

Daniel Naroditsky

Mastering Complex Endgames

Revised and updated edition, New In Chess 2026

Contents

Explanation of symbols.	4
Foreword by Sam Shankland (2026).	5
Foreword by Yasser Seirawan (2012).	8
Acknowledgements and Editor's note	11
Chapter 1 What Are Complex Endings?	13
Chapter 2 Rook Endgames	33
Solutions to Exercises.	93
Chapter 3 Rook + Minor Piece(s)	97
Solutions to Exercises.	180
Chapter 4 Queen Endgames.	185
Solutions to Exercises.	224
Chapter 5 Queen + Minor Piece(s) versus Queen	227
Solutions to Exercises.	357
Chapter 6 Conclusion	361
Index of names	381
Bibliography	384

Foreword by Sam Shankland (2026)

When I grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area, there was no shortage of strong young players. When Daniel and I first met, we both had made decent strides in chess for new players, but we were far away from establishing ourselves as California's two most promising young talents. I sort of saw him as a little brother in the chess world; our four-year age gap felt enormous when we were 12 and 8. Our relationship was cordial and friendly, and not much more than that. In fact, I was much closer with his older brother Alan, who was my age.

As a few years passed, around the time that we were 15 and 11, we had surpassed all of the other young players around. At this point, I was starting to feel the competition between us. I vividly remember taking second place in the K-12 state championship, while Danya took first. It was my first year at my high school, and the school had sent a team. I remember our captain writing for the school newsletter 'Sam went undefeated and finished as the top high schooler in the state.' Words carefully chosen to avoid pointing out that a 5th grader had won the tournament, and that my undefeated 5.0/6 was half a point short of the winning score. I felt embarrassed going back to school the next day.

Sometime shortly after, Daniel passed me in rating, and I was the second highest rated young player in California. To me, this was entirely unacceptable and was like waving a red flag at a bull. I upped my training regimen, started taking chess much more seriously, and I had my breakout year shortly after.

While our relationship before was friendly and cordial, the competitive element was always there. It was only a few years later, as an adult, that I came to realize something critically important. I would not have made it to where I was if Daniel had not been constantly chasing my tail, and making sure that my place at the top of California chess was anything but secure. And this taught me the most important lesson I have ever learned as a chess player, and as a human being.

The best friends that we have in this world are the ones who push us to be the best versions of ourselves, and will accept nothing less. As competitors, as friends, as humans.

Daniel was that friend for me. People make all kinds of acquaintances as they go through life, positive, negative and everything in between. But the difference between those who enrich your life, and those who actively change the trajectory of your life for the better, tends to be that the latter group pushes you in a way that makes you uncomfortable at times. In ways that might not always be pleasant, but that when you look back, you know was critical in your personal and professional growth.

I dealt Daniel his fair share of setbacks in our early days as well. I remember him at 11 years old, choking back tears as I beat him on board 1 in the final round of the Tuesday Night Marathon to clinch first place. And this prepubescent boy, still under 5 feet tall, showed incredible personal strength when he fought back

the tears, shook my hand anyway, and wished me luck as I would make my debut in the upcoming US Championship. He even volunteered to play training games and help me out however he could.

Even at such a young age, Daniel was a perfect role model. He was as fierce and competitive a player as I had ever known, but he was also a kind soul. Whatever pressure he put on me to perform, it came from his excellent play, and only his excellent play. In terms of our interpersonal relationship, he was nothing but positive. My young teenage self might have been too proud to learn from an 11-year-old at the time, but he had mastered the balance between athletic excellence and exemplary sportsmanship ahead of me.

As we became adults, Daniel became one of my closest friends. We both became US Junior Champions. What the world might not know is that we each seconded each other in the event that the other one won. We worked together for many years, for as long as Daniel was still focused on playing more than being a content creator. There are at least 5 games I can point to from each of us that were won by playing opening preparation that came right from the other's laptop. When we played in the same events overseas, it had become abundantly obvious that we were brothers in arms. Homegrown Americans who trained together, proud to fly our flag as we played for our country all across the globe. Not kids who competed against each other to be the biggest fish in a small pond in a tiny little slice of the world.

The first time I played Daniel in a serious professional game when we were both grandmasters was the 2014 US Championship. He tore me to shreds, with Black. I was furious with myself for not bringing my best, and my base instincts would not have led me to show good sportsmanship. But as I was getting ready to resign, I had a vision of young Daniel showing tremendous class in that final round Tuesday Night Marathon game. Sitting across from the same player, now a grown man and a first-rate grandmaster, I swallowed my pride, shook his hand, and congratulated his father on my way out of the tournament hall.

Daniel and I were closer at some times than others. There were times we would be talking all the time, other times we might go months without speaking. While I treasure the memories I had with him playing blitz, bughouse, Avalon, just hanging out, and everything in between, what I will remember him most for was the profound impact he had on my growth. Both as a chess player and as a man. I truly believe that I would not be the chess player or the person I am today had Daniel not touched my life. And for that, I will be forever grateful in ways that words can never describe.

Daniel had a great impact on me, but an even greater impact on the entire chess community. His deep passion for learning made him a fantastic content creator in addition to his incredible playing strength. In his later years, he channeled this creativity into streaming and growing the game. Given his success over the board and his online popularity, it is easy to forget that Daniel also wrote two

excellent books in his life, the first published when he was just 14 years old, and the second, now in your hands.

Indeed, there were some errors in the old edition. I assumed I would find it less impressive than I did before, because I am such a stronger player than I was then, and would be more able to identify potential misjudgments. In fact, quite the opposite was true. I was even more impressed! Indeed, there were some errors, errors I could see now as a super-GM, and also pointed out by superior machinery from what was available in 2011. But there were a lot fewer errors than I was expecting. Daniel had done an absolutely fantastic job of producing analysis that would stand the test of time.

Having gone through his old work with Jacob Aagaard, Peter Boel and the rest of the New In Chess team, and done some small edits to fix the alarmingly few outdated or incorrect comments, I could not be more proud to write a preface to this wonderful book from my late friend.

Daniel is gone. Nobody will ever play with him again, have a conversation with him again, or have him interact with them again. But he lives on forever in the words that he wrote within these pages, words that I'm sure will have a great impact on chess players for generations.

Daniel would be happy seeing this book inspire young players to improve. As it certainly will.

Sam Shankland
Walnut Creek
May 2026



Sam (left) and Danya meeting at the board.

Having said all of this, a fundamental question arises: ‘How did the players find all these moves?’ I can’t emphasize enough the importance of knowing endgame ideas. A player with limited knowledge would spend much more

time on 19.g4 than one who has studied endgames. However, without sharp analytical abilities, one could never correctly assess the consequences of the sacrifice. One slight miscalculation and White loses on the spot.

All of this comes to show that two fundamental skills are **required** to master the art of the endgame: **the ability to calculate long (possibly unforced) lines and evaluate the resulting position, and the ability to apply general endgame ideas to a specific position.** Generic knowledge of common endgame themes is not enough, it is only through the careful examination of countless complex endings that one is truly able to imbibe the elusive liquid of strong endgame technique.

This brings us to another important point: **stereotyping in the endgame is a major cause of mistakes.** As an example, let’s take the queen and knight vs queen and bishop tandems. It is quite true that as a rule, the queen and knight work better together than the queen and bishop – we will later examine the specific reasons behind this pattern. However, one should never make decisions based on a general pattern; every concrete game should be considered separately. Yes, statistics do prove that the side with the queen and knight wins more games than the side with the queen and bishop, but this does not mean there aren’t exceptions to the rule! This might seem rather obvious to the seasoned reader, but in the heat of the battle, thinking rationally can be much more challenging. Usually, such stereotyping occurs at a subconscious level.

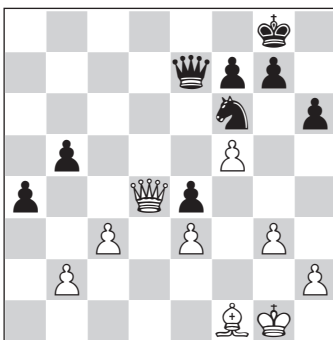
Consider the following game as an illustration of the above:

Game 3

□ Daniel Naroditsky

■ Evan Sandberg

San Francisco 2008



The opening was a complete debacle for me, but I managed to recover and found myself faring rather well.

White’s queen and bishop are coordinated perfectly. They dominate the board and attack Black’s weak queenside pawn chain. On the other hand, Black’s queen and knight are mere spectators. White doesn’t really have any weaknesses in his position, and therefore his king is quite safe from any sudden attacks.

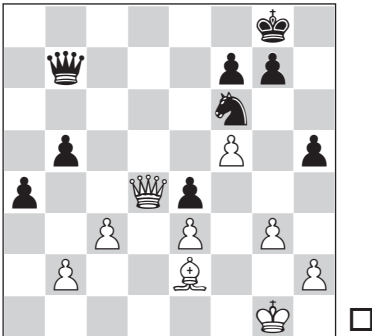
1...♚b7

Quite probably, Black was under the mistaken impression that the queen and knight are superior to the queen and bishop in practically any position. My opponent is an aggressive young player, and therefore his judgment might have been a little over-ambitious.

Had he looked at the position from an unprejudiced point of view, the drawing move 1...a3! would not have been hard to find. After 2.bxa3 ♚xa3, Black holds without trouble.

2.♙e2

Preparing the pawn storm g4 and h4, and practically forcing Black's next weakening move. Being greedy with 2.♚c5 would have given Black a chance to activate his pieces by means of 2...♚d7 3.♚xb5 ♚d2! 4.♙e2 ♚c1, when the position is completely unclear.

2...h5

Here I settled into a long think. White has a few logical plans:

- 1) Place the king on e1, from where it will defend the important d2-square and thus give the white queen more freedom.
- 2) Insist on playing g3-g4 by means of ♘g2 (since h2-h3 immediately is

thwarted by ...♚c7 and ...h5-h4, with great counterplay), and follow it up by h2-h3 and g3-g4, trying to open up the position of Black's king and possibly utilize the a2-g8 diagonal.

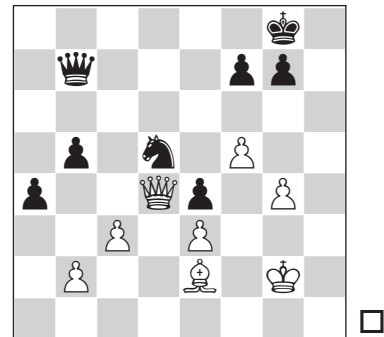
I was leaning towards plan A before I realized that after the king is placed on e1, Black will constantly have the nagging idea ...h5-h4, and if g3-g4, ...♚c7, attacking the important h2-pawn and forcing a weakening of the g3-square. This left me with plan B – it was logical, and wasn't all that risky.

3.♘g2 ♘g4?!

This sets a trap, but the move in and of itself is completely useless.

4.h3!

If White had played 4.♙xg4 hxg4 5.♚d8+ ♘h7 6.♙h4+ ♘g8 7.♙xg4, Black would achieve drawing counterplay by means of 7...♚d7, when the position after, for example, 8.♙e2 ♙xf5 is drawn.

4...♘f6 5.g4 hxg4 6.hxg4 ♘d5?!

Black finds a tricky defense, setting a cool trap along the way. If White plays 7.♙xe4?!, hoping for 7...♘xe3+?? 8.♙f3 ♙xe4+ 9.♙xe4, with a winning endgame, Black plays instead 7...♘f4+! 8.♙f3 ♙xe4+ 9.♙xe4 ♘xe2, with an extra piece.

However, the knight move also has its drawbacks.

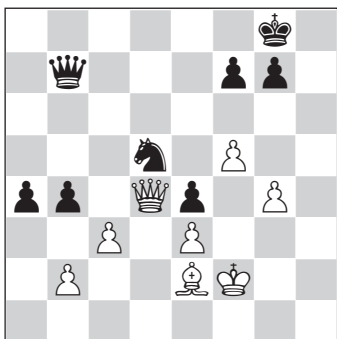
7.♔f2?!

Better was 7.g5!. Now the defense seen in the game fails: 7...b4? 8.cxb4 ♘xb4? 9.♖d8+ ♕h7 10.g6+! fxg6 11.♗h4+ ♔g8 12.♙c4+ ♕f8 13.♗d8#.

However, if Black does not play 7...b4, it is hard to find a good move. Black appears to be in zugzwang. For instance, after 7...♖c6 8.♔f2!, the e4-pawn is lost, since defending leads to disaster: 8...♘b6? (or 8...♘c7? 9.♗d8+ ♘e8 10.♗b8) 9.♗d8+ ♕h7 10.♙h5!.

As such, the computer recommends 7...♗e7!? 8.♗xd5 ♗xg5+, when White won't be able to hold on to the e3-pawn, but is a piece up, with definite winning chances.

7...b4!



□

Black finds the objectively strongest defense. The point of this move is to confront White with a dilemma – he could risk it with c3-c4, hoping that his pawn will be faster than Black's (after ...a4-a3), or he could choose the safe option with ♙c4 or cxb4, although it probably won't give more than a draw. At first, I was leaning towards 8.♙c4, but after calculating that Black isn't

in much danger if he plays carefully, I started to doubt the fact that Black can generate counterplay connected with a passed pawn before White tears the monarch's residence apart with g4-g5 and c4-c5 followed by ♙c4+. Even if Black does get ...a4-a3 in, he will need at least two more moves before his threats become real, thus giving White ample time to organize a mating attack.

Therefore:

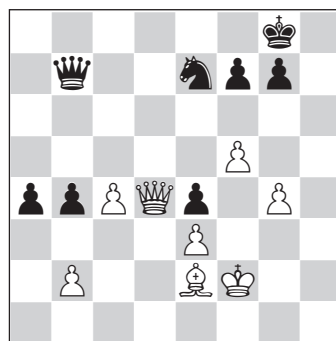
8.c4!

I later discovered that my calculations were right; both 'safe' alternatives give White nothing if Black plays carefully:

A) 8.cxb4 ♘xb4 9.♙c4 ♘d3+ 10.♙xd3 exd3 is a draw;

B) 8.♙c4!? is a much better try, forcing Black to come up with a series of strong moves: 8...bxc3! 9.♙xd5 (9.♗xd5?? would even lose, to 9...♗xd5 10.♙xd5 c2) 9...♗xb2+ 10.♔g3 ♗b8+! (10...♗d2 is also okay, but only if after 11.♗xe4, Black plays 11...♗e1+! 12.♔g2 ♗b2+, and White cannot avoid perpetual check – not 11...c2?? 12.♗e8+ ♕h7 13.♙xf7! c1♗ 14.♗g8+ ♕h6 15.♗h8+ ♔g5 16.♗xg7#, when White delivers mate before Black does.

8...♘e7



□

9. ♖d6

It's important to combine defense with attack. White improves his queen and stops ...a4-a3 at the same time.

The rash 9.c5 could have led to dire consequences after 9...a3 10.bxa3 bxa3, when White must be careful and avoid 11.♖a1? ♜b2, when Black wins due to 12.♞d1 a2 13.♞d8+ ♔h7 14.♞xe7 ♞f6!.

9... ♘c6

This makes sense, although I think that Black simply underestimated the strength of the deadly g5-g6 advance, forcing him to open up the a2-g8 diagonal.

The most testing continuation is probably 9...a3!? 10.bxa3 b3. After 11.♙d1 b2 12.♙c2 ♘xf5 (12...b1♞ 13.♙xb1 ♞xb1 14.♞xe7 ♞c2+ 15.♙g3 ♞xc4 should also draw) 13.gxf5 b1♞ 14.♞d8+ ♔h7 15.♙xb1 ♞xb1 16.♞d4, White reaches a queen endgame a pawn up. There are definitely some winning chances, although after 16...♞c2+ 17.♙g3 f6!, Black should be able to hold, as with the fairly instructive sequence 18.♙f4 ♞b1 19.♞xe4 ♞f1+ 20.♙g3 ♞g1+.

10.g5 ♖a8?

Black collapses.

With 10...a3!, he would have saved the game: 11.bxa3 b3 12.♙d1 b2! (12...♘a5? 13.♞d8+ leads to a position where White has numerous ways to finish off the black monarch) 13.♙c2 b1♞ 14.♙xb1 ♞b2+! 15.♙g3 ♞xb1 16.♞xc6 ♞g1+ 17.♙f4 ♞h2+, and Black escapes with perpetual check.

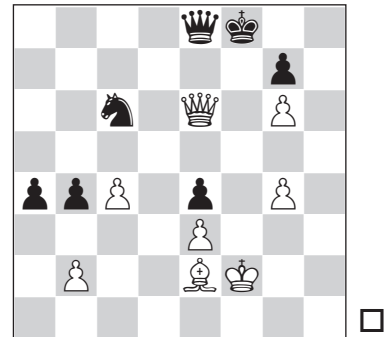
Instead, 10...f6? loses immediately after 11.c5! fxf5 12.♙c4+ ♔h7 13.♞g6+ ♔h8 14.♞h5#, and 10...♞c8 11.♙e1! enables White to press, though 11...a3 12.bxa3

bxa3! (12...b3? 13.♙d2! ♞b7 14.g6! wins, because of 14...b2 15.gxf7+ ♙xf7? 16.♙h5+ ♙g8 17.♙g6, when 17...b1♞ 18.♞e6+ is mate in two and 17...b1♘+ 18.♙c1 wins) 13.♞xa3 ♘e5 should be drawn.

11.g6 fxg6 12. ♞e6+

This felt like the fastest and easiest continuation.

12.c5! was also strong. For example: 12...♘a5 (or 12...gxf5 13.♙c4+ ♔h7 14.♙f7! and Black has no good defense against mate on the h-file) 13.♞e6+ ♙f8 14.fxf6 ♞e8 15.♞f5+ ♙e7 (similarly, 15...♙g8 loses to 16.c6!) 16.♞e5+ ♙f8 17.♞f4+ ♙g8 18.c6! and Black can resign.

12... ♙f8 13.fxf6 ♞e8**14. ♞f5+?**

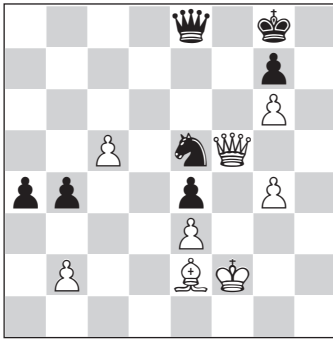
Giving away the win. 14.♞d6+! (this was also good last turn) 14...♙g8 15.♙e1!, followed by 16.c5, still wins, but not 15.c5? ♞f8+! and Black escapes.

14... ♙g8?

Returning the favor.

14...♙e7! 15.♞xe4+ ♙d8 holds. Both kings are exposed and Black's potential outside passed pawn cancels out White's extra pawn and superior minor piece.

15.c5 ♘e5



16.c6!

The last finesse. Both the c6- and the g6-pawns are untouchable, unless Black wants to lose material.

16...a3?

All other moves lost too:

A) 16...♘xg6? 17.♙c4+ ♔h8 18.♚h5#;

B) 16...♚xg6? 17.♙c4+ ♔h7 18.♚h3+ ♚h6 19.♚xh6+ ♔xh6 20.c7 gains a new queen;

C) Even 16...♚xc6 17.♚xe5 ♚xg6 18.♚b8+ ♔h7 19.♚xb4 is winning: 19...♚f6+ 20.♔e1 ♚h4+ 21.♔d2 ♚d8+ 22.♚d4 escapes the checks, and the extra bishop will decide the game.

17.c7 ♘d7 18.♙c4+

Black resigned.

What should we take out of this game? First of all, note that Black's position started rapidly deteriorating after his first error. What is the reason for this? After all, Black's position looked rather plausible, and White's king was not too safe in its own right. All of these factors probably played a key role in Black's overestimation of his chances and subsequent errors.

Having said all of this, however, it is still not clear how to evaluate these types of positions. How should one decide whether to attack or defend? And how do different tandems fare in different types of positions? Once again, all of these questions cannot be answered without spending hours and hours studying a multitude of complex positions.

In the following pages, I will attempt to answer these questions through the analysis of fascinating and yet infinitely tricky games.

The examples above were mainly designed to give you a sneak preview of the themes and quandaries which will be covered in this book. Here is a short recap:

- 1) **Complex endgames are endgames where the evaluation isn't immediately clear and there is no short and obvious path to a result.** Usually, a complex endgame will be multi-piece and will revolve around one or more fundamental ideas. This stretches from something as seemingly minuscule as control of a file to a much more encompassing and overarching theme, like the fight to stop or promote a passed pawn.
- 2) **Very often, as a result of a middlegame sacrifice, the game transforms into an endgame in which one side has unbalanced, dynamic compensation for a certain material loss. In those cases, both sides often have to make a lot of decisions.** The side with the material disadvantage sometimes has to decide whether to win the material back, or continue with the attack. If you are in time trouble in an endgame, it's important to look out for simple but hidden tactical dangers.
- 3) **Complex endgames don't have to contain many tactical variations.**
- 4) **Very often, unusual endings arise when one tandem, which is statistically worse than another, prevails.** If, for example, you have a knight and queen vs a bishop and queen, you cannot assess the position based on the general rule that one tandem is 'better' than another. You have to look at the concrete situation on the board, and only then evaluate the position. In Naroditsky-Sandberg, Black probably felt he was better because he knew that the knight and queen tandem was statistically better than the bishop and queen tandem. Instead of making the correct decision and going for a draw, he played for a win, ignoring the fact that in the concrete situation, the bishop and queen were working together much more productively than the knight and queen.

The great English physicist Isaac Newton once said, 'I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.'

Well, dear reader, buckle your seatbelts and hold on tight, for we are about to sail and possibly conquer the infinitely dangerous and mind-bendingly thorny ocean of complex endings.

Queen + Bishop vs Queen + Knight

José Raúl Capablanca once remarked that as a rule, the queen and knight tandem is superior to the queen and bishop tandem. This ‘rule’ has been the subject of heated debate. In this section, I will attempt to explain the basic ideas behind each tandem, and also establish a more concrete, experience-based answer to this question.

Let us start out by making some general observations. In a tactical, double-edged position, the queen and knight usually cooperate much better than the queen and bishop, as they can whip up deadly threats very quickly. Also, it is much easier to create annoying tactical threats with the queen and knight because the knight can join the attack with a deadly fork.

However, in positions where the kings are safe, the queen and bishop are usually superior as they can control a larger amount of space. Also, a passed pawn is a knight’s worst enemy. In the game Naroditsky–Sandberg (in Chapter 1), we could see that White’s passed pawn forced Black to remain passive.

As we look at more and more games, we will have a better understanding of why and how the queen and knight are usually superior to the queen and bishop.

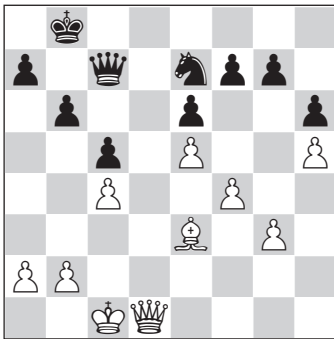
Let’s start out from the point of view of the queen and knight. As an introduction, we turn to Anatoly Karpov.

Game 100

□ Ljubomir Ljubojevic

■ Anatoly Karpov

Linares 1981



□

At first, it appears that White is slightly better. In addition to White’s space advantage, Black has a weakness on d6 and White has the potential to pressure Black on the queenside. However, appearances can be deceptive! First of all, the Black player is named Karpov

(what else needs to be said?). Second, it’s not entirely clear how White should play. Given time, Black will activate both his queen and his knight, neutralizing White’s advantage. Naturally, Ljubojevic plays actively.

1. ♖d3

As Karolyi and Aplin prove in an extensive, meticulous and entertaining analysis in their book, this is an error. Basically, White should not allow Black to play ...g7-g6 (improving his pawn structure) without concessions. Karpov recommends 1.g4! instead. I will give some of Karpov and Aplin’s analysis, and add some of my own thoughts as well.

A) 1...♖c6 is the most natural move.



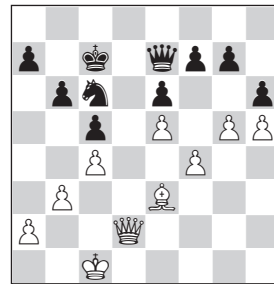
analysis diagram

Black establishes a firm grip on d4 and will counter White's kingside play with central pressure. Black also parries 2.♖d6?!, as after 2...♖xd6 3.exd6 f5!, White will at some stage lose the d6-pawn. White has a few other moves:

A1) 2.♖d3 (unmentioned by the annotators) is a dangerous move. White now threatens 3.♖h7, forcing Black to make a sequence of strong defensive moves. After 2...♖b4! (Black has to defend actively) 3.♖h7 ♖xa2+ (3...♖d7 4.a3! is okay for White) 4.♖b1 (I later realized that 4.♖d1! is better; now, the draw is not so simple, but after 4...♖c6!, I can't find a way for White to avoid the perpetual check) 4...♖b4, White must bail out with 5.♖d2!, since 5.♖xg7? loses to 5...♖d8!, with the deadly threats of both 6...♖d3+ and 6...♖d1+;

A2) 2.g5!? hxg5 3.fxg5 ♖xe5 4.♖f3 ♖d4! (Karolyi and Aplin) 5.♖f2 ♖c8, with dynamic equality;

A3) It seems to me that the best way to try for an advantage is to play the quiet 2.b3!. White's idea is simple: he will improve his position before taking any kingside action. After 2...♖e7 3.g5!? ♖c7! (3...hxg5? 4.fxg5 ♖xe5 5.♖f4 is too dangerous for Black, due to White's outside majority), White has the incredibly subtle 4.♖d2!.

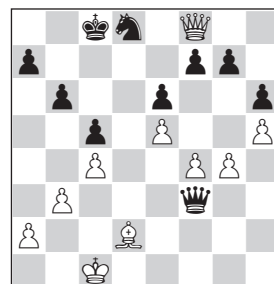


analysis diagram

This has the idea of forcing a concession, after which White moves ♖d2-d1-d2 until Black finally plays ...♖c8. Therefore, it makes sense to play 4...♖c8 immediately. After 5.♖d6! ♖xd6 6.exd6 ♖d7 7.♖d2 (this endgame is drawn, but Black has to find some accurate moves!) 7...♖xd6 8.gxh6 gxh6 9.f5! exf5 10.♖xh6 ♖e6 11.♖g7 f6! White makes no progress.

Overall, 1...♖c6 should draw, although Black has to play carefully.

B) 1...♖b7 (Karolyi and Aplin) seems to be the shortest path to a draw, i.e. 2.♖d6+ ♖c8 (not 2...♖c7? when the ending after 3.f5! exf5 4.♖f4! ♖xd6 5.exd6 is lost for Black: 5...♖c6 6.gxf5, followed by f5-f6 or 6...f6 7.d7+ ♖b7 8.♖d6) 3.b3 ♖f3! 4.♖d2 ♖c6! (4...♖h1+ is mentioned by Karolyi and Aplin, but after 5.♖b2 ♖g2 6.♖a3, Black still has to make some precise moves in order to draw) 5.♖f8+ ♖d8, and Black establishes an impenetrable fortress.

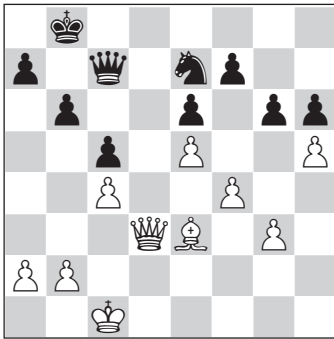


analysis diagram

For example: 6. ♖xg7 ♖h1+ 7. ♘b2 ♖g2, with a forced repetition of moves or perpetual after 8. ♘c2 ♖e4+.

All in all, Black should be able to draw without too much trouble after both 1... ♘c6 and 1... ♖b7. Notice that the knight functions best in the role of the defender, while the queen is the attacker, always looking for perpetual check.

1...g6!



Ljubojevic had underestimated this key move. As we shall soon see, Black establishes a stronghold on f5, and it will be White who will have to equalize.

2.hxg6 fxg6 3.a3

3.g4 would be risky. Only Black could be better after 3...h5!?

3...a5 4.b3 h5

Another important part in Black's plan. Now, White cannot stop the e7-knight from occupying the f5-square.

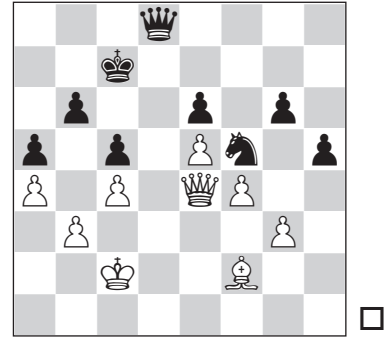
5. ♖e4?!

White is drifting. Again, he might have been more active, with 5.b4!, when 5...axb4 6.axb4 cxb4 7. ♘b2 ♘f5 8. ♙f2, followed by ♘b3, should lead to a draw.

5... ♘f5 6. ♙f2 ♖d7 7.a4?!

7. ♖f3! was preferable to this committing move, and if 7...a4, then 8. ♖d1! ♖xd1+ 9. ♘xd1 axb3 10. ♘d2 ♘d4 11. ♘c3.

7... ♘c7 8. ♘c2 ♖d8!



A tricky move. Ljubojevic, lulled by his rock-solid position, played:

9. ♘c1

9. ♖g2! was a more practical defense, as now 9...g5? (9... ♘e7, followed by either ... ♘c6 or 10. ♖e4 ♖d7 and ... ♖c6, retains an edge for Black) 10.fxg5 ♖xg5 11. ♖a8 leaves Black unable to avoid the perpetual.

9...g5!

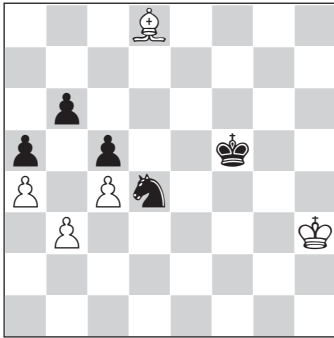
'Uh-oh,' Ljubojevic must have thought! Notice that as soon as Black activates his queen and knight, White's position completely falls apart.

10.fxg5 ♖xg5+ 11. ♘c2 ♘e7 12. ♖h7 ♘d7 13. ♖e4 ♖f5 14. ♖d3+ ♘c6 15. ♖xf5 exf5

The endgame is very difficult for White to defend, as he cannot protect his weak pawns. Both sides' play is now instructive!

16. ♙e3 ♘g6 17.e6 ♘d6 18. ♙g5 ♘xe6 19. ♘d3 f4! 20.gxf4 h4 21. ♘e3 h3 22. ♘f3

♙f5 23.♙g3 ♜xf4! 24.♙d8! ♜e2+
25.♙xh3 ♜d4



□

26.♙xb6?

Ljubojevic has defended an extremely tough position well, but now collapses with the draw in sight.

26.♙g2! (the king can also go via g3) 26...♜xb3 27.♙f2! would have held. After 27...♙e4 28.♙e2 ♜d4 29.♜d1!, the white king is just in time to reach c2 after Black captures on c4. Although this costs White a second pawn, the endgame with a knight and two pawns versus a bishop is a tablebase draw: 29...♙xc4 30.♙c2 ♙b4 31.♙xb6 ♙xa4

32.♙c3! ♙b5 33.♙d8, and White can defend with further careful play.

26...♜xb3 27.♙d8 ♙e4

Note how Black keeps the white king at bay, which is more important than winning the a-pawn.

28.♙g4 ♜d3 29.♙f4 ♙xc4 30.♙e4 ♙c3
31.♙f6+ ♙c2 32.♙e5 c4 33.♙e3 c3
34.♙f6 ♜c5 35.♙e2 ♙b3

And White resigned.

So what exactly do we learn from this game? First of all, Karpov demonstrated that activity is of paramount importance when playing with a queen and knight. Given an opportunity, you should find the best accessible square for your queen and preferably establish a solid outpost for the knight.

This certainly doesn't mean, however, that when given a chance you should lunge at your opponent, burning all the bridges. A knight can also be a very strong piece in closed positions, especially when the bishop is passive.

In the following game, subtle maneuvering leads to a strong attack. Since the game is very instructive, let's start from the beginning.

Game 101

□ Miguel Najdorf

■ Svetozar Gligoric

Saltsjöbaden Interzonal 1948

1.d4 e6 2.c4 f5 3.g3 ♜f6 4.♙g2 ♙e7
5.♜c3 0-0 6.♜f3 d5?!

The main drawbacks of the Stonewall variation are the gaping weaknesses (e5, f4, c5) that Black creates when setting up the Stonewall pawn structure. Keeping that in mind, the bishop is more logically placed on d6 in this variation. However,

at the time the game was played, the ...♙d6 set-up was very unpopular. Since Black has already committed himself to playing 4...♙e7, it made sense to go into the Ilyin-Zhenevsky Variation with 6...d6.

7.0-0 c6 8.♙g5!