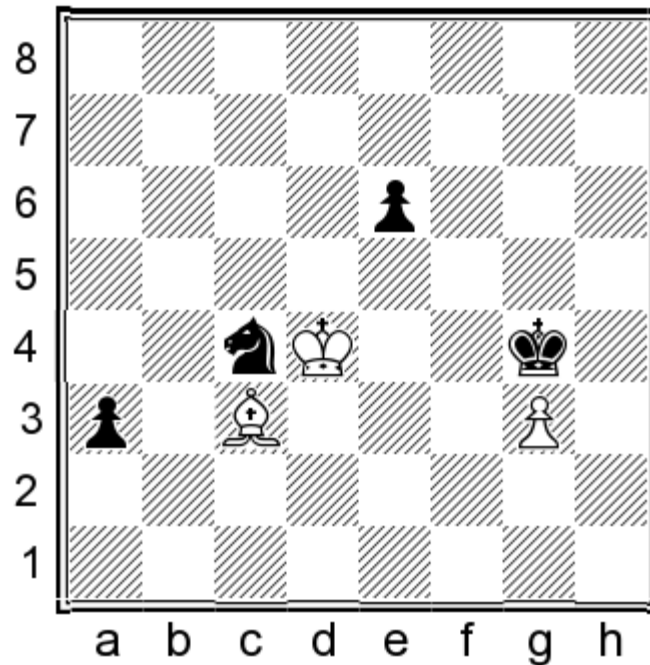
Of course my idea should be to push the a-pawn as far as possible.

47.♖e5 ♟c4 48.♖c3 a3

It is still not so clear if this position is a winning one or not, because so little material is left on the board.

49.♔f4

If 49.♔d4 ♖b6 (49... ♖b2 was another possible option.) 50.♔e5 ♖d5 51.♔d4 ♔f7 Black should be winning because White does not have the option of playing ♔f4. Maybe the best chance for White was 49.f3!? gxf3 50.♔xf3 and now Black needs to choose the right square: 50...♔f5! (50... ♔g5 just leads to a draw: 51.♔e4 ♔g4 52.♔d4



52... ♖b2 53.♔e5 ♔xg3 54.♔xe6 ♔f3 55.♔d5 ♔e3 56.♔c5 ♔d3 and White is just in time with 57.♔b4) 51.♔e2 (Now 51.g4+ was already working: 51...♔g5 52.♔e4 ♔xg4 53.♔d4 ♖b2 54.♔e5 ♔f3 55.♔xe6 ♔e4 and as we can see White is missing the important tempo from the line above.) 51...♖b2 and it seems like Black's winning chances are good here.

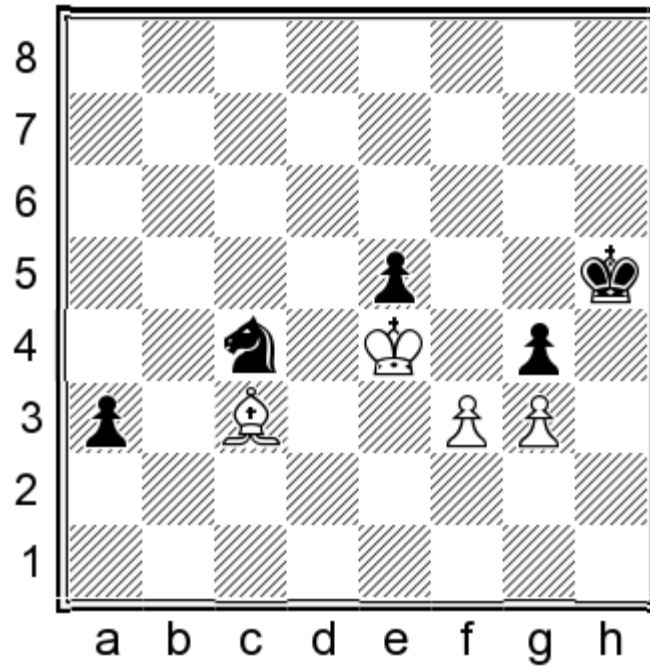
49...♔h5

Of course I need to hold on to the g4-pawn.

50.f3 e5+!

This move was not very hard to find, but it's still a very important one. I need control over the g5-square.

51.♔e4



51...♞d6+ 52.♔e3

And here comes the key move:

52...♔g5

Now I already want to play ...exf3 and ...e4 when White does not have the ♔f4 move anymore because my king is on g5.

53.fxg4

Of course not 53.♙xe5?? ♞c4+

53...e4

53...♔xg4 was also possible.

54.♔d2 ♞b5

I wanted to be sure to have the ...e3 move in the future, in case the white king tried to go to b3, which is why I decided to chase away the bishop from c3 first.

55.♙e5 ♔xg4

♔f3 is the threat.

56.♔e3 ♔f5 57.♙a1 ♞d6

and I am back again with the knight to d6. Next move is ...♔g4.

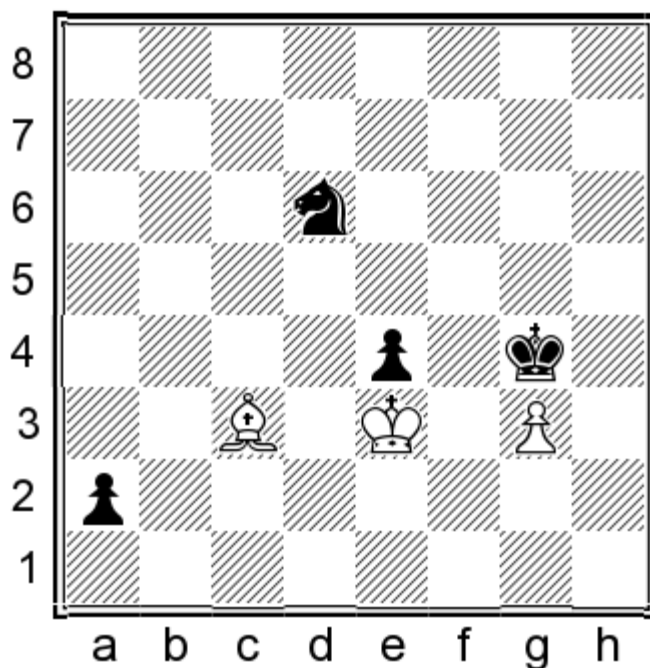
58.♔d2 ♔g4 59.♔e3

Of course I can't take on g3 immediately, so I improve my position even more.

59...a2

The g3-pawn is falls next.

60.♖c3



60.♖f2 ♖c4 does not help White at all.

60...♙xg3

The g3-pawn is gone, so my next plan is to bring the king back to f5 and to play ...♖c4.

61.♖a1 ♙g4 62.♙d2

Everything else is losing as well.

62...♙f3

At the moment of the handshake I understood that I had won a game with Black against the strongest opponent I have ever played before. My team also won by the smallest margin of 2.5–1.5. A moment of happiness! :)

0–1

GAME 52

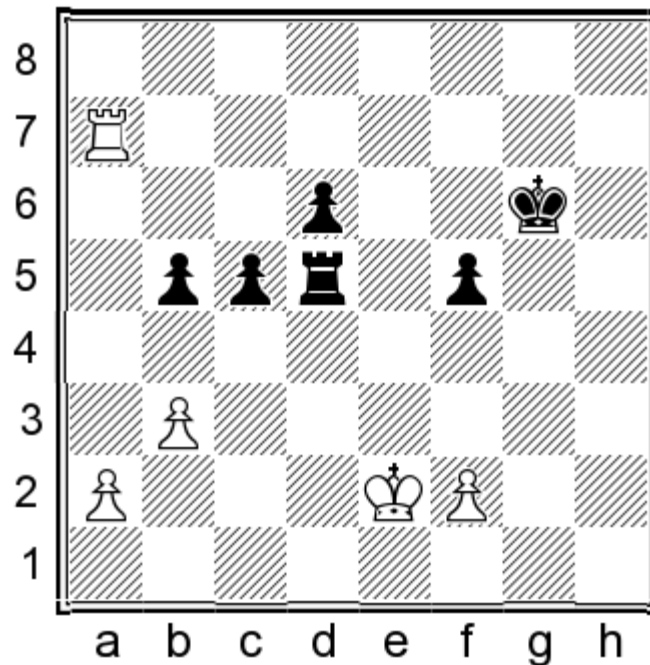
H. Nakamura (2787)

V. Topalov (2772)

2nd Sinquefeld Cup 2014

Saint Louis USA (8.3)

04.09.2014, [C67]



Nakamura was having a horrible tournament in his home country and this game was no exception. After the opening Nakamura quickly got a worse position in the Berlin, then things got worse, and worse still, and finally he found himself in this very bad-looking rook endgame. During the following moves we will witness great technique from Topalov and a good example of how to convert such positions.

45...b4!

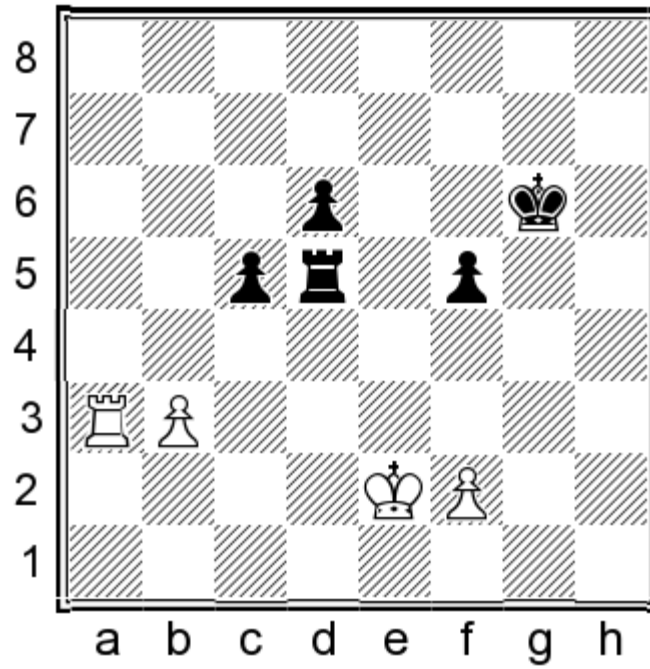
A great positional decision. Black had couple of choices, but 45...b4! looks just great. It is clear that White will have to play a3 at some point and Black has prepared a very nice future winning plan.

46.a4 bxa3

The simplest.

47.♞xa3

and here comes the winning move:



47...Re5+!

Perfectly played by Black. Now the white king has to choose whether to stay on the kingside or to protect the queenside.

48.♔d3

Queenside it is... To stay on the kingside would lead to the same result as in the game: 48.♔f3 ♔f6! now the black king will slowly come closer to the b-pawn and White can't do anything about it. The position is totally lost and the white king is nicely cut off on the e-file.

48...♔g5

The black king goes for the f -pawn.

49.Re6

White tries to disturb Black by attacking the weakest pawn on d6, but of course it does not really help to save the game.

49...Re1

The simplest. First Black forces the white king to go back to d2

50.♔d2

and only now does he defend the d6-pawn.

50...Re6

Black is now ready to proceed with his king and White can do nothing about it.

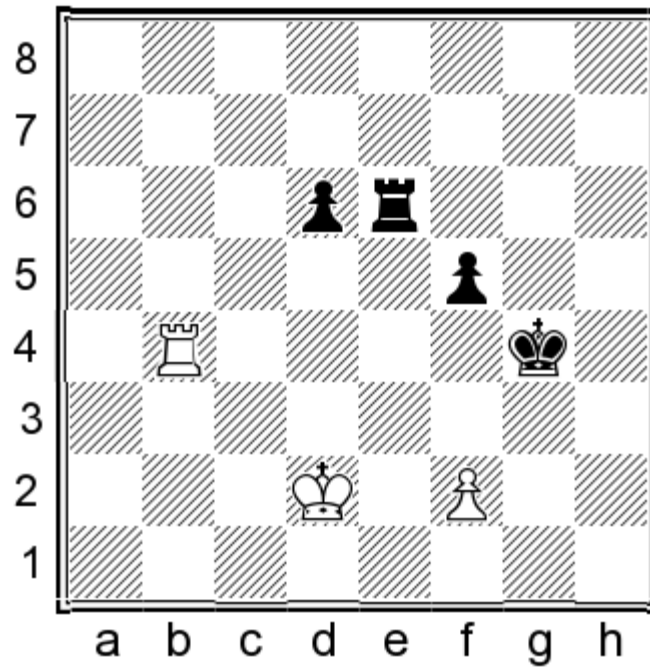
51.♖b6

Nakamura decides to at least exchange a pawn to have some theoretical chances of drawing the position.

51...♔g4 52.b4 cxb4

There is no reason even to think about any other moves, Black is easily winning here.

53.♖xb4+



53...♔f3

As we can see, it is only a matter of time until the f2-pawn falls, and to get a drawn position the white king needs to be situated on the “short side”, so on h2, which is simply impossible because he is cut off along the e-file.

54.♔d1 f4 55.♖d4

White waits for Black to win the game.

55...♖e4

The d6-pawn is no longer important.

56.♖d2 d5

Of course 56...♔g2 would win the game as well...

57.♖a2 ♔g2

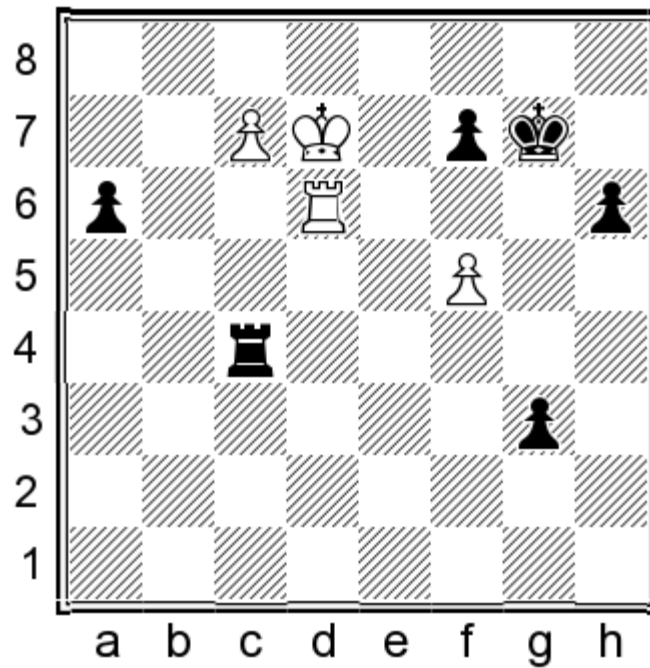
followed by ...f3, ...♔f1 and ...♖e2. We just witnessed perfect technique by Black and a few easy-looking, but not that easy to play, positional decisions which we should remember for our own games!

GAME 53**B. Gelfand (2748)****R. Kasimdzhanov (2706)**

Baku GP

09.10.2014

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



This study-like endgame was reached after 6 hours of play and both players were exhausted and low on time. White is winning, but to find the solution is basically impossible for a human mind, especially under such circumstances.

51.♖d3?

The most natural move, to catch the passed pawn, but it leads to draw in a forced line. The winning line starts with 51.f6+! ♔h7

(51...♔g6? is a blunder because the king moves into a tactical motif after 52.♖c6! ♖xc6

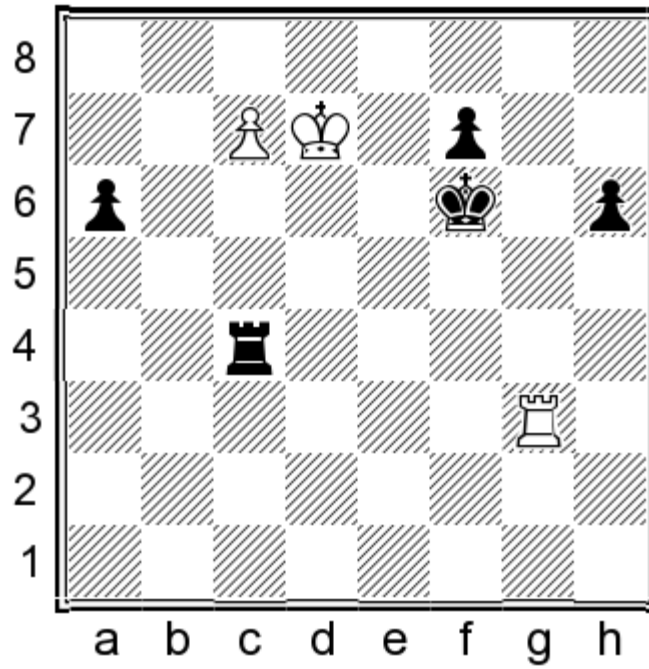
(52...♖d4+ 53.♔e7 ♖e4+ 54.♔f8+- and the king finds a safe shelter against the checks.)

53.♔xc6 g2 54.c8=♖ g1=♖ 55.♖g8+! this move points out the drawback of ...♔g6?)

52.♖d3!

(52.c8=♖ leads to the same draw as the game and the 51.c8=♖ line: 52...♖xc8 53.♔xc8 ♔g6 54.♔d7 g2 55.♖d1 ♔xf6 56.♖g1 h5 57.♖xg2 ♔f5=)

52...♔g6 53.♖xg3+ ♔xf6



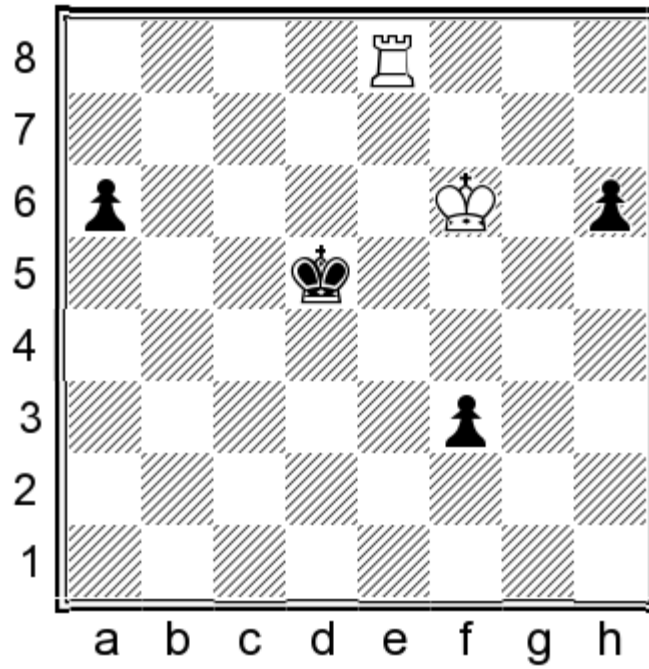
54.♖g8!! This is a move that only computers can find! Actually with the tempi we will reach the same situation if we promote the pawn at once and play ♔d7 or after ♖g8 and take back with the rook on c8. The only difference is the placement of the rook and it turns out that this one is winning, while c8=♖ is a draw.

(54.c8=♖ leads to the usual draw after 54...♖xc8 55.♔xc8 h5 56.♔d7 ♔f5)

54...♔e5

a) 54...h5 55.c8=♖ ♖xc8 56.♖xc8 ♔f5 (56...h4 57.♔d6 ♔f5 is a transposition.) 57.♔d6 h4 58.♖h8 ♔g4 59.♔e5 h3 60.♔e4 ♔g3 61.♔e3 White has an extra tempo in comparison to the game and it turns out to be decisive... 61...♔g2 62.♔e2 h2 63.♖g8+ Black cannot play ...♔f1, which would be obligatory to save the game. 63...♔h3 (63...♔h1 is another standard way to hold with the defensive side. White is forced to leave the g-file with the rook to avoid stalemate, but then ...♔g2 forces a repetition. However, the extra pawns of Black are preventing the stalemate and White wins by simply mating the king with 64.♔f2 f5 65.♖e8 and ♖e1.) 64.♔f2+– and ♖h8 wins the queen.

b) 54...♖d4+ makes no sense, because the rook is too close to the pawn and White can play 55.♔c6 ♖c4+ 56.♔d6 ♖d4+ 57.♔c5 when Black has no check on the c-file. With the rook on the 3rd rank, the story would be different. 55.♖e8+!! Another computer move! It seemingly just drives the king to a better place to support one of his pawns, but things are otherwise... Black faces a difficult choice of which one of his pawn he should support... (The most obvious 55.c8=♖ leads to a draw after 55...♖xc8 56.♖xc8 f5! 57.♖e8+ (White is not in time to catch the f-pawn with 57.♖c5+ ♔e4 58.♔e6 f4 The black king blocks the shortest way to the pawn and going around with the king takes too much time... 59.♖c4+ ♔e3 60.♔f5 f3 61.♔g4 f2 62.♖f4 ♔e2= and White is just too late to play ♔g2.) 57...♔d5! It is very important to keep the white king away as long as possible. 58.♔e7 (58.♖f8 ♔e4 59.♔e6 f4 Another very unlucky situation for White. With the black pawn on h7, he could win with ♔f6, f3, ♔g5 ♔e3, ♔g4, f2 and ♔g3! But the lucky placement of the h-pawn saves Black!) 58...f4 59.♔f6 f3



60.♖e3! White has successfully stopped the f-pawn, but his king has drifted too far away from the a-pawn. Black starts to advance his other passer... 60...f2 61.♖f3 a5 62.♖xf2 ♔c4 63.♔e5 a4 The plan is easy, ...a3, ...♔b3 and ...a2. The black king stands perfectly again and blocks the path of the other king back to the corner. 64.♖f3 ♔b4 65.♔d4 a3 66.♖f6 a2 67.♖a6 ♔b3 68.♔d3 ♔b2 and we have reached exactly the same draw as in the game, but the position is mirrored! Amazing! 69.♖b6+ ♔c1 70.♖xh6 a1=♚ 71.♖h1+ ♔b2 72.♖xa1 ♔xa1=) 55...♔d4 (55... ♔f4 56.c8=♚ ♖xc8 57.♖xc8 h5 58.♖h8 ♔g4 59.♔d6+- transposes to the 54...h5 line.) 56.♖f8! Well, it is getting totally 'unhuman'. It seems like White never wants to promote his pawn...but this is the only winning move again. 56...a5 57.♖xf7 White threatens ♖f4! 57...♔c3 Black must advance to his a-pawn, but this move blocks the rook's way and White suddenly wins after 58.♖f4! ♖xf4 (58...♖xc7+ 59.♔xc7 ♔b3 60.♔b6 a4 61.♔b5 a3 62.♖f3+ ♔b2 63.♔b4 a2 64.♖f2+ ♔b1 65.♔b3+-) 59.c8=♚++-

The rest still requires some technique, but it should already be easier than what we had before. 51.♖c6? is wrong in view of 51...♖xc6! 52.♔xc6 g2;

51.c8=♚ leads to the game after 51...♖xc8 52.♔xc8 g2 53.♖d1 ♔f6 54.♖g1 ♔xf5 55.♖xg2 h5 56.♔d7 h4 57.♔d6 ♔f4!= and ...h3 next with a draw. But not 57...h3 because 58.♖g3 wins the h-pawn.

51.♖d3? ♔f6 52.♖xg3 ♔xf5

Black sacrifices his rook for the c-pawn and promotes his h-pawn with the help of his king.

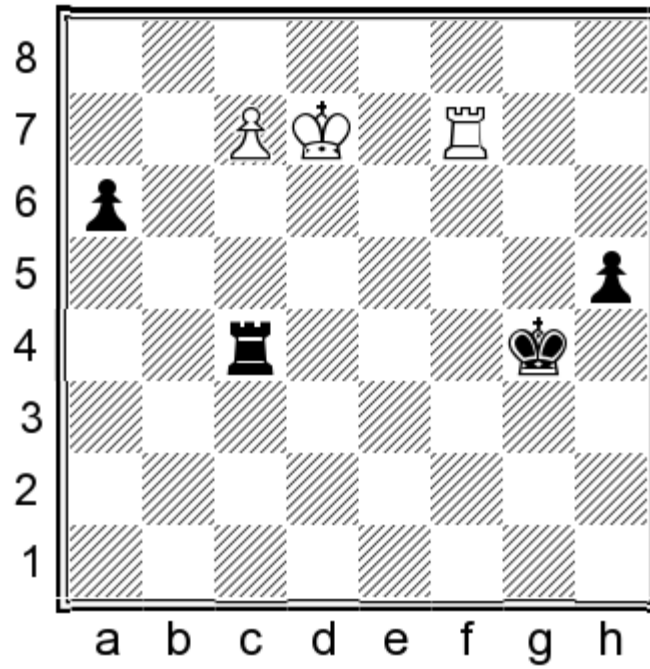
53.♖f3+

53.c8=♚ ♖xc8 54.♔xc8 h5 55.♔d7 h4 and the same draw as in the game is inevitable.

53...♔g4!

Of course, the f-pawn does not count now. Black needs to keep his focus on the h-pawn.

54.♖xf7 h5



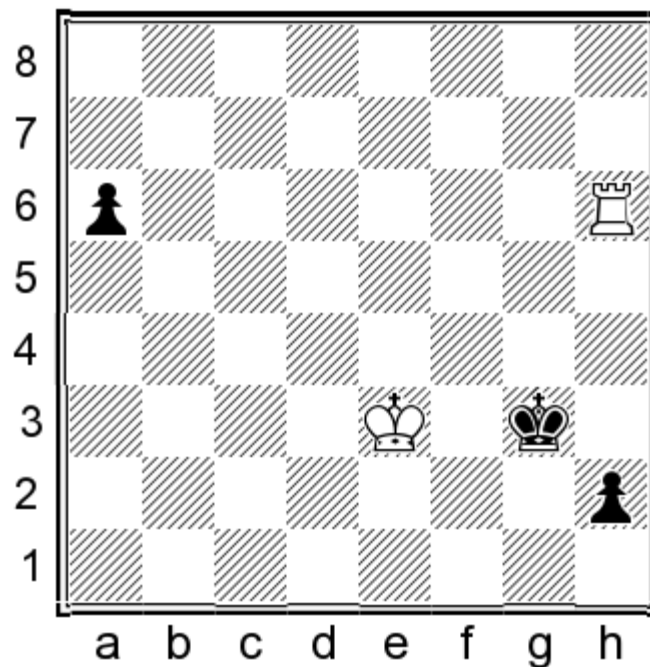
55. ♖g7+!

Unfortunately for White the game is drawn, but Gelfand shows us the best technique to play for the win. White gets behind the h-pawn with his rook with tempo.

55... ♔f3 56. ♖h7 ♔g4 57. ♖h6!

The best try again! White is threatening to play ♖c6, and from the checks the king heads to g7. Therefore Black is forced to take on c7 and in this way the white king is closer to catching the h-pawn.

57... ♖xc7+! 58. ♔xc7 h4 59. ♔d6 h3 60. ♔e5 ♔g3 61. ♔e4 h2 62. ♔e3



62...♔g2!

This is an important theoretical draw (the a-pawn does not count now).

63.♞g6+ ♔f1!

And the game is drawn as ♞h6 is met by ...♔g2. Gelfand decides to finish the game in style. But not 63...♔h3? because of 64.♔f2! and ♞h6 wins the promoted queen.

64.♞xa6 h1=♚ 65.♞a1+ ♔g2 66.♞xh1 ♔xh1 67.♔e4 1/2

GAME 54

D. Andreikin (2722)

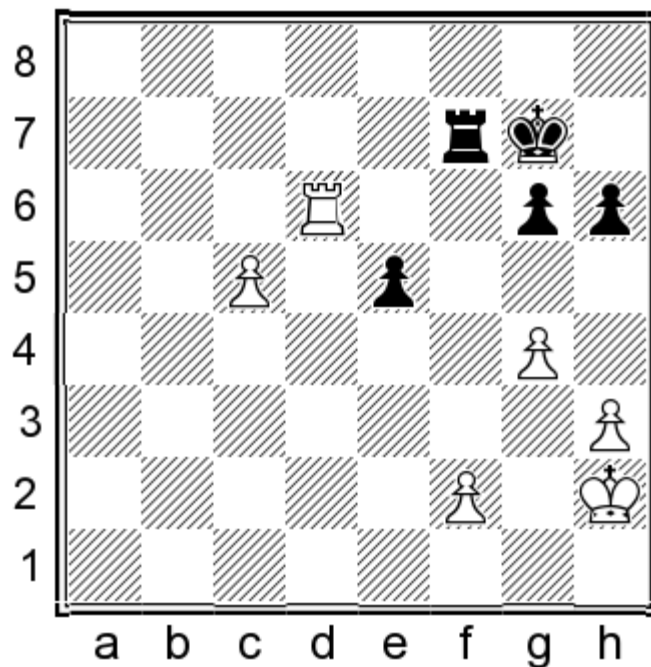
F. Caruana (2844)

Baku FIDE Grand Prix 2014

Baku AZE (7)

09.10.2014, [B01]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



As we can easily see, White finds himself in a rook endgame a clear pawn up and with his rook on d6 perfectly placed. Andreikin is so close to managing something which seemed impossible during the previous 5 months: to defeat Caruana! The game began with 1.e4 d5, White managed to keep the overall advantage and shortly before the time-control, taking advantage of Black's inaccurate play, White won a healthy pawn.

49.♔g2

The pawn has to be protected, but White also had another option: the logical 49.♞d2 with the idea of putting the rook behind the pawn, which is usually good. 49...♞c7 50.♞c2 ♔f6 51.♔g3 ♔e6 would lead to an endgame where White needs to calculate accurately whether the position is winning or not, because the black king comes to d5. So Andreikin makes the practical decision in the game not to enter these complications.

49.♔g2 ♖f4!

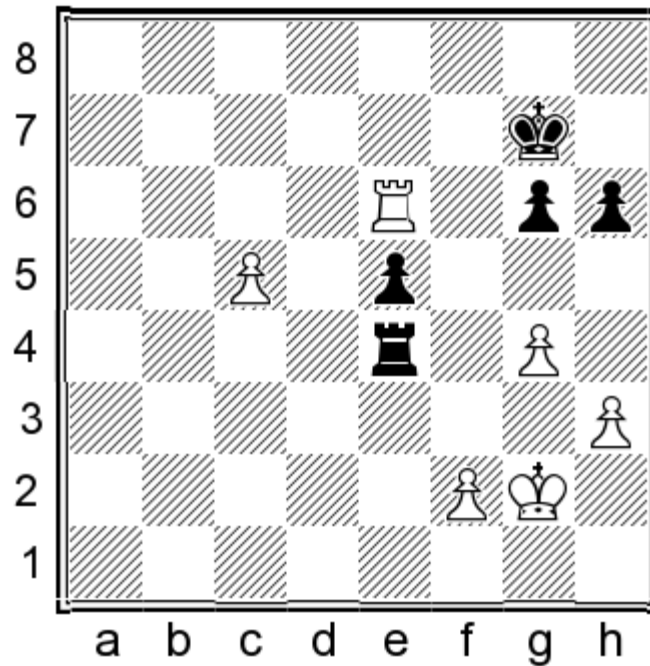
Black tries his best chance, and this is to get the rook behind the c-pawn. In case of passive play by Black, the white king will slowly come to e3 and then e4, after which the game would be over.

50.♞e6

White is winning a second pawn on e5, but probably a different move would have led to an easier win... 50.c6 looks easier. 50...♞c4 51.♔f3 Now the white king needs to get to d3. 51...g5 52.♔e3 e4 Black is trying to create a fortress, but of course it doesn't work because of 53.f3! and White's position is totally winning.

50...♞e4

Before giving up the e5-pawn, Caruana wants White to weaken the second rank.



51.f3

51.♔f3 ♞e1 and it is not so easy for White to cross the e-file with his king.

51...♞e2+ 52.♔f1

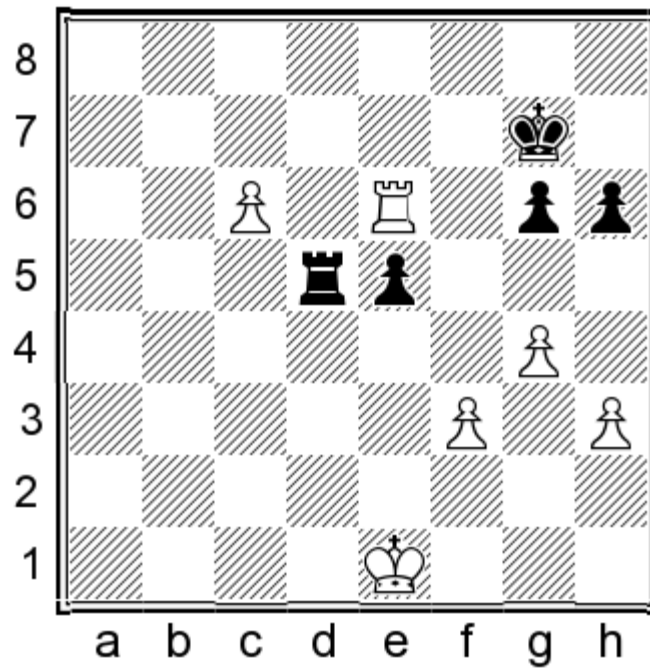
So the e5-pawn is lost, but now the white king is very badly placed on f1. Of course not 52.♔g3? ♔f7, followed by ...♞c2 next and Black has very realistic drawing chances.

52...♞d2

A strange-looking move, but maybe Black's best chance. After 52...♞c2 53.c6 ♔f7 54.♞d6 Black just can't do anything about White playing ♔e1–♔d1.

53.♞xe5

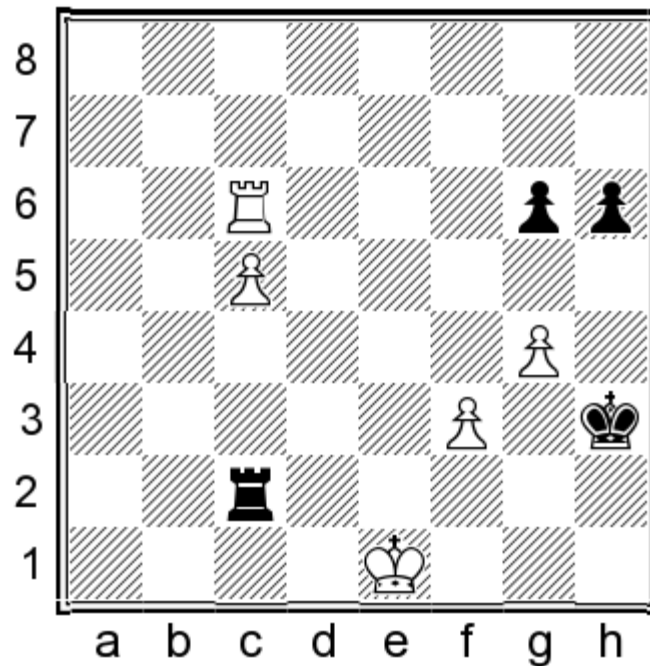
Black's idea would come true after 53.♔e1? ♞d5 54.c6



54...♔f7! and the white rook is sort of trapped on e6. 55.c7 ♖c5 56.♞xe5 ♞xc7 with a drawn position.

53...♔f6

This allows White to finally put his rook behind the c-pawn. 53...♞c2 might give Black slightly more practical chances. Now White has a lot of different options, but let's check the most logical one: 54.♞e7+ ♔f6 55.♞c7 White's idea is to play ♞c8, c7 and the push the f-pawn until f6. Of course this all just happens if Black plays his king to g7 and keeps on waiting, so he needs to act quickly. 55...♔g5 56.♔e1 The white king is close to d1. 56...♔h4 57.♞c6 ♔xh3

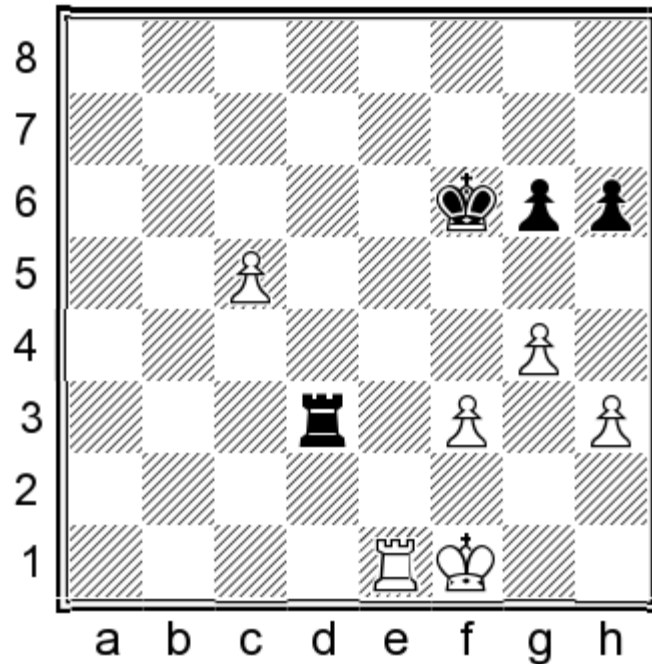


58.♔d1 is the most accurate. 58...♞c3 59.♞xg6 and White is still winning.

54.♞e2!

Exactly! The white rook is going to be perfectly placed on the c-file.

54...♖d1+ 55.♗e1 ♖d3



56.♖c1!

White should not care about the f3-pawn, as the c-pawn will guarantee him a winning pawn endgame.

56...♖xf3+ 57.♕e2

The black rook needs to hurry back to c8 now.

57...♖a3 58.c6 ♖a8 59.c7 ♖c8

All White needs to do now is to bring his king to the center.

60.♖c5

Of course 60.♔e3 ♔e5 61.♖c5+ ♔d6 62.♔d4 would win as well.

60...♔e6 61.♔d3 h5

Black can't take the c7-pawn because of the winning pawn endgame for White, and the rook can't move from c8, so the position is totally lost.

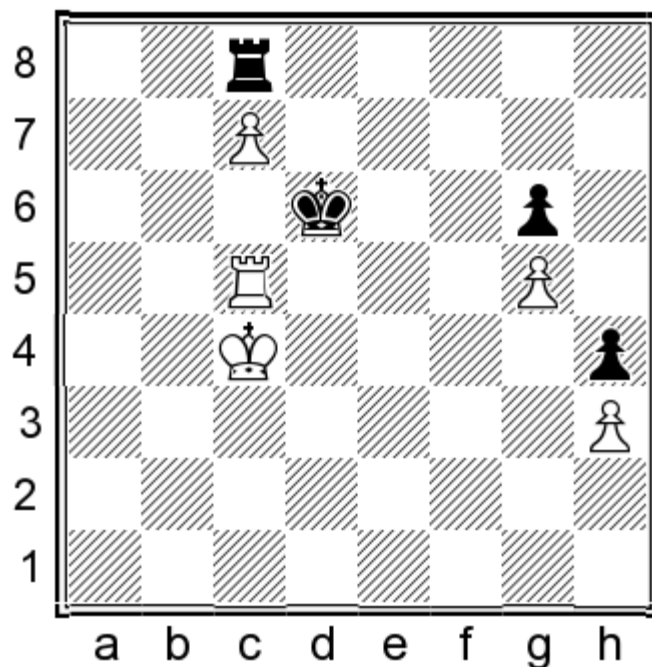
62.g5

Naturally White does not exchange the pawns.

62...♔d6 63.♔c4

The white king heads to b6.

63...h4



64.♔b5

and Black resigned because the pawn endgame after 64...♖xc7 65.♖xc7 ♔xc7 66.♔c5 ♔d7 67.♔d5 ♔e7 68.♔e5 ♔f7 69.♔d6 is totally winning for White. A great victory by Andreikin in a game where not many would have guessed the outcome with the right result.

1–0

GAME 55

S. Mamedyarov (2764)

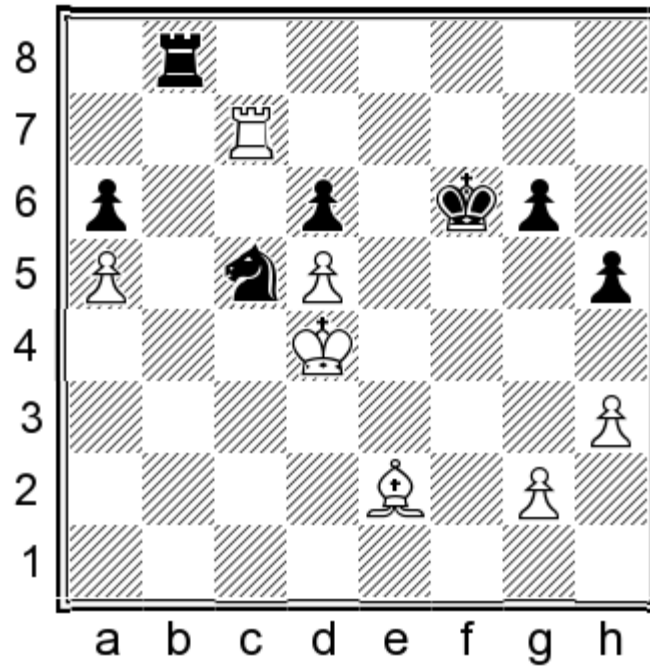
B. Gelfand (2748)

Tashkent FIDE GP

Tashkent UZB (3)

23.10.2014, [E60]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



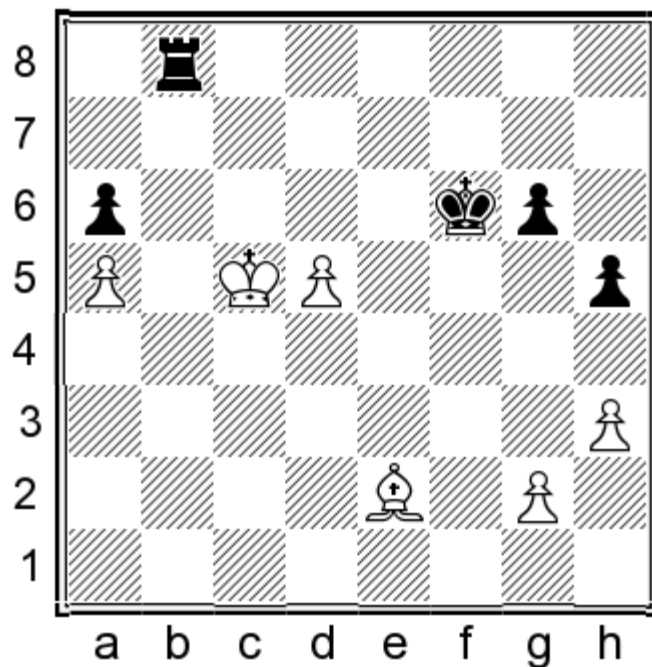
White was pushing all game long and somewhere around move 30 it looked like the win was not too far away for Mamedyarov, but with great defence Gelfand managed to achieve this difficult endgame, which still holds quite some chances of a draw.

42. ♖xc5!

An excellent try and probably the only real hope for White to win this endgame. A move like 42. ♖c6 doesn't lead to anything after 42... ♔e7 and of course the game would just immediately end in a draw after 43. ♕xa6 ♖a8 since Black is winning back the a5-pawn.

42. ♖xc5! dxc5+ 43. ♔xc5

We now have a very interesting position. Black is an exchange up, but it is clear that only White is playing for the win here. The a6-pawn is going to fall and the white d- and a-pawns are going to be very dangerous. Still, a rook is a very strong piece in an endgame and this gives Black good chances to save the game.



43...Rc8+!

A strong move! The white king needs to be removed from the c-file to make it possible for the black king to come to the d6-square.

44.♔b6

Now Black has two options.

44...♙e5

This is one of two correct moves. Another option for Black was the strange-looking 44...♞d8!? and it is funny, but there is no win for White. 45.♙xa6 (45.♙c4 ♞d6+ and the a6-pawn is saved.) 45...♞d6+! is the only move that holds the draw. 46.♔b7 ♞xd5 Now we see why ♞d6+ was so important (because the a5-pawn is hanging now). 47.♔b6 ♞d6+ and the position is just a draw.

45.♙xa6 ♞c2!

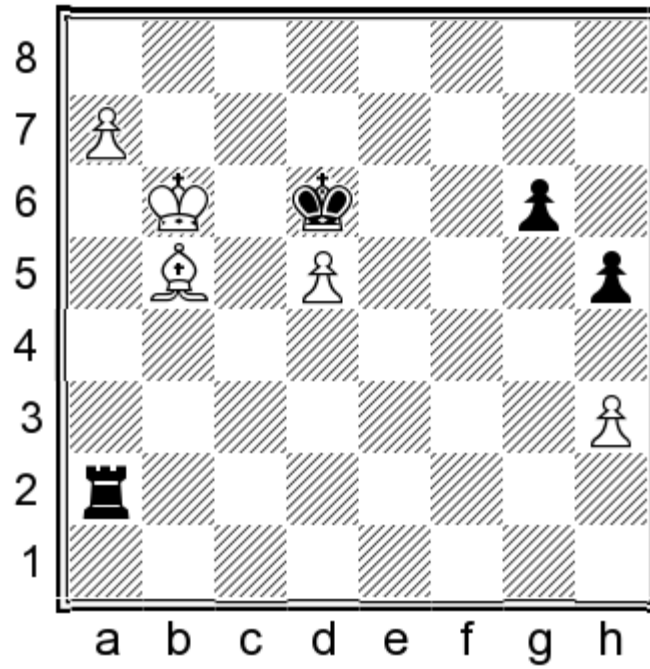
Gelfand defends perfectly. It is very important for Black to attack the g2-pawn.

46.♙f1

Protecting the g2-pawn and at the same time threatening to play a6-a7-♙a6.

46...♞f2?!

This is a slightly strange decision, even if not a mistake. Black could have drawn much more easily after 46...♔d6! The black king is back to help the rook to stop the a-pawn. 47.a6 ♞b2+! A very important check, forcing the white bishop to leave its protection of the g2-pawn. 48.♙b5 ♞xg2 49.a7 ♞a2



50.♔b7 ♚xa7+ 51.♔xa7 ♕xd5 and all Black needs to do now to reach a draw is to go to h8 with the king.

47.♕c4 ♚xg2?

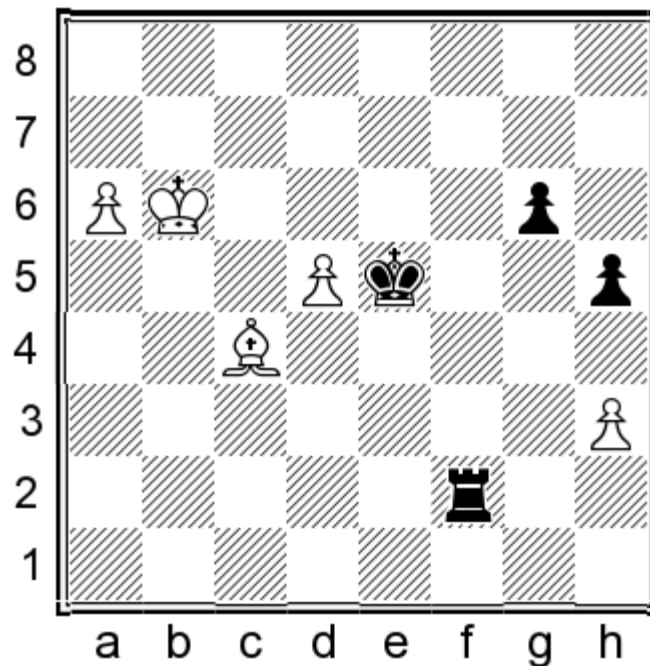
This move is already a serious mistake. 47...♔d6 would take us back to the drawish line we saw before.

48.a6

Now it is already difficult for Black to stop the a-pawn because the white bishop on c4 covers the a2-square.

48...♚f2!

Black's position is on the verge of being lost, but Gelfand finds the best chances to save the game again.



48...♖b2+ 49.♔c6 and Black is lost.

49.♔c5!!

A really fantastic move by White which wins the game. The key idea is that White wants to play ♕b5-♕c6! Black seems to hold the draw after 49.a7 ♖f8 50.♔c6 g5 The g-pawn is going to save the game! 51.d6 ♖c8+! 52.♔b7 ♖d8 and the game should end in a draw.

49...♖f8

Black has nothing better. 49...g5 was also losing. 50.d6! White is just faster. 50...g4 51.d7 ♖f8 52.hxg4 hxg4 53.♕d5 The white bishop on d5 stops the black pawn and at the same time supports the upcoming a7-a8=♚. Black's position is hopeless.

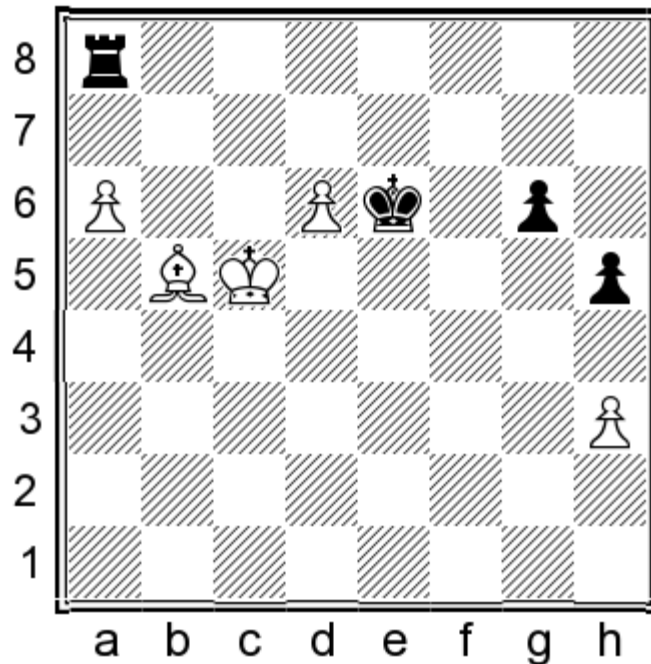
50.♕b5

The white bishop is going to c6.

50...♖a8

Black stops the ♕c6 move, but now the d-pawn rolls...

51.d6 ♔e6



52.h4!

A very nice technical move! Now Black has no counterplay at all.

52...g5

Other moves were also losing.

53.hxg5 h4 54.d7

White just has too many passed pawns...

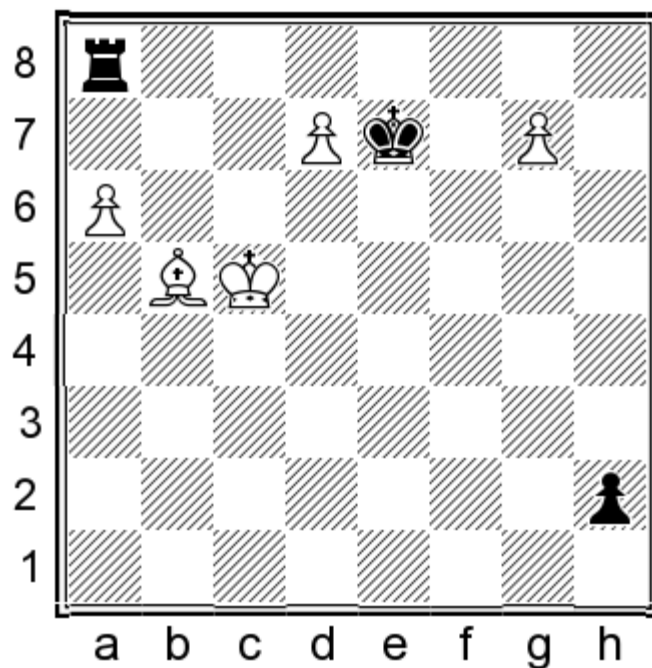
54...♖e7

White wanted to play ♙c6.

55.g6 h3 56.g7

Black can't stop White from playing ♙c6 next.

56...h2



57.♙c6

Very nicely played by Mamedyarov, and of course Gelfand is going to be very disappointed that he didn't manage to hold the endgame when the draw was so close!

1-0

GAME 56

B. Gelfand (2748)

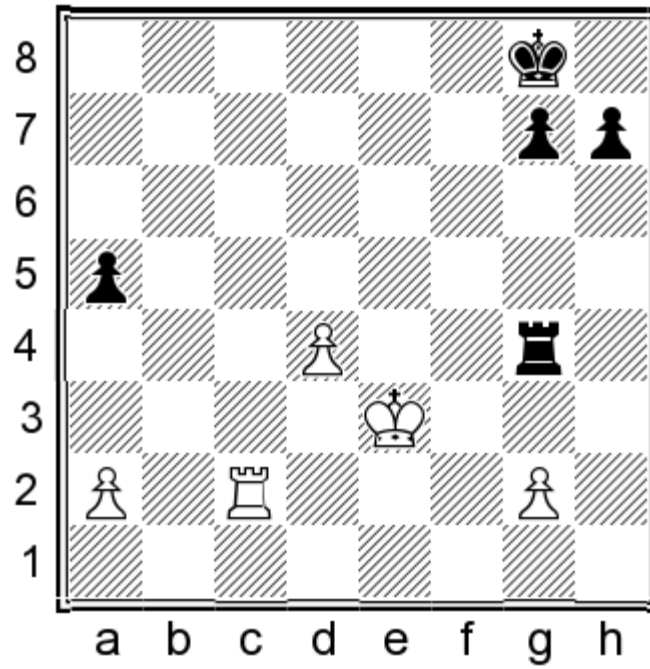
D. Andreikin (2722)

Tashkent FIDE GP 2014

Tashkent UZB (10.4)

01.11.2014, [D45]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



In the current position White is a bit better because of the more centralised position of his king and also the passed d-pawn. Of course Black's chances to hold are very good, but sometimes it is not so simple to defend a worse endgame where a single mistake could lead to big trouble. Andreikin is going to show us a great defense, which is a perfect example on how to defend this quite typical rook endgame.

36...♔f7

Of course. It is important to bring the king to the center as quickly as possible, in the best case to d6.

37.♖e2!

A great move by Gelfand! White's idea is to go "around" the d4-pawn with the king and cut the black king off on the 3rd rank.

37...♞g6!

Excellent defense by Andreikin. The most important thing for Black is to get his king to the d-file. Of course not 37...♔e6?? 38.♔f3+ ♔f5 39.♞e5+ and White wins the rook.

38.♔d3 ♞e6

Now we can see why the previous move was so important for Black.

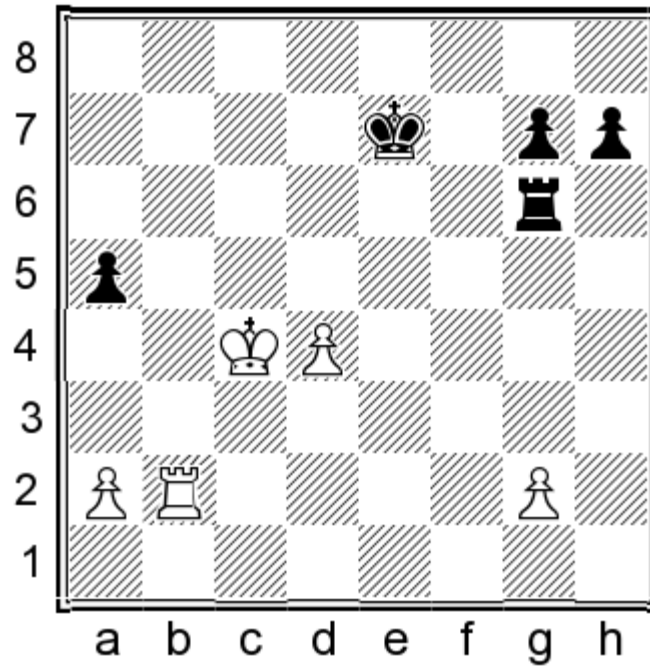
39.♞b2

White cannot enter the pawn endgame...

39...♞g6

The safest move. White can do nothing about Black playing ...♔e7 next.

40.♔c4 ♔e7



So the minor time-trouble is over and both players have some time to think again. White's only hope now is to get the black a-pawn and be very quick with the own a-pawn, but it costs a lot of time — and it is actually pretty hard to win the a5-pawn. The position is very close to a draw, but Gelfand still tries everything to play for a win.

41.♔b5

Checking how Black plans to defend the a-pawn.

41...♟d6

A good and very safe move! Black not only attacks the d4-pawn but he also maybe wants to start pushing his own kingside pawns.

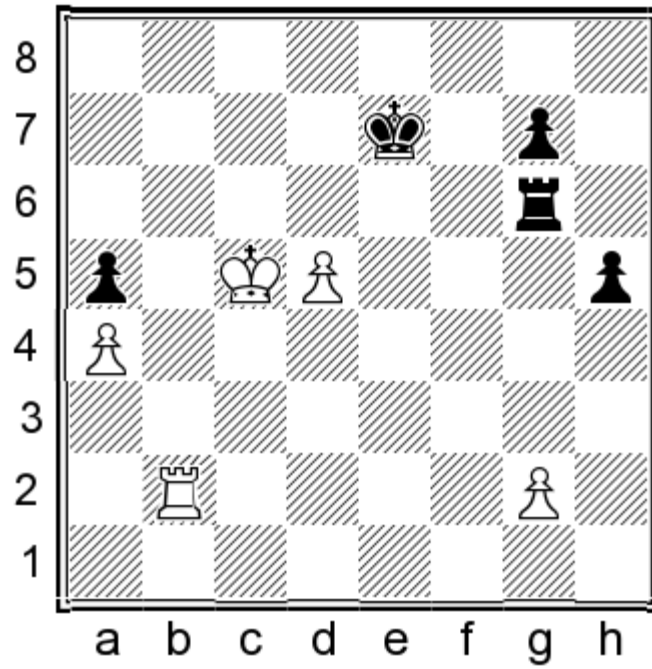
42.♔c5 ♟g6

the rook can go back to g6: passive, but very solid play by Black.

43.a4 h5

and the black pawns start to advance too.

44.d5



44...h4

Fixing the g2-pawn and also preparing to get his own pawn to g4 and to play ...h3 later.

45.♔b5

A second attempt to get the a5-pawn...

45...♞d6

and we see a pretty similar defense from Black.

46.♞d2

Gelfand is winning the a5-pawn, but of course it doesn't help to win the game anymore, as the black pawns are very fast now.

46...g5!

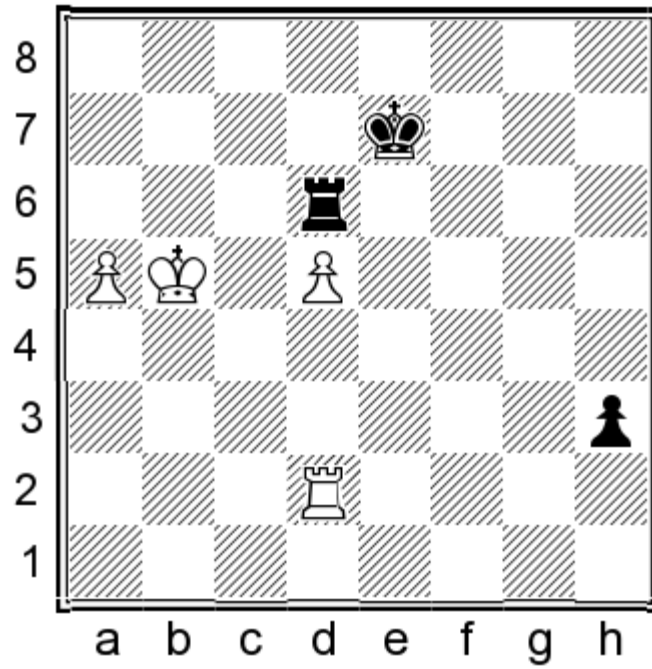
There were also other ways to hold a draw, but this is clearly the easiest one.

47.♔xa5 g4

Black is going to create a passed h-pawn.

48.♔b5 h3 49.gxh3 gxh3 50.a5

Both pawns are running.



50...♖h6

Black fixes the white rook.

51.♖h2 ♔d6

and the black king comfortably holds the a-pawn.

52.a6 ♔c7 53.♔c5 ♖xa6 54.♖xh3 ♖g6

We just saw great defense by Andreikin, with a lot of standard tools which are quite important to know for practical rook endgames.

1/2

GAME 57

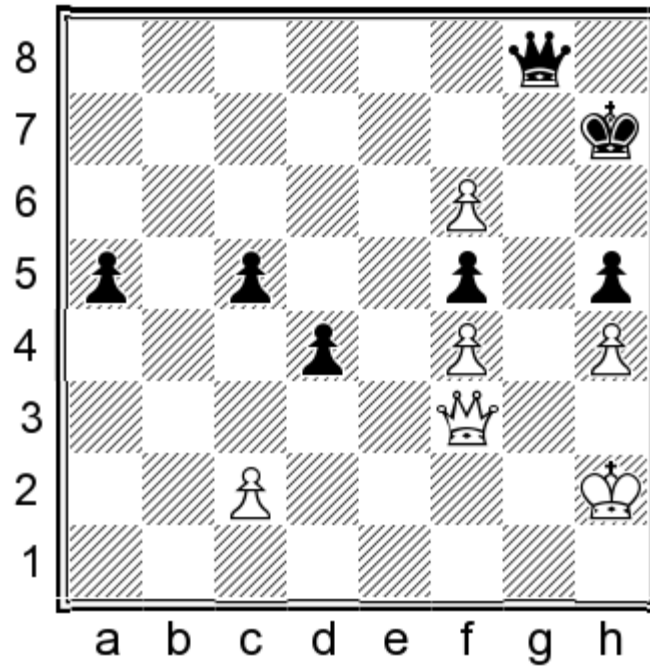
Y. Kryvoruchko (2706)

S. Bogdanovich (2590)

Ukrainian Championship

14.11.2014

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



We are on the last move of the time-trouble phase and Black makes a serious mistake in terms of maintaining the advantage.

40...♞g4?

A very important rule in queen endgames is that the quality of pawns is much more important than the quantity! The key element of this game is the pawn on f6. Any other white pawns are irrelevant, but as long as that one is on the board, White will have all the chances to secure enough counterplay to hold, despite being momentarily a pawn down (and later it will be even more...) Black should have eliminated the dangerous passed pawn with 40...♞f7! 41.♞c6 c4 followed by ...♔g6 when he has good chances to win.

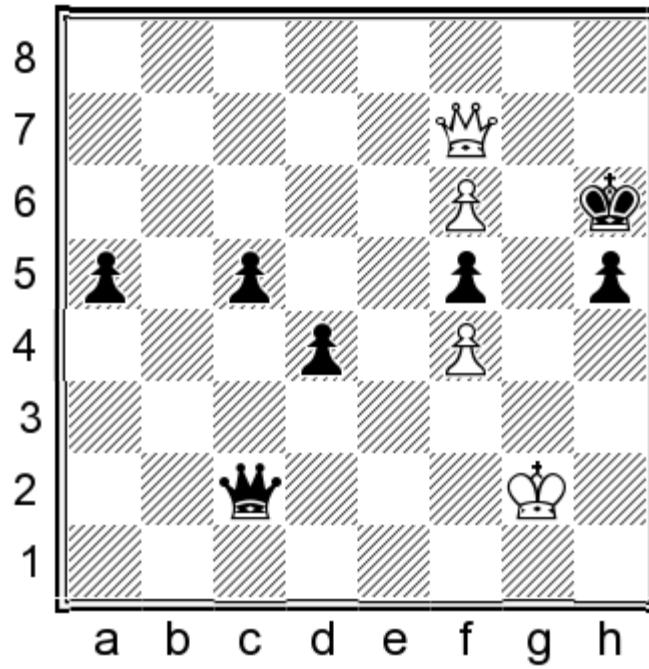
40...♞g4? 41.♞b7+!

White must play actively and pin all his hopes to the f6-pawn. Defending the h4- and f4-pawns passively equals resignation.

41...♔h6 42.♞f7!

This is the point! White is ready to give a check on f8 and then — according to circumstances — give more checks or advance the f-pawn, which will then only be one square away from promotion.

42...♞xh4+ 43.♔g2 ♞g4+ 44.♔h1 ♞d1+ 45.♔g2 ♞xc2+



Black collects all the pawns with check, and he is already 3 pawns up, but his position is not winning. The f6-pawn is too strong.

46.♔g1 ♚c1+ 47.♔g2 ♚b2+ 48.♔g1 ♚a1+ 49.♔g2 ♚b2+ 50.♔g1 ♚b1+ 51.♔g2 ♚e4+ 52.♔g1 ♚e1+ 53.♔g2 ♚e4+ 54.♔g1 ♚e3+ 55.♔g2 ♚e2+ 56.♔g1 ♚g4+ 57.♔h1 ♚h3+ 58.♔g1 ♚g3+ 59.♔h1

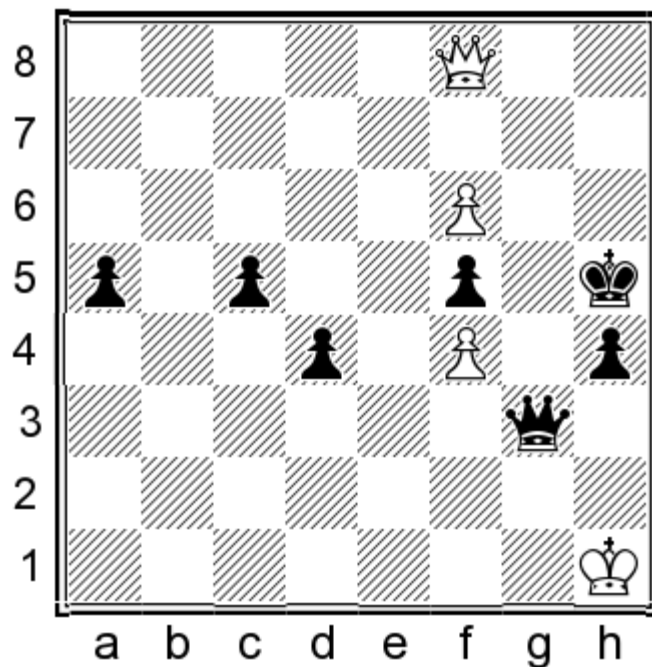
At this point, Black should have realized that he cannot win, but it is very difficult to admit this when you have such a big material advantage. Black continues to play for a win, but he soon turns out to be lost!

59...h4

With the idea of opening an 'evacuation path' for the king along h5-g4 and to threaten ...h3 and ...♚g2 mate. 59...d3 is met by 60.♚f8+ ♔h7 61.♚f7+ with perpetual check. 59...♚g6 60.♚f8+ ♔h7 61.♚e7+ (61.f7 is also good enough because of the ♚e7 threat.) 61...♔g8 62.♚d8+ ♔h7 63.♚e7+ also holds by perpetual.

60.♚f8+ ♔h5?

Consequent, but this could have been the decisive mistake.



Black should have allowed perpetual check with 60...♔h7 61.♕f7

61.♕e8+!

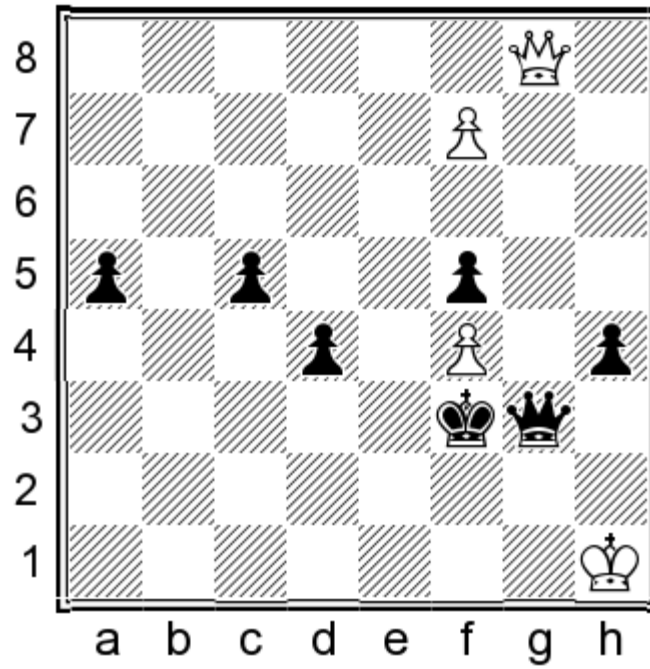
Suddenly the f-pawn turns out to be too strong and White is winning in a study-like manner.

61...♔g4

It is already too late to turn back with 61...♔h6 as it loses to 62.♕h8+ ♔g6 63.♕g7+ ♔h5 64.♕xg3 hxg3 65.f7+–

62.♕e2+!

The first thing is to guarantee the king's safety and then White can advance his f-pawn. Black probably missed this check when he went 60...♔h5. 62.f7? is premature in view of 62...♔f3! threatening mate on g2. 63.♕g8 could be a saving idea (63.♕a8+ ♔f2 and mate follows in the next move.) but not in this position, because of



63...♔f2!! creating the threat of ♕h3. 64.♖xg3+ hxg3 65.f8=♖ g2+ 66.♔h2 g1=♖+ 67.♔h3 ♖g3#

62...♔xf4

62...♔h3 loses more readily because of 63.f7 ♖g7 (63...d3 64.♖f1+ ♔g4 65.f8=♖+-) 64.♖h2+ ♔g4 65.♖g2+-

63.f7!

A very nice position. White is fighting with 1 pawn against 5, but his is the most advanced and the most relevant one.

63...♖g7!

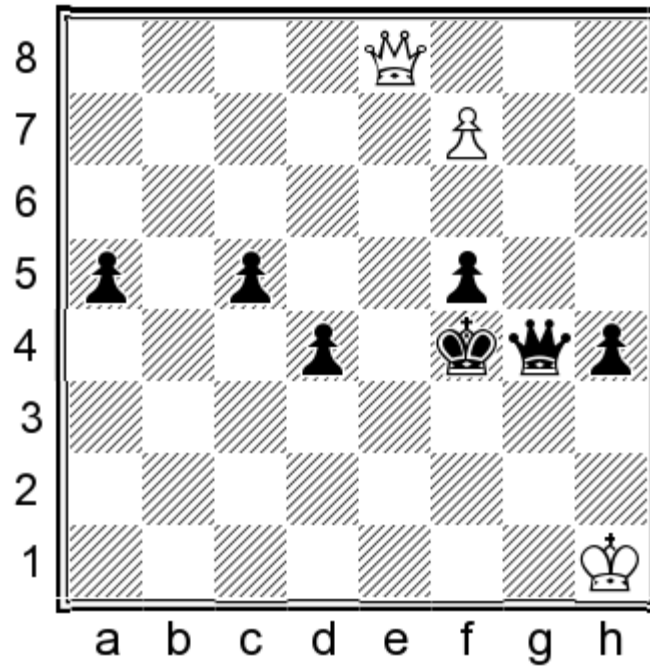
The best chance again! 63...♖h3+ runs into a countercheck with 64.♖h2+ ♖xh2+ 65.♔xh2+-;
63...d3 64.♖f1+- and f8=♖ next.

64.♖e8!

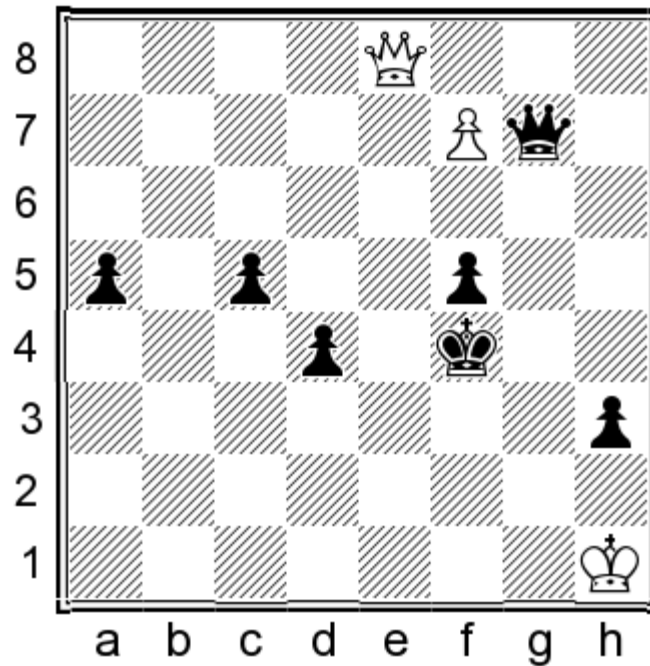
It is very important to have the ♖g8 option for White to avoid getting mated on g2. 64.♖e7 is met by 64...♔f3 and White is forced to give a perpetual here: 65.♖b7+ ♔f2 66.♖b2+ ♔f3 67.♖b7

64...♖g4!

Black finds the most tenacious defense yet again, which rewards him with the half-point for the huge risk he has taken before.



64...♔f3 loses to 65.♚g8! ♚e5 66.f8=♚ and Black has only one check. 66...♚e1+ 67.♚g1+-;
64...h3



is tricky, but it fails to 65.♚b8+! White drives the king to a wrong place before playing ♚g8! (The direct 65.♚g8 allows 65...♚e5! 66.f8=♚ ♚e1+ 67.♚g1 ♚e4+! This is the key and the reason why White needs to give a check on b8 first. 68.♔h2 ♚e2+ 69.♔xh3 ♚h5+ 70.♔g2 ♚f3+ 71.♔h2 ♚h5 with a perpetual.) 65...♔f3 66.♚g8+- without the check on e4, Black is lost.

65.f8=♚?

White returns the favor, since Black has a perpetual check now... The winning move was 65.♚b8+! ♔e3 (65...♔f3 66.♚g8!+-) 66.♚g8! (Still not 66.f8=♚ ♚f3+ 67.♔h2 ♚f2+ 68.♔h3 ♚f3 and White cannot take on h4 in view of ♚g4!) 66...♚e4+ (66...♚f3+ 67.♚g2+- no more checks as ...♚d1 runs into ♚g1 check! 66...♚h3+ 67.♔g1+- and

there are no more checks for Black.) 67.♔g1 ♚b1+ 68.♔h2 ♚a2+ 69.♔h3+— and once again, the game is over.

65...♚f3+ 66.♔g1 ♚g3+ 67.♔f1 ♚f3+ 68.♔e1 ♚c3+!

The king cannot escape from the checks...

69.♔f1 ♚f3+ 70.♔e1 1/2

GAME 58

M. Rodshtein (2676)

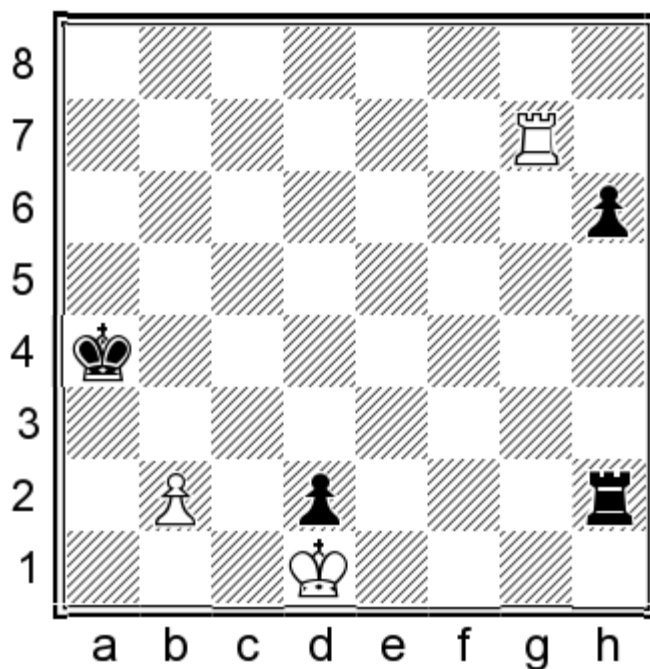
K. C. Arkell (2489)

90th Hastings Masters 2014–15

Hastings ENG (7.2)

04.01.2015, [C02]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



We find ourselves looking at a very interesting rook endgame, already on move 57. Both players are a bit tired and probably don't have too much time, which makes the game even more exciting. At first sight the position looks like a draw. The white king is blocking the d2-pawn, the h-pawn can be stopped by the white rook and of course the b2-pawn gives White some counter chances if the black king were to start his walk to support the h-pawn. But things are much trickier than that and we will soon see why...

57...h5

Black needs to push the h pawn-this much is clear

58.♔c2!

A good move. It is very important for White not to give Black the chance to play ...♔b3-♔a2. Not now, but later when the pawn will be on h3.

58...♔b5

The black king starts his march towards the h-pawn.

59.♞c7

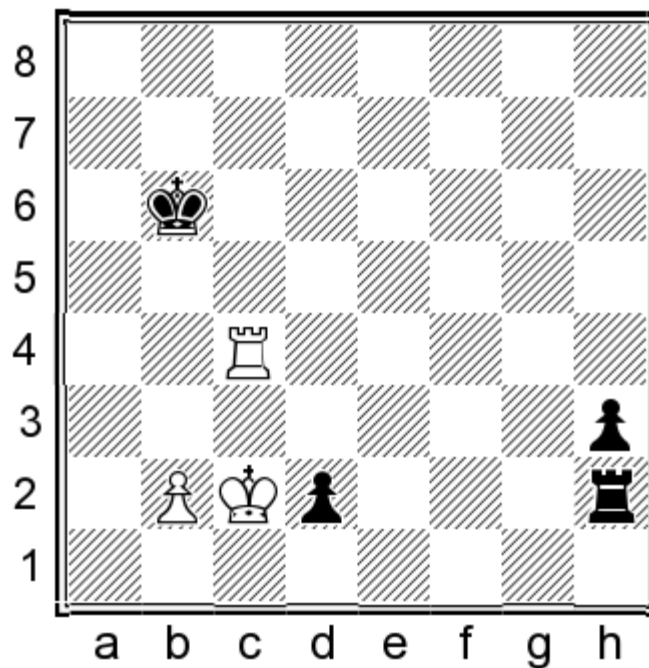
White has nothing better than to keep on waiting anyway, so why not cut the black king off at least for a while?

59...h4 60.♞c8 ♔b6

A slightly strange move. Why not play h3 immediately? But it doesn't really change anything.

61.♞c4 h3

Now Black wants to play ...♞f2 followed by ...h2 with a win, so the white rook needs to take up position on the h-file.



62.♞h4

The only move. 62.♞c3 loses on the spot to 62...♞h1! Black shows a very typical idea for many rook endgames. 63.♔xd2 h2 64.♞h3 ♞b1! If White was in time to play ♔c2 the position would, of course, be a total draw. 65.♞xh2 ♞xb2+ 66.♔c3 ♞xh2

62...♔c5

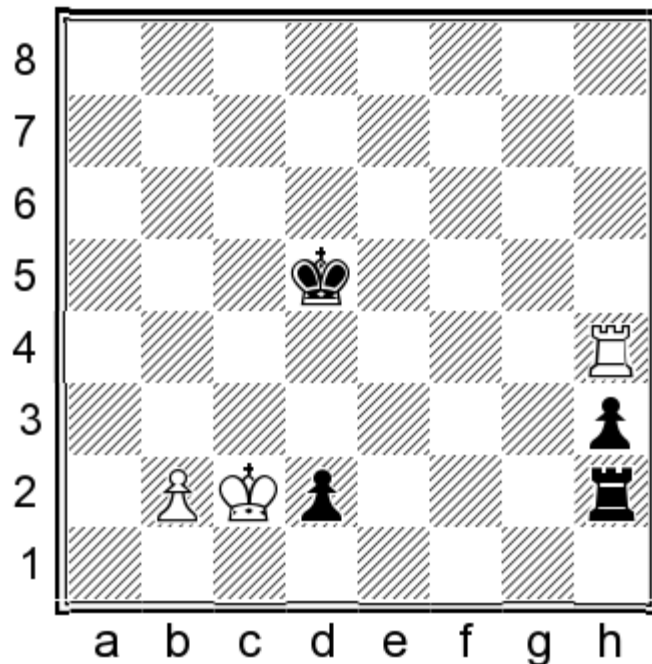
The black king heads off to g5.

63.♔d1

White still has nothing better than to keep on waiting. A very wrong idea is to touch the b2-pawn, which would lead to an immediate end to the game: 63.b4+? ♔b5 64.♔d1 and now Black wins with exactly the same idea as we saw before: 64...♞h1+! 65.♔xd2 h2 66.♔c2 Once again if White had enough time to reach the b2-square the position would be a draw, but it is Black to move... 66...♞a1! Now that the b2-pawn is gone, Black has a check on the a2-square. 67.♞xh2

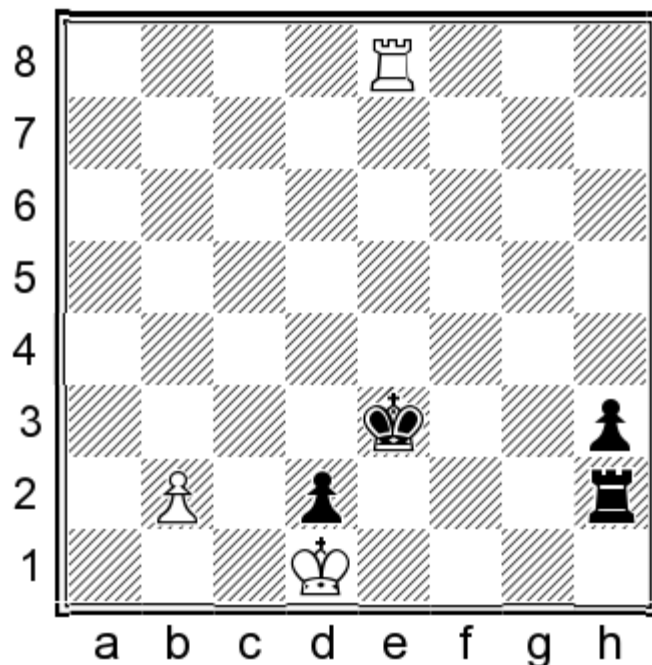
♖a2+ 68.♔b3 ♜xh2 and Black is winning.

63...♔d5 64.♔c2



64...♔e5 65.♜h8

White could have waited for the black king to reach the g5-square, but the rook would have to leave the 4th rank anyway, which would allow the black king to reach the position in the game. After a waiting move like 65.♔d1 ♔f5 66.♔c2 (White doesn't save the game with the king on d1 either, because now Black uses the other winning idea: 66.♜h8 ♔f4 67.♜f8+ ♔e3 68.♜e8+ and here comes the difference:



68...♔d3! 69.♜d8+ ♔c4 The black king is going to b3. 70.♜h8 The white rook must go back to h8 and Black uses this

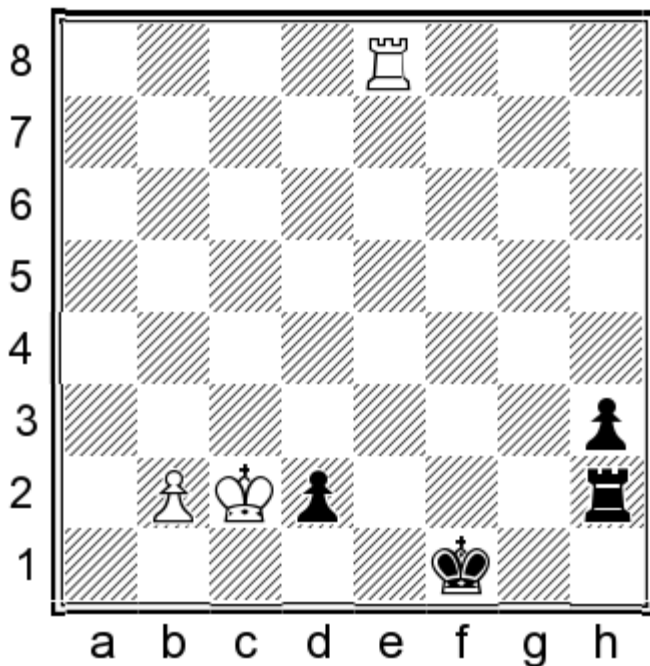
factor for the standard winning idea: 70...♔b3 71.♖h6 ♖h1+ 72.♔xd2 h2 and White can't stop Black from playing ...♗b1 next. Black is winning.) 66...♔g5 and the white rook would have to go back to h7 or h8, because in case of 67.♗a4? ♖f2 the game would be over immediately.

65...♔e4 66.♖e8+

White doesn't have anything better.

66...♔f3 67.♖f8+ ♔e2 68.♖e8+ ♔f1

So there are no more checks and Black wants to play ...♖f2.

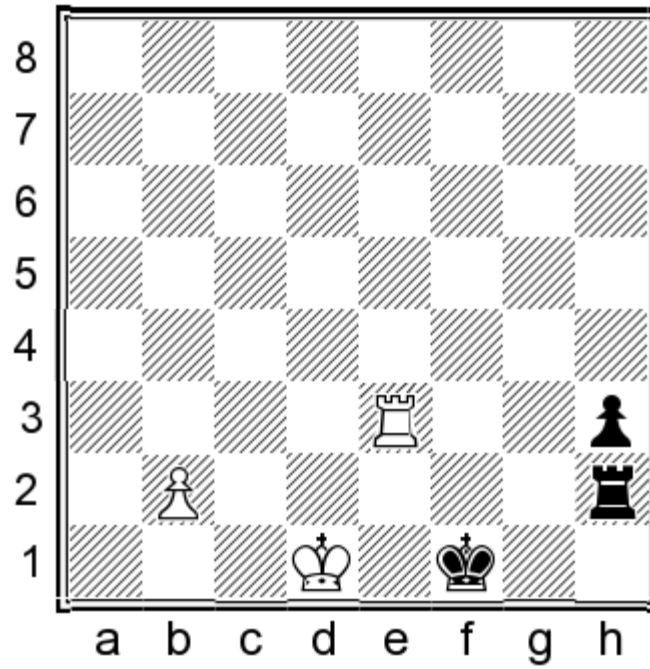


69.♖e3!

White uses his only practical chance. 69.♖h8 loses to 69...♔e1 70.♖e8+ ♖e2 followed by d1=♖.

69...♔g2?

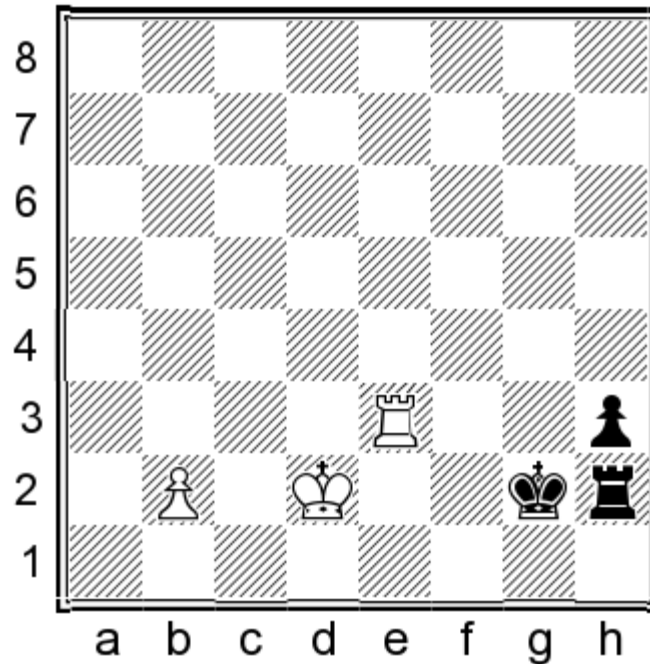
Black misses a win, even if it was not so simple to find! The right move was 69...d1=♖+! 70.♔xd1 and now the very strong



70...Rf1! It is quite amazing, but White can't save the game here. 71.Kd2 (71.Kc2 h2 72.Rh3 Kg2 and Rf1 next.)
 71...Kg2 Black wants to play ...h2 next. 72.Rf2+ White doesn't have anything better. 72...Kf3 73.Rf3+ Kf4! and White has no defense against Black's idea of playing ...h2 followed by ...Rb1. 74.Rf8 h2 75.Rh8 Rb1 76.Rxh2 Rxb2+ 77.Kc3 Rxh2 and the game is over.

70.Kxd2?

and White returns the favor...



70.Rd3!! d1=Q+ What else to try? 71.Rxd1 Rh1 (White easily holds the draw after 71...Kf3+ 72.Kc3 Re2 73.b4! The b2-pawn is finally useful. 73...h2 74.Kc4 Kg2 75.b5 h1=Q 76.Rxh1 Kxh1 77.b6 Rb2 78.Kc5 Kg2 79.Kc6 Kf3 80.b7 Ke4 81.Kc7 with a draw.) 72.Rd2+! Now that the white king is placed on c2, Black doesn't have the usual ...h2-Rb1 idea. 72...Kg3 73.Rd3+ Kf4 74.Rd4+ Ke3 75.Rh4 and the position is a draw.

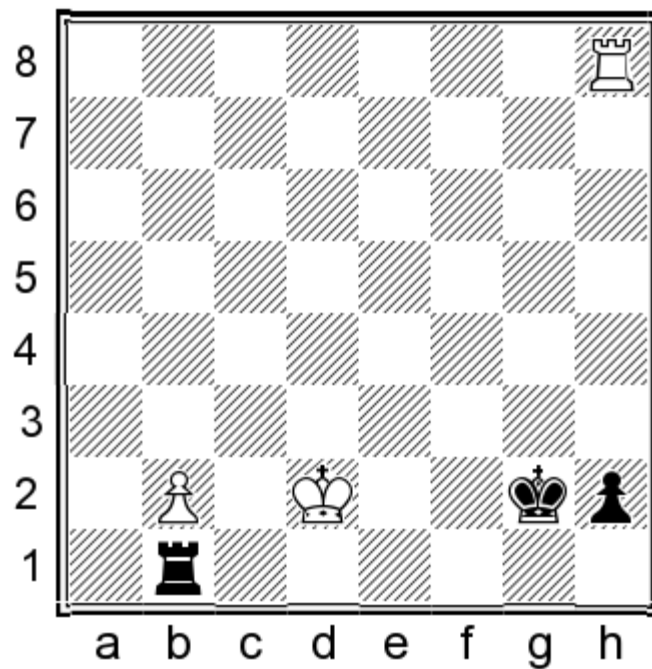
70...♖h1

Now we are back to what we already know...

71.♖e8 h2

Black is simply winning.

72.♖h8 ♖b1



73.♔c3

White tries to get the b-pawn going, but of course it is too late...

73...h1=♔ 74.♖xh1 ♖xh1

In case of 75.b4 Black can win with 75...♖h4! and after 76.b5 ♔f3 77.b6 ♖h6! So, finally it was a winning endgame for Black, but both players managed to exchange presents. Again we see how hard it is to play rook endgames well!

0–1

GAME 59

I. Saric (2666)

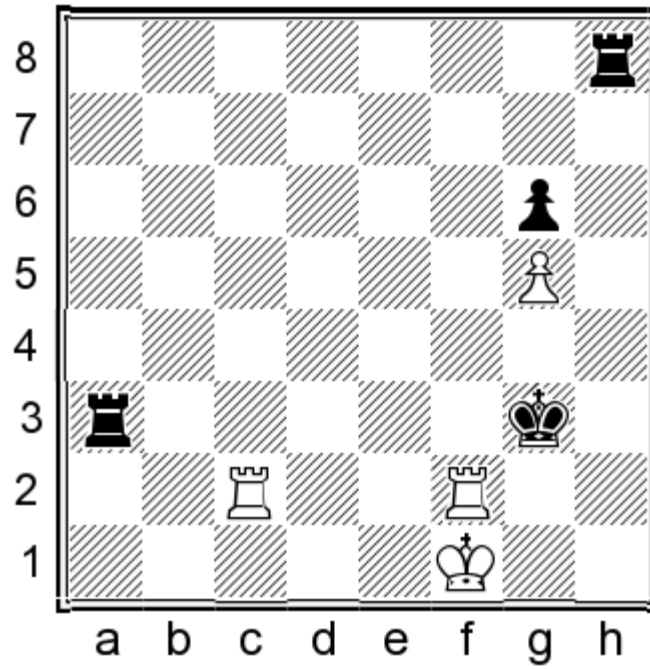
L. Van Wely (2667)

77th Tata Steel GpA

Wijk aan Zee NED (9.1)

20.01.2015, [B07]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



When we look at the current position, it is hard to imagine that at one point White was a clear pawn up and close to winning, but then Saric clearly over-pushed in an already equal position and found himself in this double-rook endgame. It is still very hard to say if this position is winning or just a draw. If Black manages to win the g5-pawn and not let the white king take up a safe position in front of the pawn, it should be enough for a win. On the other hand, “all” White needs to do is to keep his king as close as possible to the g1-square.

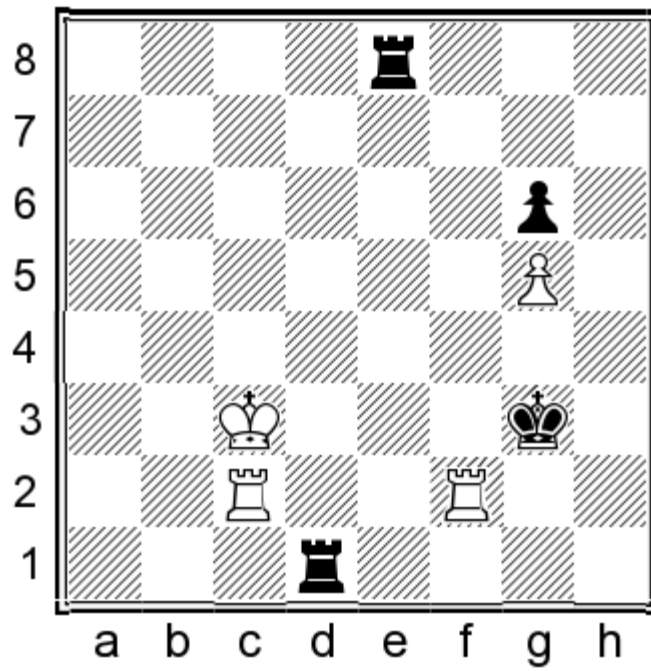
80...♖a1+!

A very strong move. Black starts with the right plan — to get the white king as far away as possible from the g-pawn.

81.♔e2 ♜e8+ 82.♔d3 ♜d1+

using the fact that White cannot play ♜d2.

83.♔c3



White is just not in time (by one tempo) after 83.♖cd2 ♜d8+ 84.♔c2 ♜8xd2+ 85.♞xd2 ♜xd2+ 86.♔xd2 ♔f4 87.♔e2 ♔xg5 The white king would need to jump to g3 now to keep the opposition and the draw. 88.♔f3 ♔h4 89.♔g2 ♔g4 90.♔f2 ♔h3 and Black is easily winning.

83...♞c8+!

Another good move. Black still follows the right plan: one rook needs to be exchanged and it is the right moment while the white king is far away from the g1-square.

84.♔b2 ♞xc2+ 85.♔xc2

To take on c2 with the rook of course makes no sense, as the white king has to get to g1 as quickly as possible.

85...♞d5

Black is collecting the g5-pawn. Entering the pawn endgame would already lead to a draw: 85...♔xf2? 86.♔xd1 ♔f3 87.♔e1 ♔g4 88.♔f2 ♔xg5 89.♔g3 and White is in time.

86.♞f6!

Saric uses his best chance — to attack the g6-pawn and attempt to keep the black rook as passive as possible.

86...♞xg5 87.♔d3 ♞g4

Black is still on the right track. For those who have learned rook endgames by heart, it is clear that this position is winning! But in case you are new to the position, things are far from obvious. 87...♔g2 would also lead to a won position. 88.♔e4 ♞g3 89.♔f4 ♔h3 and Black wins by bringing his king to h4 and playing ...g5. 90.♞a6 ♔h4 followed by ...g5 with a winning position.

88.♔e3 g5 89.♞g6

So what to do next? If Black could somehow move the rook from g4 without losing the g5-pawn, it would be an easy

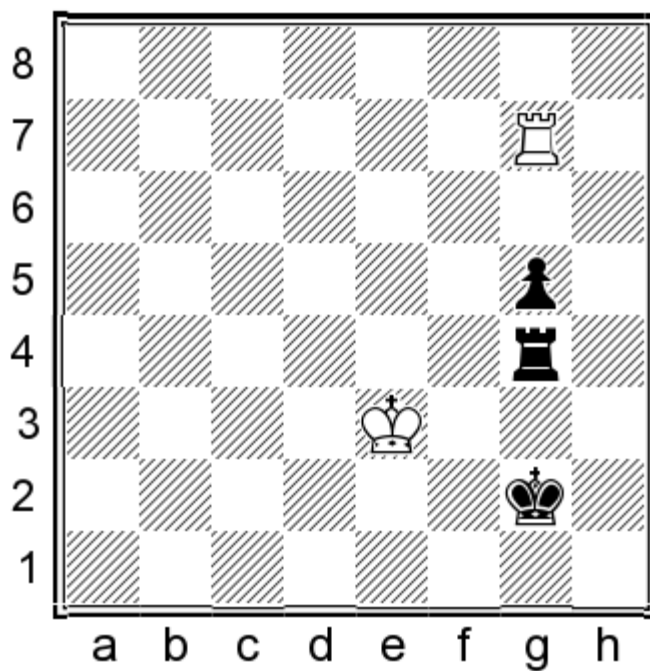
win, but how to do it...

89...♔g2

This move is not a bad one, as it doesn't change anything.

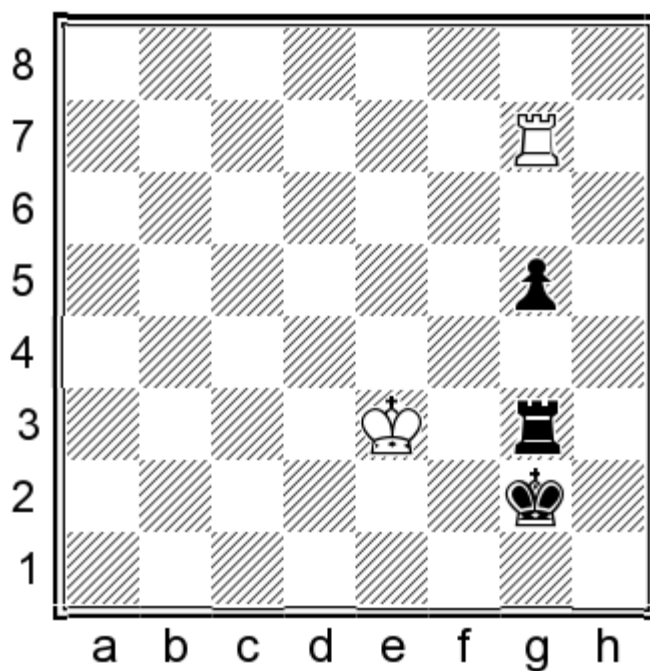
90.♖g7

White keeps on waiting and it is the best he can do.

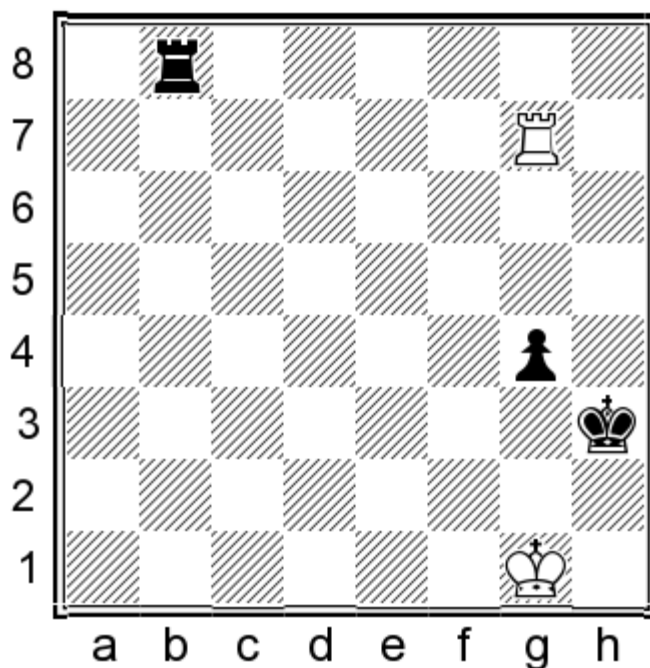


90...♖g3+??

What a mistake by Loek Van Wely, when the win was so close!



90...♔h3! This strong move puts an end to White's hopes... 91.♖h7+ (After 91.♔f2 ♖g2+ 92.♔f1 g4 Black enters a theoretically winning position by playing 93.♖h7+ ♔g3 94.♖a7 ♖b2 and Black is winning because White can't defend against ...♖b1 and ...♔h2 at the same time.) 91...♖h4 92.♖g7 g4 The black rook on h4 is horribly placed, but White cannot make use of it. 93.♔f2 (93.♔f4 didn't help, because of the nice and tricky 93...♖h8! 94.♖xg4 ♖f8+ 95.♔g5 ♖g8+ and Black wins the white rook.) 93...♖h8 The black rook gets back into the game. 94.♔g1 ♖b8



95.♖g6 White can do nothing more than wait. 95...♔g3 96.♔f1 ♖b1+ 97.♔e2 ♖g1! is the simplest path to victory. 98.♖g8 ♔h2 99.♔f2 g3+ 100.♔f3 ♖f1+ 101.♔e2 ♖f7 and we are in a theoretically-winning position.

91.♔e4!

White, of course, happily accepts the present. It is funny, but the position is already a draw.

91...g4

Black also can't do much after 91...♔h3 92.♔f5 g4 93.♖h7+ ♔g2 94.♖a7 and there is no way to improve the position.

92.♖g5

and here we can also see that Black cannot improve his position. In case of 92...♔g1 93.♔f4 leads to an immediate draw. A huge upset for the Dutchman Van Wely, who is usually a fighting player, but it seems as though a lack of energy, or perhaps endgame knowledge, clearly cost him half-a-point here...

1/2

GAME 60

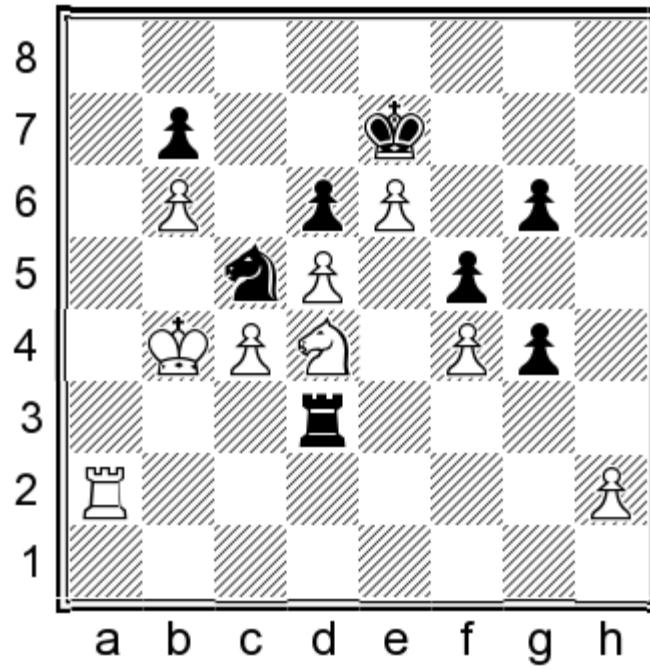
T. Nyback (2603)

A. Braun (2549)

German league

31.01.2015

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



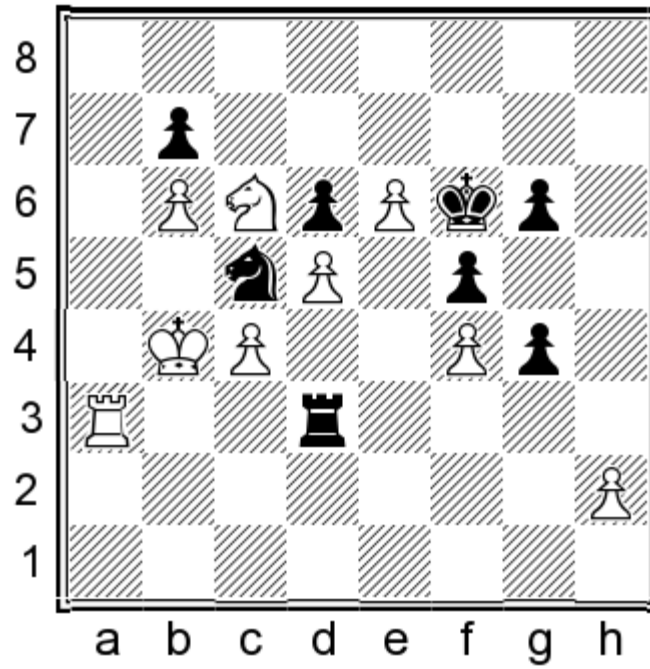
The players have reached a study-like endgame. White has an extra pawn and a huge protected passed pawn on e6, but Black seems to have created an impenetrable fortress. The white king is also a bit trapped, and sometimes ...♖b3 check can be unpleasant.

44. ♘c6+!

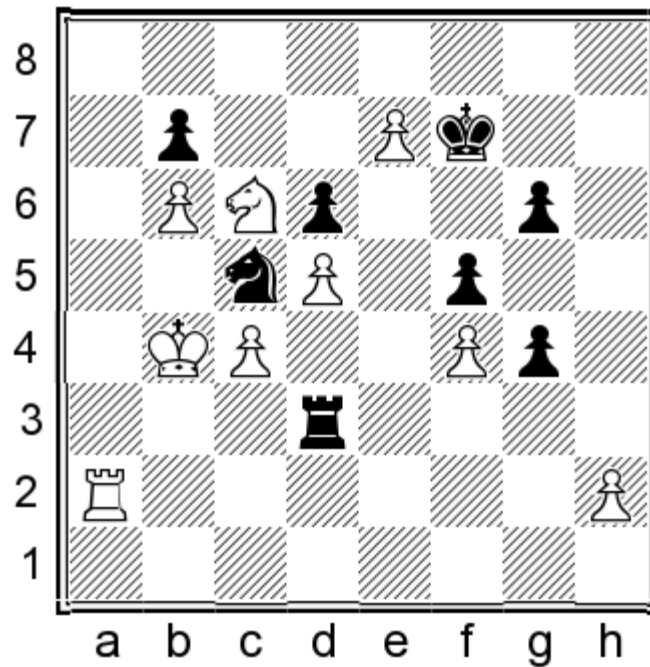
The only, and excellent, attempt to break through! White sacrifices his knight to create even more passed pawns.

44... bxc6?

The wrong decision, most probably based on a miscalculation. Black should have tried to keep the pawn structure with 44... ♔f6! 45. ♖a3! My teammate Arik Braun was rightly afraid of this move: White saves himself from the b3 check, the knight endgame is winning and if Black leaves the 3rd rank, White can already invade on a8. However Black has



(Black must be very careful after 45.e7 ♖b3+! It is necessary to insert this check before catching the pawn with ♔f7. (45... ♔f7? right away moves into



46. ♕e5+! The desperado knight continues his journey! 46...dxe5 47. ♔xc5 ♔xe7 48.fxe5+-) 46. ♔a5 ♔f7= and White cannot make progress.) 45...♖f3! A great resource! Black keeps the 3rd rank under control and the rook cannot be taken because the f-pawn becomes unstoppable. The game remains unclear after all! (45...♖xa3? loses to 46. ♔xa3 ♕d3 White has other wins too, but a pretty one is 47.e7 ♔f7 48. ♕d8+ ♔xe7 49. ♕xb7 ♕xf4 50. ♕c5! ♔d8 51. ♕e6+! ♕xe6 52.dxe6+- and one of the pawns promote.)

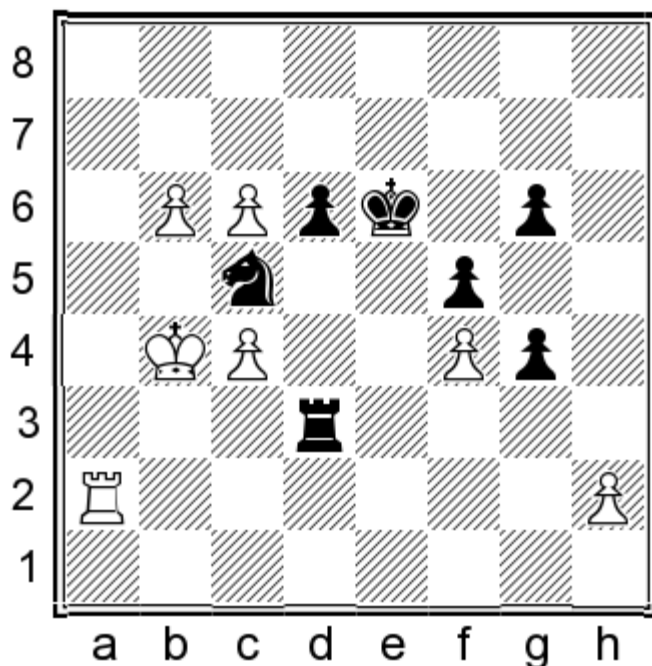
45.dxc6!

White is winning now, but it still requires very good technique! It is very important to keep the rook on a2 to maintain control over the a3-square. After the invasion of the rook, Black could have the option of ♖b3 ♔a5 ♖a3. 45.♖a7+ leads

only to draw after 45...♔e8 (But not 45...♔f6?? because of 46.♖f7#) 46.dxc6 (46.♖a8 White can also give perpetual check.) 46...♖b3+ 47.♔a5 ♖a3+ 48.♕b5 ♖b3+ and Black survives by landing a perpetual.

45...♖b3+

45...♔xe6 is refuted by

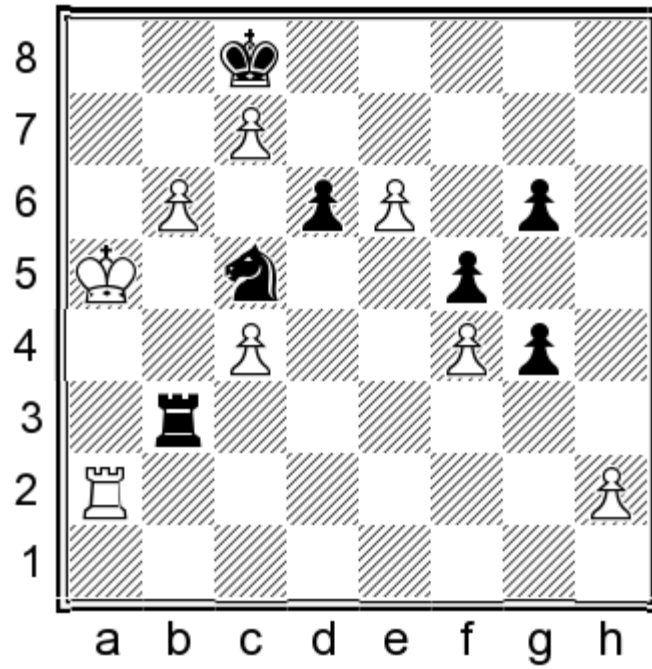


46.♖e2+! An important intermediate check to send the king away from the connected pawns... 46...♔f7 47.c7! And now, when ...♔d7 does not work anymore, White advances his pawn and at the same time opens a shelter for the king on c6 against the checks... 47...♖b3+ 48.♔a5 ♖a3+ 49.♕b5 ♖b3+ 50.♔c6+—

46.♔a5 ♔d8

The only refutation of 46...♔xe6 is 47.♖e2! pinning the knight and White is ready to advance his passed pawns... 47...♔f6 48.c7+—

47.c7+! ♔c8

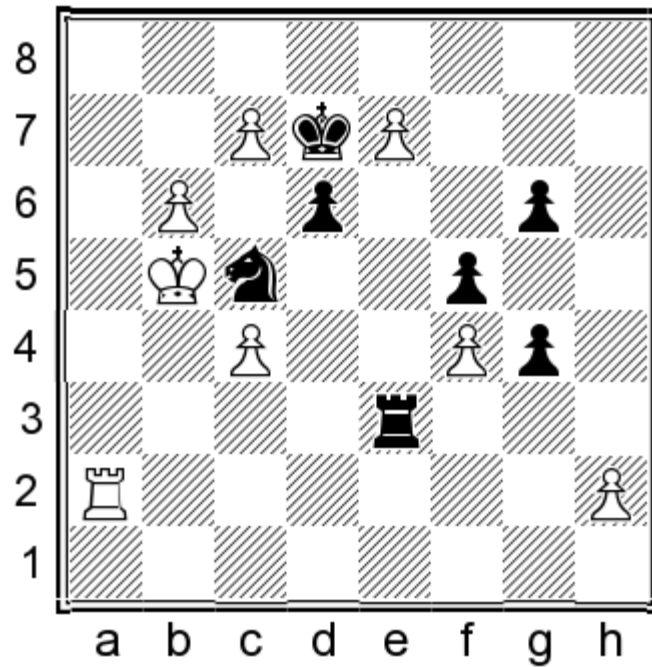


48.e7!

Excellent play by White! He lures the rook away from the b-file to rescue his king from the edge of the board!

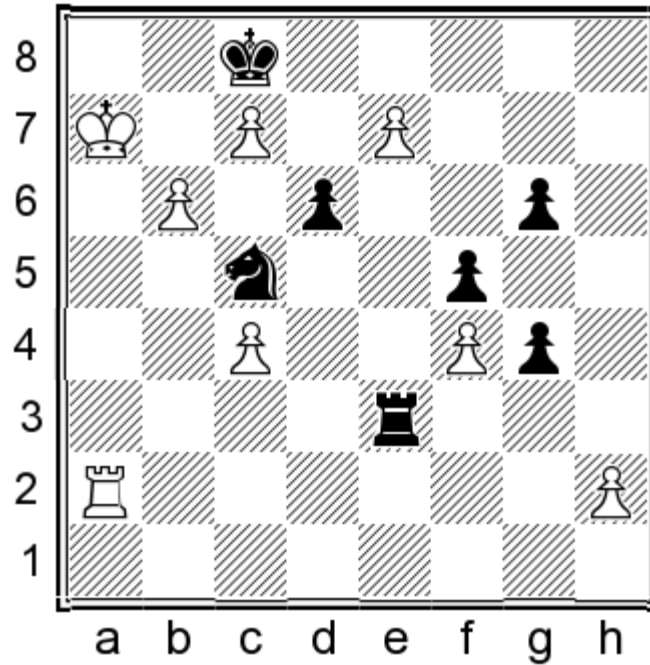
48...♖b7+

48...♞e3 loses to 49.♔b5! Threatening ♞a8! 49...♔d7



50.c8=♚+! (But not 50.♞a8?? because of 50...♞b3+ and ♞a3 next wins the rook and the game.) 50...♔xc8 51.♔c6! ♔b8 52.♞a7+- (52.♔xd6 wins as well 52...♖b7+ 53.♔d7 ♖c5+ 54.♔d8 ♖b7+ 55.♔e8+- White has too many passed pawns.)

49.♔a6 ♖c5+ 50.♔a7 ♞e3



Black's clever idea to trap the white king with two checks seems to be succesful! ♔b5 does not work anymore and the e-pawn is also stopped. However Tomi Nyback finds another beautiful motif!

51.b7+!

The key is again to rescue the king from the a-file and let the rook penetrate via a8!

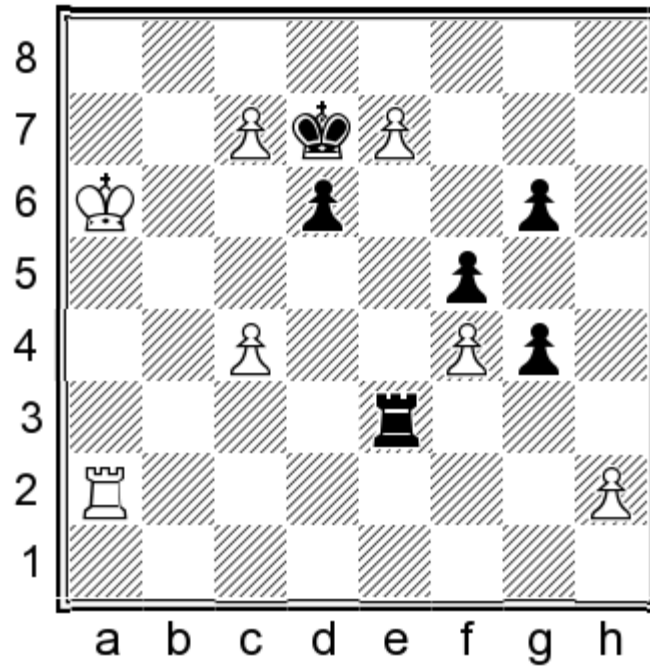
51...♖xb7 52.♔b6! ♔d7

52...♞b3+ 53.♔c6+– is over.

53.♔xb7 ♞b3+ 54.♔a6

Unfortunately for Black, he cannot take any of the passed pawns...

54...♞e3



Black is already threatening ...♔xc7, and ♔b6 or ♔b7 are met by a check on b3 and the rook goes back to e3. How can White make progress?

55.♖a5!!

Another brilliant idea and Black finally runs out of defensive resources. White intends to play ♔b7 because after ...♖b3 he already has ♖b5.

55...♔xc7

55...♖xe7 loses to 56.♔b7 ♖e8 57.♖d5 other moves are also good. c5 is coming next, while after 57...♖c8 58.♖xd6+!+- wins.

56.♖e5!

This is the point of the previous move and we can also see the reason why White has moved his king to a6 in move 54, to avoid getting mated after ♖a3.

56...dxe5 57.e8=♖

The rest is clear!

57...exf4 58.♖xg6 ♖e5 59.c5 ♖d5 60.♖b6+

Black defended resourcefully and tried everything, but White's play was just amazing!

1-0

GAME 61

A. Naiditsch (2706)

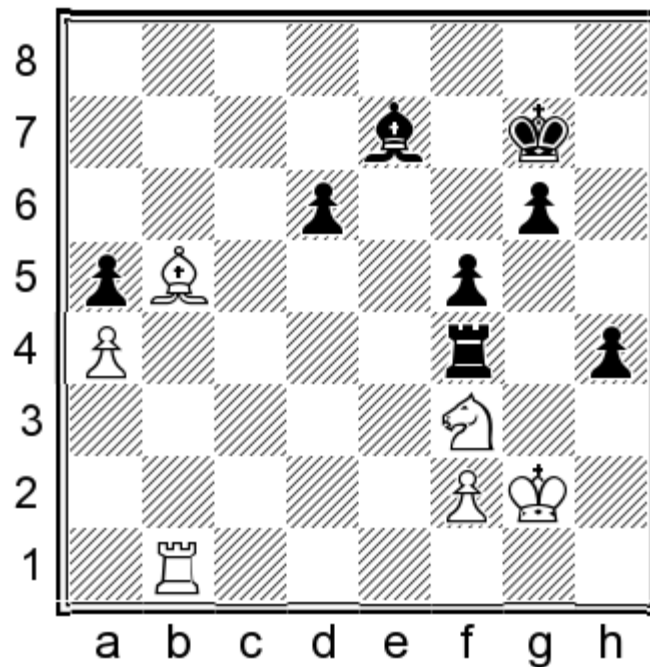
M. Carlsen (2865)

3rd GRENKE Chess Classic

Baden Baden GER (3.3)

04.02.2015, [B06]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



After a very turbulent game — where I had very good winning chances, which I missed in time-trouble- we are faced with an interesting endgame. The first question to ask should be who is better here? Black has 3 pawns for the piece and opposite-colored bishops. From a strategic point of view White's position should somehow be better, let's say in case of rook exchanges, when it is clear that White will be doing better by attacking the a5-pawn and the other black pawns, but on the other hand, if the black pawns start to move the position should just be a draw.

41. ♖d1!

I am not sure if this was the best move, but I liked the move a lot. My threat is simple; to play ♖d4 or ♘d4 next.

41... ♖g4+

This is probably also best.

42. ♔f1

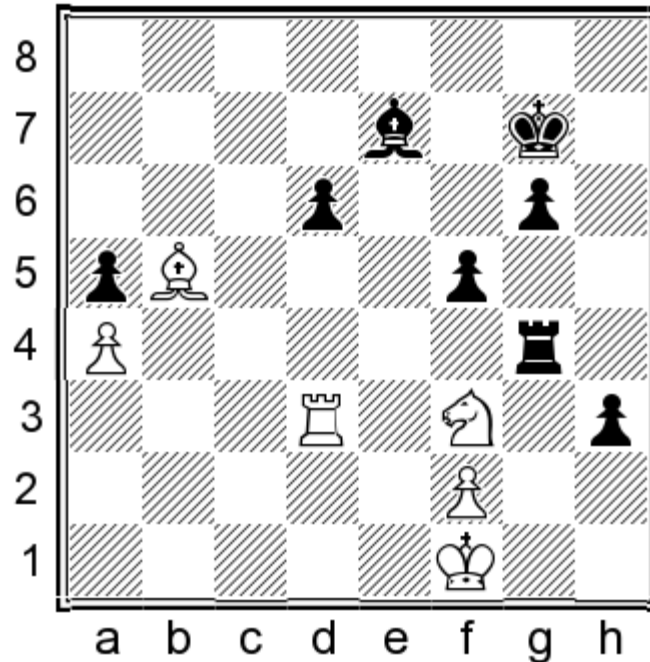
If 42. ♔h3 ♖f4 I probably don't have anything better than to go back to g2. 43. ♔g2 (Of course not 43. ♖d3? g5) 43... ♖g4+ and we are back in the same position.

42... h3

I wasn't really sure if this move was needed for Black. Of course it is great to have a passed pawn on h3, but on the other hand the h3-pawn could become a target, and in case Black loses the h3-pawn then the position should already be winning for White.

43.♖d3

with the simple idea of playing ♗h2 next.



43...♗f6!

A very strong move, using the fact that I can't take on d6. Basically, Black's idea should always be to play ...g5-g4 to connect the pawn structure, which I should of course avoid.

44.♗h2

I continue my strategy of playing against the h3-pawn. In case of 44.♖xd6 ♖f4 45.♖d3 g5 followed by ...g4 next, when I think the position should be a draw.

44...♖h4 45.♔g1!

The beginning of a nice plan. First I need to move my king to free my knight from h2.

45...♗d4 46.♖f3

protecting the f2-pawn and at the same time playing against Black's idea of ...g5-g4 because now the f5-pawn is going to be hanging.

46...♔f6 47.♗f1

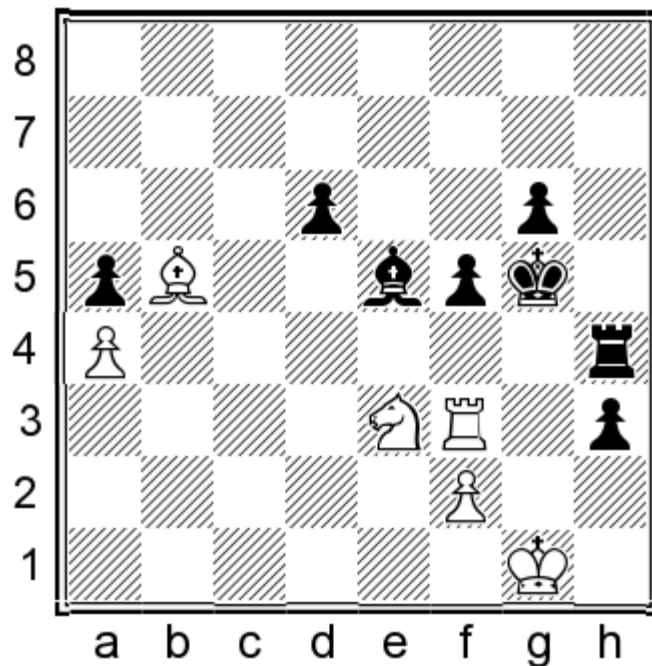
Now that the white king can easily stop the black h-pawn, it is time to bring the knight back into the game.

47...♗e5 48.♗c3

White already has the serious threat of playing ♗c4 at a good moment.

48...♔g5?!

The World Champion starts to go in the wrong direction...



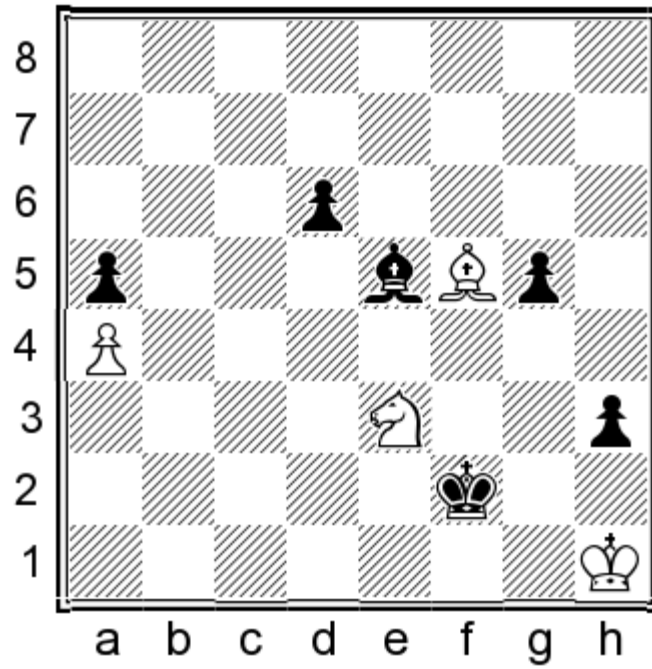
Black can't wait any longer and really needs to act fast to prevent me from being in time with the ♖c4 move. 48...h2+! Of course it is very risky to put the pawn on h2 as it can now easily be attacked but Black gets active play for it. 49.♔h1 ♜d4! The black rook will take up a great position on d2. 50.♔g2 ♔g5 avoiding all the tricks. 51.♞h3 d5 and of course Black still has a serious fight ahead for equality, but objectively the position should probably be very close to equal.

49.♔h1!

and this is probably the winning move of the game! Calm but deadly... as is often the case in endgames, the silent ♔h1 creates the deadly threat of ♖c4. 49.♖c4? was premature since after 49...♞g4+ 50.♔h1 Black saves the game with 50...♔h4! defending the h3-pawn. The position should be around equal now.

49...♔f6?!

It is strange that Carlsen didn't seize his best practical chance... Probably the best practical choice would have been 49...♞f4!? and now White has 3 different options: 50.♞xf4 (It is very hard to say if White can win the position after 50.♞xh3 ♞xf2 51.♖c4 attacking the e5-bishop and the a5-pawn. 51...♔f4 52.♖xa5 g5 and my feeling tells me that Black should be able to save the game, even if things are still pretty unclear.; 50.♞g3+ ♔h4 51.♞xg6 ♞xf2 52.♞h6+ ♔g3 53.♖f1+ ♔g4 54.♖e3+ ♔g3 leads to a forced draw.) 50...♔xf4 and again we are in an endgame where it is very difficult to say if White is winning or not. 51.♞e8 There are of course many other possibilities. 51...g5 52.♞d7 We can clearly see how good it is for White that the bishops are not of the same color, as Black can't defend his pawns from a double attack. 52...♔f3 53.♞xf5 ♔xf2



54. ♖c4 and once again only an in-depth analysis could clarify whether White really has enough for a full point here.

50. ♖c4

Now the a5-pawn is falling.

50...g5

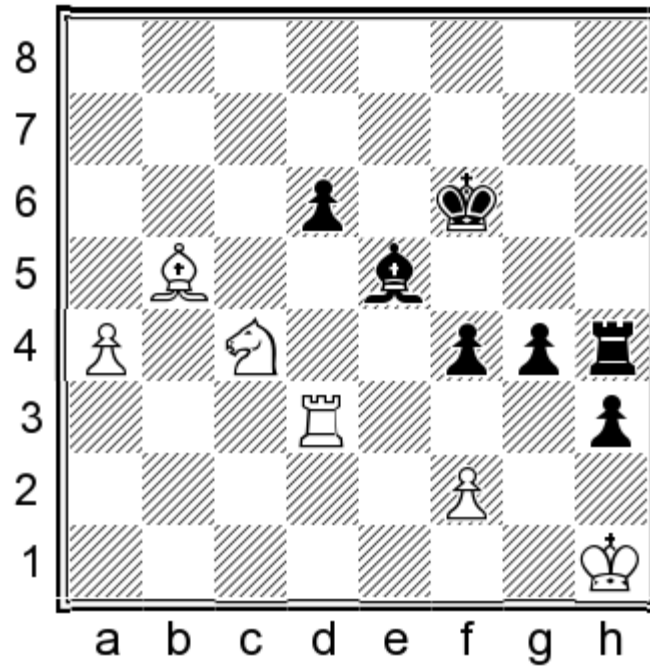
Black doesn't have anything better than to try and create counterplay as quickly as possible.

51. ♖xa5 g4 52. ♖d3 f4

and I am in time for

53. ♖c4

stopping Black from playing ...g3 just in time. Here I started to feel that a win over the World Champion was very, very close...



53...♖h7

I have to push my a-pawn and avoid the g3-move at the same time. 53...g3 of course didn't work since after 54.fxg3 fxg3 55.♗xe5 g2+ 56.♕h2 White is easily winning.

54.♗xe5

This may not be best, but from a practical point of view it is a very logical move. Now I don't need to worry about the unpleasant g3 threat anymore.

54...dxe5 55.a5

It is time to push the pawn.

55...♖c7

The rook must be activated.

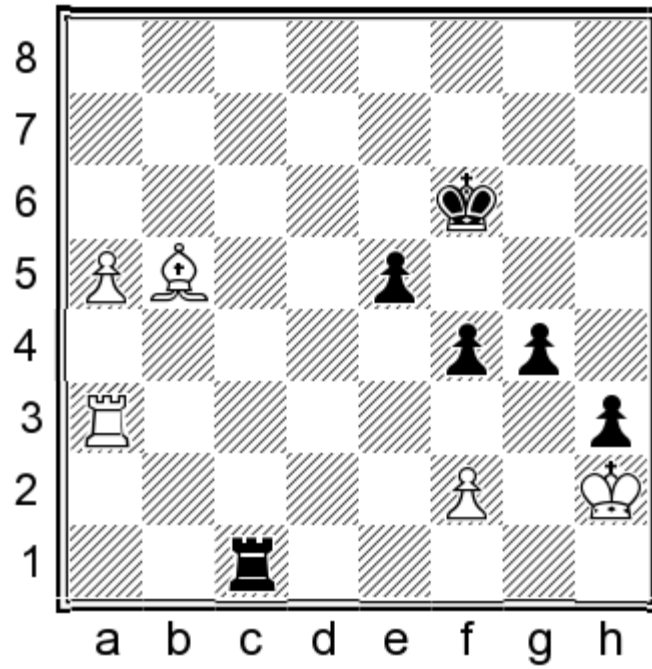
56.♖a3

This is a risky move at first sight, but before playing it I calculated the complications until the end and hoped I was right!

56...♖c1+

This is Black's only chance. To wait for a6 and to play ...♖a7 is clearly not an option because of ♕c6-♕b7 and the black rook would be trapped on a7.

57.♕h2



57...Rc2

Black will win the f2-pawn.

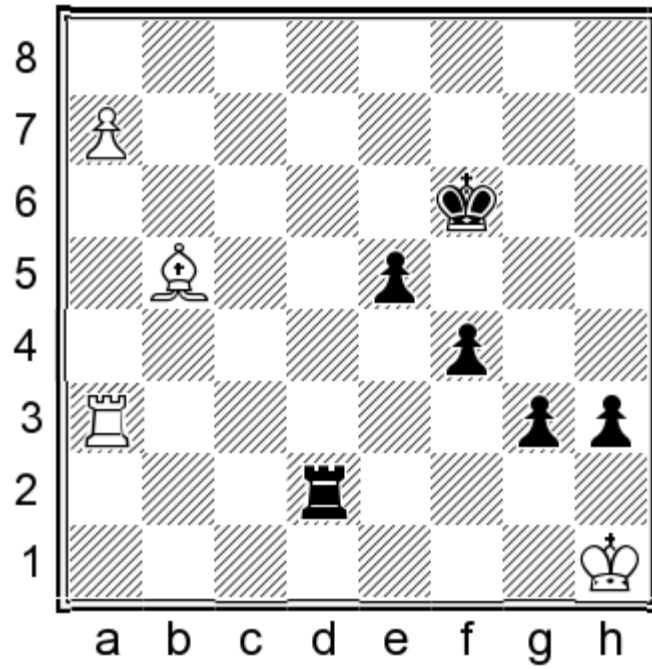
58.a6 Rxf2+ 59.ϕh1

Black has a huge armada of pawns advancing but White is just faster.

59...g3 60.a7

The bishop from b5 covers the f1-square.

60...Rd2



60...♖b2 61.♖a1 wouldn't change anything...

61.♖a1

and the game is over. Black can't stop White from playing a8=♚ and after a line like 61....♖h2 62.♔g1 ♖g2 63.♔f1 ♖f2 64.♔e1 h2 65.a8=♚, the queen covers the h1-square. I can tell you guys that there is no better feeling than beating the World Champion in a difficult, 6-hour game! :)

1–0

GAME 62

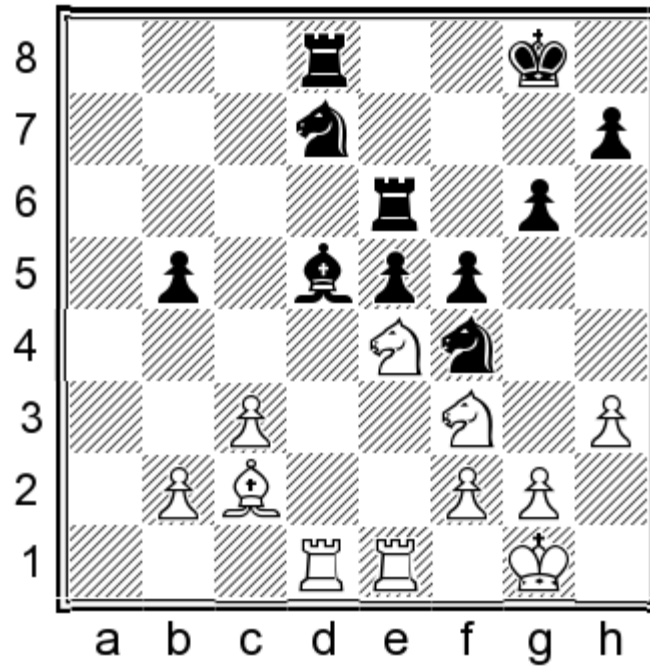
M. Carlsen (2865)

D. Baramidze (2594)

Grenke Chess Classic

07.02.2015

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



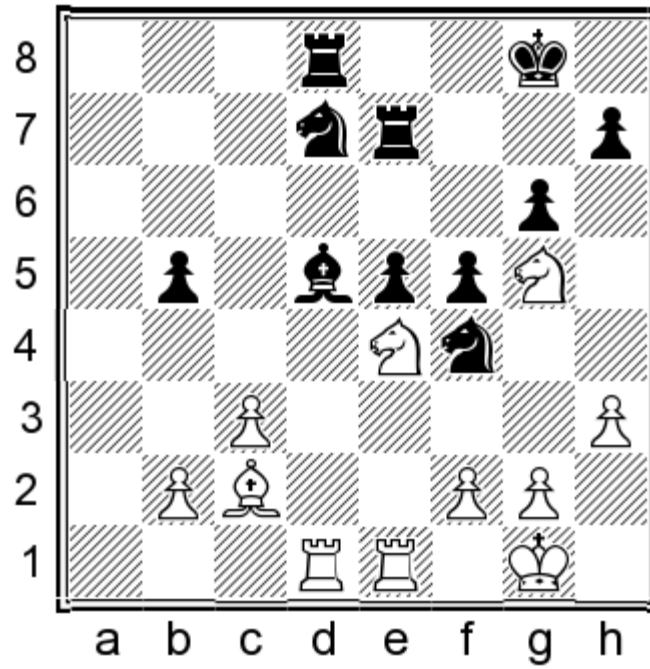
Black seems to be completely fine in this position. He has a nice center and active minor pieces. The only temporary drawback of his position is the misplacement of his e6-rook, and indeed it allows White to grab the advantage with extremely powerful play...

30. ♖fg5!

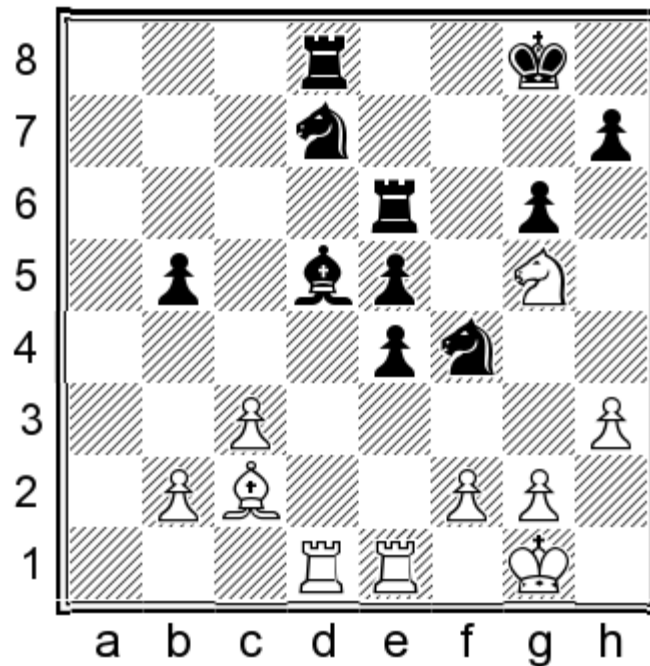
Very well played! Actually the position is very concrete and Carlsen starts to use his tactical skills to gain a positional advantage. Suddenly Black faces a difficult problem: he has many moves and none of them seem to be adequate. Black is slightly better after the simple retreat 30. ♖ed2 ♜ee8 when he consolidates and is ready to take over the initiative by pushing ...e4 followed by ...♞e5-d3.

The reason why the f-knight had to go to g5 can be seen in the line 30. ♖eg5 ♜ee8 31. g3 ♞xh3+! and the f3-knight is hanging.

30. ♖fg5! ♜e7



A nice tactical point is to meet 30...fxe4 by



31. ♖xd5! ♜xd5 32. ♗xe6 ♞e8 and White wins serious material with 33. ♕b3!+- Black cannot survive the pin on the diagonal. 30... ♞ee8 moves into 31. ♗d6 ♞e7 32. g3;

30... ♞c6 is similar to the game. White again plays 31. g3!

31. g3!

The main point of the previous move! White uses the fact that the black pieces are tied to defending each other.

31... ♗xe4

Probably the best defense was 31... fxe4 32. gxf4 ♜b6 33. fxe5 ♞xe5 34. ♗xe4 when White has won a pawn, but at least

Black managed to keep his active pieces and he might hope for sufficient compensation. 34...♔g7

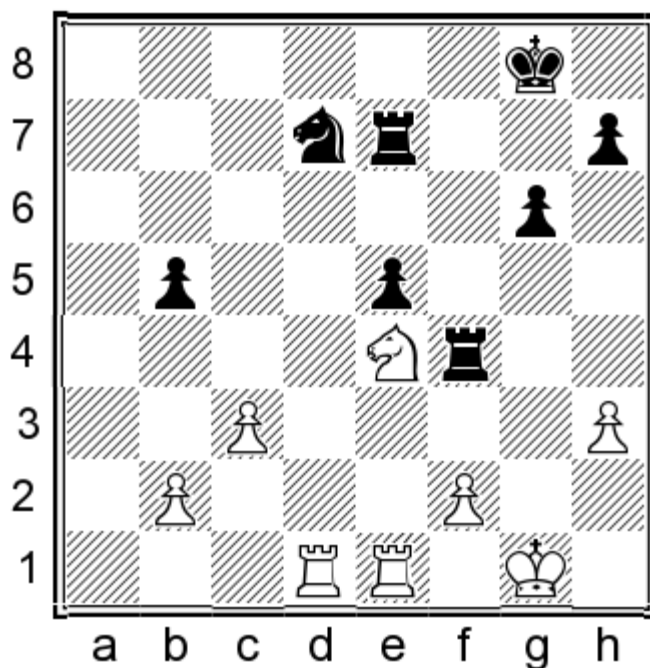
32.♙xe4 fxe4

32...♞xh3+ is even worse, because it leaves Black with a horrible structure after 33.♞xh3 fxe4 34.♞g5!± White could have recaptured the e4-pawn right away, but it is much better to occupy this excellent square with the knight. Despite the material equality, White can claim a serious advantage because of the two weaknesses on e5 and b5 and the excellent placement of his pieces.

33.gxf4 ♖f8

Black loses material after 33...exf4 34.♖xe4! ♖de8 Black was forced to leave the pin on the d-file but it simply costs him a pawn. 35.♖xf4±

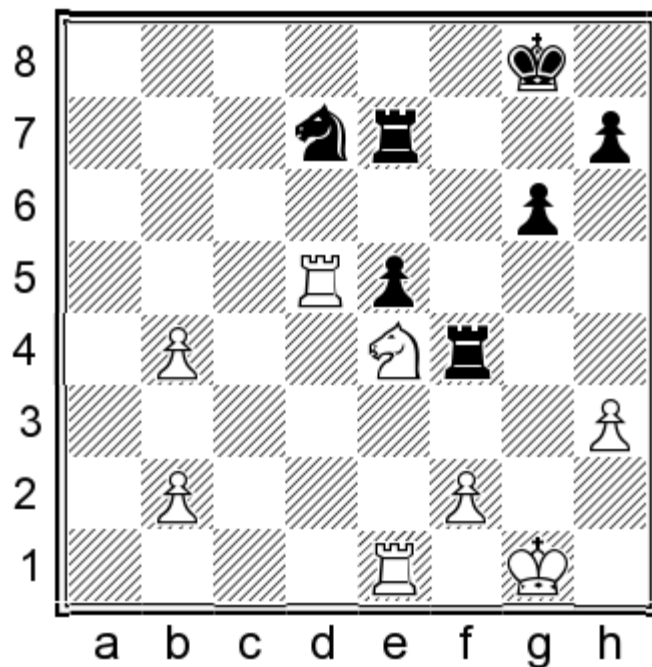
34.♞xe4 ♖xf4



The material is balanced, but the b5 pawn is extremely weak. Carlsen continues the game with extreme precision. It is tempting to go for the pawn directly with ♖d5, but it allows Black to create counterplay. He rather fixes the weakness first to be able to win it under better circumstances...

35.b4!

♖d5 and ♞d6 are real threats now. 35.♖d5 is strongly met by 35...b4! 36.cxb4



36...♘f6! forcing simplification to a rook endgame, where Black keeps excellent chances to survive. 37.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 38.♖dxе5 ♖xe5 39.♖xe5 ♖f4! It is important not to allow the rook to take up position behind the b-pawn. For instance ...♖f3? ♖e3 followed by ♖b3 is game over. 40.♖b5 ♔g7! It looks clever to leave the back-rank in order to avoid the cutting-off of the king with ♖b7. White cannot avoid losing the b2-pawn anyway. 41.♔g2 ♖d4 followed by ...♖d3 and ...b3 next. If White tries to activate his king with ♔f3-e4 the dropping of the h3-pawn gives Black strong counterplay with the h-passer.

35...♘f6

Baramidze aims for a rook endgame, but Carlsen correctly refuses this option.

36.♘d6!

The fall of the b5-pawn creates very dangerous connected passed pawns for White!

36...♖f3 37.♘xb5 ♖xh3 38.c4!

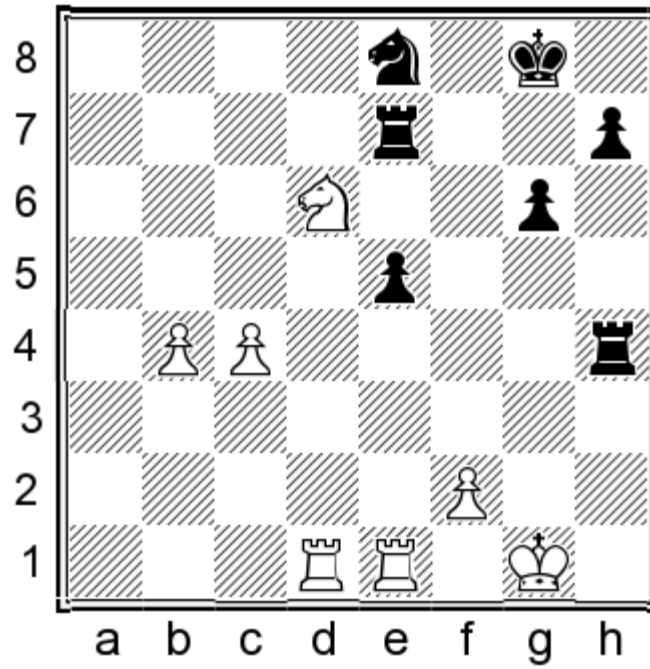
The material is still balanced, but the quality of the pawns decides the outcome. The b- and c-pawns start to advance and Black cannot really stop them.

38...♖h4

38...♖b3 runs into 39.♘d4! and ♘c6 next!

39.♘d6 ♘h5

On 39...♘e8



40.♖e4! is a key move to save the pawns along the 4th rank. (Sometimes such pawns automatically decide the game, but here White loses one of them... 40.♜xe8? ♜xe8 41.♞c1 ♞c8=) 40...♞xe4 41.♜xe4+- and the pawns continue marching.

40.b5 ♜f4

Black pins his hopes on active counterplay against the exposed king, but he is lacking the pieces to create something serious. White can easily neutralize the threats of the knight and rook.

41.b6 ♞g4+ 42.♔f1 ♞h4 43.f3!

Simple and strong. White parries the mate threat.

43...♞h1+ 44.♔f2 ♞h2+ 45.♔g1

Sacrificing an exchange with 45.♔e3 was also good enough. 45...♜g2+ 46.♔d3 ♜xe1+ 47.♞xe1+- and the passed pawns are unstoppable.

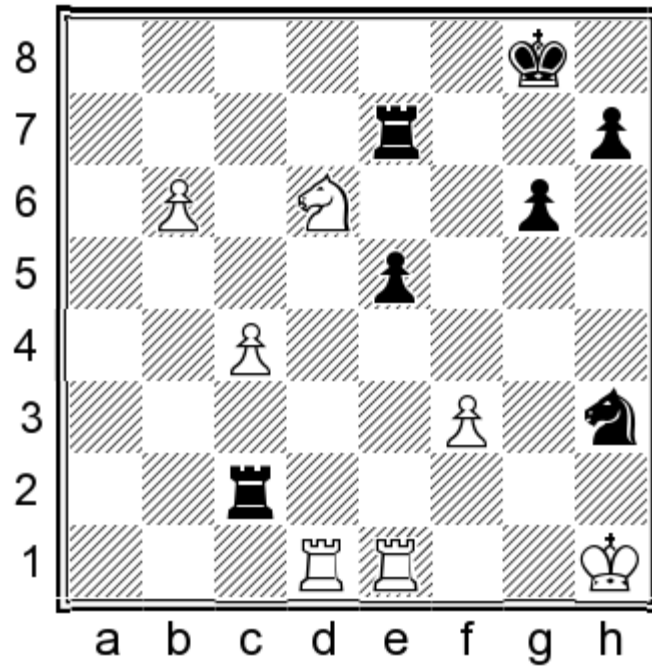
45...♞c2 ...

♜h3 is threatened now, but White has many convincing winning moves to parry this single threat. 45...♞b2 loses to 46.♞b1 ♜h3+ 47.♔h1 ♜f2+ 48.♔g2+- and there are no more checks.

46.♔h1

46.b7? is wrong because of 46...♜h3+ 47.♔h1 (47.♔f1?? ♞f2#) 47...♜f2+ 48.♔g1 ♜h3

46...♜h3



47. ♖e4!

The final exact move! White prevents ...♘f2 and now the only question that remains is what happens if Black captures the unprotected pawn, but this is also refuted directly...

47... ♜xc4 48. ♜d8+! ♔g7 49. ♜b1!

and Black resigned in view of 49. ♜b1 ♜b7 50. ♘d6+– and the pawn promotes. Perfect technique by Carlsen!

1–0

GAME 63

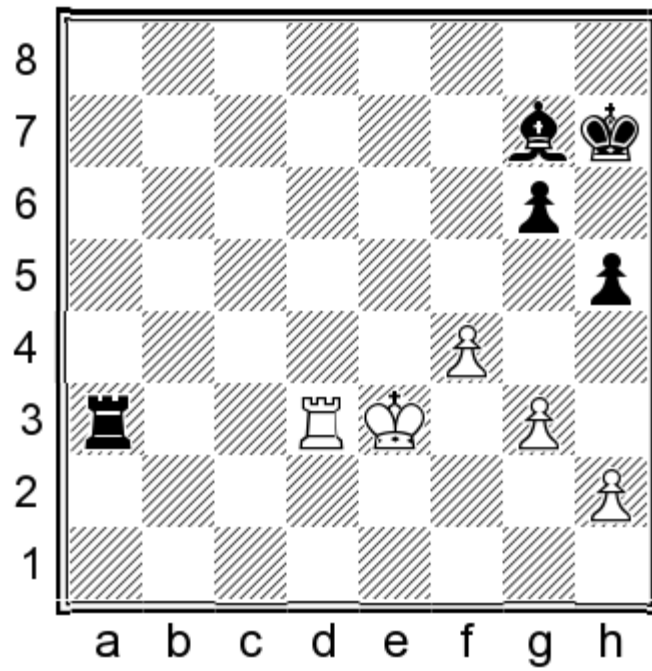
I. Bukavshin (2622)

A. Moiseenko (2695)

European Championship

27.02.2015

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

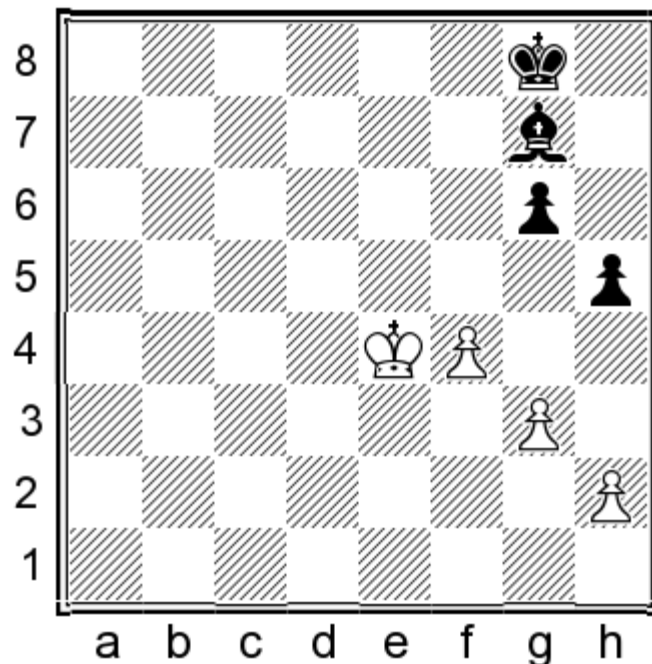


Black is a piece up, but the h1-corner square does not match the color of the g7-bishop. This makes the win more difficult technically. The question is if Black should trade rooks or not?

44...♖xd3+?

It's amazing, but the game seems to be drawn after this exchange. Black should have kept the rooks on the board, followed by slowly improving his position by bringing the king into the game... 44...♖a7 45.♔e4 ♔g8 46.h3 ♔f7 followed by ...♔e6 and ...♕f6 and starting to squeeze the white king. 47.g4 Black could also now keep his pawns on the board with ...h4, but there is an even stronger direct solution as well: 47...♖a4+! 48.♔f3 ♕h6→ forcing the g5-move, which is a fatal weakening of the pawn structure.

44...♖xd3+? 45.♔xd3 ♔g8 46.♔e4



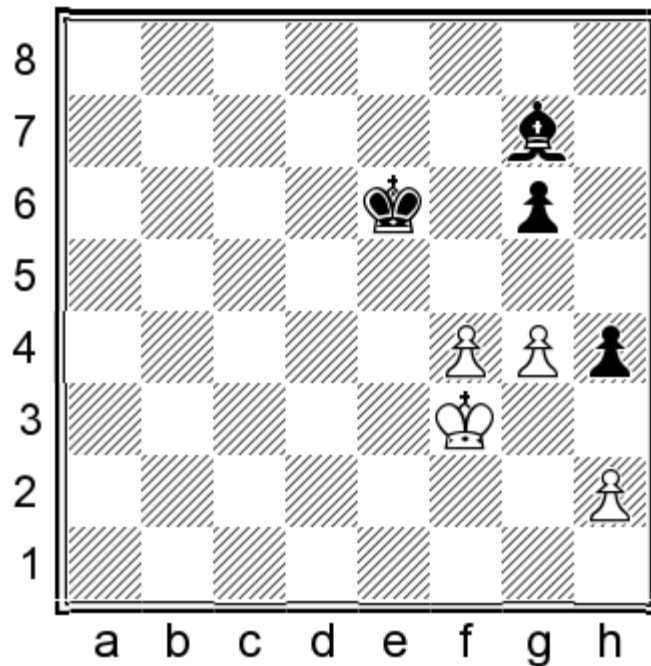
At first sight Black is completely winning as he simply brings up his king and White is unable to trade pawns because f5 is met by ...g5 and g4 by ...h4. However the truth is different...

46...♔f7 47.♔f3

White intends to push g4 as it cannot be taken because, after ...♔xg4, h4-h5 inevitably appears, trading off the last-pawn-standing. Trying to reach the game position via a different move-order by playing 47.f5 fails to do the job, because Black can answer with 47...g5 48.h3 ♔e7! 49.♔d5 (White has no time to play 49.g4 because Black reaches the d6-square with the king. 49...hxg4 50.hxg4 ♔d6—+ and the king goes to e5 next move and soon catches the g4-pawn.) 49...g4! This is the key! Black separates the f5-pawn from the others... 50.hxg4 hxg4 51.♔e4 ♕h6! prevents ♔f4! The rest is just a matter of technique. 52.♔e5 ♔f7! 53.f6 otherwise Black plays ...♔f6. Now he must prevent ♔f5 with 53...♔g6 54.♔e6 ♕g5 55.f7 ♕h6 56.♔e7 ♔f5 57.f8=♖+ ♕xf8+ 58.♔xf8 ♔e4—+ wins. However 47.h3 is also strong, when 47...♔e7 (47...♔f6 48.g4) 48.♔d5 will transpose to the game.

47...♔f6

47...♔e6 does not work because of 48.g4 h4



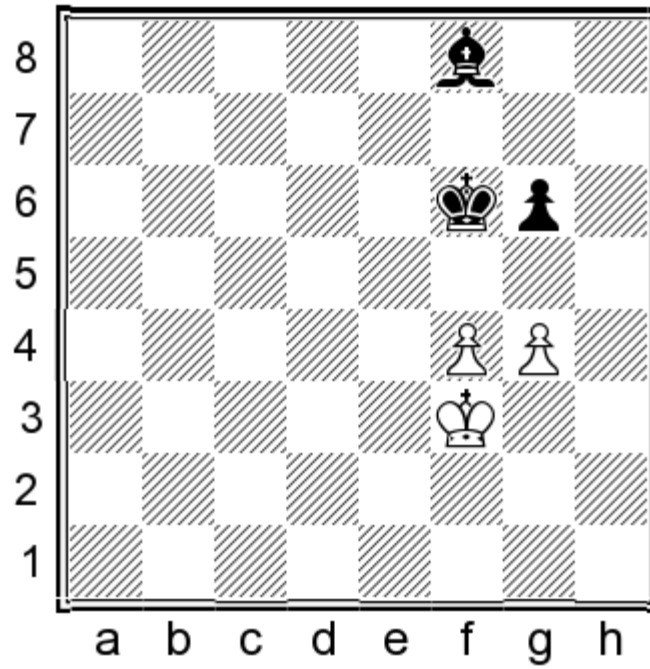
(48...hxg4+ 49.♔xg4= and h4-h5 next. 48...♔d5 49.f5=) 49.f5+! leaves Black with a single h-pawn, which is not winning with the dark-squared bishop. 49...gxf5 50.gxf5+ ♔xf5 51.♔g2 and the king goes into the corner and reaches the well-known theoretical draw... 51...♔g4 52.h3+ ♔f4 53.♔h2 ♔f3 54.♔h1 ♔g3 55.♔g1 ♔xh3 56.♔h1= White just passes on g1-h1 and Black cannot squeeze it out from there because it always ends in a stalemate.

48.h3

48.g4 h4 49.h3 is equally good, as it transposes to the game.

48...♕f8 49.g4 h4

49...hxg4+ 50.♔xg4! is the only move to hold, with h4-h5 coming next. (50.hxg4?

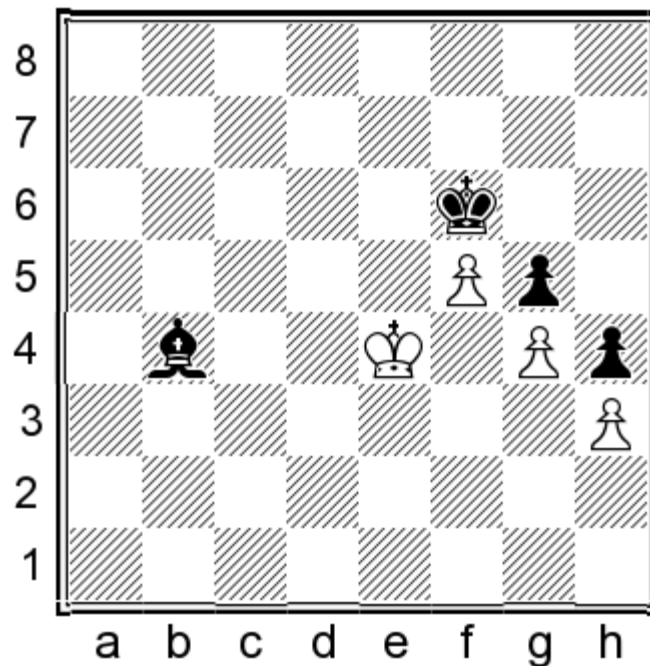


also looks good at first sight, but Black wins after some subtle maneuvering: 50...♔e7! Black must go around with the king and he must sidestep the f5-check to save his last pawn... 51.♕e4 ♔d6 Compared to the game, Black has reached the 6th rank with his king and from now on the squeezing goes more-or-less automatically... 52.♕d4 (52.g5 ♔e6-+; 52.f5 g5-+) 52...♖g7+ 53.♕e4 ♖b2-+ White finds himself in zugzwang and ...♕d5 comes next.)

50.♕e4

50.f5 g5 51.♕e4 is again a transposition to the game.

50...♖b4 51.f5 g5



White has done a great job since the initial position of our game. He has set all his pawns on light squares where the bishop cannot attack them. Black has managed to save the g-pawn, but surprisingly it is not enough to win. Let's see

the reasons behind this...

52.♔d5

White keeps the black king in the cage, not opening a path towards the h3-pawn.

52...♚e7 53.♔c6!

It is very important that the king cannot be allowed to d6 or e5! White must always control these two squares and he will hold the draw...

53...♞a3 54.♔d5 ♚d7 55.♔e5

Black would like to go around with his king, but suddenly White finds his counterplay in ♔f6! Let's just demonstrate the win if Black reaches the d6-square with the king: 55.♔e4?? ♚d6 56.♔d4 ♞b2+ 57.♔e4 ♞f6—+ The king is forced to retreat and Black gets to e5. Later he uses the same technique and soon he gets to the h3-pawn.

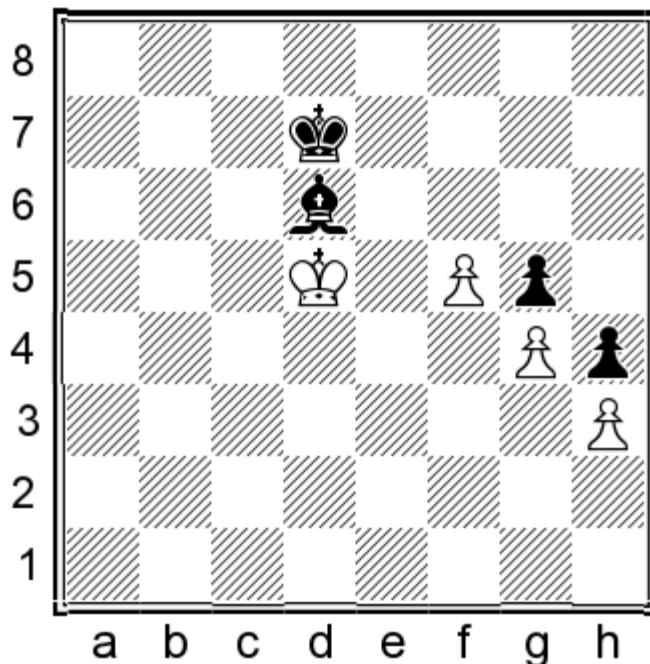
55...♞b2+

The king cannot be allowed to get to f6. 55...♔c6 also leads to a draw after 56.♔f6 ♞c1 57.♔g6 ♚d6 58.f6 ♔e6 59.f7 ♞a3 60.♔xg5=

56.♔d5 ♞g7 57.♔c5

White has a very easy task. He simply needs to control the d6- and e5-squares...

57...♞e5 58.♔d5 ♞b8 59.♔c5 ♞c7 60.♔d5 ♞d6



Black finally manages to place his opponent in zugzwang, but it is still not enough because suddenly the bishop finds itself misplaced on d6, where it occupies the king's ideal place...

61.♔e4 ♞f4

61...♔c6 would be the thematic squeezing, but it allows quick counterplay again: 62.f6! The black king has strayed too far away from the kingside... 62...♔d7 63.♕f5 ♖f4 64.♕g6 ♔e8 65.♕g7 ♖e5 66.♕g6= forces the draw.

62.♕d5

White occupies the right square again and keeps the black king in his prison, far from the d6-square.

62...♔e7 63.♕c6 ♕f7 64.♕d5 ♕f6

Now Black tries to break through the e5-square, but White has enough squares for his king to prevent this idea.. .

65.♔e4 ♖e5 66.♕d5 ♖b2 67.♕e4 ♕f7 68.♕d5 ♕e7

Black tries again via d6, but we already know what happens...

69.♕c5 ♕d7 70.♕d5 ♖f6 71.♕c5 ♖d8 72.♕d5 ♖b6 73.♕e5 ♕e7 74.♕d5 ♖c7 75.♕c5 ♕d7 76.♕d5 ♖d6

We have already seen this position 16 moves ago...

77.♕e4 ♖a3 78.♕d5 ♕e7 79.♕e5 ♖b2+ 80.♕d5 ♕d7 81.♕c5 ♖e5 82.♕d5 ♖b8 83.♕c5 ♕e7 84.♕d5 ♕f7 85.♕c5 ♕f6 86.♕d5

Black admitted to his opponent's brilliant fortress and agreed a draw. This endgame could be very useful to remember...

1/2

GAME 64

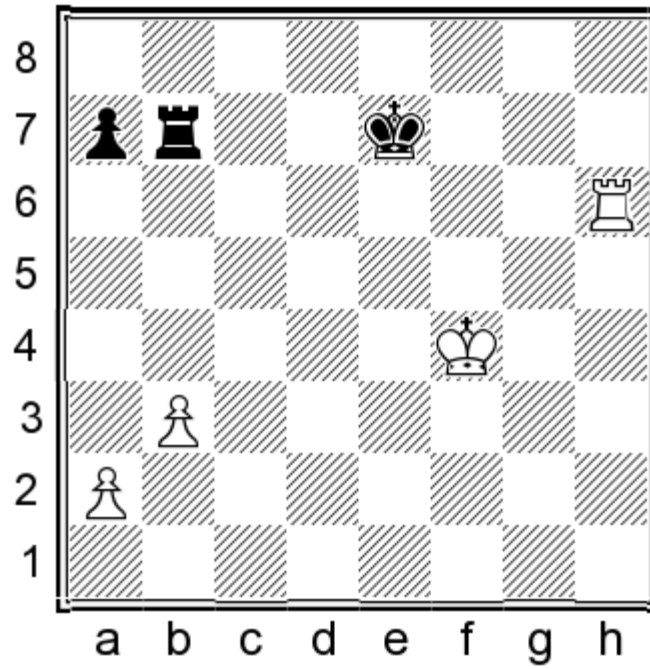
R. Rapport (2709)

A. Khalifman (2613)

Aeroflot Open

02.04.2015

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

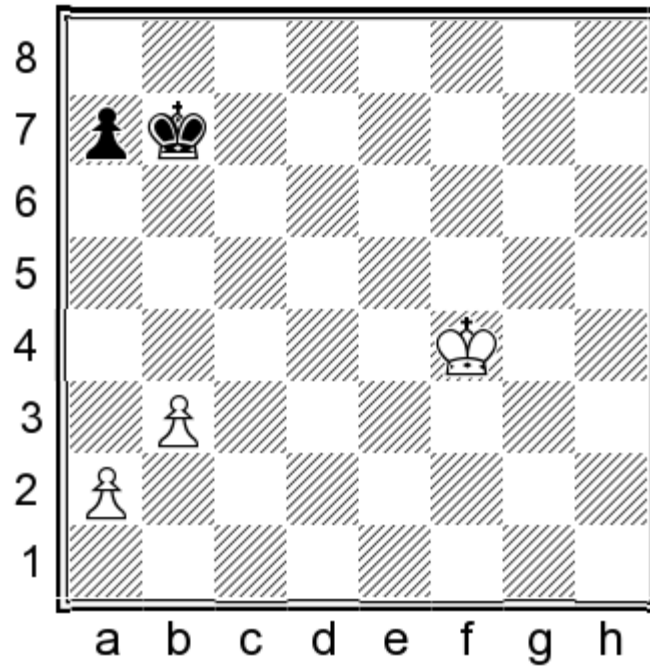


We are now facing a very instructive practical endgame, which will be very useful to remember for our own games. The 2 vs 1 rook endgames are fairly easy theoretical draws if the pawns are on the same side. If the black king was on b8 we could speak about this case, however the huge difference is that the black king is far away from the pawn, and by approaching towards it he must always count on trading the rooks, thus entering into a seemingly suspicious pawn endgame. Our co-author, the ex-World Champion Alexander Khalifman, solves this difficult situation by having a perfect understanding of the position!

48...♔d8!!

The most natural move! Black would like to move the rook along the 7th rank and continue the journey with the king towards the a7-pawn to secure the draw. The question is — what happens if White forces the trade of the rooks? Black had to evaluate the arising pawn endgame accurately...

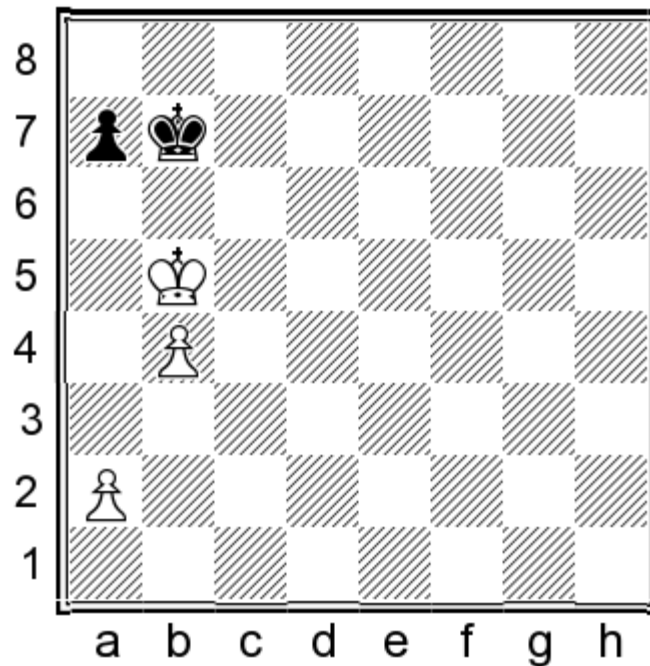
49.♖h8+ ♕c7 50.♖h7+ ♕b6 51.♖xb7+ ♕xb7



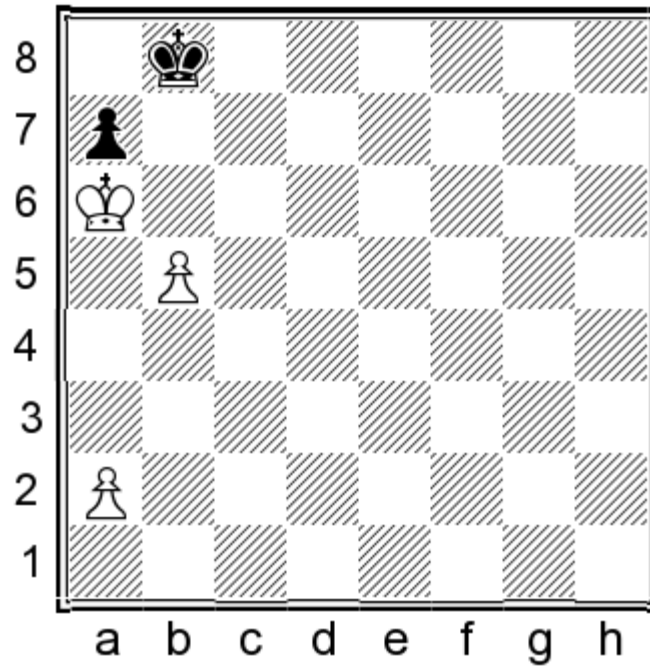
This endgame is a draw, but without knowing about it one must be really scared of losing.

52.♔e5 ♕c6!

It is very logical to go forward with the king, provoking the a2-a3 move to win a crucial tempo and to avoid getting into zugzwang in some positions. The following 52...♕b8? 53.♕d6 ♕b7 54.♕c5 ♕c7 55.♕b5 ♕b7 56.b4



Here is a zugzwang! Black must allow the white king to occupy the a6-square. 56...♕b8 (Touching the a-pawn is never good. It just makes the pawn more vulnerable. 56...a6+ 57.♕c5 ♕c7 (Black cannot force the b-pawn to capture on a5. White wins after 57...a5 58.b5!+-) 58.a4 ♕b7 59.♕d6 ♕b6 60.a5+ ♕b5 61.♕c7 ♕xb4 62.♕b6+- Black misses one tempo to squeeze the king to the a-file.) 57.♕a6 ♕a8 58.b5 ♕b8



Here we can see the importance of each tempo. If the pawn was on a3, the game would be drawn. However, White wins the crucial tempo with 59.a3! ♔a8 60.a4 ♔b8 61.a5 ♔a8 62.b6 axb6 63.axb6 ♔b8 64.b7!+-

53.♔d4 ♔b5 54.a3

54.♔c3 ♔c5 forces one of the pawns to move if White wants to make progress.

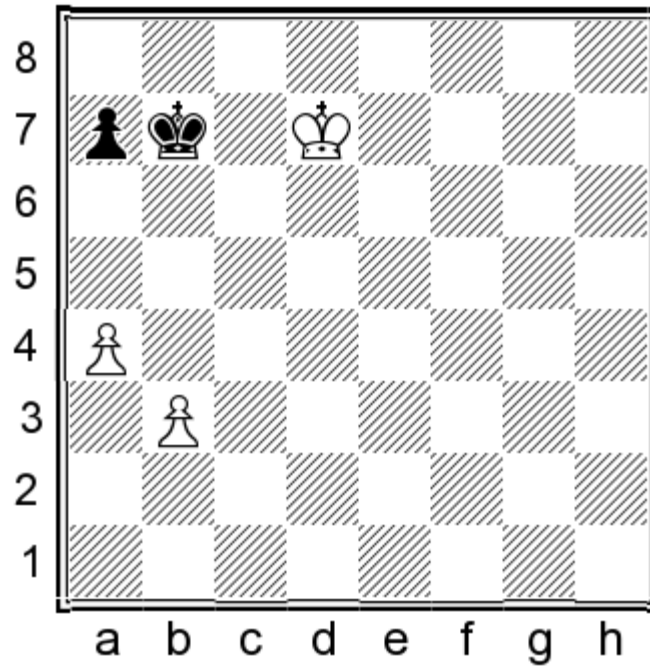
54...♔b6!

Black starts waiting now. He only moves with his a-pawn if it forces a draw. Let's say after 55.b4 a5. Otherwise it is obligatory to keep it on a7 to save the game.

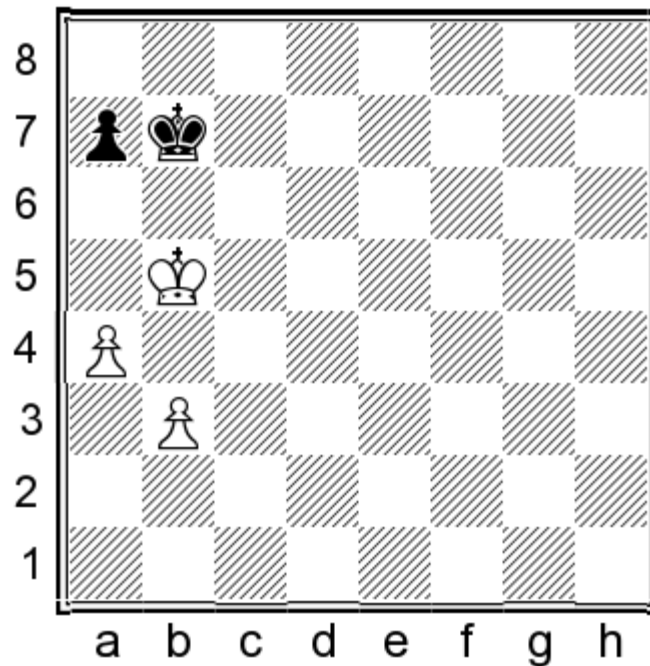
55.♔d5

White cannot make progress if he tries frontal opposition: 55.♔c4 ♔c6 56.♔b4 ♔b6

55...♔b5 56.♔d6 ♔b6 57.a4 ♔b7 58.♔d7



58.♔c5 is another line where we can see the importance of provoking all the white pawn moves... 58...♔c7 59.♔b5 ♔b7



The only thing that Black must calculate here is the position with the white king on a6 and then White advances his pawns to b6 axb6 axb6 and in this situation he should play ...♔a8! 60.b4 (If 60.♔a5 ♔b8 61.♔a6 ♔a8 62.b4 ♔b8 63.b5 ♔a8 64.a5 ♔b8 65.b6 axb6 66.axb6 ♔a8= and draw!) 60...♔a8! By accurate calculation we come to the right conclusion! (60...♔b8? loses now, because of 61.♔a6 ♔a8 62.b5 ♔b8 63.a5 ♔a8 64.b6 axb6 65.axb6 ♔b8 66.b7+–; 60...♔c7 is also good. It transposes after ♔a6 ♔b8.) 61.♔a6 ♔b8 62.b5 ♔a8 63.a5 ♔b8 64.b6 axb6 65.axb6 ♔a8!= and Black holds!

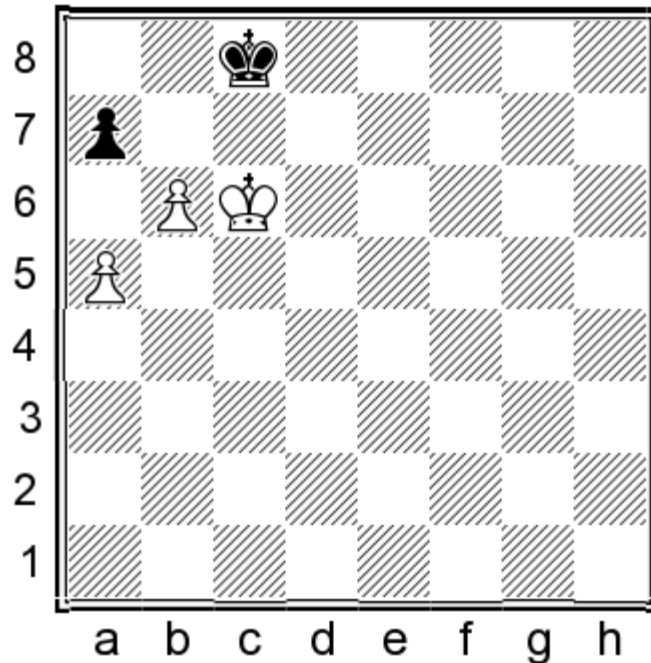
58...♔b8!

The only move! Black must prevent the white king from getting behind his pawn! 58...♔b6? loses to 59.♔c8! a5 (59... ♔c6 60.♔b8 ♔b6 61.b4+–) 60.♔b8 ♔c5 61.♔b7 ♔b4 62.♔b6 ♔xb3 63.♔xa5 ♔c4 64.♔b6+–

59.♔c6

On 59.♔d8 Black only waits with ♔b7-b8. 59...♔b7;

I just want to demonstrate another drawing idea with the line 59.♔d6 ♔c8 (59...♔b7 is more natural of course, but it is still a draw.) 60.♔c6 ♔b8 61.b4 ♔c8 62.b5 ♔b8 63.a5 ♔c8 64.b6



I wanted to reach this position where 64...axb6 65.axb6 ♔b8 66.b7 wins again. But Black has two different ways to make a draw: 64...♔b8 (64...a6 is another well-known theoretical draw. Black only waits on the b8-b7 — and if necessary c8 — squares and White cannot make progress because 65.b7+ ♔b8 66.♔b6 is stalemate!) 65.b7 a6!= and White is forced to stalemate his opponent with ♔b6.

59...♔c8 60.♔c5 ♔c7 61.♔b5 ♔b7 62.♔a5 ♔b8!

We already know that Black must calculate if the king should go to a8 or b8. With the white pawn on a3, 62...♔a8 would have been the drawing move!

63.♔b4

63.♔a6 ♔a8 64.b4 is the usual draw after 64...♔b8 65.b5 ♔a8 66.a5 ♔b8 67.b6 axb6 68.axb6 ♔a8 69.b7+ ♔b8 70.♔b6=

63...♔c8 64.♔c5 ♔c7 65.b4 ♔b7 66.♔d6 ♔b6 67.♔d7 ♔b7 68.a5 ♔b8 69.♔c6 ♔c8 70.b5 ♔b8 71.b6 axb6 72.axb6 ♔c8 73.b7+ ♔b8 74.♔b6

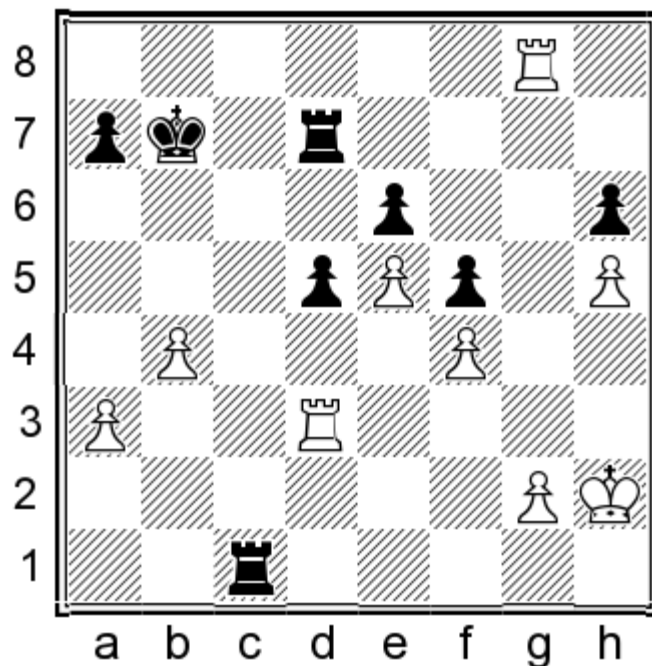
A very instructive endgame!

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GAME 65

Y. Kuzubov (2667)

D. Solak (2607)



This is the game which brought Solak what is probably one of his biggest successes in his chess career — taking first place at the very strong Dubai Open. Black's position seemed to be close to lost for a long time until this interesting rook endgame appeared. White is a pawn up and Black's pawns look to be in danger, especially the pawn on h6, but Solak finds a great way to complicate things and even — after a few mistakes by his opponent — to win the game!

46...d4!

Black grabs his only chance. The idea of the d4-move is not to push the pawn, but to get the king to the e4-square.

47.♠g6

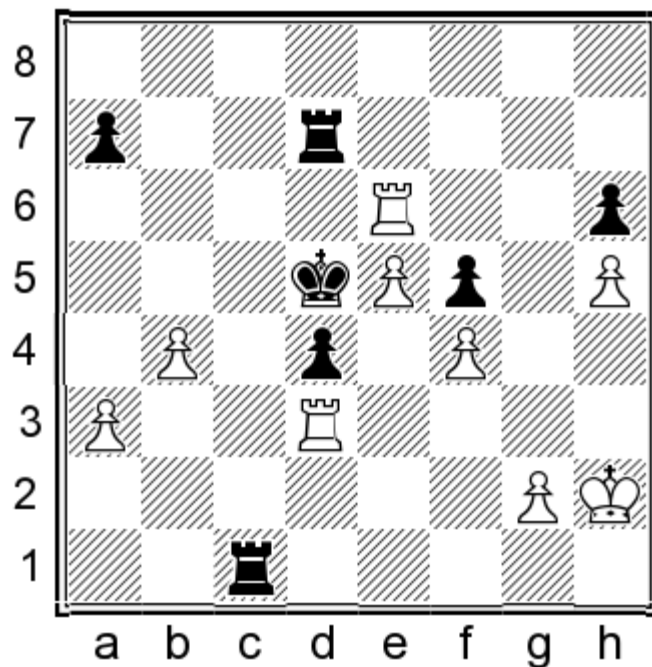
What could be more logical than to take the e6-pawn?

47...♙c6

Black's only chance.

48.♠xe6+ ♔d5

White is already 2 pawns up, but things are much more complicated than they seem. The black king on e4 will support the movement of the d-pawn while the white king on h2 is not doing anything.



49. ♖e8

Not a bad move, but maybe not the most precise. Why not continue with 49. ♖xh6 ♕e4, and now White would have to find the very strong 50. ♖d6! A nice tactic which gives White a clear advantage. 50... ♖xd6 51. exd6 ♖c8 (Black can't stop the white pawn after 51... ♕xd3 52. d7) 52. ♖d1 ♖d8 Now White has a couple of moves, but I think that after the simple 53. ♕g3 ♖xd6 54. ♕f2 White's chances to win the game are excellent.

49... ♕e4

The white rook on d3 is under attack, and to go back to d2 is not an option because of ♕e3.

50. e6!

White finds the best move, the e-pawn starts to be dangerous as well.

50... ♖g7

and Black also plays the best move. To let White play ♖g3 would end up badly for Black.

51. ♖d2?

This is a serious mistake. White had to play 51. ♖g3 ♖xg3 52. ♕xg3 and now we are in a crazy position! White is a full 2 pawns up and has a strong pawn on e6, but the d4-pawn almost cannot be stopped. Things are very complicated here. 52... ♖c7 (Black is losing after 52... ♕e3 53. ♖f8! and the f5-pawn falls. 53... ♖c7 54. ♖xf5 followed by ♖e5+ with an easy win.) 53. ♖d8 (53. ♕f2 ♖c2+ just leads to a draw.) 53... ♖e7 54. ♖d6 The black rook is blocked on e7, but here comes the king! 54... ♕e3 with the simple idea of playing ...d3-d2-♕e2 and queen. Of course Black can never be better here, but whether White is winning or not is really hard to tell, especially in a practical game. White's idea here is to play ♕h4 followed by g4.

51... ♕e3

Of course! Winning a clear tempo and pushing the white rook to a passive position on b2.

52. ♖b2 d3

Now it is already White who is risking a loss, as Black just wants to play ...d2.

53. ♖d8

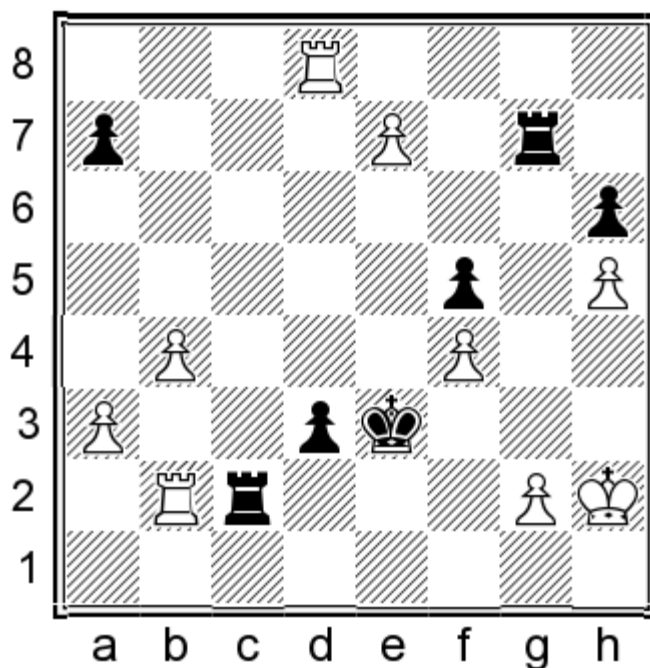
There is no other way to stop Black from playing ...d2.

53... ♖c2

Offering the rook exchange and attacking the g2-pawn.

54. e7?

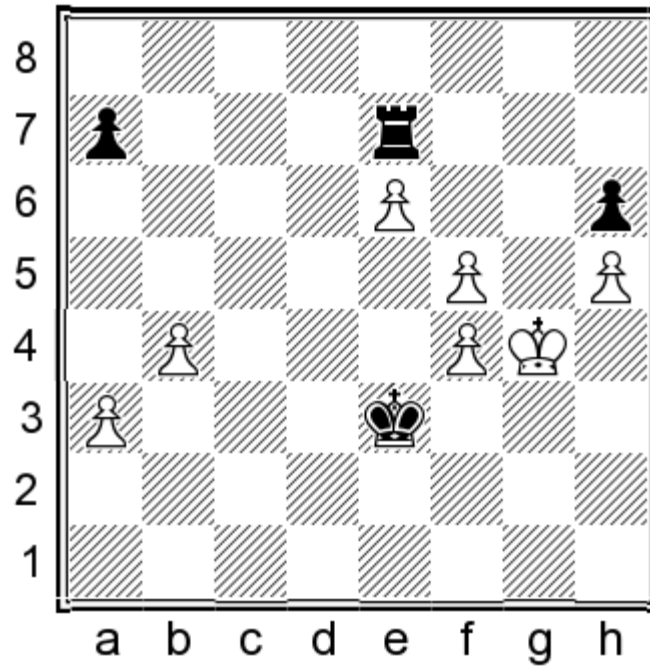
and White makes another mistake.



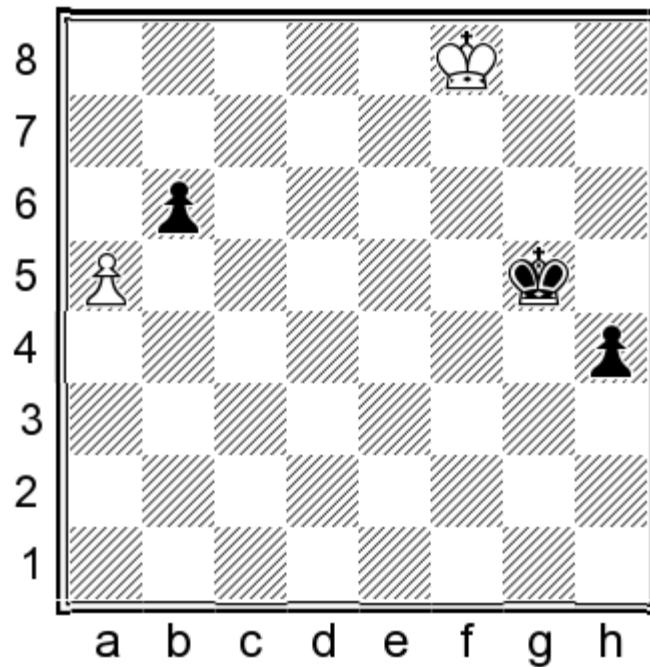
54. ♖xc2! This move is just impossible to calculate during a practical game. **54... dxc2 55. ♖c8 ♔d2** and here comes the key move: **56. g4!!** This is not the hardest part to find, but the position that will appear in a couple of moves is the nut which White needs to crack. **56... c1=♚** Black doesn't seem to have anything better.

(**56... ♖e7 57. gxf5** leads us back to the main line. **56... fxg4 57. f5 ♖e7 58. ♔g3** Here White is just winning.)

57. ♖xc1 ♔xc1 58. gxf5 Now Black has **58... ♖e7!** and it seems as though he has managed to stop all the white pawns. The king from c1 also has enough time to get back to d6 after which the game is over...but no! **59. ♔g3 ♔d2 60. ♔g4 ♔e3** and



61.f6! The e6-pawn has to be sacrificed. 61...♖xe6 62.♔f5 ♜e4 63.f7 ♜xf4+ 64.♔g6 ♔f3 The black king is going for the h5-pawn. 65.♔g7 ♔g4 66.f8=♚ ♜xf8 67.♔xf8 ♔xh5 68.b5 ♔g5 69.a4 h5 70.a5 h4 71.b6 axb6 and of course



72.a6! taking the h1-square under control. 72...h3 73.a7 h2 74.a8=♚ and White is winning. To calculate this line from the beginning is almost impossible and, as we saw, just a single tempo decides a win or loss.

54...♜xe7

Now Black has taken the main enemy and the d-pawn is still alive.

55.♜b3

This is White's only chance to stop the d3-pawn from moving.

55...♖d2 56.b5?

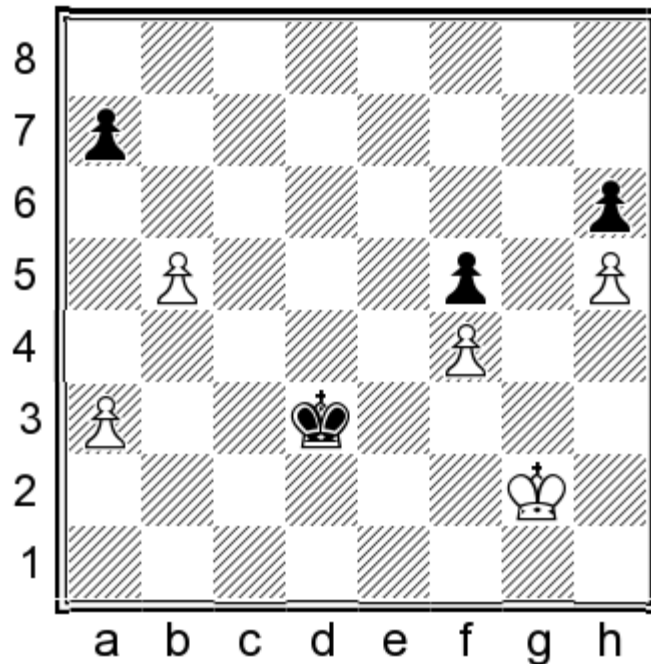
The long-term idea is to play a4-a5 and create a passed pawn, but now Black is winning by force. White had to play 56.♖d6 with the idea of having ♖g6 after Black's ...♖g7. Black is better here, but White has decent chances to survive.

56...♖g7

attacking the g2-pawn which cannot be protected any longer.

57.♖e8+

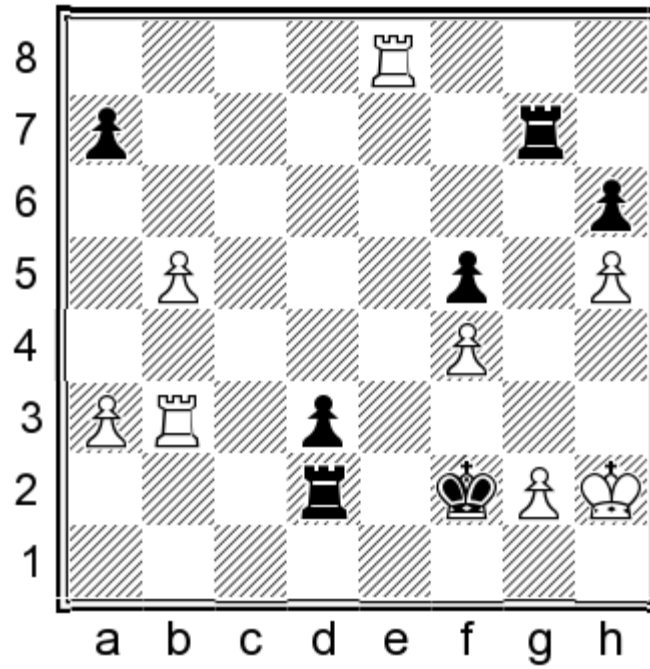
White was probably planning to play 57.♔h3 but Black can still take the g2-pawn. 57...♖xg2 58.♖bxd3+ ♖xd3 59.♖xd3+ ♔xd3 60.♔xg2 We are now in a pawn endgame where Black is winning.



60...♔c4 61.♔f3 ♔xb5 62.♔e3 and Black has 62...♔c4! followed by ...a5-a4 and only then going for the white a-pawn. Black is easily winning here. (62...♔a4? Now it is White who has good winning chances! 63.♔d4 ♔xa3 64.♔e5 ♔b3 65.♔xf5 a5 66.♔g6 a4 67.f5 a3 68.f6 a2 69.f7 a1=♚ 70.f8=♚ and White is pushing for the full point.)

57...♔f2

Now the g2-pawn is falling and White's position is completely lost.



58.b6 ♖xg2+ 59.♔h3 ♖g3+ 60.♔h4

Of course Black could have played ...♔g2 immediately.

60...♖g4+ 61.♔h3 ♖g3+ 62.♔h4 ♔g2

and White can't stop the mate on h3. A very lucky win for Solak, but we have to admit that he used his practical chances well, and the winning decisions for White were anything but easy. Once again we can only marvel at how complicated rook endgames are.

0–1

GAME 66

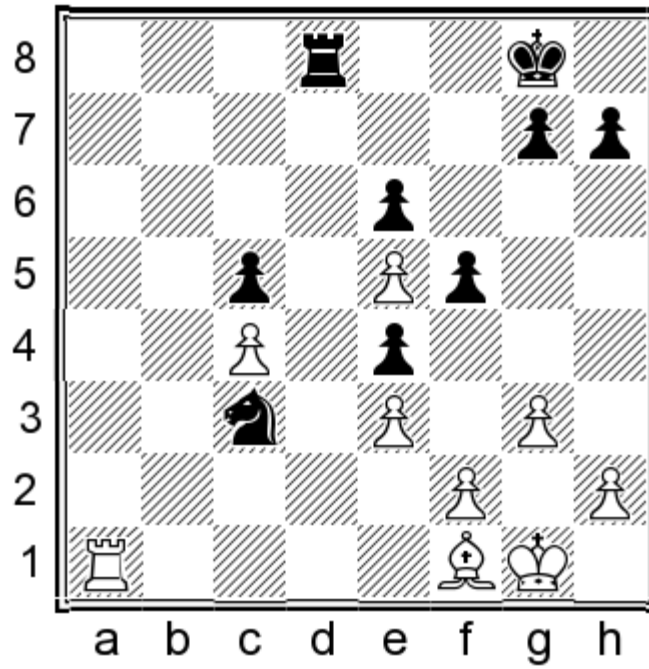
F. Caruana (2802)

M. Carlsen (2863)

Gashimov memorial

19.04.2015

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



We will now look at another example where the World Champion outplays the other top players of the world from seemingly ‘nothing’ positions. The material is balanced, but the knight is clearly superior to the locked bishop. However, Black has his weaknesses on e6 and c5, which should give White enough counterplay to hold the draw.

29. ♖a3

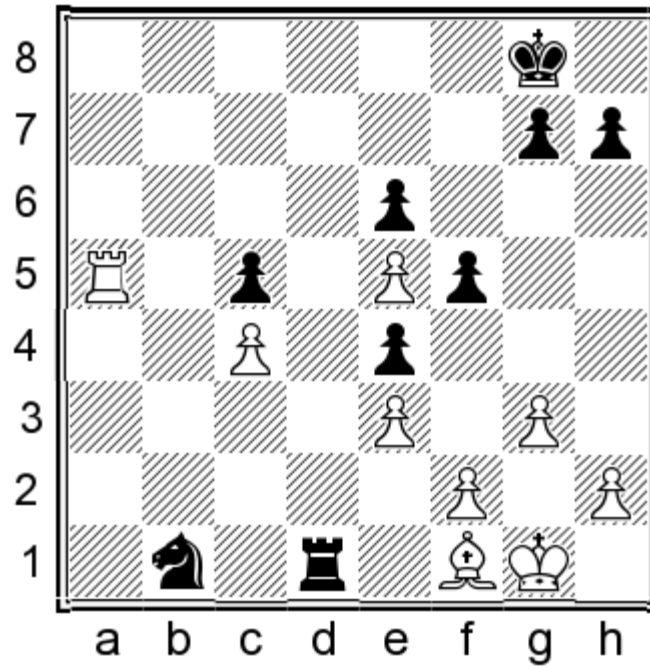
I like this move. White sends the knight to a worse spot, because Black was threatening ...♖d2 followed by ...♘d1, winning the f2-pawn. Trying to do the same with 29. ♖c1 was less accurate, because Black locks the rook as well with 29...♘a2 30. ♖a1 ♖d2 depriving White from his counterplay on the a-file.

29. ♖a3 ♘b1

Now on 29...♘d1 30. ♙e2= White takes the knight and holds the rook endgame. Black might try to win the c4-pawn, but White attacks e6 with ♖a6 and after ...♙f7 ♖a7 check he goes back to a6 next.

30. ♖a1?

Caruana tries to repeat moves, but he underestimates Carlsen’s subtle plan... White should have played 30. ♖a5 ♖d1 This was what White was afraid of, but he has



31. ♖a1! preventing ...♞d2 by pinning the knight! (31. ♔g2 loses to 31... ♞d2! 32. ♕e2 when ♞e1 demonstrates very well how bad the white bishop is! It is trapped!) 31... ♞c3 32. ♖a3 ♞c1 33. ♖a8+ ♔f7 34. ♖a7+ forces a draw. ...♔g6 can be met by ♖a6.

30... ♞d2!

The knight is heading to f3 to collect the e5-pawn.

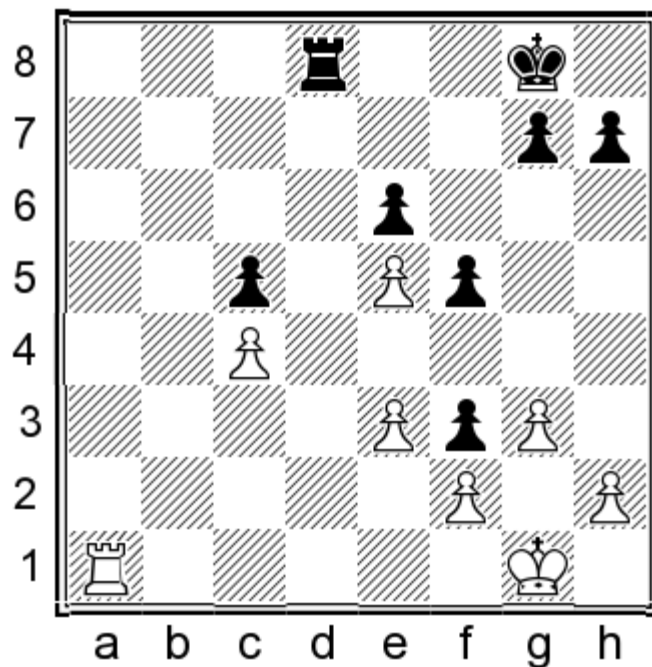
31. ♕e2

Another mistake which already causes too big problems for White. He should again have tried 31. ♔g2 ♞f3 32. ♖a6 still with good chances for a draw.

31... ♞f3+! 32. ♕xf3

32. ♔g2 ♞xe5 33. ♖a5 ♞c8 is a healthy extra pawn for Black.

32...exf3



Caruana probably thought that if he managed to trade his poor bishop for the knight, the rook endgame must be an easy draw. However changing the pawn structure in Black's favor creates new problems for White. The new key-factor is the king on g1, which is squeezed to the back rank thanks to the f3-pawn! White cannot start his counterplay against the c5- and e6-pawns because of the penetration of the black rook on the d-file.

33.h3

Trying to give air to the king. White also plans to play g4, followed by going to the f3-pawn with ♔h2-g3. Carlsen prevents this idea with the most natural move.

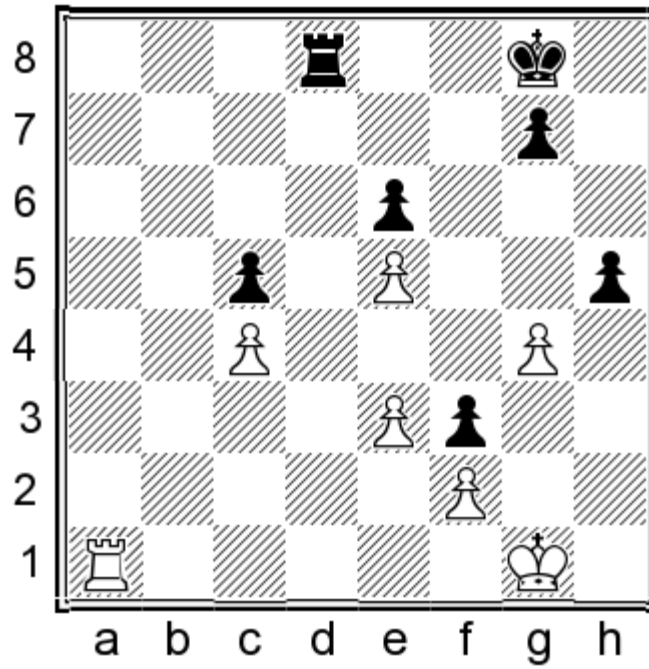
33...h5!

Activating the rook with 33...♞d2 allows White to free his position with 34.g4! fxg4 35.hxg4 ♞c2 36.♔h2 ♞xf2+ 37.♔g3 ♞c2 38.♔xf3 ♞xc4 Black has won a pawn, but White has rescued his king from the cage and launches his counterplay with 39.♞a8+ ♔f7 40.♞a7

34.g4

A clever attempt to rescue the king at the cost of a pawn! Another defensive attempt, 34.♞a6, also seems to fail after 34...♞d1+ 35.♔h2 ♞f1! 36.♞xe6 ♞xf2+ 37.♔g1 ♞g2+ 38.♔f1 ♞xg3 when Black collects all the pawns and his passed pawns are going to be more dangerous than the white ones. 39.♞c6 (39.h4 ♞g4 Black takes on c4 first and then on h4.) 39...♔f7 40.h4 ♞g4 41.♞xc5 ♞xh4 42.♔f2 g5 43.♔xf3 ♞e4 followed by ...h4 and ...g4, which seems to be very bad for White. He is also in some kind of zugzwang as he cannot push his pawns — and if he moves with the rook, one of the pawns falls.

34...fxg4 35.hxg4



35...h4!

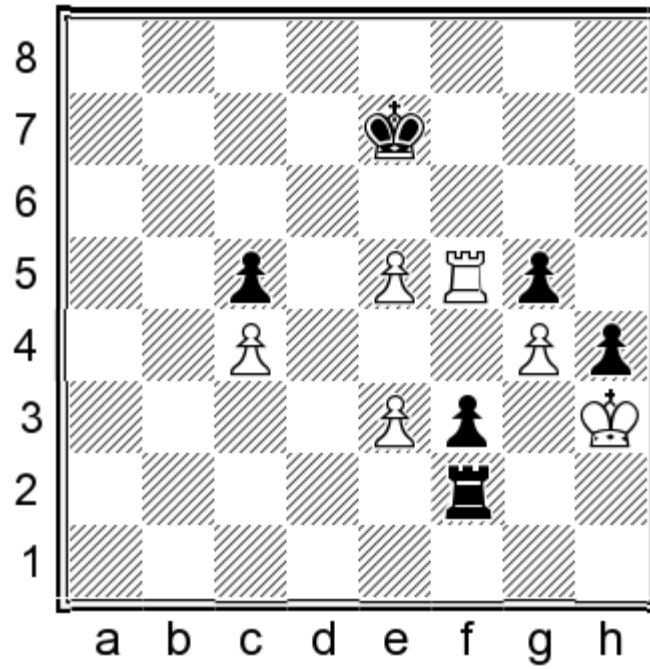
Excellent play by Carlsen! It is more important to keep the king imprisoned by maintaining control of the g3-square, than gaining a material advantage but allowing counterplay. 35...hxg4 36.♔h2 ♖d2 37.♔g3 White should hold without difficulties.

36.♔h2

White could have tried to avoid Black getting a protected passed-pawn with ...g5 by playing g5 himself: 36.g5 but it also fails to hold, as the black king joins the game too quickly. 36...♔f7 37.♔h2 ♔g6 38.♔h3 ♔h5! followed by ...♖d2 next move, or in case of ♖a6 or ♖a7, then ...♖d1 threatening mate on h1! (But not 38...♔xg5 because of 39.♖g1+! again with counterplay.)

36...♖d2

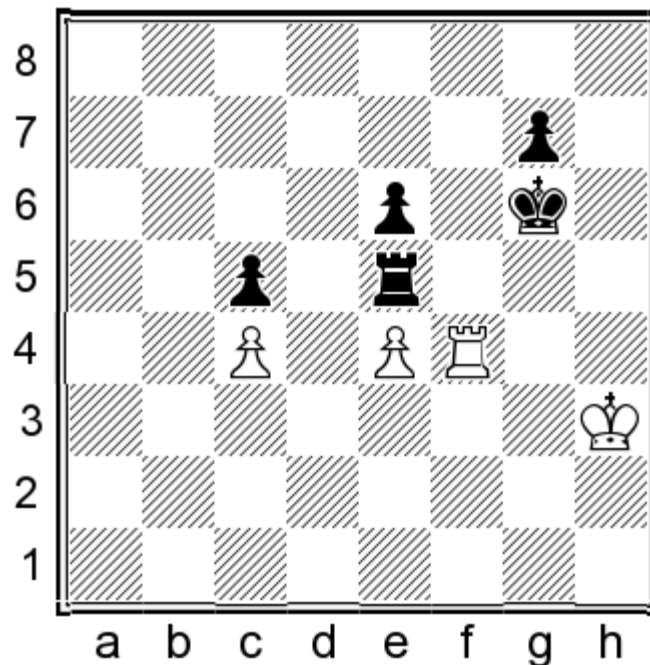
I believe that this is the only inaccuracy Carlsen made in this game. He should have started with 36...g5 and only on the next move activated the rook. 37.♖a6 is met by 37...♖d2 38.♔g1 ♖d1+ 39.♔h2 ♖f1 40.♖xe6 ♖xf2+ 41.♔h3 ♔f7 42.♖f6+ ♔e7 43.♖f5 I tried to hold with active defense, but it is not enough...



43...Rf1! winning an important tempo by threatening mate on h1! 44.♔h2 ♖c1 45.♙xf3 (45.♙xg5 f2+) 45...♙xc4 This is the point. Now the g4-pawn is hanging thanks to the 43...Rf1 move. 46.♔h3 ♖c1 47.♙f5 c4 and the c-pawn runs too quickly! 48.♙xg5 c3 49.♙g7+ ♔d8 50.♙g8+ ♔c7 51.♙g7+ ♔c6 52.♙g6+ ♔b5+ White cannot stop the pawn.

37.♔h3

Missing the opportunity! The only chance was 37.g5! when compared to the 36.g5 line, the white king is a square closer. 37...♙xf2+ 38.♔h3 ♖g2 39.♔xh4 ♔h7 also looks quite bad for White. ...♔g6 is coming and the white rook cannot leave the first rank because of ...f2, but perhaps he can save the game with 40.♙f1! f2 41.e4 ♔g6 42.♔h3 ♙xg5 43.♙xf2 ♙xe5 44.♙f4



Black is a healthy pawn up, but his rook is passive. White wants to bring his king to f3 to free his rook and if Black goes 44...Rh5+ (44...♙g5 45.♙f8) 45.♔g3 ♖h1 46.♙f8 ♖c1 47.♙c8 ♙xc4 48.♔f4! White gets very active with ♔e5 next! In

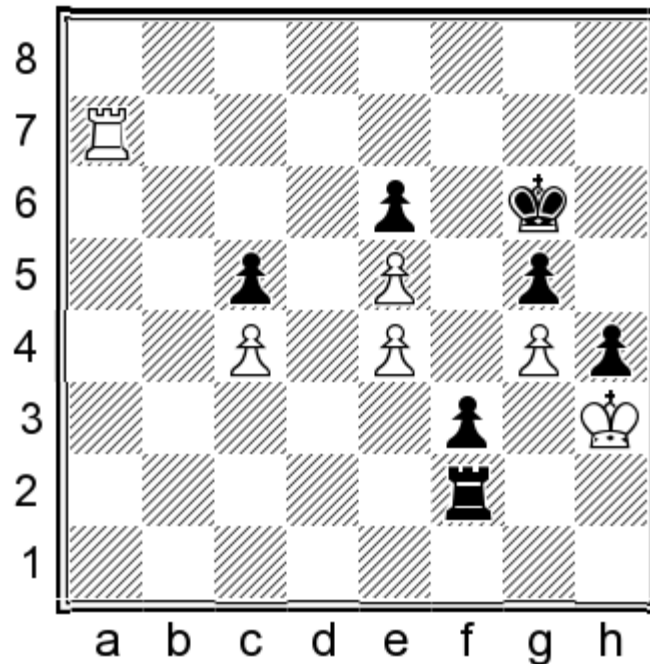
most rook endgames, active defense is usually the best, even if it sometimes costs a pawn. I would say a draw is the most probable outcome here.

37...g5! 38.e4

Setting up a deep trick, but of course Carlsen does not fall for it. 38.♖a6 transposes to the 36...g5 line!

38...♞d4!

collecting all the pawns one-by-one. We can see the point of 38.e4 after 38...♞xf2? White has given up all his moves, his king is stalemated, and he need only sacrifice his rook to split the point. 39.♞a8+ ♔g7 40.♞a7+ ♔g6



41.♞g7+!=

39.♞a8+ ♔f7 40.♞a3

40.♞a7+ does not change the outcome. Black wins in a long, but forced line: 40...♔g6 41.♞e7 ♞d1! 42.♔h2 ♞f1 43.♞xe6+ ♔g7 44.♞f6 ♞xf2+ 45.♔h3 ♞f1 This mate threat is always the key! 46.♔h2 f2 47.♞f5 ♞g1 48.♞xf2 ♞xg4—+ The connected passed pawns decide the game. Black wants to take on e4 and ♞e2 allows ...♔f7-e6. 49.♞f5 ♔g6 50.♞f6+ ♔h5—+

40...♞xc4 41.♞xf3+ ♔e7 42.♞e3 ♞d4

White has finally eliminated the f3-pawn, but his king is still forced to stay behind the h-pawn. Meanwhile, Black has gained another passed pawn, which decides the game.

43.f3 c4 44.♞a3 ♞d3 45.♞a7+ ♔d8 46.♔g2 c3 47.♞a4 c2

It was even easier to go behind the c-pawn with 47...♞d7! and ♞c7 next! 48.♞a8+ ♔c7 49.♞a4 ♔b6—+

48.♞c4 ♞d2+ 49.♔h3 ♔d7 50.♞c5 ♞f2 51.f4

51.♞c3 fails to 51...♞xf3+!—+

51...♖f3+ 52.♔h2 ♜xf4

White resigned because of 52...♜xf4 53.♞xc2 ♜xg4—+ The connected passed pawns win automatically. White must stay passive to defend the e-pawns, but it allows the black king to h5, from where it will help to promote the pawns. A very instructive and well-executed endgame by the World Champion.

0–1

GAME 67

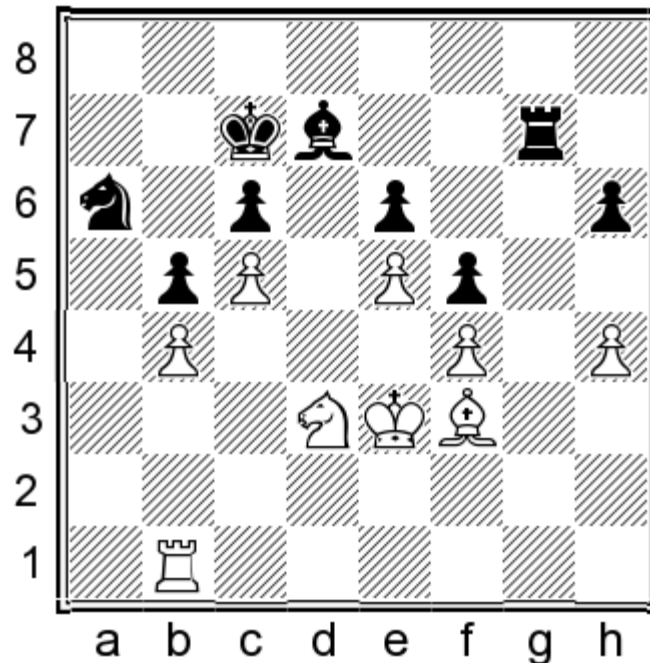
G. Sargissian (2668)

S. Karjakin (2757)

World Teams 2015

26.04.2015

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



White has a beautiful position. The black pawns are fixed on light squares, where they are targets of the white bishop and where they are also restricting the movement of the black pieces. Actually all the black pieces are in a cage and only the knight can be activated by driving it to d5. However, that would make things even worse, because after ♔xd5 White would gain a protected passed pawn either on e5 or on c5, and also an excellent outpost for the knight on d4 against the poor bishop. This means that Black cannot do anything better than sit and wait. However, everything is protected, the opened files are well-controlled and White cannot penetrate with his rook, so converting the advantage still requires some effort. White has all the time in the world for maneuvering and Sargissian finds a very nice way to win the game.

45.♞e1!

White drives his knight to c2 in order to allow access for his rook to d6, and the knight might also jump to d4.

45...♔b7

45...♞g1 is visually some kind of activity, but after 46.♔f2 the rook must retreat.

46.♟c2 ♞c7 47.♞f2

White is not in a hurry.

47...♞e8 48.♞d1! ♞d7

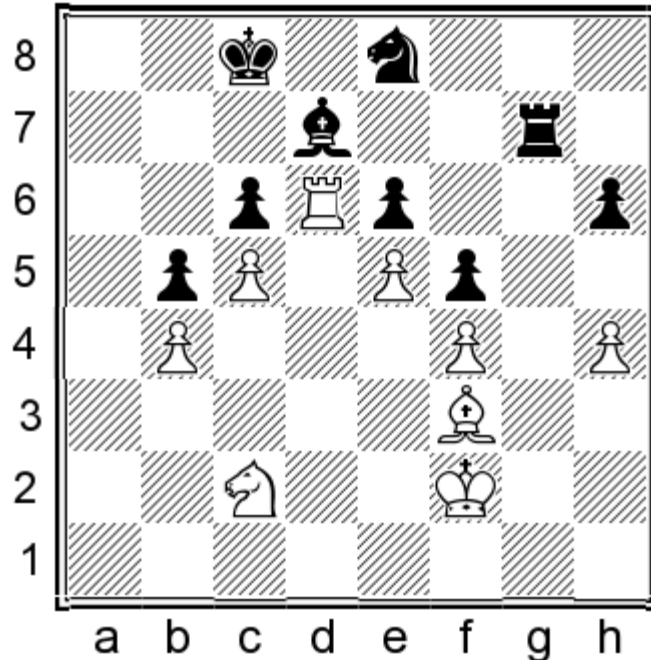
48...♞d7 is strongly met by 49.♞d6!+- followed by ♟d4 and the c6-pawn falls. Taking on d6 is also hopeless, since after exd6 White breaks in with his king through e5-f6.

49.♞d3

One more waiting move before starting the action.

49...♟c8 50.♞d6! ♟e8

Black still seems to be in control! He defends his c6-pawn by attacking the rook and if it retreats he also goes back with ...♟c7, with no gain for White.



51.♟d4!!

This great sacrifice decides the outcome. White gives up his rook, but he gains protected — and far-advanced — passed pawns in exchange. The black rook still cannot create any counterplay.

51...♟xd6 52.exd6 ♟d8

52...♟b7 defends the c6-pawn, but drops b5! 53.♟xb5!+- was the point behind the sacrifice when White returns to d4 followed by pushing b4-b5!

53.h5!

Giving Black no chance! White wants to take on c6 (which does not run away), but it allows the black rook go to g4, attacking both pawns and gaining some counterplay. Therefore Sargissian decides to put it to a protected square.

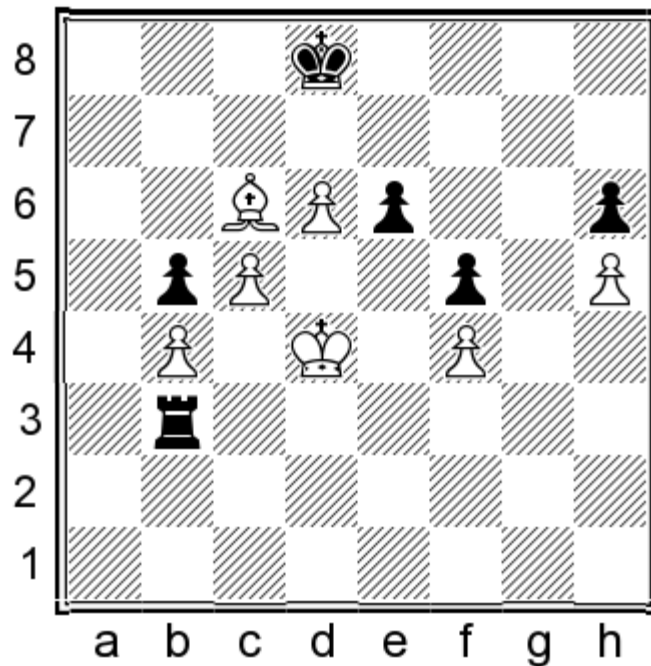
53...♖g8

Black can still do nothing better than just wait.

54.♘xc6+ ♕xc6 55.♙xc6 ♖g4 56.♙e3

Perhaps not the most accurate move, but Sargissian has calculated the line until the end, so there was nothing wrong with it. 56.♙f3 and taking on b5 next would have won automatically without any calculations. 56...♖g1 57.♙xb5 ♖d1 (57...♖b1 58.c6 ♖xb4 59.c7+ ♔c8 60.♙a6+- wins.) 58.♙e3+- controlling the d4- and d2-squares, followed by ♙e2 next sending the rook away from the d-file, and then c6-c7 will work.

56...♖g3+ 57.♙d4 ♖b3



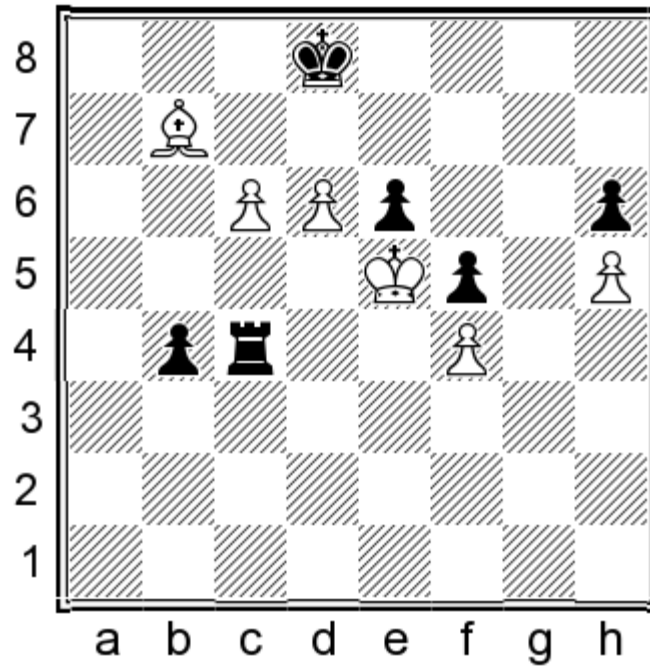
58.♙e5!

Well played! The only winning move! 58.♙xb5 allows Black to stay between the pawns after 58...♖xb4+ 59.♙c4 ♙d7! 60.♙c3 ♖b1= and White is no longer better.

58...♖xb4

A tricky defensive attempt would have been 58...♖e3+!? 59.♙f6 ♖e4! but it also loses after 60.♙xe4! (But not 60.♙xb5? because of 60...♖xb4 61.♙a6 ♖a4 and it is not easy to advance the c-pawn, as the bishop always gets attacked. 62.♙b7 allows 62...♙d7! using the unfortunate placement of the bishop, which cannot give an essential check.) 60...fxe4 61.c6 e3 62.c7+ ♔d7 63.c8=♕+! ♙xc8 64.♙e7 e2 65.d7+ ♙b7 66.d8=♕ e1=♕ The queen endgame is hopeless. White eliminates all the pawns and b5 even falls with check after 67.♕d7+ ♔a8 68.♕c6+ ♔a7 69.♕c7+ ♔a6 70.♕a5+ ♙b7 71.♕xb5+-

59.♙b7! ♖c4 60.c6 b4



61.♔xe6!

The last accuracy, which had to be calculated long ago. White promotes his pawn and the bishop is just in time to catch the b-pawn. Here Black resigned in view of 61.♔xe6 b3 (61...♖e4+ 62.♔d5+-) 62.c7+ ♖xc7 63.dxc7+ ♔xc7 64.♕d5 b2 65.♕a2+-

1-0

GAME 68

A. Grischuk (2780)

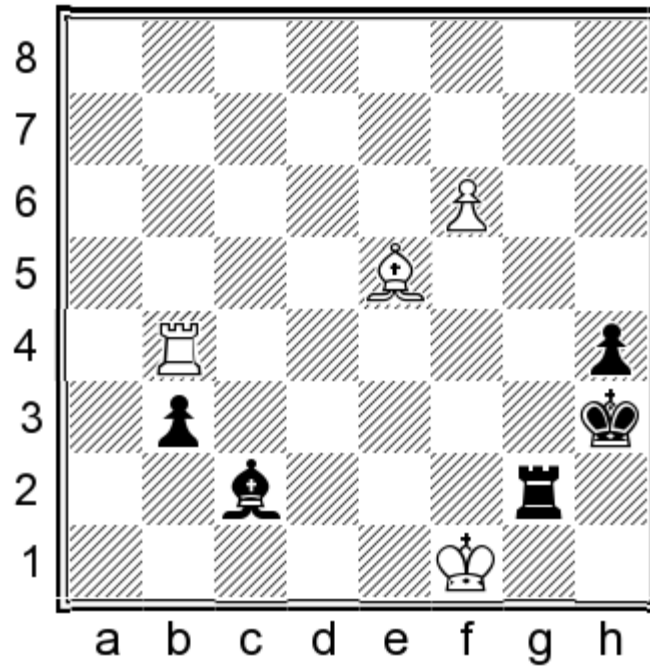
F. Caruana (2803)

KM FIDE GP 2015

Khanty-Mansiysk RUS (6.6)

20.05.2015, [D37]

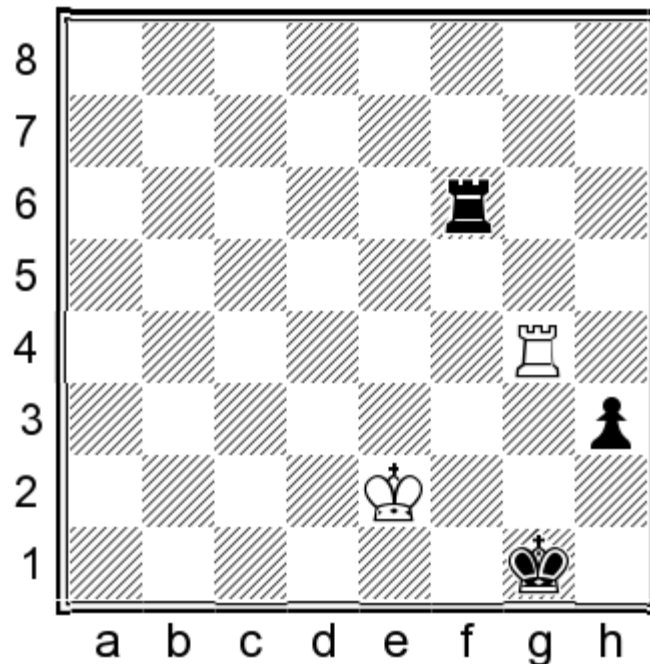
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



Caruana had been dominating this game for a very long time, but Grischuk was fighting very well and made it difficult for Caruana to score the full point. Currently Black has passed b- and h-pawns, which gives him excellent winning chances, especially since the white king is also cut off on the 1st rank.

60...♖g5

Caruana plays in a very practical way. Black could have transposed into a rook endgame after 60...♕d3+ 61.♔e1 ♜e2+ 62.♔d1 ♜xe5 but now White is in time with 63.♞xb3 and Black can't save the d3-bishop. 63...♞f5 64.♞xd3+ ♔g4 but it is still not so easy to see that it is actually a draw! (64...♔g2 65.♞d2+ ♔g1 66.♞d4 h3 67.♔e2 ♞xf6 68.♞g4+



68...♔h2 and the position is a theoretical draw.) 65.♞d4+! An important move, chasing the black king away as far as possible. 65...♔g5 66.♞d8 ♞xf6 67.♞g8+ Now the white rook starts to check from behind. 67...♔h5 68.♞h8+ ♔g4 69.♞g8+ ♔h3 and now that the black king is cut off on the g-file, we again have an easy theoretical draw. 70.♔e2

60...♖g5 61.♗d4

White keeps on waiting on the a1–h8 diagonal.

61...♔h2

Black of course tries to bring his pawn as close as possible to the h1-square.

62.♗b6

It is not the best idea to move the bishop away from the a1–h8 diagonal. 62.♞b7 ♞f5+ 63.♔e2 and White keeps on waiting.

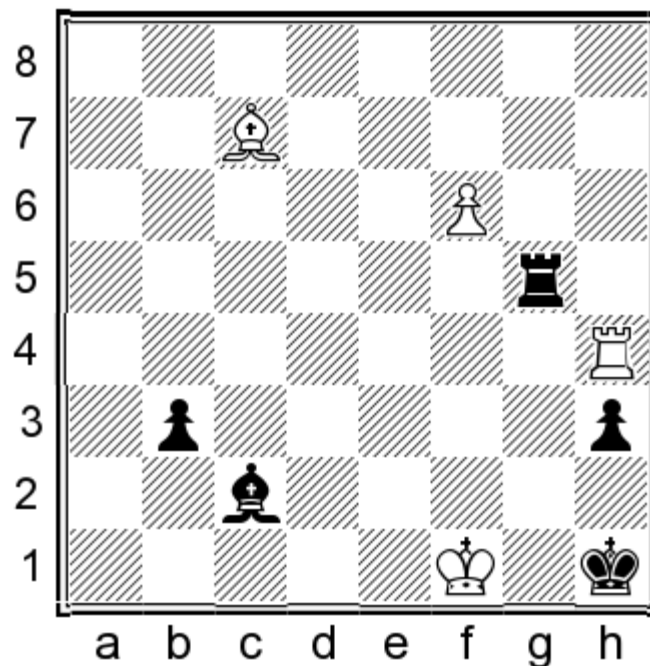
62...h3

A normal move, but perhaps Black suddenly has a sudden better possibility. 62...♞f5+ 63.♔e2 ♔g2! exploiting the fact that White can't take the h4-pawn because of the b2-move. 64.♞g4+ White has nothing better. 64...♔h3 65.♞b4 ♞xf6 66.♗d8 ♞h6 and Black is already 2 pawns up.

63.♗c7+ ♔h1

It is very hard for White to defend such a position. Maybe it is a draw, but practically it is very hard to hold. Black has a lot of tactical ideas.

64.♞h4



64.♔e2 Maybe White should have tried to go to b2 with his king.

64...♗d3+!

A very strong move, since now Black will be in time to play b2!

65.♔f2 ♖g2+ 66.♔e3 b2 67.♖b4!

Grischuk refuses to give up and pins his hope on the f6-pawn.

67...♙g6

Black needs to stop White from playing f7.

68.♙e5

The b2-pawn is falling, but the h-pawn is almost there.

68...h2 69.f7!

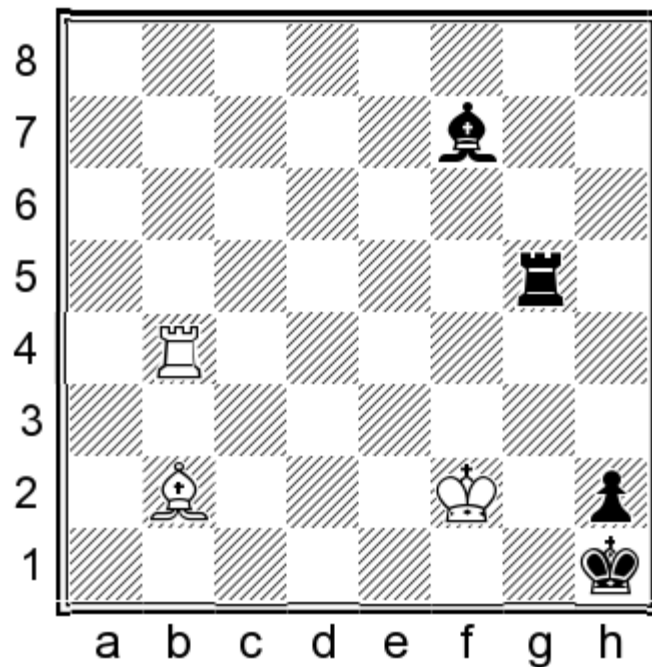
and again White finds the only way to continue. 69.♙xb2 was losing on the spot after 69...♔g1 and h1=♚ next.

69...♙xf7 70.♙xb2 ♖g5!

Perfect play! 70...♔g1 already leads to a draw now. 71.♙e5 and with the f7-move White secured the threat of playing ♖b1, so the position is a draw.

71.♔f2

White cannot let Black play ...♔g2.



71...♙d5?

What a mistake when victory was so close! 71...♙g6! was the right move, controlling the b1-square. Black threatens to play ...♖g2 next and free his king from h1. White is just lost here!

72.♙d4?

After such a tough defense, Grischuk hands back the present! White could have used the little tactical trick 72.♙e5!

attacking the h2 pawn and threatening to play ♖b1. The position is a draw!

72...♞g2+

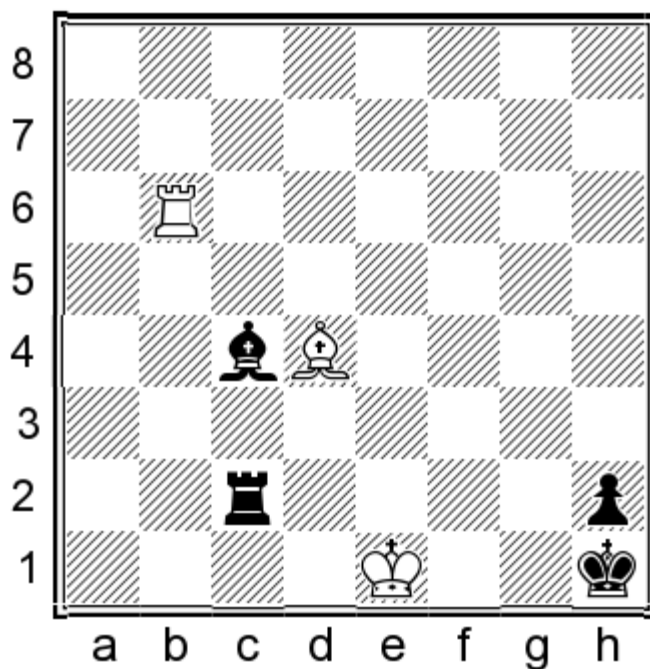
Now Black is back on the winning track.

73.♔f1 ♞c2

White can't keep the black king on h1 any longer.

74.♞b6 ♕c4+ 75.♔e1

and now Black can even choose with which move to finish the game.



75...♞g2

Clearly a safe winning move. Black wants to remove the rook from g2, all the while attacking the white bishop, and then play ...♔g2. White is helpless. Of course a move like 75...♔g2 was winning too. We saw a very high level of play in an interesting endgame, where both players used their chances very well, and then blundered at the same time...

0–1

GAME 69

A. Giri (2773)

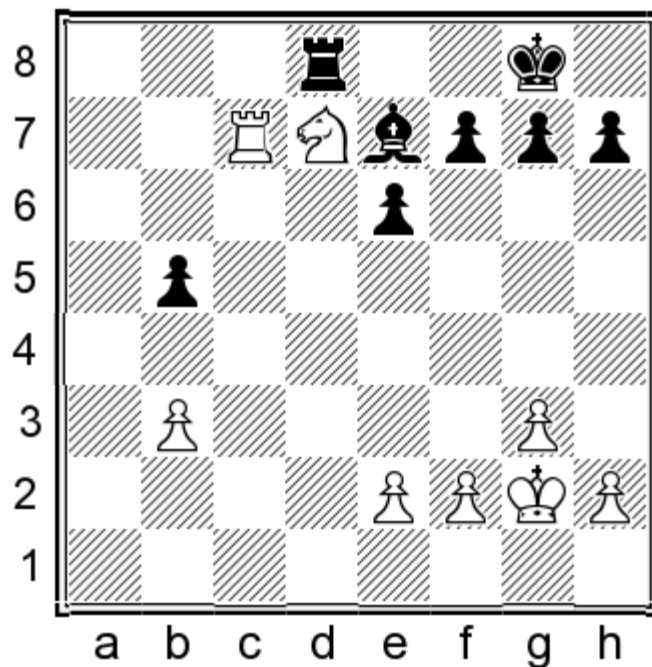
V. Topalov (2798)

3rd Norway Chess 2015

Stavanger NOR (8)

24.06.2015, [E10]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



This calm-looking endgame is much trickier than it seems. Many young players don't remember the greatest Catalan player of all-time, Ulf Anderson, who was famous for his perfect endgame technique, and the knight in the current position on d7 could be just like one from his games! In fact he was more famous for having similar endgames with the knight more often on c6.

33. ♖b7

A good move! Now the black rook from d8 has no moves and White might threaten to play ♘b8 or ♘e5, winning the b5-pawn.

33... ♜d6

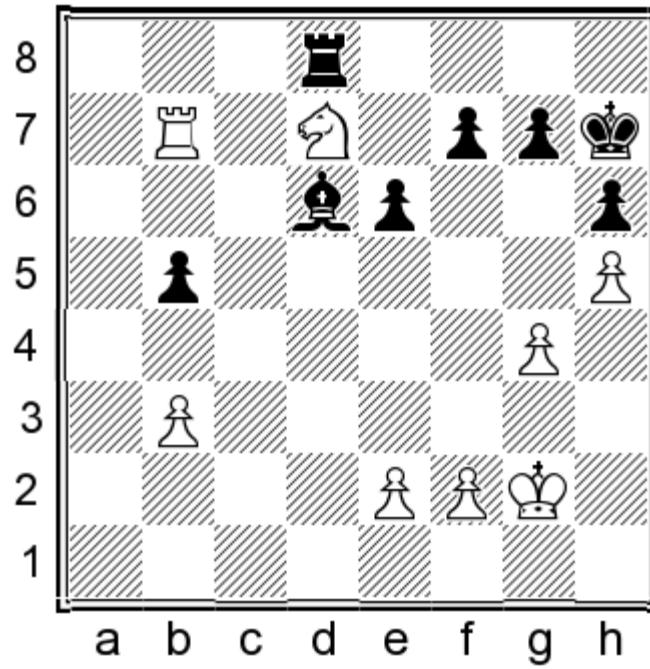
A logical move, preventing White's knight moves.

34. g4

An interesting moment. White clearly has to start pushing his pawns, but which one to start with?! To play e4 but maybe then Black is able to play e5? Or maybe to play f4 with the idea of playing e4-e5?! Giri chooses the g4-move and actually this looks like a very good choice to me! The black pawns are fixed and White just wants to gain some space over the next few moves.

34... h5?!

Not the best in my opinion since it is always very dangerous in an endgame to give a pawn for free, even if it weakens the opponent's pawns structure. 34...h6 looks safer. 35.h4 ♖h7 36.h5 and now Black should play the very important



36...g6! 37.♘f6+ ♔g7 38.♘e4 gxh5 39.gxh5 b4 40.♘xd6 ♖xd6 41.♖xb4 ♖d5 and Black's chances to make a draw in this rook endgame are not bad. But again, the position is really unpleasant!

35.gxh5!

A good choice. Of course White doesn't give Black the chance of exchanging pawns so easily, which is always good for the defending side.

35...♔h7 36.b4!

Perfect play! Maybe this is the move that Topalov had underestimated.

36...♖xb4

36...♔h6 37.♘c5 also leads to a very unpleasant endgame a pawn down for Black.

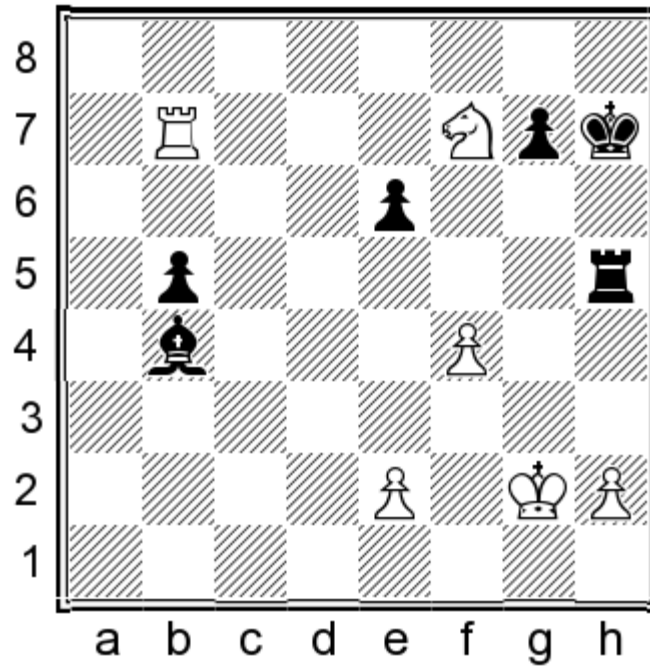
37.♘e5

Now the f7-pawn falls.

37...♖d5

Of course 37...f6? is not possible since after 38.♘c6 White wins material.

38.♘xf7 ♖xh5 39.f4



White continues to play a great game! Now the white knight will go to g5 and the e6- and b5-pawns will be under attack.

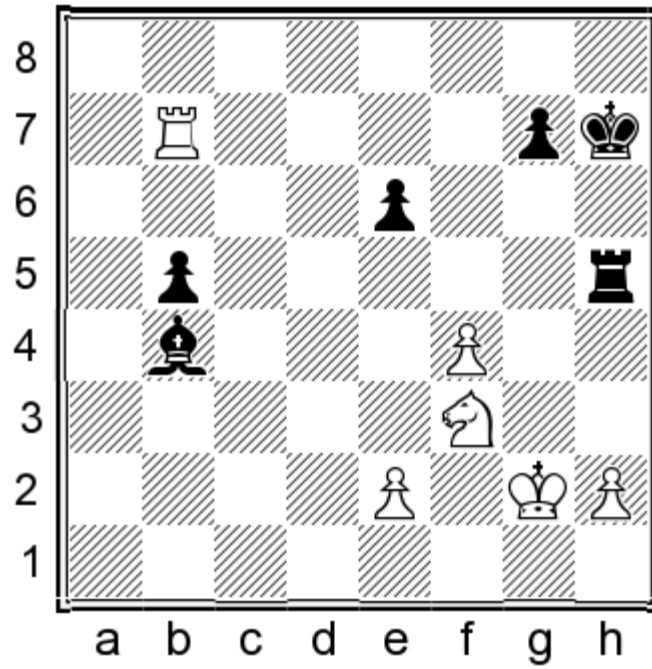
39...♔g6

Certainly a possible move, but Black maybe had another chance to fight for an escape clause, e.g. 39...♔d2 — but this move is almost impossible to find over the board. 40.♘g5+ ♔g6 41.♘xe6 Black's position looks lost, but after 41...♚h4! it is not that easy for White to prove that the position is winning.

40.♘e5+ ♔h7 41.♘f7 ♔g6 42.♘e5+ ♔h7

After repeating a couple of times, White of course continues the fight.

43.♘f3



43...Rf5

After 43...Rg6 44.e4 looks very strong.

44.Bg5+ Kh6 45.Kf3

The white pieces are perfectly placed and this is a real problem for Black. If he was in time to exchange a pawn, or maybe enter a rook endgame, the position would most probably be a draw, but it is simply impossible!

45...Kd2

After 45...e5 46.Bf7+ Kh7 47.Bxe5 the position is probably lost.

46.e3

The e6-pawn is going to fall.

46...b4

There is already no way of saving the pawn...

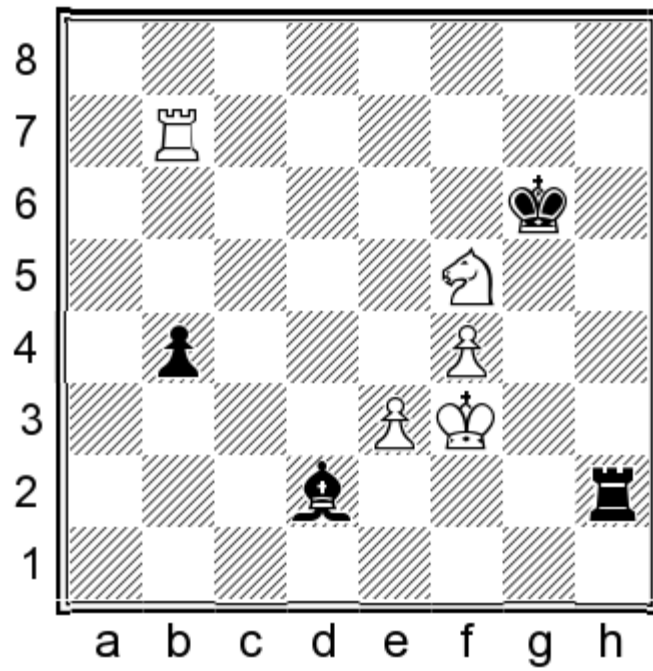
47.Bxe6 Rh5

Black tries to get some play. In case of a passive defense like 47...Kc3 White is wins with 48.e4 Rh5 49.e5 and the g7-pawn will fall.

48.Bxg7 Rh2 49.Bf5+

Now we can evaluate this position as winning for White.

49...Kg6



50. ♖e7+

The simplest and most human; White wins the b4-pawn. 50.e4 was good as well.

50... ♔f6 51. ♘d5+ ♔e6 52. ♔e4

Also the easiest approach. The king is a strong piece in an endgame.

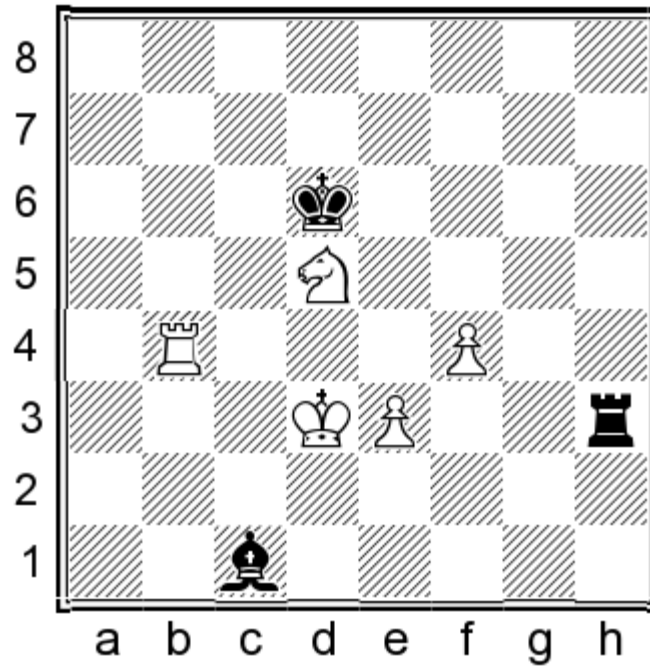
52... ♜h3

Preventing ♘xb4.

53. ♜b6+ ♔d7 54. ♔d3

The b4-pawn is lost and so are Black's chances to hold a draw.

54... ♔c1 55. ♜xb4 ♔d6



56.♔d4

and Toplaov resigned without any further fight since White is totally winning. We have just witnessed fantastic endgame technique by Giri who used his chances very well — especially the unusual idea of 36.b4! which is definitely something we should remember from this game.

1–0

GAME 70

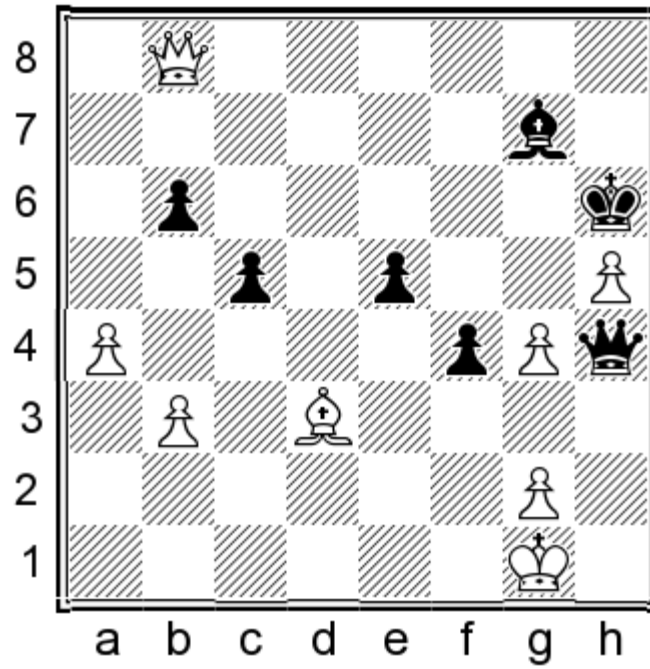
Wang Yue (2716)

Ding Liren (2749)

Hainan Danzhou GM

06.07.2015

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



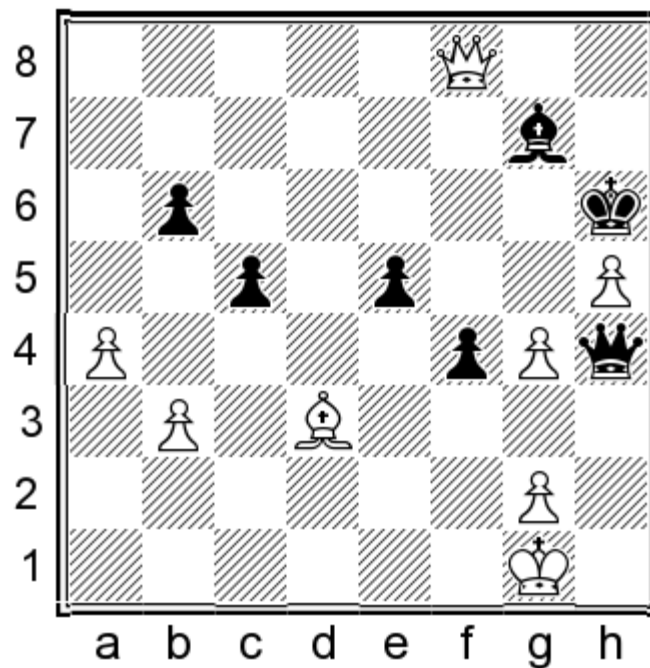
From the diagram position, Wang Yue simplifies the game down to a very instructive opposite-colored bishop endgame. He perfectly foresees and evaluates the consequences.

45. ♖d6+!

This forces the exchange of the queens. 45. ♖xb6+ ♔f6 46. ♖xc5 should also be winning, but of course with the queens on board Black might always hope for salvation. If the bishop endgame is winning, then there is no reason to allow counter-chances.

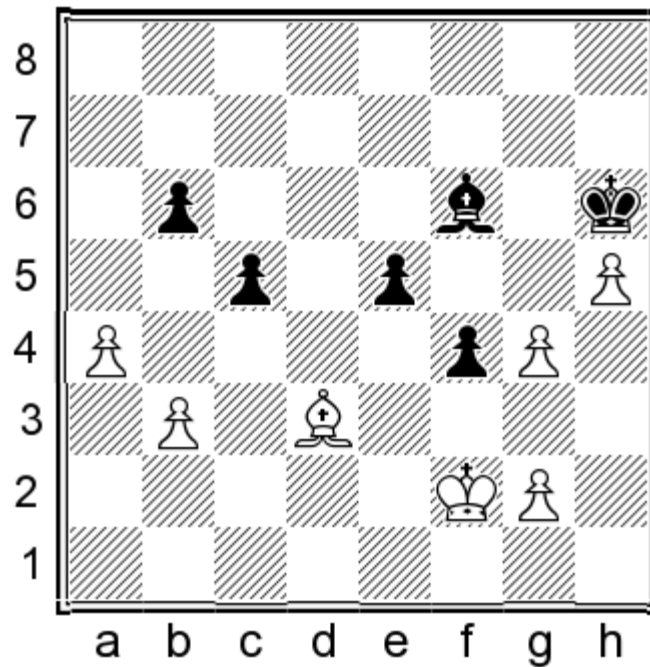
45. ♖d6+! ♜f6

The only chance! 45... ♜f6 loses now to 46. ♜f8+! ♜g7



47. ♖f5! and Black has only two checks after which he gets mated on g6... 47... ♜e1+ 48. ♙f1 ♜e3+ 49. ♔h1+—

46. ♜xf6+! ♙xf6 47. ♕f2



At first sight the game is drawn, because the connected passed pawns on the kingside are fixed and perfectly blockaded by the king, while the black bishop can successfully protect the queenside. However, Wang Yue sees much more deeply into the position...

47... ♙h4+

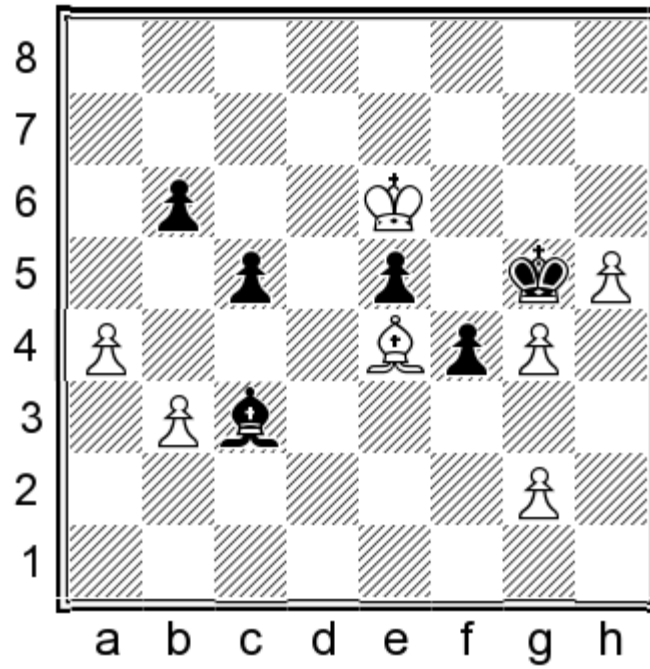
Black prepares to defend his b6-pawn from a5 with the bishop, which looks completely safe. The diagonal is too short if Black wants to do the same from d8-c7. Black quickly finds himself in zugzwang after 47... ♔g5 48. ♕f3 ♙e7 49. ♙e2 ♙d8 50. ♕e4 ♙f6 51. ♙f3 White makes the same preparations as in the game; he settles his bishop to f3 from where it not only blocks the e5 pawn, but also defends g4; It also frees the way for the king to attack b6... 51... ♙g7 52. ♕d5 ♙f6 53. ♕c6 ♙d8 54. ♕d7 ♙f6 55. ♕c7+— and the pawn is lost.

48. ♕f3 ♔g5 49. ♙e2!

White preserves all his pawns and prepares to centralize his king.

49... ♙e1 50. ♕e4 ♙c3 51. ♙f3 ♙b4

Well, Black believes that the e5-pawn does not make much difference, which is actually true in the matter of the outcome... 51... ♙d4 52. ♕d5 ♙c3 53. ♙e4! Using the fact that the g4-pawn cannot be taken because the h-pawn queens. Suddenly Black finds himself in zugzwang. If the bishop moves and keeps the e5-pawn protected, ♕c6 is going to win the one on b6. He could only play then 53... ♕h6 but it loses to 54. ♕e6! threatening ♕f6 and pushing the g-pawn... 54... ♕g5

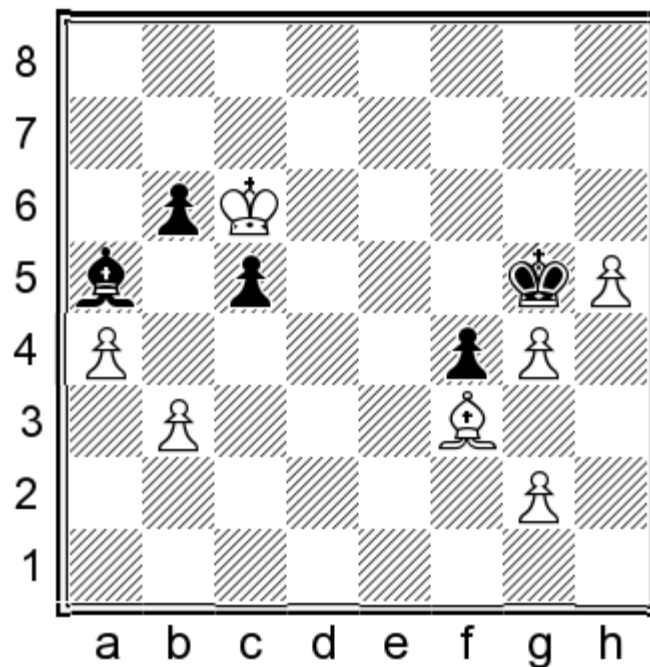


55.h6! is the point and the reason why Black gave up his e5-pawn. Now the bishop cannot take part in stopping the g-pawn... 55...♔xh6 56.♔f6+- and the g-pawn promotes automatically.

52.♔xe5

The disappearance of the e5-pawn does not change the strategy of the defense. The kingside pawns are still blockaded and the b6-pawn can be still defended with ...♘a5.

52...♘c3+ 53.♔d5 ♘d2 54.♔c6 ♘a5



It looks as though the game is drawn, because Black just waits with ...♔h6-g5 or if the white king approaches the kingside, it frees the black bishop to move. However here comes the brilliant idea, which was foreseen by Wang Yue before trading the queens...

55.♙d1!! ♔h6 56.b4!! cxb4

56...♙xb4 57.♕xb6+- is over, since the a-pawn promotes.

57.♙b3!

This is the point! The black bishop is trapped and suddenly Black finds himself in zugzwang! He can only move with his king now, but after...

57...♕g5 58.♕d5

Black resigned because the king goes towards f6 and promotes the g-pawn. 58...♔h6 59.♕e6 ♕g5 60.♕e5 At some point Black is forced to sacrifice his b6-pawn to free his bishop, but 60...b5 61.axb5 and the white king goes back to support the b-pawn. White wins!

1-0

GAME 71

V. Topalov (2816)

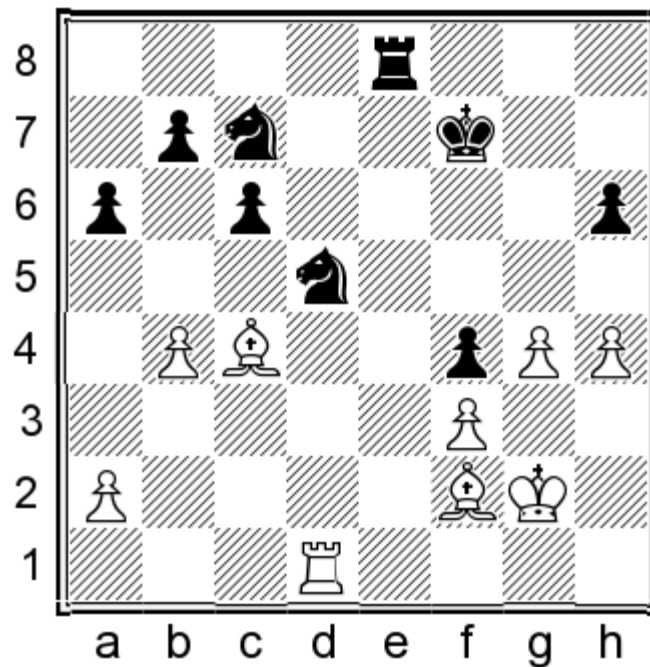
H. Nakamura (2814)

3rd Sinquefeld Cup 2015

Saint Louis USA (2.1)

24.08.2015, [C65]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



We are in the second round and Topalov once again shows his great class. With a wonderful win in the first round over Magnus Carlsen, Topalov was clearly going for nothing less than a full point in this much better endgame for him. The bishop pair dominates the board and the 3 vs 2 pawn situation on the kingside is clearly very positive for White, but Black's position is still very solid and material is equal. Let's take a look at some very nice technique from the current World Number 2.

44.h5!

A great move! White not only fixes the black pawn on h6, but as we will see later on he is planning to put the king to h4 and play g5, which will create a passed h-pawn, as well as probably win the f4-pawn.

44...♙f6

A solid move. Black can't do anything active anyway.

45.♔h3

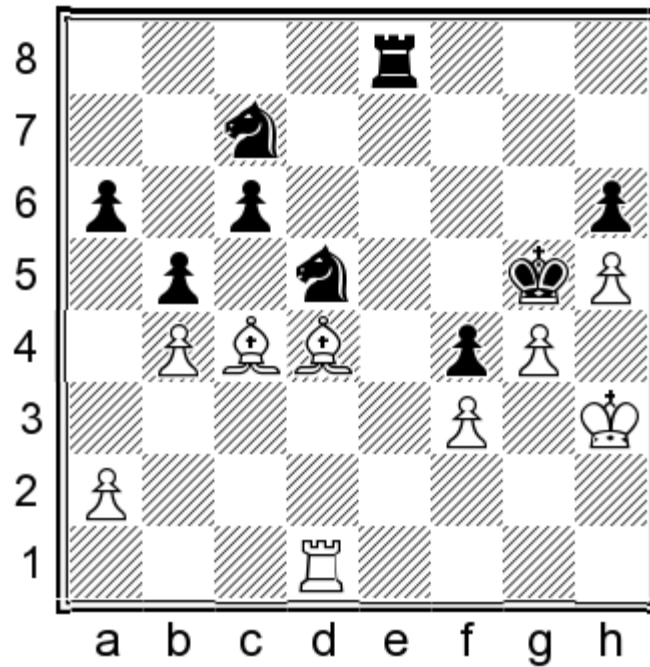
The white king heads to the correct position.

45...b5

Practically this may be Black's only chance. White already wanted to play ♕h4, followed by g5 and ♖g4 at a good moment.

46.♙d4+ ♔g5

I think this is the most logical move, even if it gives White the chance to end the game on the spot.



In case of 46...♙f7 47.♙b3 White would continue to dominate the position, and probably next to follow is g5. 47...♞e2 48.g5! a very strong move. 48...hxg5 49.♞c1 and the game is close to over.

47.♙xd5?!

White still has a big advantage, but Topalov missed a very nice win here... 47.♙b3 ♞e2 (After 47...♞xb4 48.♙f2! ♙f6 49.♙h4+ ♙e5 White had to see 50.♙f7! and the game is over because of the huge amount of threats to the black king. If the black rook moves away from the e-file, the deadly ♞e1+ will follow.) 48.♞c1! ♞e6 49.♞c5 and Black is totally paralyzed, so White is winning.

47...♞xd5 48.♞c1 ♞e6

White's pawn structure is much better and the black pawns on the queenside are blocked, but how to proceed?!

49.♞c5 ♞d6

Black continues his waiting policy.

50.♙g7 ♞e6 51.♙d4 ♞d6 52.a3

After repeating the moves once, White improves his position a bit by protecting the b4-pawn for the future.

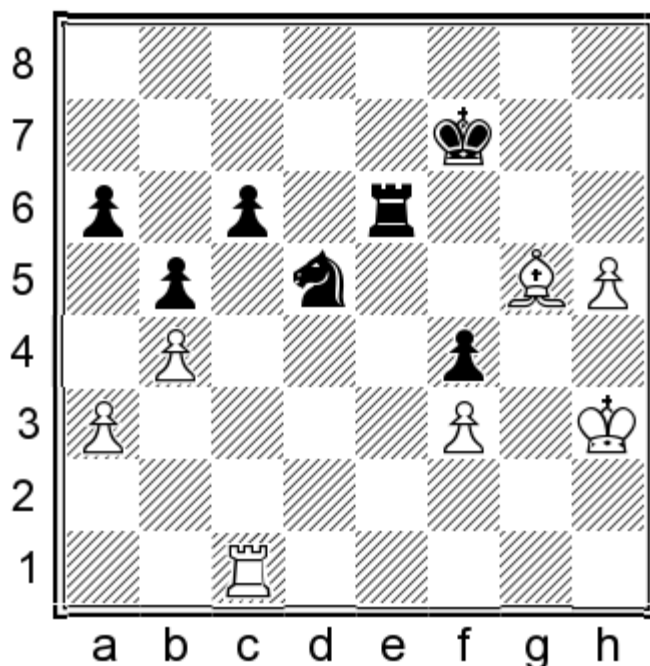
52...♞e6 53.♞c1

So we find ourselves a'most back in the position from which we started and it is clear that White will try the plan with ♙f2-♙h4 next.

53...♞e7 54.♙f2 ♙f6 55.♙h4+ ♙f7 56.g5

A very logical move. White creates a passed h-pawn and freeing the g3 square for the king.

56...hxc5 57.♙xg5 ♜d5



58.♚g4

Black really can't do much but wait. It is clear that the f4-pawn is going to fall, but maybe Nakamura was still hoping to get some chances in the rook endgame!? As we know, the h+f pawns in the rook endgame is a draw in most cases.

58...♚g7 59.♙xf4 ♜xf4 60.♙xf4

So we have reached a rook endgame and if Black was able to trade the 3 pawns against the white a- and b-pawns, the position would be a theoretical draw- but it is just impossible. The position of the white rook on c1 is very active, keeping the black rook passive on the 6th rank.

60...♞d6 61.♞c3!

Wonderful technique by Topalov. There is absolutely no need to hurry with the play on the kingside. First it is important to avoid Black's counterplay with ...♞d3.

61...♚f6 62.♚g4

White wants to play f4, followed by ♞h3 and advancing the h-pawn.

62...a5

This is maybe Black's last practical chance. To keep on waiting no longer makes any sense.

63.bxa5

It is never bad to take a free pawn...

63...♖d4+ 64.f4 ♜a4

The black rook is finally active, but it is just too little, too late.

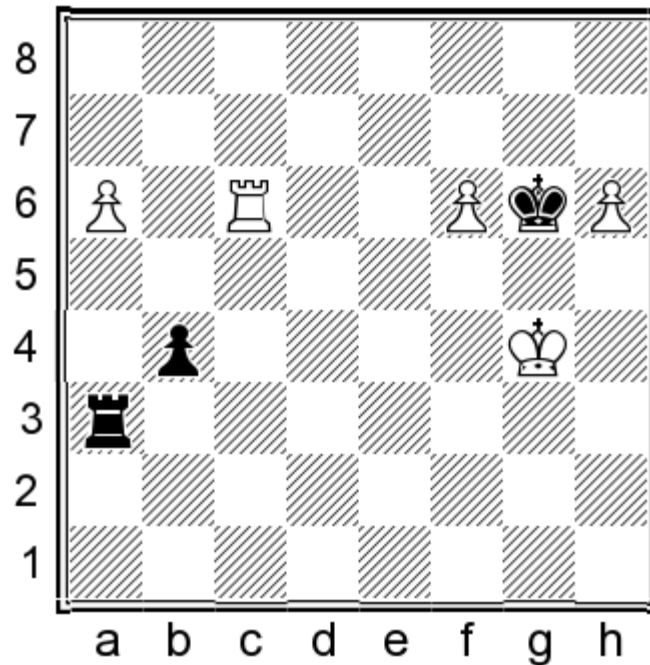
65.♞xc6+ ♔g7 66.a6!

The final precise move of the game. 3 passed pawns are just too many to even dream about a draw any longer.

66...♞xa3 67.f5 b4 68.f6+

The white pawns are simply too fast.

68...♔f7 69.h6 ♔g6



70.♞c8

The poor king tries to stop all the white pawns at the same time, but it is impossible.

70...b3

70...♞xa6 71.h7 ♔xh7 72.f7 and White promotes next move.

71.♞g8+

A lot of other moves would win as well.

71...♔f7 72.h7 ♞a4+ 73.♔f3

All-in-all this game demonstrated really impressive technique by Topalov, giving Nakamura no chances for survival. In my opinion, to be good in endgames a player must have these 3 attributes: patience, precise calculation and good nerves.

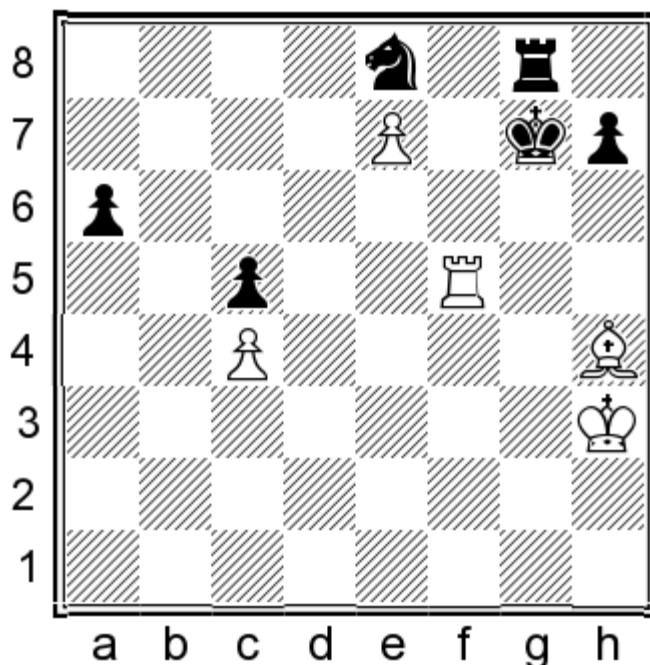
GAME 72**H. Nakamura (2814)****A. Grischuk (2771)**

3rd Sinquefeld Cup 2015

Saint Louis USA (9.4)

01.09.2015, [B51]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



We are in the final round and Nakamura really needs a full point to share 2nd place. After a very fighting game where Grischuk also had his chances, we are in an endgame which is clearly much better for White. The e7-pawn is very dangerous and the black pieces are very passively placed. In the following moves we will see a beautiful realization of a won position by Nakamura, with a very nice final position where Black simply doesn't have any moves available!

63. ♕g3!

A very strong move. The bishop will cut down the options of the black knight on e8 and at the same time White wants to put his rook on f8 to stop the black rook from moving as well.

63... h6

Black is preparing to put the king on h7 to defend against ♖f8.

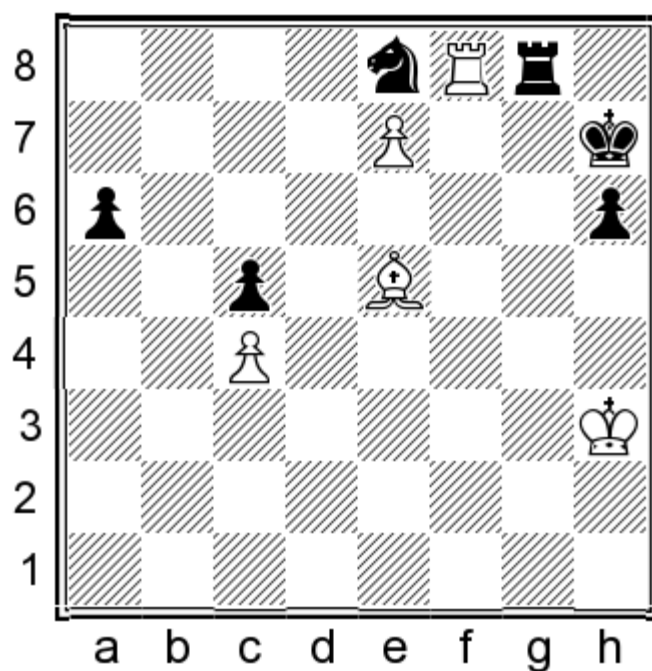
64. ♕e5+ ♔h7 65. ♖f7+

Winning a tempo, and the white rook belongs on f8 anyway.

65... ♔g6 66. ♖f8 ♔h7

So White has achieved almost everything he could, but what next?! If it wasn't for the a6-pawn, a move like ♔h4

would just finish the game, but for now White needs an idea of how to continue next.



67...Qf4!

Nakamura manages his winning position very precisely. White goes for all the black pawns.

67...a5 68.Qxh6

One pawn is gone.

68...a4 69.Qe3 a3 70.Qxc5

and another one...

70...a2 71.Qd4

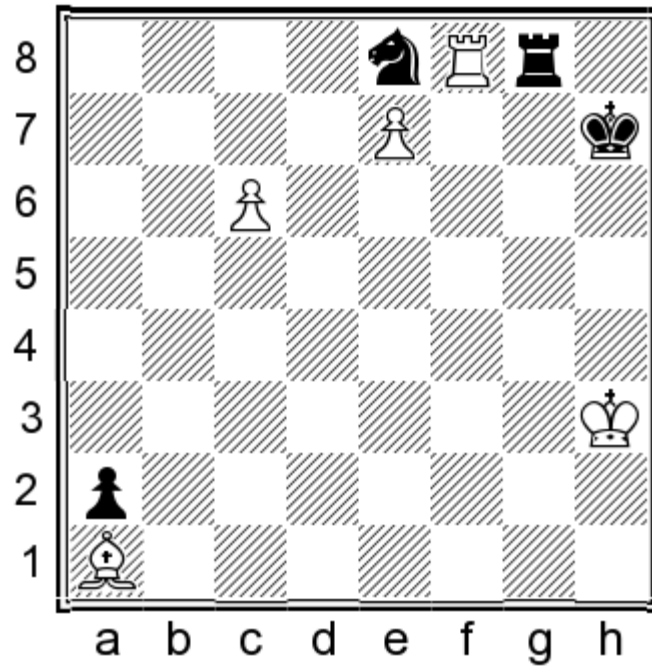
It is now White who is a pawn up and Black still can't do anything.

71...Nc7 72.Qa1 Ne8

All Black can do is move his knight to c7 and back to e8.

73.c5 Nc7 74.c6 Ne8

White has improved the position of the pawn, but how to finish the game?!



75.♔h4!

Just beautiful! The final white piece — which was out of the game — plays the decisive role.

75...♘c7 76.♔h5

♜f7 is a deadly threat and Black has no defense.

76...♘e8 77.c7

A very beautiful finishing position of an exciting game. With this win Nakamura also jumped back to the 2nd position in the world on live ratings.

1–0

GAME 73

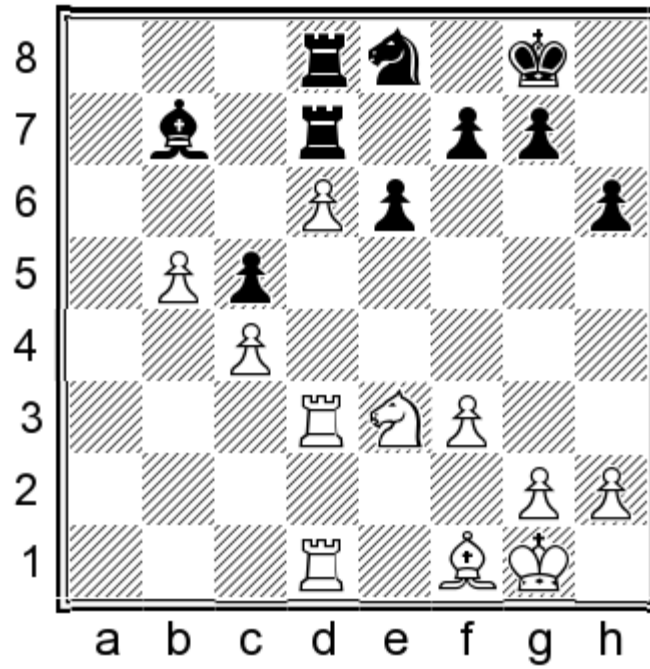
R. Wojtaszek (2741)

B. Lalith (2557)

FIDE World Cup

12.09.2015

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



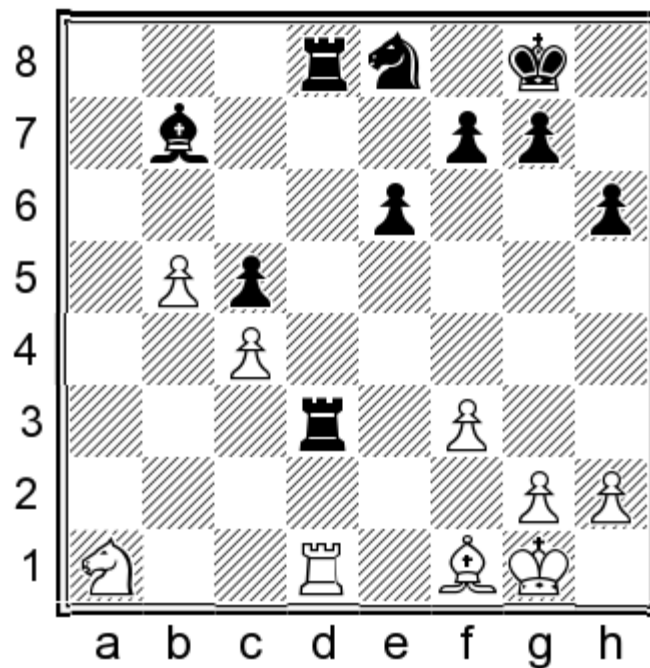
Black is just about to win back the pawn on d6 and restore the material balance. However, it is not enough to equalize positionally, because the b5-protected passed pawn still gives White a nice edge. The question is how: should White improve his position? Wojtaszek finds a subtle positional maneuver to increase his advantage.

34. ♖c2!!

The knight heads via a1–b3 from where it not only attacks the weakness on c5, but also prepares to support the b5-passed pawn with ♖a5.

34... ♜xd6

34... ♜xd6 is also met by 35. ♖a1! ♜xd3



36. ♖xd3!± Here it is important to retain the rooks, to keep enough potential for the future to increase the advantage. ♗b3 is coming, forcing the black rook into passivity to c8 after which White could invade with his own rook on the a-file. (36. ♖xd3? is a mistake because it allows Black to build a blockade with 36... ♖xd3 37. ♖xd3 ♗f6! 38. ♗b3 ♗d7 defending the c5-pawn and blocking the passed pawn on b6. Black brings his king to d6 and he saves the game.)

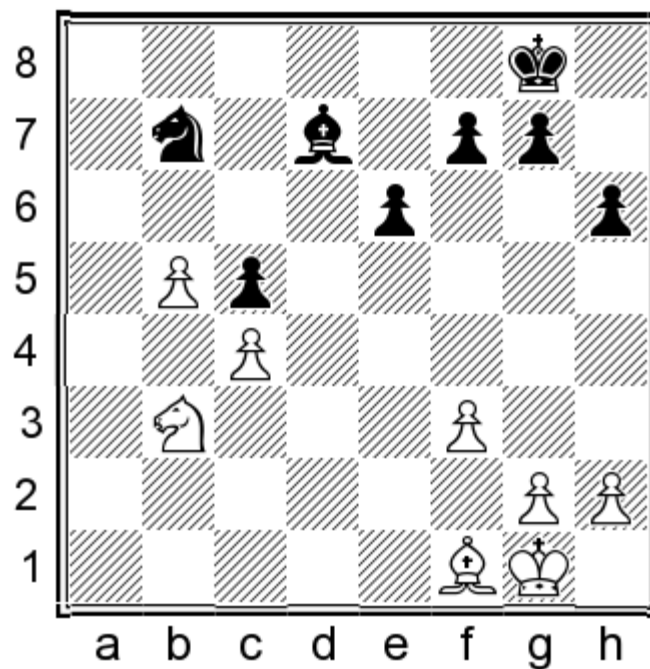
35. ♗a1!

White has already found the right plan, he only needs to execute it properly.

35... ♖c8

The only way to save the c5-pawn was to protect the rook in order to be able to play ... ♗b7.

36. ♗b3 ♗b7 37. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 38. ♖xd7 ♖xd7



White has accomplished the first task by driving the knight to b3. What to do next?

39. f4!

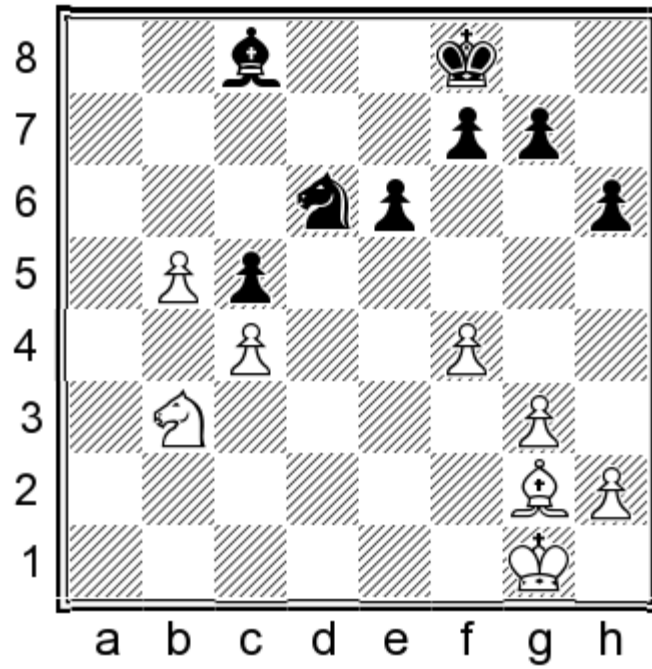
The knight on b7 protects the c5-pawn, but it does not have stability. White needs to transfer his bishop to the long diagonal before Black can reach the d6-square with his king to replace his knight from defending the c5-pawn. 39. ♖d3 would have been met by ...f5, but now White wants to play either ♖e2-f3 or g3-♖g2.

39... ♖f8 40. g3 ♖c8

Black is just missing one tempo to reach the d6-square.... 40... ♖e7 41. ♖g2 ♗d6 42. b6 ♖c8 43. ♗xc5+—

41. ♖g2 ♗d6

Otherwise ♖xb7 and ♗xc5 is hopeless.



42. ♖a5!

The final accuracy! White does not exchange his c5-pawn for the one on c4, but helps promote his passed pawn. Black cannot stop it.

42... ♕e7 43. b6

Black resigned! It was very instructive to see how Wojtaszek increased his advantage move-by-move with a straightforward plan.

1–0

GAME 74

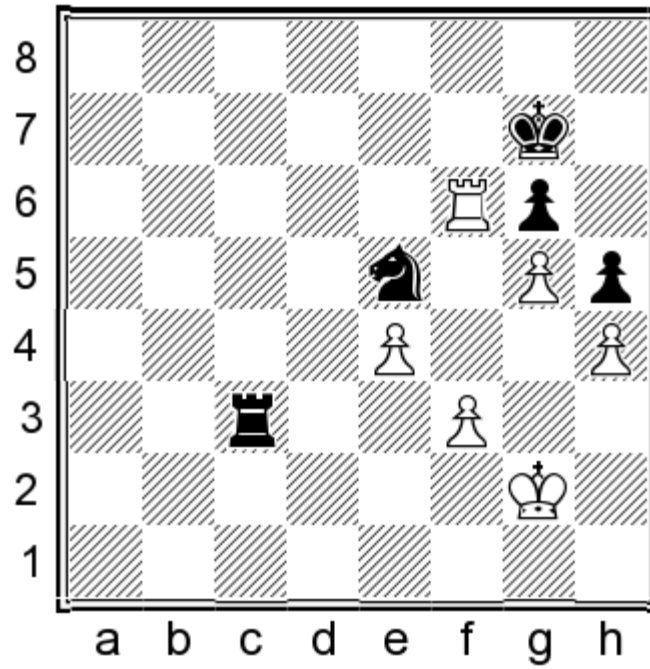
W. So (2773)

M. Vachier-Lagrave (2744)

FIDE World Cup 2015

21.09.2015

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



We are now facing a very interesting endgame. Black is a piece up, but he has only two pawns left against White's four. However they are ideally placed, as White can only exchange one pair of pawns with f5, but h5 remains on board.

47...♖c6!

A difficult decision! Vachier-Lagrave correctly evaluates that forcing the trade of the rooks leads to a winning endgame, but it requires very subtle technique.

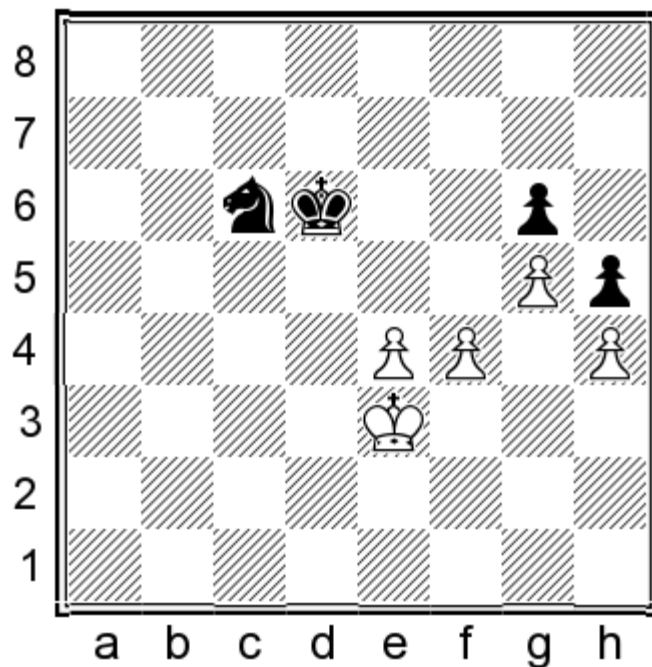
48.♖xc6

White has no choice. 48.f4? opens the king's position and allows Black access to the h4-pawn after 48...♖c2+! 49.♔g3 ♖c3+ 50.♔g2 ♖f3—+

48...♗xc6 49.f4

White could have brought his king to e3 first, but he has to play f3-f4 at some point anyway and it is always going to be a transposition.

49...♔f7 50.♔f3 ♔e6 51.♔e3 ♔d6



52.♔d2!

White finds the most tenacious defense! He correctly realizes that the position with the white king on d3 and the black one on c5 is zugzwang, therefore he sidesteps this square. On 52.♔d3 ♕c5 White cannot touch his pawns, because e5 offers the f5 square for the knight, while f5 allows the knight to occupy e5. 53.♕e3 (The king can never go too far from the h4-pawn, because it loses to 53. ♕c3 ♖d4+ and ♖f3 next.) 53...♕c4 White is in zugzwang again. The king goes to d4... 54.f5 ♖e5 55.♕f4 ♕d4 56.fxg6 ♖xg6+ 57.♕f5 ♖xh4++ as White has no access to the h5-pawn because of his own pawn on g5.

52...♕c5 53.♕d3 ♕b4

The most natural move. Black tries to squeeze the king, however it does not bring success; a few moves later, Black already finds the right path towards the win.

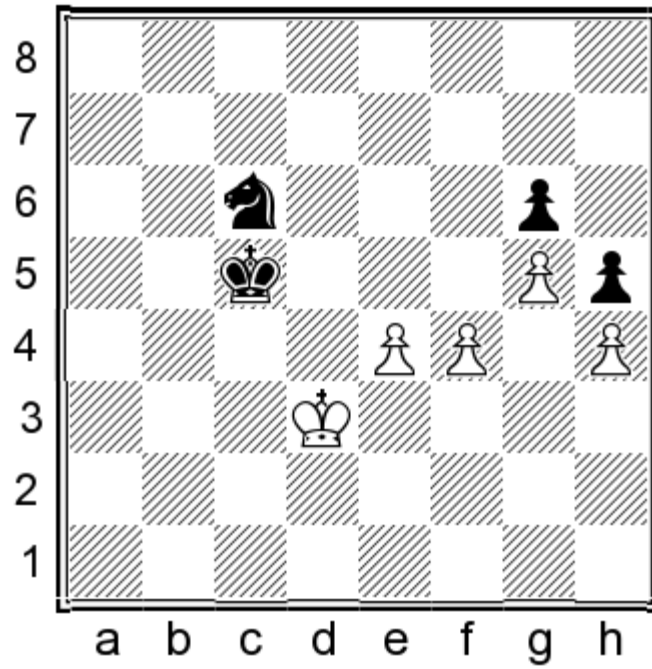
54.♕d2!

White continues to defend perfectly. We have already seen that White is lost if it is his move with the kings on e3 and c4, therefore he tries to give the move to his opponent. 54.♕e3 ♕c4+ See the line 52.♕d3. 54.f5 loses to 54...♕c5 55.fxg6 ♖e5++

54...♕c4 55.♕e3 ♕c5!

Black admits his mistake and searches for another plan... The thematic way to squeeze the king was 55...♕c3 however it allows White to push 56.e5! and the point is that whenever White plays e5, Black should be able to play ...♕d5, otherwise the white king gets to e4. 56...♕c4 57.♕e4 ♖e7 otherwise White plays f5. 58.e6 ♕c5 59.♕e5 ♕c6 60.♕f6 ♕d6 61.♕f7 Black is in zugzwang and loses his g6-pawn.

56.♕d3



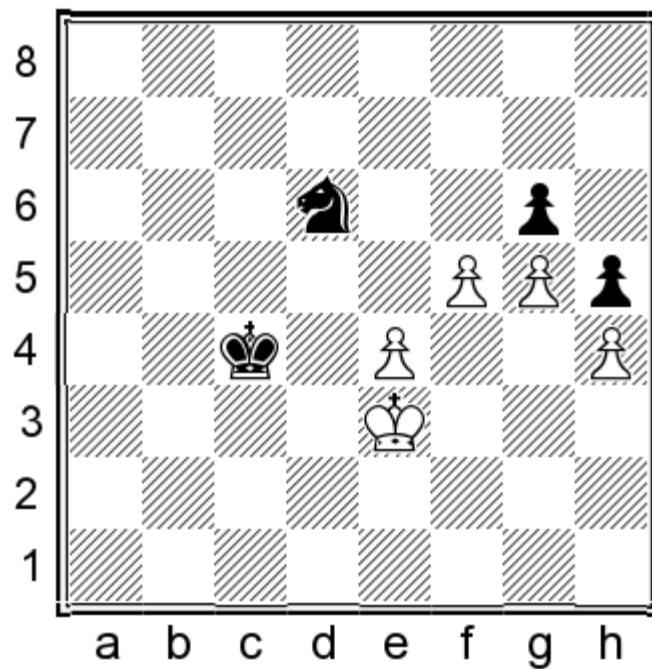
56...♞d8!

Black realizes that with the knight on c6, he cannot make progress. The question is where to place the knight before starting the same squeezing technique as happened unsuccessfully before...

57.♞e3 ♞f7 58.♞d3 ♞d6

This is the ideal placement of the knight! White's rescue with e5 as happened in the 55...♔c3 line does not work anymore. The only saving attempt remains to push f5.

59.♞e3 ♞c4 60.f5



60...♞e8!!

The only winning move, which was correctly foreseen by Vachier-Lagrave. The point is that the knight stands between the white pawns in any case. If he takes on g6, the knight goes to g7 while in case of f6, then ...♞c7-e6 creates a perfect blockade. White will have no access to the h5-pawn and the black king will collect all the pawns one-by-one. 60...gxf5 spoils the win after 61.♔f4! fxe4 62.g6 ♞e8 63.♔xe4 and the king heads to the h5 pawn. 63...♞g7 64.♔e5 ♔f6 is coming next.

61.fxg6

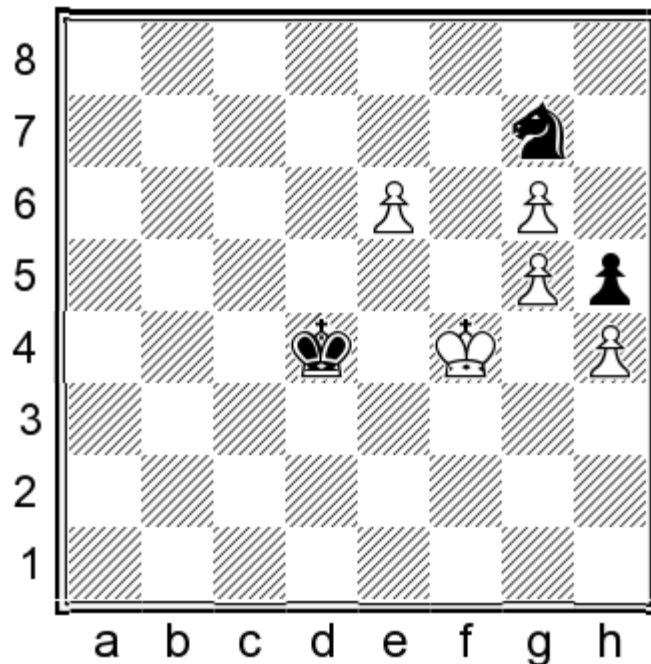
61.f6 ♞c7 62.♔f4 ♔d4+;

61.♔f4 ♔d4+;

61...♞g7 62.e5

Another clever attempt, but today nothing helps — Black simply plays the endgame perfectly. If White decides to sit with 62.♔f4 ♔d4 63.♔f3 ♔e5 64.♔e3 the winning method is the following: 64...♞e6 65.♔f3 ♞d4+ 66.♔e3 ♞c6 67.g7 ♞e7 After provoking g7, the black king gains access to it. Another important factor is the fixed situation of the h4-pawn. Black can attack it in one move with ...♞g6. 68.♔f3 ♔e6 69.♔f4 (69.g6 ♔f6+;) 69...♞g6+ 70.♔g3 ♔f7+ After taking on g7, Black goes for the e4-pawn and collects the rest as well.

62...♔d5 63.♔f4 ♔d4 64.e6



64...♔d5!

The last accuracy! The path of the white king had to be blockaded, the knight must stay on g7. 64...♞xe6+? 65.♔f5 ♞g7+ 66.♔f6

65.e7 ♔e6 66.♔e4 ♔xe7 67.♔e5 ♔e8 68.♔d5

68.♔f6 ♔f8 White must retreat. 69.♔e5 ♔e7 transposes to the game.

68...♔d7

White resigned in view of 68...♔d7 69.♔e5 ♔e7 70.♔d5 (70.♔e4 ♔e6 71.♔f4 ♔f5–+) 70...♔f5 and Black takes on h4 as the king stops the g-pawn. With this nice endgame victory, Vachier-Lagrave eliminated Wesley So and advanced to the final 8 players.

0–1

GAME 75

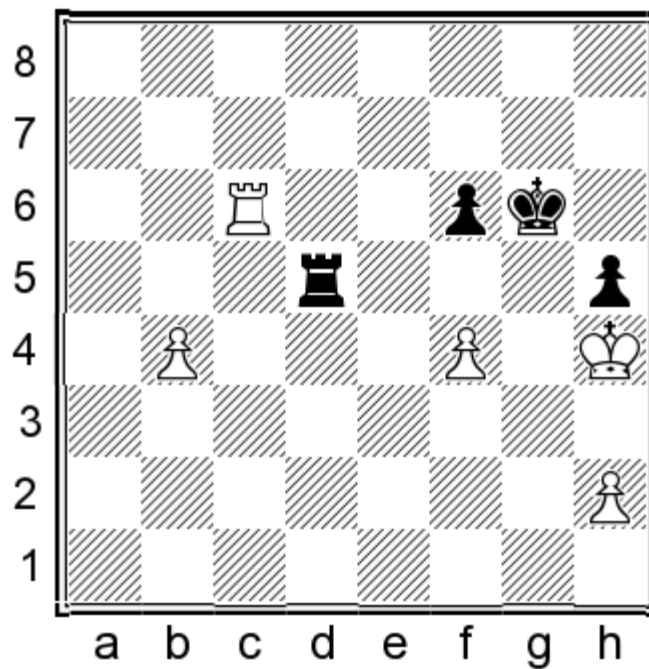
A. Giri (2793)

Vachier–M. Lagrave (2744)

World Cup 2015

25.09.2015

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



We have before us a very interesting rook endgame. At first sight, despite being a pawn down, Black should hold the draw rather comfortably because of his active pieces and the vulnerable positions of the white pawns. However, Giri plays the entire endgame with great resourcefulness, exploring all his chances and finally manages to convert his advantage.

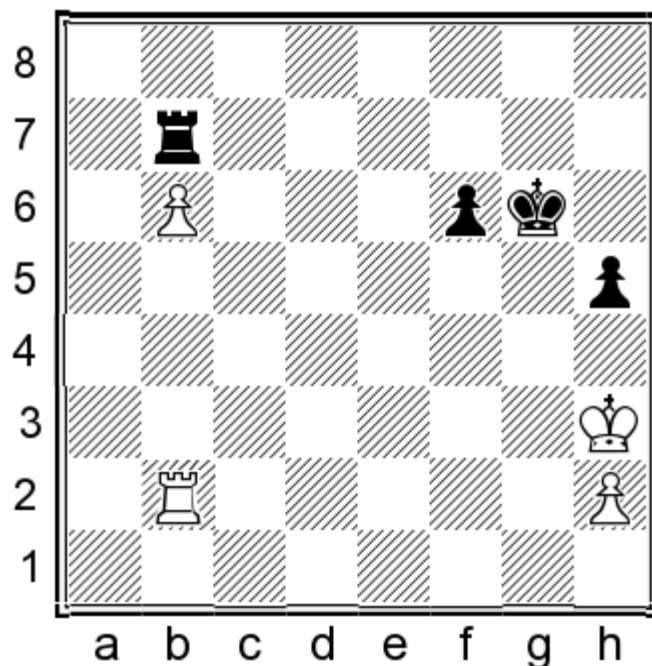
47.♖c2!

Giri follows the very important principle that in rook endgames the rook should stay behind the passed pawn! This is true for both sides: if it was Black's move, he should also quickly go behind the b-pawn. 47.♖c4 allows 47...♞d2 48.h3 ♞b2 and Black is too active, as White cannot make any progress.

47.♖c2! ♞b5!

Not the best place for the rook, but Black could not avoid ♞b2 after which the pawn must be blockaded. Black could have restored the material balance with 47...♞d4 but it lets the pawn run too far after 48.♞b2 ♞xf4+ 49.♔h3 ♞e4 50.b5

♖e7 51.b6 ♜b7



52.♔h4 We can see the reason why they say that activity in rook endgames play a key factor. Despite the limited material, Black seems to be helpless... 52...♔h6 53.♞b5 ♔g6 54.h3 Black is in zugzwang. He either loses his h5-pawn with check or plays 54...f5, but it allows 55.♔g3+— followed by h4 and ♔f4.

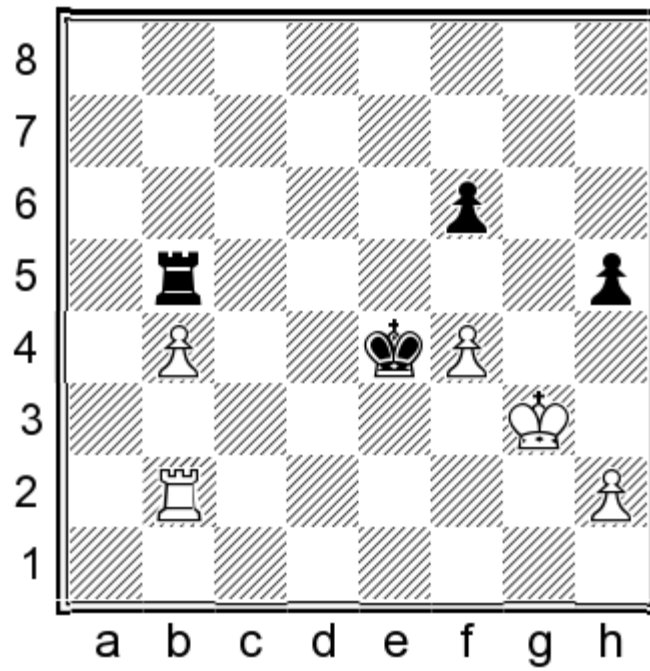
48.♞b2 ♔f5

Vachier-Lagrave tries to defend actively, in general this is the right idea!

49.♔g3!

White temporarily switches to passivity, but the f-pawn had to be protected. 49.♔xh5 gives Black an f- passed pawn, which will always ensure adequate counterplay. 49...♔xf4+ 50.♔h4 f5=

49...♔e4



Black cannot trade his h-pawn for the f-pawn, as White is not forced to grab it. Actually it just helps White, because the king wanted to go to c4 anyway. 49...h4+ 50.♔f3

50.♖b1!

Another very clever move by Giri! It hands the move to Black, who again finds himself in a sort of zugzwang. He cannot move his rook as it lets the b-pawn advance and all the other options have a drawback as well. In general, it is a very good practical idea to ask ourselves, what would our opponent do if it was his move. We can find many zugzwangs like this.

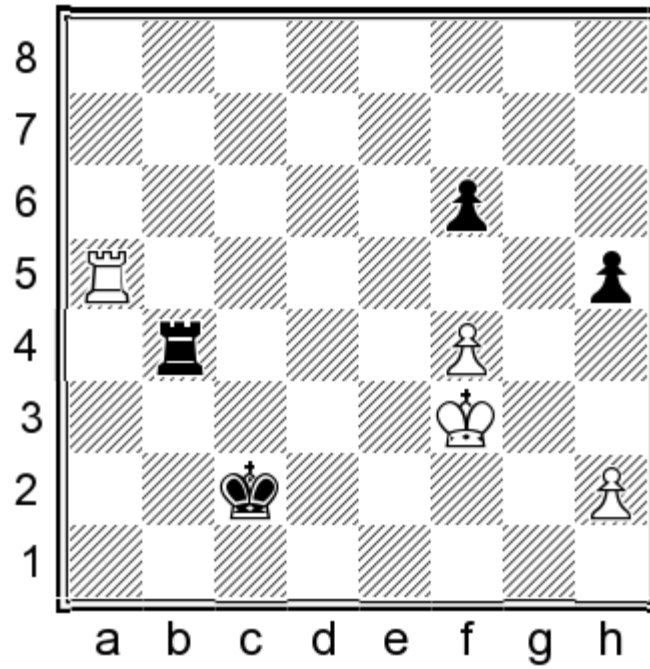
50...♔d3

Black still cannot trade his h-pawn for the f4, because 50...h4+ is met by 51.♔g4 and the h-pawn just becomes weak. 50...f5 with the idea of pushing h4 now is strongly met by 51.♖e1+! ♔d4 52.♔h4 and the black king is cut off.

51.♔f3 ♔c2

Black could find nothing better than capturing the b-pawn by sending away the rook, but at the same time his king strays too far from the kingside. There will be no-one to defend the f6-h5 pawns.

52.♖a1! ♖xb4 53.♖a5!



We have reached another scenario within our rook endgame. If Black could get back with his king, let's say to g7, he could hold the draw even without his pawns, as it is known, that f- and h-pawn in rook endgames is a theoretical draw. However the problem is that the king is too far removed and it is going to be cut off along the 5th or the 6th rank.

53...♖b3+

53...h4 looks bad as well 54.♔g4 ♔d3 55.♖a6 and the pawns start to fall.

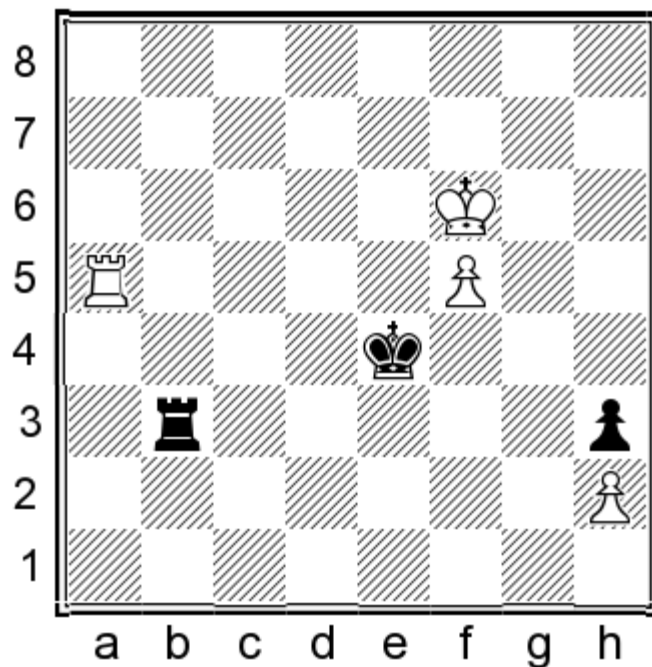
54.♔e4 h4

The critical line would have started with 54...♖h3 55.♖a2+! ♔b3 56.♖f2 ♔c3 57.♔f5 ♔d3 58.♔xf6 ♔e3 59.♖f1 ♖xh2 60.f5 It is very difficult to judge, whether this endgame is drawn or winning for White. Actually, in a practical game, I would say Black is in big trouble, but perhaps he can save this endgame somehow?! 60...h4 (60...♔e2 61.♖a1 ♔f3 62.♔g5 h4 63.f6+- wins.) 61.♔e5! h3 62.f6 and White is winning, because the king is cut along the f-file, he cannot go to support the h-pawn. 62...♖a2 63.f7 ♖a8 64.f8=♔ ♖xf8 65.♖xf8 and Black cannot play ♔f3 to ensure the draw... 65...h2 66.♖h8+-

55.♔f5 ♔d3

55...♖b6 56.♖a3 ♔d2 57.♖h3 was also bad.

56.♔xf6 ♔e4 57.f5 h3



Black pins his counterplay on the h2-pawn, but White is able to protect it with his rook and support his f-pawn at the same time.

58.♖a4+ ♔f3 59.♔g5 ♝b5

59...♔g2 60.♝a2+- followed by pushing the f-pawn. If 59...♝b2 60.f6+- and Black has no time to grab the h2-pawn.

60.♝a2 ♝b4

60...♔e4 is met by 61.♔g6! as the pawn cannot be taken. 61...♝xf5 62.♝a4+-

61.f6

The rest is easy...

61...♝g4+ 62.♔f5 ♝f4+

62...♝g2 63.♝a3+- wins the h3-pawn.

63.♔e6 ♝e4+ 64.♔d6 ♝d4+ 65.♔e7 ♝e4+ 66.♔f8 ♝b4 67.f7 ♝f4 68.♝b2 ♝a4 69.♝b6!

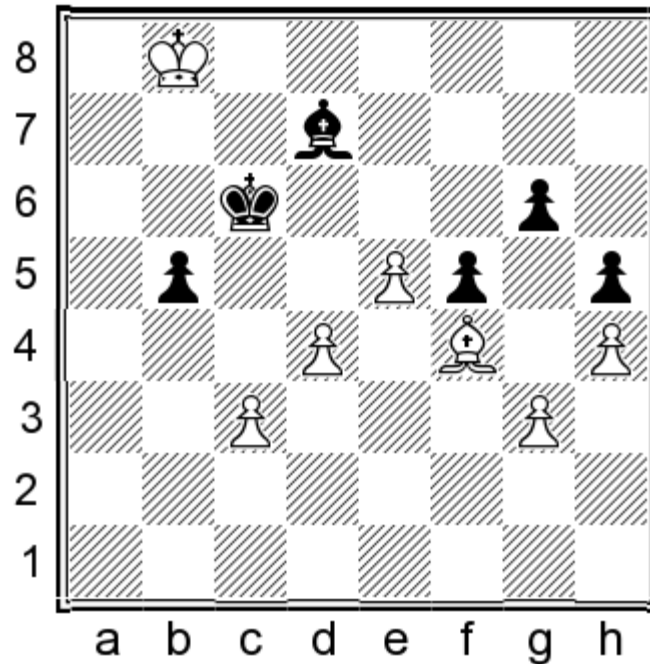
The last accuracy! White wins the bridge building method, Black has no time to collect the h2-pawn. Black resigned in view of the following lines: 69.♝b6! ♔g2 70.♔g7 ♝a7 (70...♝g4+ 71.♝g6+-; 70...♝f4 71.♝f6+-) 71.♝b2+ ♔g1 72.♔g8+- A superb endgame by Giri! My gut-feeling tells me that Black should have been able to hold the draw somehow, but it is difficult to suggest where he might have improved his play...

1-0

GAME 76

S. Karjakin (2762)

P. Svidler (2727)

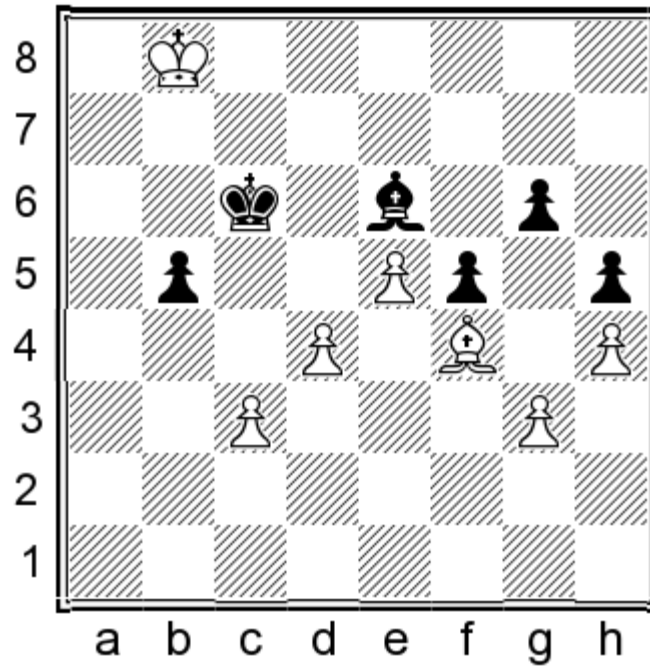


We have reached a study-like endgame with opposite-colored bishops. White is a pawn up, but it seems as though Black has successfully built up an unbreakable blockade. He just moves ...♖e6-d7 and White cannot do anything, because his king cannot pass the 8th rank. However the truth is somewhat different. Both players had less than a minute on the clock, but Karjakin found a brilliant idea with which he could continue the fight and it seems that even objectively his position is winning. The only existing idea is to sacrifice a pawn with d5 ...♔xd5 and ♖c7, but then Black plays ...♗e6 keeping the blockade. The key is, White can give the move to Black with a triangulation, and he finds himself in zugzwang.

77.♗g5! ♖e6 78.♗h6! ♖d7 79.♗f4!

Here we are! It is Black to move now and he has no other move than ...♗e6.

79...♗e6

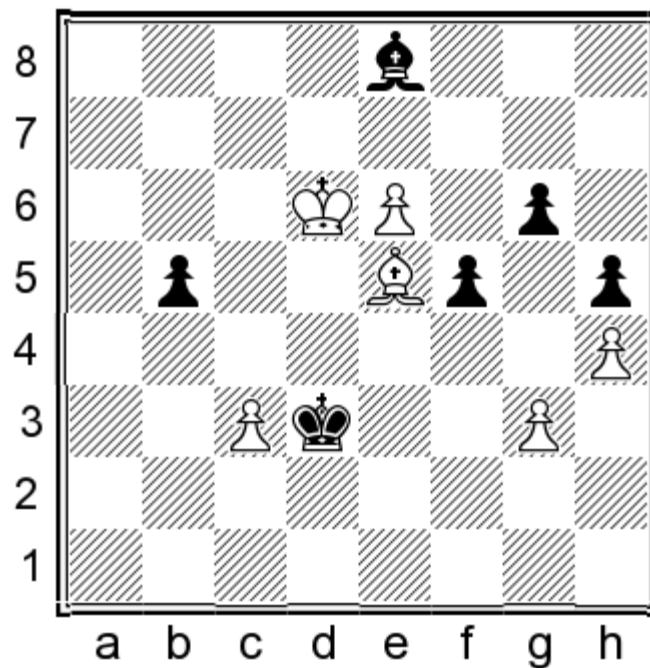


80.d5+!!

This is the fantastic idea! White gives up his material advantage, but he gains access for his king to the kingside pawns. The difference with the bishop on e6 is that after $\text{♔xd5} \dots \text{♔c7}$ Black cannot block the way with $\dots \text{♔e6}$!

80...♙xd5

The alternative was 80...♙xd5 81.♔c7 when the unfortunate placement of the black pawns allows the king to march towards f6 and collect the g6- and h5-pawns. Black cannot protect the latter one, because the e5-passed pawn must be blockaded and it occupies both of his pieces. 81...♙c4 running towards the c-pawn does not save Black... 82.♔d6 ♙g8 (82... ♙f7 also loses after 83.e6 ♙e8 84.♙e5 ♔d3



85. ♖e7 ♙c6 86. ♖d8 ♖e4 87. ♗f4 ♖d3 88. e7 ♖xc3 89. e8=♚ ♗xe8 90. ♖xe8+- White gives up his bishop for the b-pawn and takes all the kingside with his king.) 83. e6 ♖xc3 84. ♖e5 b4 85. ♖f6 ♗xe6 86. ♖xe6 b3 87. ♖f6+- and it's the same story as in the 82...♗f7 line.

81. ♖c8!

Black cannot prevent ♖d8-e7-f6 or, if he allows, White just advances his e-pawn.

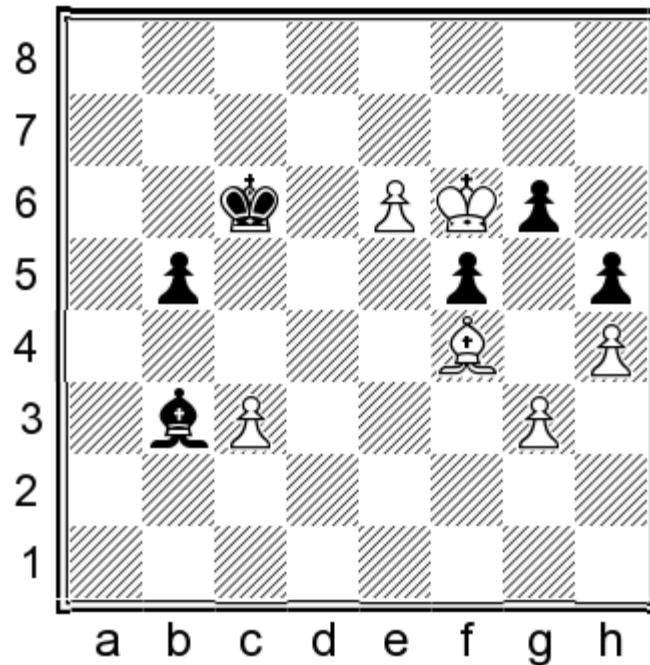
81...♗b3 82. ♖d8 ♗c4

Svidler decides to wait. Active defense does not help either 82...♖d5 83. ♖e7 ♖c4 84. ♖f7 ♖xc3+ 85. ♖xg6 b4 86. ♖xh5 ♗c4 87. ♖g6 b3 88. ♗c1+- and the white passed pawns decide the outcome.

83. ♖e7 ♗b3 84. e6

84. ♖f6 ♖d7 85. ♖xg6 ♖e6 86. ♖xh5 should also be winning.

84...♗c4 85. ♖f6 ♗b3



86. ♗c1!

White drives his bishop to a3 in order to push e7, placing it on a protected square, and then the king is free to take on g6 and h5, gaining another passed pawn. 86. ♗g5 was also good, with the same purpose.

86...♗c4 87. ♗a3 ♗b3 88. e7 ♖d7 89. ♖xg6

Black resigned in view of 89. ♖xg6 ♖e8 (There is no time for 89... ♗d1 90. ♖f7) 90. ♖xh5 ♖f7 91. ♖g5 ♗e6 92. h5 ♗d7 93. h6+- and Black is unable to create a blockade.

1-0

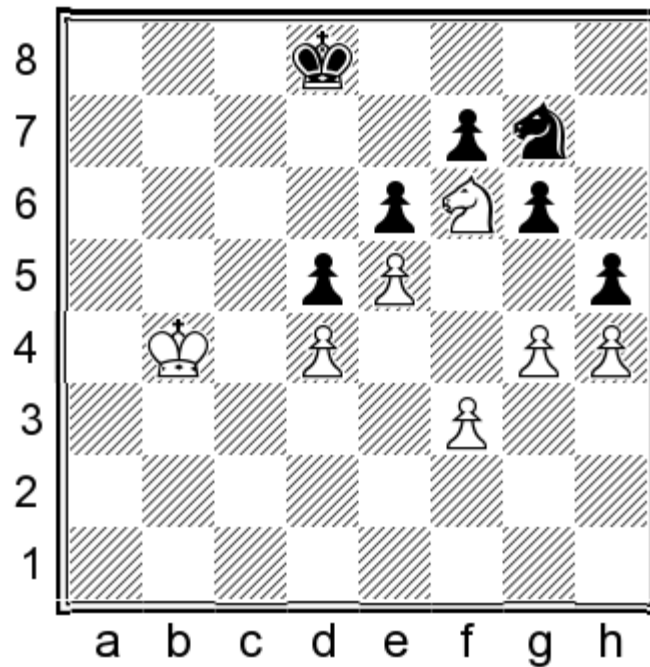
GAME 77**A. Naiditsch (2682)****J. E. Granda Zuniga (2667)**

PokerStars IoM Masters

Douglas ENG (5.3)

07.10.2015, [B10]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



After a very long fight I thought I finally had very good winning chances. The knight on g7 can't move because the h5-pawn is going to fall, and all I need to do is to get my king to g5 to win the game. All logical, but Granda Zuniga finds an amazing way to draw this position!

62...♔e7

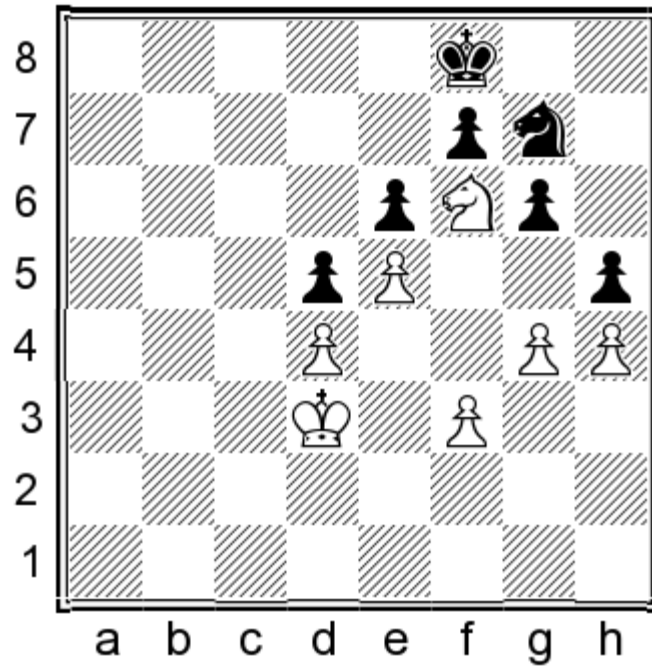
The correct move, the black king is going to f8. Of course White is just faster after 62...g5? 63.gxh5 gxh4 64.h6 and h7-h8=♔ is unstoppable.

62...♔e7 63.♕c3 ♕f8

It is too early for 63...♖e8 64.gxh5! A pretty winning idea! 64...♖xf6 65.exf6+ ♔xf6 66.h6! and Black obviously has to move his king after which h7 just wins the game.

64.♕d3

My next moves are clear, to play ♕e2-f4-g5.

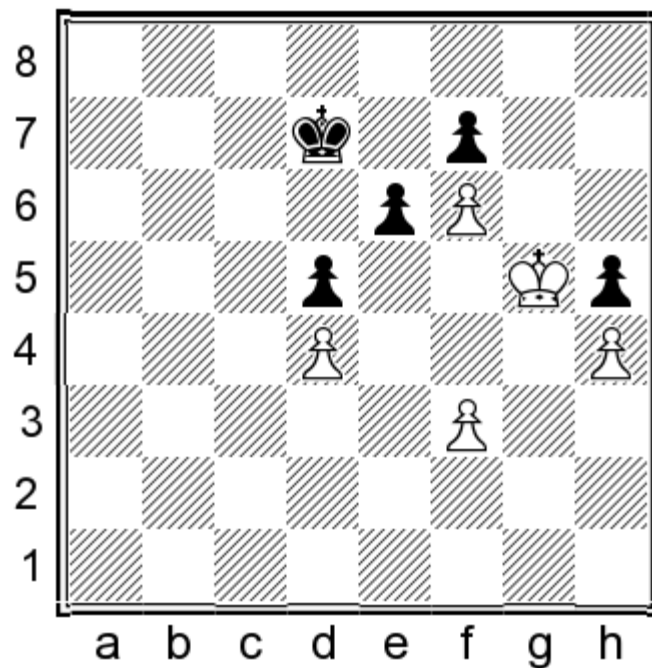


64...♞e8!

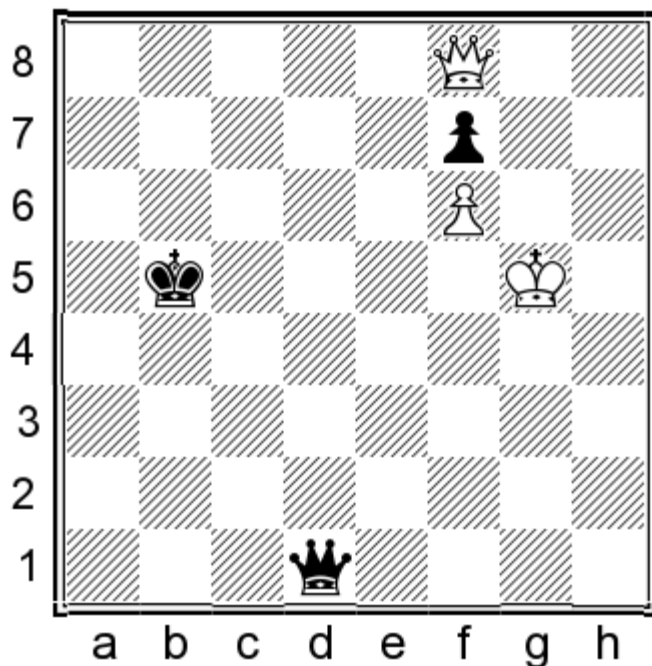
Exactly the right timing! This move is not that difficult to find for the simple reason that Black has no other chance, but what is shocking is that all the pawn endgames are drawn here! But I had another, better option: Of course g5 still doesn't work because of 64...g5 65.♞h7+

65.♞xe8

The better try was to go for a queen endgame with an extra f-pawn, which appears many moves from now, but is forced: 65.♞e3 ♞xf6 66.exf6 ♞e8 67.♞f4 ♞d7 68.gxh5 gxh5 Now White has 2 choices: 69.♞e5 (A big mistake would be 69.♞g5



69...e5! A small but nice tactic! 70.dxe5 ♖e6 71.♔f4 d4 and the position is immediately a draw after 72.♕e4 d3 73.♕xd3 ♕xe5) 69...♕c7! The only move, since Black must have ...♕c6 after White's f4. 70.f4 ♕c6 71.f5 exf5 72.♕xf5 ♕b5 Again the only move for Black. The king goes for the d-pawn. (White is winning after 72...♕d6 73.♕g5 ♕e6 74.♕xh5 ♕xf6! and the winning move is 75.♕h6 ♕f5 76.♕g7 ♕g4 77.♕xf7 ♕xh4 78.♕e6) 73.♕g5 ♕c4 The next moves are forced. 74.♕xh5 ♕xd4 75.♕g5 ♕c5 76.h5 d4 77.h6 d3 78.h7 d2 79.h8=♚ d1=♚ Both players got a queen, but White wins the f-pawn now. 80.♚f8+ ♕b5



81.♚xf7 and objectively this position should be a draw, but to draw this queen endgame is a very difficult task to manage, so I would keep some practical chances for a full point.

65...♕xe8 66.♕e3 ♕e7

66...hxg4 67.fxg4 ♕e7 would lead to the same.

67.♕f4

67.gxh5 gxh5 68.♕f4 f6 and the position is a draw.

67...hxg4

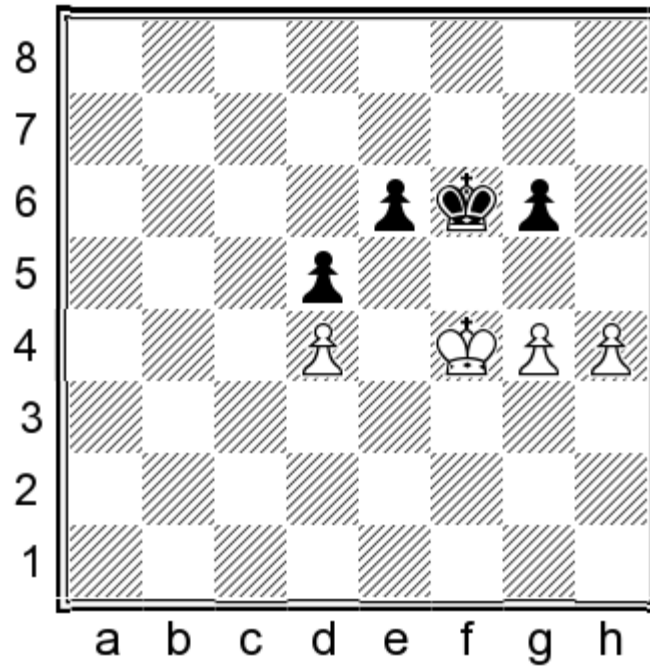
The only move again! 67...f6 loses to 68.exf6+ ♕xf6 69.g5+ ♕f7 70.♕e5 ♕e7 I now have an extra tempo with 71.f4 and my king enters Black's position.

68.fxg4 f6

Surely Black can't let the white king go to g5.

69.exf6+ ♕xf6

Now I have 2 choices, but both only lead to a draw.



70.g5+

Another try is 70.h5 g5+ 71.♔e3 but Black keeps the draw by exchanging the e-pawn: 71...e5 72.dxe5+ ♔xe5 73.♔d3 ♔f6 74.♔d4 ♔e6 and I can't improve my position any longer, only by pushing the h-pawn: 75.h6 ♔f6 76.♔xd5 ♔g6 77.♔e6 ♔xh6 78.♔f6 ♔h7 79.♔xg5 ♔g7 with a well-known draw.

70...♔f7 71.♔g4

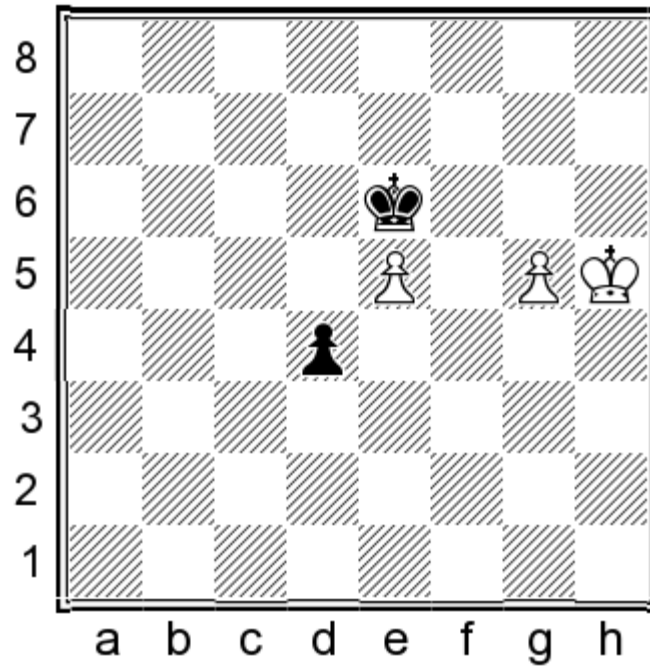
I want to play h5, after which the game would be over, but again my opponent finds the only moves.

71...e5!

The only right way!

72.dxe5 d4!

The only move that saves the game! It was easy to go wrong with 72...♔e6 73.h5! and now White is just in time: 73...gxh5+ 74.♔xh5 d4



75.g6 d3 76.g7 ♔f7 77.♔h6 ♔g8 78.e6 d2 79.e7 ♔f7 80.g8=♚+ ♔xg8 81.e8=♚#

73.♔f3

I need to go back to catch the pawn.

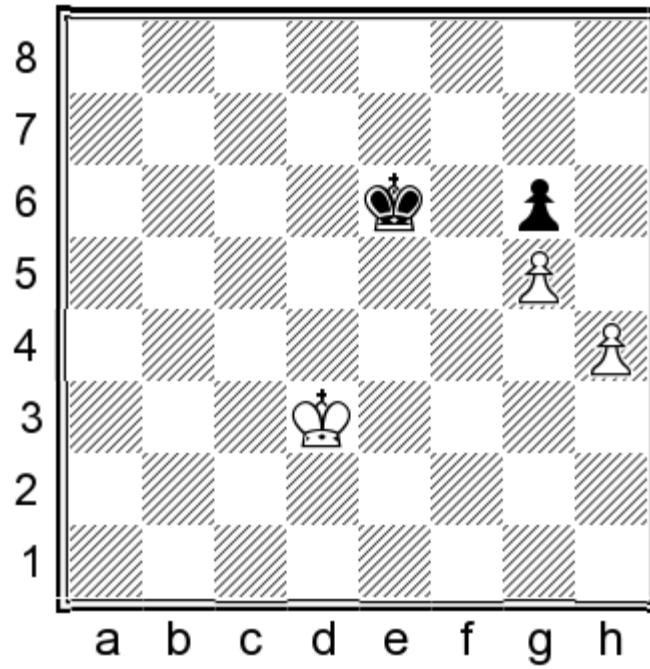
73...♔e6 74.♔e4 d3 75.♔xd3 ♔xe5 76.♔e3

and of course this position is nothing but a draw.

76...♔f5 77.♔f3 ♔e6 78.♔f4 ♔f7

This is still the only move to make a draw here... but of course it is too easy to miss. 78...♔d6 would be a big mistake since after 79.♔g4 ♔e6 80.h5 gxh5+ 81.♔xh5 ♔f7 82.♔h6 the arising pawn endgame is already winning for White.

79.♔f3 ♔e7 80.♔e3 ♔d7 81.♔d3 ♔e6



82.♔e4

The rest of the moves don't require any comments, the position is a dead draw.

82...♔d6 83.♕f3 ♔e7 84.♕g4 ♕f7 85.♕g3 ♔e7 86.♕f4 ♔e6 87.♕g4 ♕f7 88.h5 gxh5+ 89.♕xh5 ♕g7 90.g6 ♕g8 91.♕h6 ♕h8 92.g7+ ♕g8 93.♕g6

Well, it is difficult to be happy after such a game, where I was sooooo close to the win, but on the other hand my opponent defended fantastically and the fact that all the pawn endgames are very drawish is just amazing!

1/2

GAME 78

L. Aronian (2781)

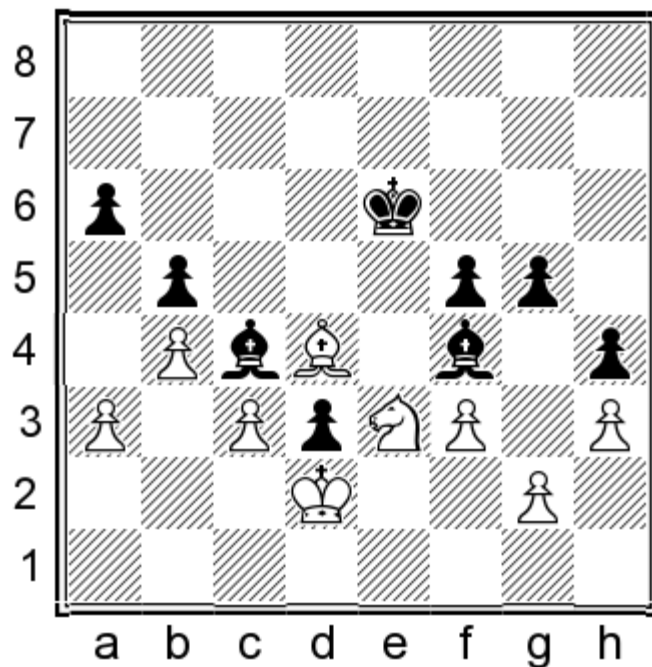
M. Vachier-Lagrave (2765)

20th European Teams

Reykjavik ISL (2.1)

14.11.2015, [A48]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch



The current game decided the outcome of the match Armenia-France in favour of “Les Bleus”. After the opening Maxime managed to equalize and slowly even outplayed his opponent, but Aronian was defended very well and it seems to be very hard for Black to create some real threats in the current position. Anyhow, Black was very inventive and again and again placed new small problems in front of White. Being under pressure, Aronian thought he had found a nice way to force the draw, but he missed a nice trick and the game was over...

55...g4!

This is the right way to continue. Black needs to open the position to activate the bishop pair.

56.hxg4 fxg4 57.fxg4

White of course needs to try and exchange as many pawns as possible.

57...♙g5!

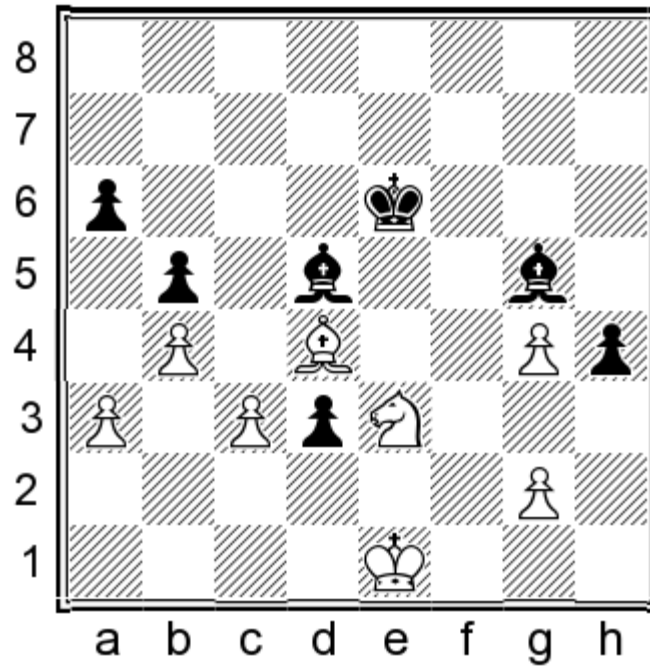
Another great and deep move by black! 57...♙d5? 58.♙xd3 ♙xe3 59.♙xe3 ♙xg2 60.♙f4 of course leads to an immediate draw.

58.♙e1

It seems as though White is in sort some of zugzwang and needs to move the king from d2.

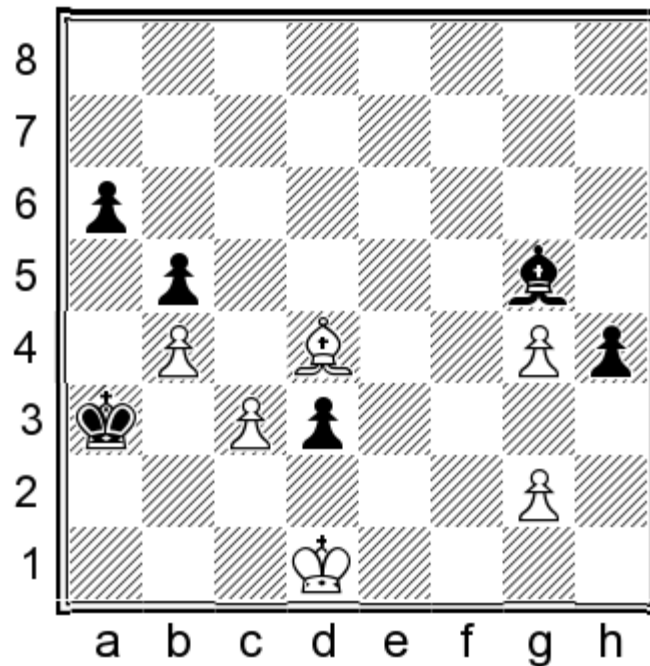
58...♙b3 59.♙d2 ♙c4 60.♙e1 ♙d5

This is the key! Black attacks the g2-pawn and asks White if he can calculate very carefully the complications after ♘xd5.



61. ♕f2?!

A mistake... 61. ♖xd5 was leadsto a draw. After 61... ♗xd5 62. ♖d1 it seems like White can do nothing against Black collecting the a3-pawn and later on winning the game, but in fact there is a defense. 62... ♔c4 63. ♖e1 ♗b3 64. ♖d1 ♗xa3



65. ♕f2! ♗b3 66. ♕e1 followed by ♕d2 next, with a draw.

61...d2 62. ♖d1 ♗b3

Maybe not the best, even if it is a good move. 62... ♕f4 seems to be very strong, followed by ... ♗f7-♗g6 and ♗g5, winning the g4-pawn.

63.♖e2 ♗c4+ 64.♖f2 ♗b3 65.♖e2 ♖f7

Again not the best move... better was 65...♖d5 66.♗g7 ♖e4 67.♜f2+ ♖f4 68.♖xd2 ♖g3+ 69.♖e2 ♗c4+ 70.♖e1 ♖xg2 and Black is simply winning.

66.♜b2 ♖g6?!

and this is a real mistake. Black is not careful! 66...♗d5 was the right way to go...

67.c4!!

A fantastic resource that came out of nowhere!

67...bxc4 68.♗c3

Not only is the d2-pawn falling now, but the bishop on b3 is also out of play now.

68...♗f4 69.♗xd2 ♖g5

Black is trying his best...

70.♜d1 ♖xg4 71.♜e3+

But now the position is already much closer to a draw than to a win for Black. The d-pawn is just gone...

71...♖h5 72.♜d5 ♗e5 73.♗c3 ♗h2

Black's idea is to get the king to g3, but White easily fights against it.

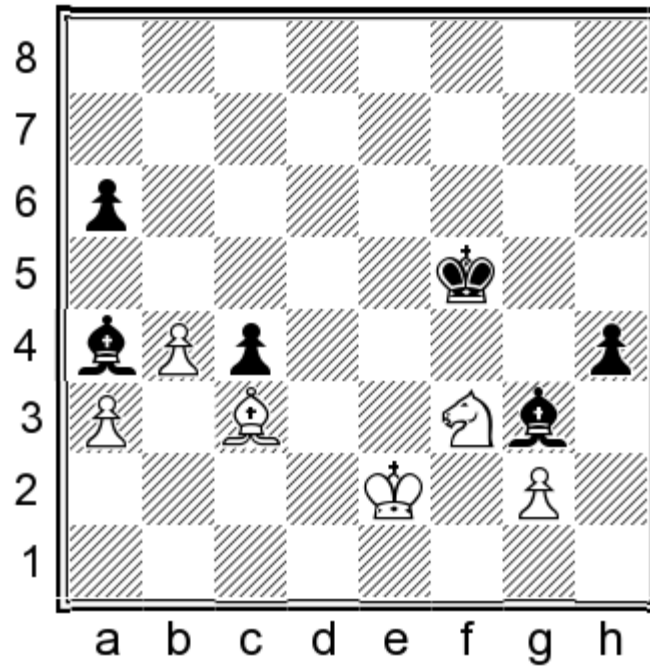
74.♜f6+ ♖g6 75.♜e4

75.♜d7 gives Black almost no chance to go on.

75...♗a4

So the black bishop is out at least.

76.♜d2 ♖f5 77.♜f3 ♗g3



78.♙e1?

A mistake which is based on a miscalculation, and one which costs the game. 78.♙e3 and although White needs to continue defending very carefully, the game should end in a draw.

78...♙g4

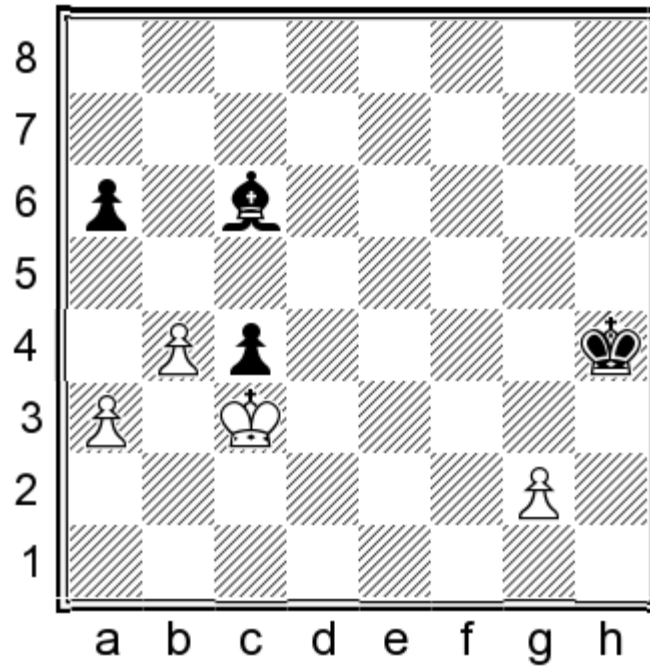
Of course!

79.♙xg3 ♙xg3 80.♙d2

Aronian thinks that the position is a draw, and we will soon see why!

80...♙c6 81.♘xh4 ♙xh4 82.♙c3

It seems like all White needs to do is to get rid of the c4-pawn and get the king back to a1.



82...♙b5!!

The winning move! It is obvious that Aronian thought he just draws the position after 83.a4, and of course it would be a draw after 83...♙xa4 84.♔xc4, but instead Black can just play 83...♔xg3 and after 84.axb5 axb5 he gets an easily winning pawn endgame. So both players missed some chances and in the end it was White who made the final, decisive mistake.

0–1

GAME 79

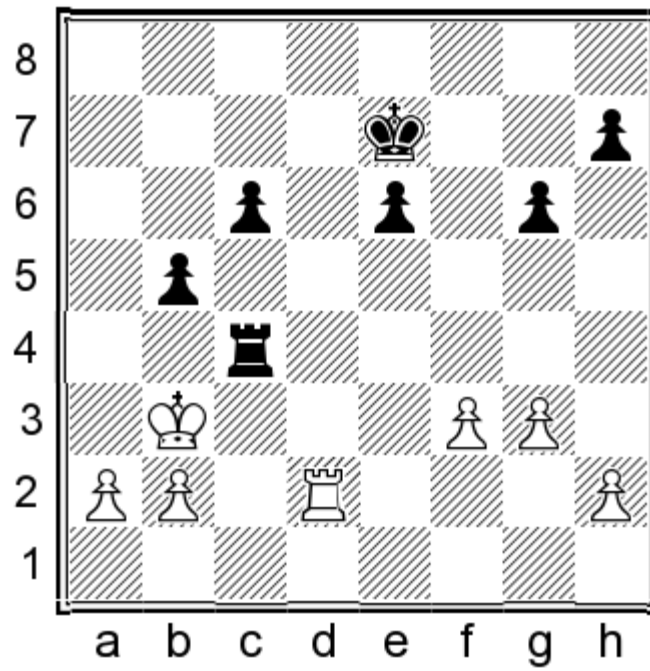
P. Leko (2708)

V. Ivanchuk (2720)

European Teams

17.11.2015

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



This rook endgame would be naturally a dead draw with 5 vs 5 pawns, but White has the option to enter into a very interesting pawn endgame.

29.♖c2! ♜xc2 30.♔xc2

The material is balanced, but White has the principal advantage because of the possibility of creating a distant passed pawn with b3-a4, which is a decisive factor in many pawn endgames.

30...c5 31.a3!

White must pay attention to some technical details while creating the passed pawn. 31.b3 allows Black to fix the queenside with 31...b4 32.♔d3 ♔d6 33.♕c4 ♕c6 and White does not gain anything by putting Black into zugzwang, because the e6-pawn controls the d5-square, therefore Black can simply move ...♔b6-c6. 34.f4 h5 35.h3 ♔b6 36.g4 hxg4 37.hxg4 ♕c6=

31...♔d6

Black has no time to fix the queenside now with 31...c4? 32.♔c3 ♔d6 33.♕b4 ♕c6 34.a4! bxa4 35.♔xc4!+- and White wins the a4-pawn and the game.

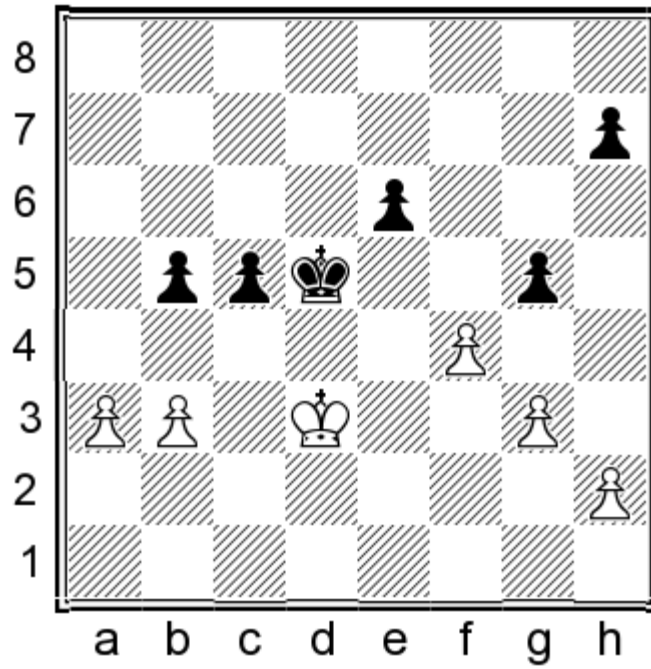
32.b3 g5 33.♔d3

White activates his king first. The direct a4 does not bring anything because of ...♔c6.

33...♔d5

A very risky move, which just holds by one tempo in a long and forced line. Both players calculated it until the end, but still it is better practically to avoid such decisions. It would have been easier to play 33...♔c6 and we will discuss these positions later in the game.

34.f4



A very interesting option was 34.a4!? the point being, with the king on d3, that Black could counter this move with c4! and after bxc4 bxa4 suddenly he is the one who has created a distant passed-pawn. However with the king on d5, c4 bxc4 is check! Black is forced to take back, but then White has the distant a-passer. 34...♔c6! The only move!

(34...bxa4 leads to the typical loss with the distant passer 35.bxa4 c4+ 36.♔c3 ♔c5 White has different wins here.

The key is, that at some point he will give up his a-pawn for the c-pawn and then his king will be closer to the other pawns to collect them. 37.h4 gxh4 38.gxh4 e5 39.h5 h6 40.a5 ♔b5 41.a6 ♔xa6 42.♔xc4+- and ♔d5 wins next.)

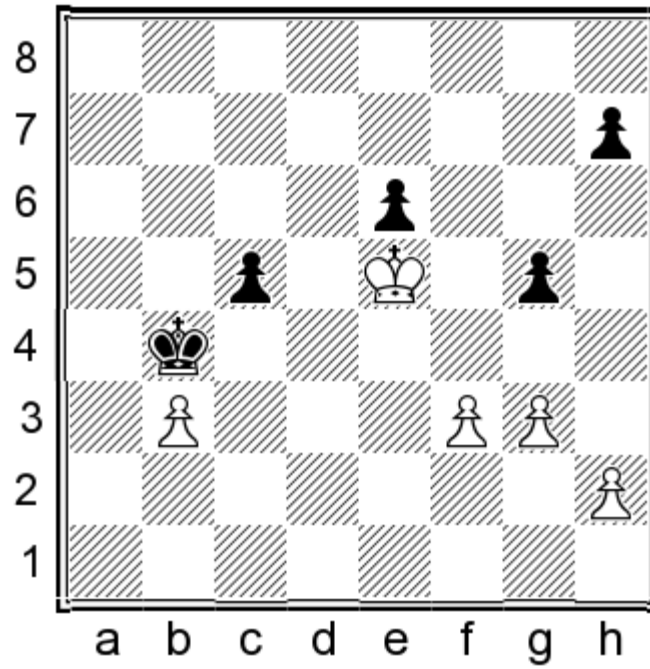
35.♔e4 ♔b6! Another only move! Black wants to play ...c4, which was not possible immediately because axb5 is a check.

(35...c4? loses to 36.axb5+ ♔xb5 37.bxc4+ ♔xc4 38.f4! gxf4 39.gxf4 and ♔e5 wins next move.)

36.axb5

(36.♔e5 is already met by 36...c4! 37.bxc4 bxa4 White can still hold the draw with 38.♔d6! the pawns promote at the same time and if Black goes 38...♔b7 with the idea of 39.c5 ♔c8, then White forces repetition with 39.♔d7! ♔b6 40.♔d6=)

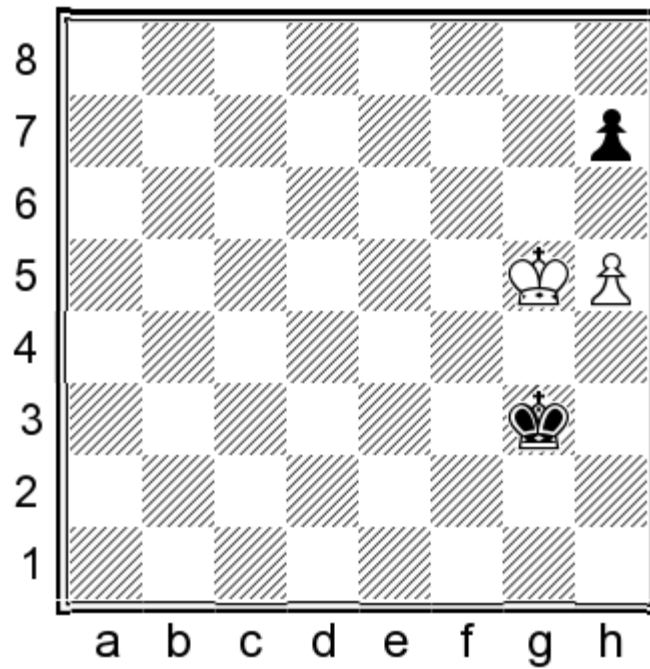
36...♔xb5 37.♔e5 ♔b4



38.♔d6! This is the key resource in White's plan. It looks like he is winning because after eliminating the c5- and b3-pawns his king again stands closer to the kingside. However, Black just survives...

(38.♔xe6 ♔xb3 leads to easy draw 39.f4 gxf4 40.gxf4 c4 41.f5 c3 42.f6 c2 43.f7 c1=♚ 44.f8=♚=)

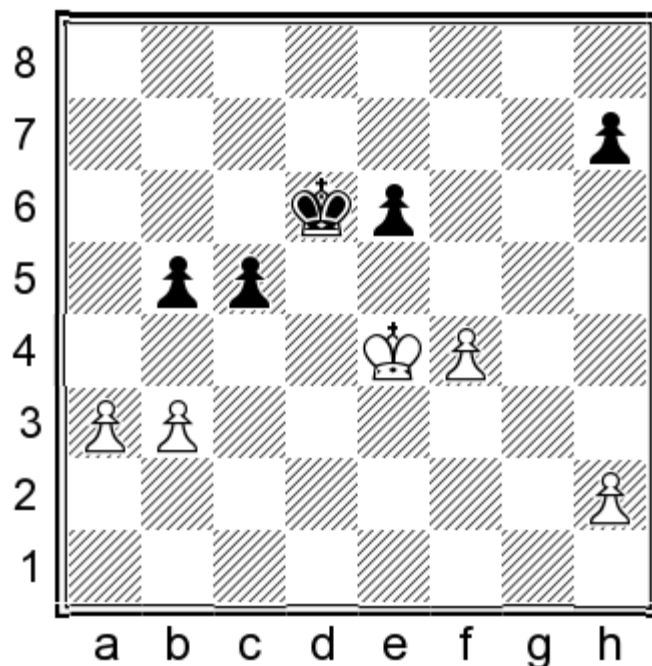
38...♔xb3 39.♔xc5 ♔c3 40.♔d6 ♔d4 41.♔xe6 ♔e3 42.♔f5 ♔xf3 43.♔xg5 ♔g2! Just in time to restore the material balance. It is still not over yet, because the white king stands well, but not well enough to win the game... 44.h4 ♔xg3 45.h5



White wants to go h6 and ♔f6-g7, but Black is just in time to squeeze the king into the corner. 45...♔f3 46.h6 ♔e4! 47.♔f6 ♔d5! 48.♔g7 ♔e6 49.♔xh7 ♔f7= This was all forced after 34.a4. A nice line to calculate as a training exercise.

34...gxf4 35.gxf4 ♔c6

Another instructive line goes with 35...♔d6 36.♔e4



36...♔c7! is the way to draw! With the white king on e4, Black should avoid moving to the mined square on c6! The point is again the same as before: on a4 he must be able to reply with ...c4, but for this the king cannot stand in the way of axb5 check!

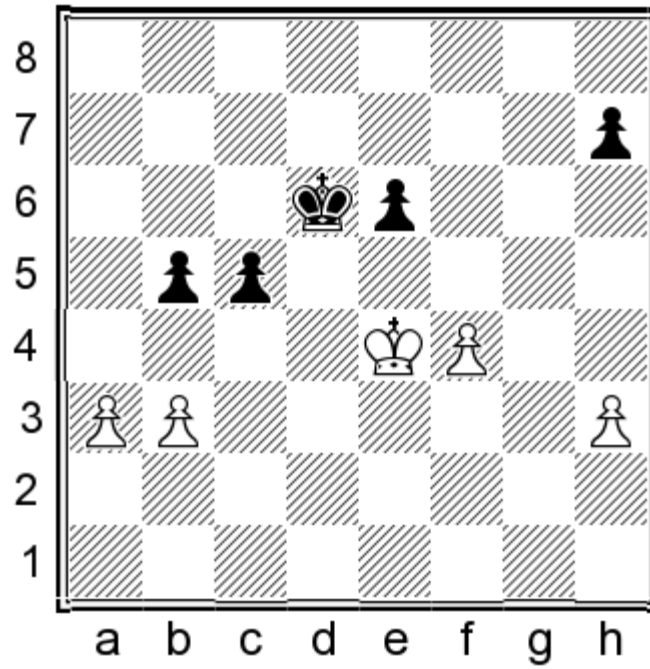
(The most natural looking 36...♔c6? loses to 37.a4! and the difference to the 34.a4 line is that the white pawn already stands on f4, therefore White is winning in the same line. 37...♔b6 38.axb5 ♔xb5 39.♔e5 ♔b4 40.♔d6! ♔xb3 41.♔xc5 ♔c3 42.♔d6 ♔d4 43.♔xe6+-)

37.♔e5 ♔b6= This is Black's easiest defensive resource. He actually does not need to do anything else other than wait with ...♔c7-b6 and White cannot make progress, because of ...c4 and the pawn promotes too quickly.

36.♔e4

The king has moved to the mined c6-square, however the white king also stands there, therefore 36.a4 could be met by 36...c4+! check! 37.♔c3 cxb3 38.axb5+ ♔xb5 39.♔xb3=

36...♔d6 37.h3



37...♔d7!

Ivanchuk does not fall into the trap! This or 37...♔c7 holds the draw. He just needs to be careful that with the white king on e4, he should not move to ♔c6. 37...♔c6? loses as we have seen in the 35...♔d6 36.♔e4 ♔c6 line. 38.a4+—

38.♔d3 ♔c6 39.♔e4 ♔d6 40.h4

Another invitation for Black to go wrong with ...♔c6, but of course he does not miss it.

40...h5 41.♔e3 ♔c7 42.♔d3 ♔c6 43.♔e4 ♔d6 44.♔e3 ♔c7 45.♔d3 ♔c6 46.♔e4

Draw agreed! A seemingly easy endgame, but there were many subtleties.

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GAME 80

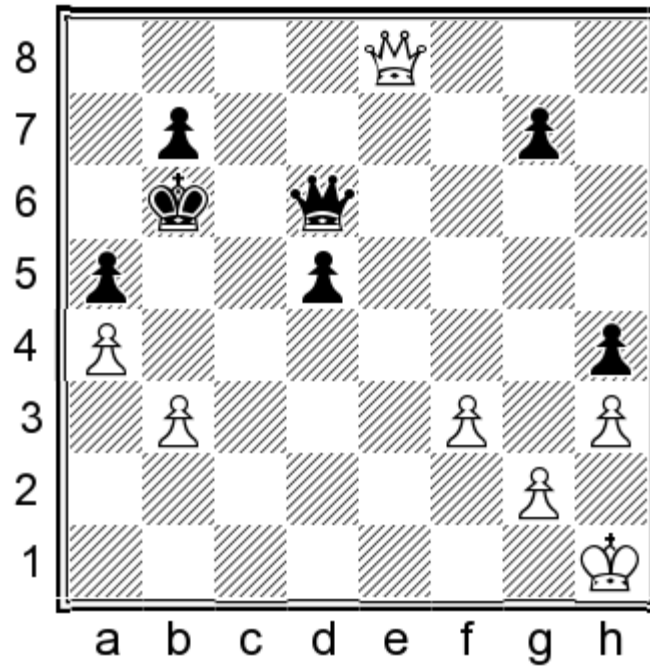
M. Matlakov (2684)

V. Kramnik (2796)

Qatar Masters

24.12.2015

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



We will now see a very instructive endgame lesson from Kramnik. We can name a few general principles of queen endgames, which Kramnik is going to use. As in all endgames, passed pawns play a very important role. Black has one on d5, while White is very far from creating one. A well-supported passed pawn is much more important than material. If Black could advance his d-pawn, he would not mind losing all his other pawns. The material is balanced, but Kramnik shows with great technique the power of the d5-passer.

57...♔c5!!

Kramnik breaks in with his king! Hidden between the b3-a4 pawns, it will be safe from checks and it will also be close enough to support the d-pawn. 57...d4 allows White to exclude the black king from the game with 58.♚b5+ ♔a7 59.♚xa5+ ♔b8 White runs out of checks, but he blocks the d-pawn in time with 60.♔g1! d3 61.♚d2= followed by ♔f1, and White holds. The Black king is too far away to help.

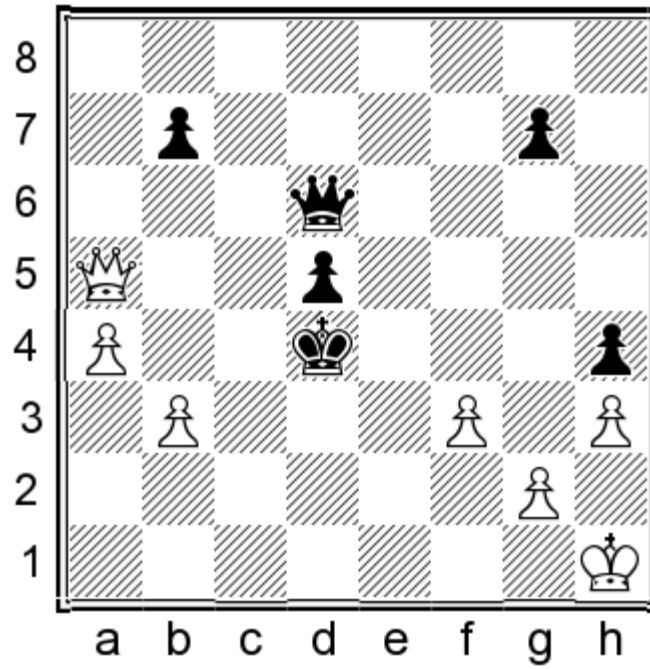
57...♔c5!! 58.♚b5+

58.♔g1 demonstrates well, that with an active black king the situation is no longer the same as it was in the previous line: 58...♔b4! 59.♚b5+ ♔a3 and Black is ready to advance his pawn and at any moment he can take on b3, after which a4 also falls. 60.♚xb7 For Black it is only important to preserve his d-pawn; the b7 and any others do not count. 60...♚c5+ 61.♔f1 ♚c1+ 62.♔e2 d4! with excellent winning chances.

58...♔d4

The king temporarily blocks his own pawn, but it soon hides itself on the queenside.

59.♚xa5



59...♔d3!

Kramnik is ready to give up all his pawns (now b7 is hanging after ♖b5 check) as he only cares about supporting his passed pawn properly with all his pieces!

60.♜b5+

60.♔g1 is too slow again 60...d4 61.♔f1 ♔c2 White does not even have a check and the pawn continues marching.

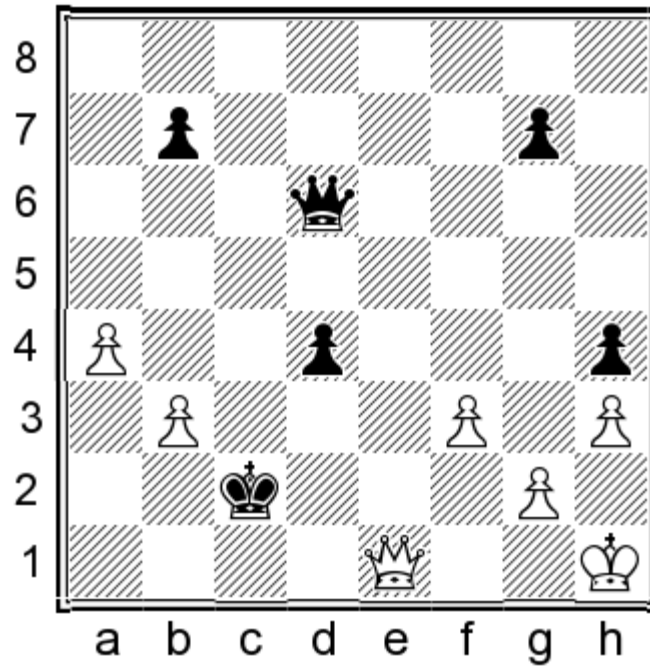
60...♔c3 61.♜a5+

Matlakov invites his opponent to grab his queenside pawns in order to be able to give dozens of checks and not be blocked by his own pawns. 61.♜xb7 was met by 61...d4 62.a5 (62.♜xg7 ♔c2–+ and d3 next.) 62...d3 63.a6 d2–+ Black is faster.

61...♔c2!

Kramnik resists the temptation and continues focusing on the support of his d-pawn instead of being materialistic.

62.♜e1 d4



63. ♖e2+

White finally manages to force Black to take his queenside pawns, otherwise the king cannot hide from the checks.

63... ♜xb3

63... ♙c3 64. ♖e1+ Black sooner or later needs to take on b3.

64. ♖d1+ ♜b4 65. ♖b1+ ♜xa4

65... ♙c5?? would have been a nice gift to Matlakov on Christmas Day, but of course Kramnik does not give away such presents :) 66. ♖b5#

66. ♖xb7

White could have tried to give perpetual check with 66. ♖a2+ although Black can run away with some precise moves 66... ♙b5 67. ♖b3+ ♙c6 68. ♖c4+ ♖c5 69. ♖e6+ ♙c7 70. ♖f7+ ♙b6 71. ♖e6+ ♖c6 72. ♖b3+ ♖b5 73. ♖e6+ ♙a7 74. ♖a2+ ♖a6 and finally there are no more checks.

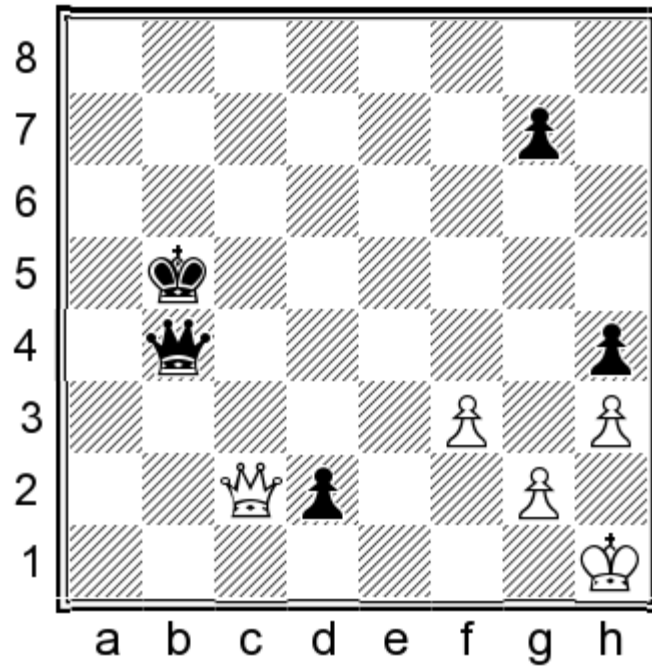
66... d3

Material may still be balanced, but the position is not equal as long as the d-pawn is on board.

67. ♖b2

White soon runs out of checks after 67. ♖a7+ ♙b3 68. ♖b7+ ♖b4! 69. ♖f7+ ♖c4! 70. ♖b7+ ♙c2—+ when the pawn and the queen offer perfect shelter for the king and Black soon promotes his pawn.

67... d2 68. ♖a2+ ♙b5 69. ♖b2+ ♖b4 70. ♖c2



70...♔d4!

The perfect square for the queen! In the center it controls all the important diagonals, lines and ranks and at the same time it supports the d-pawn. White has only a few checks left after which he is obliged to block the pawn on d1, but such passive defense already indicates that it is going to be the end of the game.

71.♚b3+ ♔c5 72.♚c2+ ♔b4 73.♚d1

73.♚b1+ ♔a3—+ No more checks!

73...♚b2!

White resigned in view of ...♚c1 and a new queen will appear next! A very instructive endgame for all of us!

0–1