

Daniel Naroditsky

Mastering Practical Endgames

New In Chess 2026

Contents

Publisher’s Foreword..... 5

Part 1 Pawn Endgames..... 7

Part 2 Minor Piece Endgames 41

Part 3 Major Piece Endgames 101

Part 4 More Complex Endgames 143

Part 5 Material Imbalances..... 211

Part 6 Special Themes 291

Part 7 Special Players 349

Index of names..... 433

Explanation of symbols..... 439

Publisher's Foreword

One of the most memorable moments in my life as an editor for *New In Chess* came when I opened my mailbox on 17 August, 2009. It contained a message by Vladimir Naroditsky, offering us a book written by his thirteen-year-old son, Daniel. 'Yeah, right,' was my first reaction, but then I read the manuscript with growing amazement. It was well structured and very thoughtfully written – and entertaining! Our then publisher, Allard Hoogland, and I didn't need much time to realize that we were onto something really special.

How a thirteen-year-old boy could argue and reason so systematically, and present his material in such a way that it seemed as if he had more than twenty years of experience, is still beyond me. But there it was. Before we knew it, Danya's first book, *Mastering Positional Chess*, was out. And as if this wasn't enough, two years later another book followed: *Mastering Complex Endgames*. Yes, of course, at 16 he'd already had plenty of those on the board too!

We kept in touch by email with Vladimir, but then I got to meet Danya and his charming mother Lena a few times when this huge chess talent came to the Netherlands to compete in the Hooageveen Open in 2010 and the Groningen Open in 2011 and 2012. During rounds, Danya was of course playing, and I spent quite a few hours talking with Lena. She still seemed a bit overwhelmed by the potential her son was showing, and uncertain how to deal with it. Daniel was friendly and a bit shy – a kind of modesty which I found quite sympathetic in such a gifted kid. In 2011 in Groningen, I intended to meet him after one of the rounds to talk about the progress of his second book. However, his game ended in a disappointing draw, and, not knowing I was there, Daniel disappeared quickly after it. The next day, he apologized extensively by email.

We kept in touch about his second book via email and Skype, and in 2012, at sixteen, Daniel published his second book for us, *Mastering Complex Endgames*. It was, again, a triumph. But next, while we kept gently harassing him about a possible third project, Danya was busy finishing school and hunting for title norms. Characteristically, he also seemed to have some doubts about his authorship.

Whatever the case, that third book didn't materialize. Danya went in other directions; he started a glorious, multifaceted career in chess. He became a grandmaster one year after finishing his second book – yes, in that order – and studied history at Stanford University. In 2014, still only eighteen, he wrote his first endgame column for the esteemed U.S. magazine *Chess Life*. We lost touch a little after that, while Danya was making it big as an online streamer and commentator at prestigious tournaments, as well as a popular chess instructor at the Charlotte Chess Center. His infectious enthusiasm for chess was always there, and, combined with his astonishing knowledge and – I dare say – wisdom, I'm sure he has inspired many, many chess kids as well as adult fans, in the USA and far beyond.

Particularly striking was the footage of Vasyl Ivanchuk breaking down after losing a crazy battle to Naroditsky during the FIDE World Blitz in 2024. Daniel sat opposite him, looking spellbound. Again, that combination of merciless ambition and nagging self-doubt, which seems to typify highly intelligent people.

Like so many others, I was shocked and immensely saddened to hear about Daniel's untimely death in October last year, while I was working as a press officer at the Hoogeveen Tournament. My thoughts went out to his mother, who had already lost her husband, and to his older brother Alan, whom I never got to meet but who I know has always been a great support for Danya.

After Daniel's death, the demand for his books skyrocketed. They were available on Forward Chess, but not in print, as Daniel for a while had said mistakes would have to be corrected – a wish we had respected. Jacob Aagaard was days from travelling to Charlotte, among others to discuss re-issuing the titles with Daniel, when the news of his death broke.

We were unsure about what to do. However, with the Daniel Naroditsky Memorial Foundation being founded, and after talks with Alan Naroditsky, we came around to the idea of updating the books ourselves. We also started work on a completely new book on endgames, which is a compilation of Daniel's articles for Chess Life completed with a number of online endgame articles he wrote for Chess.com. We are very thankful to Chess Life and Chess.com for providing us with this material and helping us with the editing process. We present the articles not in chronological order, but have arranged them according to theme. Each Chess Life article features, as they did in the magazine at the time, two exercises: the first for players with an Elo level of approximately 1500, the second for roughly 2000 strength.

So what you have before you now is Daniel Naroditsky's long-awaited third book. It's a fabulous collection of endgame articles in which his passion for this aspect of our game shines through in every sentence, and a rich source of inspiration for any chess player who might still have the notion that endgames are boring. The material was so extensive that it took us longer than originally planned to finish the book, but we wanted to do Danya's work justice by setting high standards.

We are very honoured to be Daniel Naroditsky's publisher and very proud to present you with his third book, *Mastering Practical Endgames*.

Peter Boel
Chief Editor, New In Chess
June 2026

1.4

Never Say Never

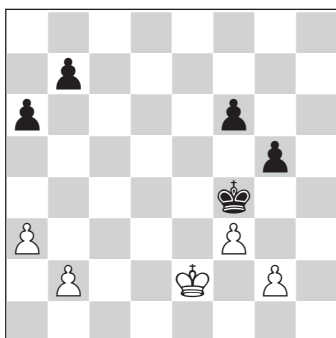
Pawn endgames and premature resignation

At the recently-concluded Politiken Cup, I witnessed a rather astonishing incident. Having finished my Round 5 game early, I settled down in my room to watch the live transmission of the top boards. An intriguing encounter between Swedish GM Tiger Hillarp Persson and Austrian GM Markus Ragger caught my attention. After an intense tactical melee, the game fizzled out into an ostensibly unremarkable endgame.

Game 8

□	Tiger Hillarp Persson	2563
■	Markus Ragger	2688

Politiken Cup, Helsingor 2015



Had it been White's turn, ♔f2 followed by g2-g3+ and ♕e3 would have pushed Black's king away and secured an immediate draw. But Ragger is not ready to call it a day just yet.

39...♔g3 40.♕f1 b5

Pawn endgames are devilish affairs. There is no room for error, and little use for intuition. The tiniest inaccuracy or lapse of concentration entails catastrophic ramifications. In this position, White must tread with the utmost caution to neutralize Black's active king.

41.b4!

Hillarp rises to the challenge, averting zugzwang by the narrowest of margins.

The tempting 41.♔g1?? enables Black to lock up the queenside on his own terms: 41...a5 42.b4 (42.b3 b4 43.a4 f5 essentially transposes) 42...a4 43.♔f1 f5 44.♔g1 g4 45.fxg4 ♔xg4 and after 46.♔f2 f4 Black gains the opposition.

41...f5 42.♔g1

With the king on f1, 42...♔h2 would have decided the game in a familiar manner. As it stands, Black can't pass the move without compromising the winning mechanism (42...f4 43.♔f1 ♔h2 44.♔f2 is a case in point). But as it turns out, two roads lead to Rome:

42...g4!

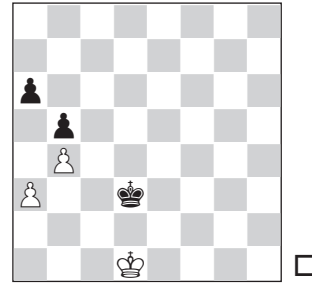
Ragger employs a deadly technique that IM Mark Dvoretsky calls **widening the beachhead**: 'Trading off pawns, with the idea of clearing a path for the king.' Indeed, if the kingside pawns magically

disappeared, Black's king would have an unobstructed path to the queenside!

43.fxg4 ♖xg4 44.♔f2 f4 0-1

There's the rub: White's king must leave f2, allowing ...♔g3 and ...f4-f3, completing the widening operation. After 45.♖e2 (45.♖g1) 45...♔g3 46.♔f1 f3 47.gxf3 ♖xf3 the triumph of Black's strategy is displayed in all its glory. Black's monarch leisurely advances toward the queenside; his counterpart can only bumble about on the first rank. Hillarp decided that further resistance was futile and laid down his sword.

But there is an amazing defensive resource concealed within the queenside pawn configuration. After 48.♖e1 ♖e3 49.♔d1 ♔d3, White is able to save the game with a study-like thrust:



analysis diagram

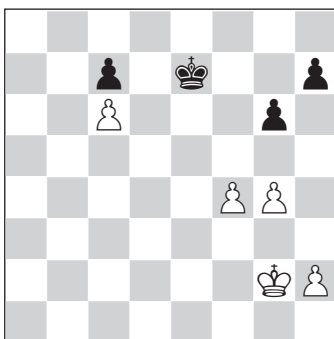
50.a4!! puts Black in a 'lose-lose' situation: 50...bxa4 leaves him with two corner pawns, while 50...♔c3 51.axb5 axb5 52.♔c1 ♖xb4 53.♔b2 reaches a well-known theoretical draw. I was sure that the '0-1' was an error in transmission, and that Ragger had offered a draw after 44...f4. But a trip to the playing hall allayed my skepticism: the Swedish GM actually did resign and Ragger hadn't been aware of the idea 50.a4 either!

'A freak occurrence,' I hear you saying. However, **pawn endgames regularly engender premature resignation**. The reason is quite simple: with material so limited, it is easy to trust appearances and calculate superficially, thereby overlooking a camouflaged saving idea.

Game 9

♖	Alexei Shirov	2690
♜	Jan Timman	2620

Wijk aan Zee 1996



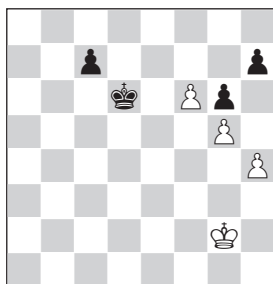
An optical illusion

Black is two steps away from re-establishing material equality and obtaining a life-saving outside passer. But Shirov thwarts his plan in the nick of time:

49.g5!

And after considering the situation, Timman saw which way the wind was blowing and promptly extended his hand. After 49...♔d6 50.h4 ♖xc6

51.f5 ♖d6 (51...gxf5 52.h5 ♖d6 and White promotes with the typical breakthrough 53.g6 hxg6 54.h6!) 52.f6 White establishes a monstrous – usually winning – protected passer.



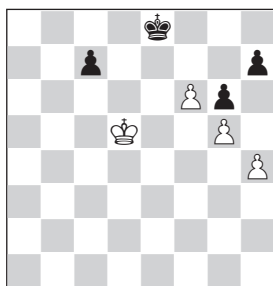
analysis diagram

There seems to be nothing to calculate: with Black's king eternally handcuffed to the f6-pawn, White's own monarch will eliminate Black's passer and then finish the job on the kingside.

This is probably the line of reasoning that led Timman to flick over his king. In fact, it is based on a terribly convincing optical illusion: the f6-pawn does not actually prevent Black's king from defending c7. To be sure, the king cannot go past the d-file, but it does have access to three squares from where it simultaneously defends the c7-pawn and restrains White's passer.

Concretely, after 52...♗e6 53.♗f3 ♗f7

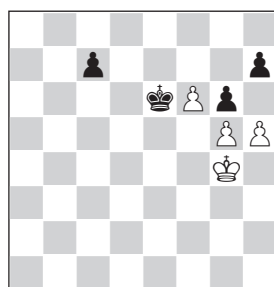
A) 54.♗e4 ♗e6 55.♗d4 ♗d6 56.♗c4 ♗e6 57.♗c5 ♗d7 58.♗d5 ♗e8...



analysis diagram

White has no way to make progress. Both 59.♗c6 ♗d8 and 59.♗e6 ♗f8 lead nowhere: White, not Black, is the one in zugzwang! He can try 60.f7 (in the line 59.♗c6 ♗d8) but after 60...♗e7 61.♗xc7 ♗xf7 62.♗d7 ♗f8 63.♗e6 ♗e8 it is time to sign the scoresheets. Triangulation is similarly useless: Black's king stays between f7 and f8, meeting ♗d5 or ♗c5 with ...♗e8;

B) But that is not all: White can set a devilish trap with 54.♗g4!? ♗e6 55.h5.

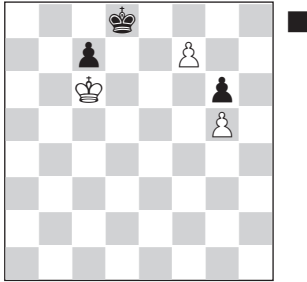


analysis diagram

There are two pitfalls that Black must avoid.

A) The first is 55...gxh5+, which enables White to reach a theoretically winning queen endgame with 56.♗xh5 c5 (56...♗f7 57.♗h6 ♗g8 58.f7+! is even worse, since White promotes first) 57.♗h6 c4 58.♗g7 c3 59.f7 c2 60.f8 ♖c1 61.♖f6+ ♗d5 62.♗xh7;

B) The only move is therefore 55...♗f7, but 56.hxg6+ confronts him with yet another dilemma. The most tempting recapture is 56...hxg6?!, but the absence of h-pawns corrupts Black's drawing mechanism: following 57.♗f4 ♗e6 58.♗e4 ♗d6 59.♗d4 ♗e6 60.♗c5 ♗d7 61.♗d5 ♗e8 62.♗c6 ♗d8, the aforementioned 63.f7 comes with far greater effect.



analysis diagram

The point is that 63...♔e7 64.♔xc7 ♕xf7 65.♕d7 is no longer a draw, since Black will lose the g6-pawn (and the game)

sooner or later. Thus, 56...♕xg6! 57.♕f4 ♕f7 58.♕e5 c5 59.♕d5 h6! is the only path to a draw.

For once, the moral of the story can be expressed in three words: never say never! There are times when resigning is the morally and ethically correct thing to do, but it is your prerogative – and your obligation – to continue fighting until every defensive try has been exhausted. Savielly Tartakower said it best: **No game was ever won by resigning!**

Exercise 3 1500 level

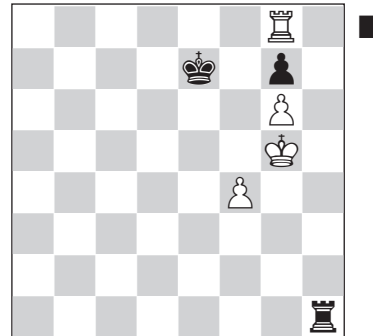
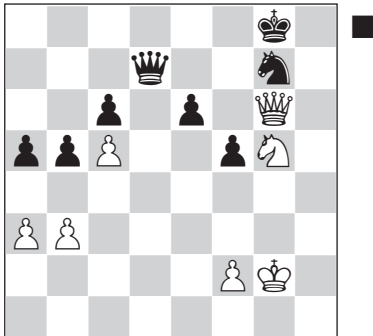
□	Magnus Carlsen	2690
■	Veselin Topalov	2783

Morelia/Linares 2007

Exercise 4 2000 level

□	Wang Hao	2727
■	Boris Gelfand	2741

Moscow 2010



Solutions on page 39

2.11

Move of the Year, Endgame Edition

For your consideration, the World Champion's defensive gem.

Among my friends and relatives, I am known as the proverbial alarm-snoozer. One Sunday during exam week last quarter, I slept through so many early morning alarms that I finally woke up to my roommate standing at my bedside and repeatedly stabbing me with an imaginary knife. My math final that night did not go very well.

One thing I will get up for at 5 a.m., however, is the World Rapid and Blitz Championship. This exhilarating event features almost all of the world's top players going at each other's throats to the tune of heart-stopping time scrambles and, inevitably, tragic blunders.

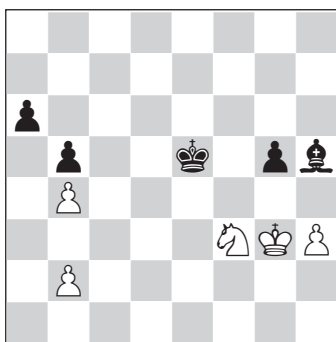
In 2017, one of the endgames in the rapid championship – which I had followed live – featured one of the most beautiful defensive resources that I have ever seen. At the risk of jinxing it, let me say that this motif will be seared in your mind for weeks to come.

Game 23

□ **Vladimir Fedoseev** 2771

■ **Magnus Carlsen** 2908

World Rapid Championship, Riyadh 2017



Water from a Rock

After a furious ascent that included a stunning victory at the 2017 Aeroflot Open, Russian GM Vladimir Fedoseev had established himself as one of the most promising talents in Russia. At the time of this game, he was leading

the rapid with a massive $8\frac{1}{2}/11$. At first blush, it seems that he has held his own against the World Champion. In fact, the time seems ripe for a handshake. The king is tied to the g5-pawn, the pawn ending after 65...♔xf3 66.♔xf3 is a dead draw, end of story.

True to his ability to squeeze water from a rock, Magnus sees past this myopic assessment and plays his last trump card.

65...♔d5!

Why not? This move is not only a good practical chance, but especially savvy given Fedoseev's acute time pressure: Fedoseev had a minute or so left and was playing 'on increment'. The king's

intentions are decidedly malevolent: the monarch intends to eat up White's defenseless pawns, relegating to his subordinate the task of restraining White's h-pawn.

66. ♖xg5

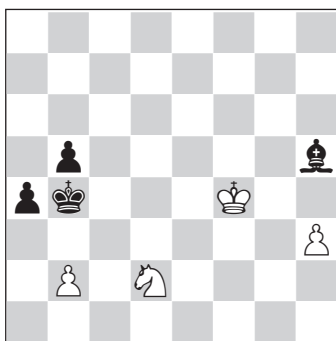
The point of this move is not so much to capture a pawn as to halt the king's path with some timely gymnastics. This does the trick, though 66.b3! was even more straightforward. The king has to detour with 66...♔e4, and after 67.♗xg5+ ♔d3 68.♗e6 ♔c3 69.♗c5 White achieves his aim with a tempo to spare. The game would end following 69...♔xb4 70.♗xa6+ ♔xb3 71.♗c7 b4 72.♗a6 and White liquidates the final pawn.

66...♔c4 67.♗e4 ♔xb4 68.♔f4

Obviously, 68...♔b3 meets with 69.♗c5+.

This is somewhat of a stopgap blockade, but it gives White just enough time to bring his own monarch to the rescue.

68...a5 69.♗d2 a4



□

70.♔e4

Fedoseev played this move almost instantly, and who can blame him? The king aims for d3, but the problem is that it temporarily deprives the knight of its

rightful place on e4! Carlsen now has a brief respite in which to reorganize his forces and confront Fedoseev with a whole new class of problems.

If Fedoseev had used Waze instead of Google Maps to decide on a route for the king, he would have undoubtedly sidestepped the trouble with 70.♔e3!. After 70...♔c5, White hits the king with 71.♗e4+. Black has a few tries, but everything fizzles out quickly:

A) 71...♔c4 72.♗d6+ ♔b3 looks intimidating, but after 73.♗xb5 ♔xb2 74.♔d4 ♔e8 75.♗c3 a3 76.♔c4 White brings the king to b4 and follows up with a check from either d1 or a4

B) 71...♔d5!? would probably have been Magnus' attempt. The 'blunder' is, of course, deliberate: the point is to lure the knight offside after 72.♗f6+ ♔c4 73.♗xh5 ♔b3. But following 74.♔d4 ♔xb2 75.♗f4 a3 76.♗d3+ the knight is in time, and Black is the one who must demonstrate caution.

70...♔c5! 71.♔e3 b4

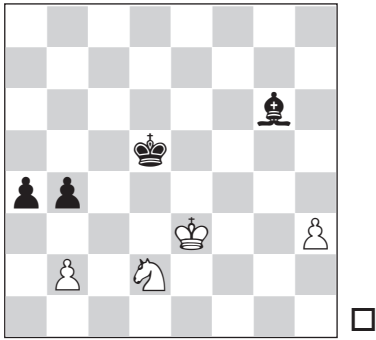
Er-oh. All of a sudden, Magnus has erected an impassable barrier along the h7-b1 diagonal.

...♗g6 followed by ...a3 looms large, when the king will be permanently cut off and the knight, no longer able to jump to e4, will trip over its own haunches. With time running out, Fedoseev starts to flounder.

72.♗e4+ ♔d5 73.♗d2 ♗g6!

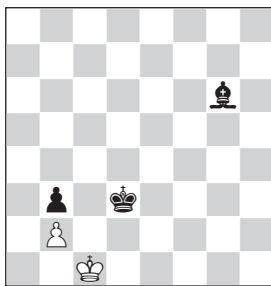
This is the critical moment, and, in many ways, the reason I chose this endgame. Now, it is not immediately clear why ...a3 is a decisive threat: White will, after all, be able to restrain the pawn from b3. It turns out that the ensuing position is

lost for White, and that should not be a surprise: once the knight is reduced to utter passivity and the passer advances past the sixth rank, White's prospects are not very promising.



But there doesn't seem to be any conceivable way to stop ...a3, or to breach the diagonal blockade. It transpires that the first of these assumptions is correct, but the second, believe it or not, is false. The drawing idea – rendered all the more stunning by the fact that it is the only path to salvation – is so jaw-dropping that it took me a long, long time before I accepted its objective value.

The theoretical underpinning of this idea can be found in the following stem position, featured in Karsten Müller and Frank Lamprecht's classic work, *Fundamental Chess Endings*:



analysis diagram

This is a draw with either side to move, and regardless of the bishop's color(!). See

for yourself: put a bishop on any square on the board, and the fortress remains watertight. At the first opportunity, White's king wriggles its way to a1 and stays there, awaiting stalemate or (with a dark-square bishop) liquidation to a drawn king-and-pawn ending.

Now, back to the text. At first, it may be difficult to understand the link between the two positions. But as GM Alex Yermolinsky explained to me many years ago, theoretical positions will not necessarily arise in pure form every time; the true endgame virtuoso knows how to use theoretical positions as beacons of light, guiding his play in outwardly dissimilar positions. And in this case, just such an approach can be used to uncork one of the most brilliant ideas in recent endgame memory:

74. ♖b3!!! No, this is not a typo. Yes, three exclamation marks. What makes chess so attractive to me is that even the wildest ideas can be understood with enough persistence and logical thinking. This is just such an idea: after 74...axb3 75. ♕d2, we reach the exact same theoretical position as the one shown above, with a few inconsequential differences. You can even put black pawns on b5, b6, and b7, and the situation remains the same: White will push the h-pawn until Black is forced to take it, and voilà!

Skepticism is encouraged, but the fact is that 74. ♖b3 is the only drawing move. If Black does not take the knight, White is well in time to stop the pawns since a direct route to the queenside is open for his king. Some illustrative lines:

A) 74...a3 75.bxa3 bxa3 76. ♕d2 ♖c4 77. ♖a5+ ♕b4 78. ♖c6+ ♕c5 (78...♕b3

79.♖a5+ leads nowhere, since 79...♔b2 80.♗c4+ is a draw) 79.♔c3! and it is time to shake hands. Even if 79...♔xc6 80.♔b3 did not happen to win the pawn, it would still be a draw since Black has the incorrect bishop for the a-pawn;

B) 74...♔c4 75.♗a5+ ♔b5 76.♗b3 is probably the most unconventional repetition of all time;

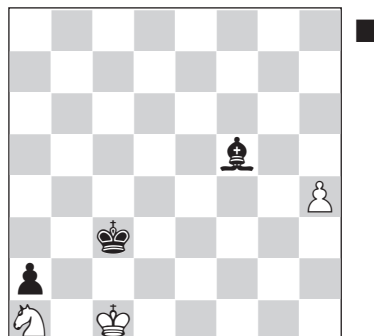
C) 74...♗c2 is useless: 75.♗d4 ♗d1 76.♔d2! with a draw.

Alas, with just a few minutes left on his clock, Fedoseev did not exploit the opportunity. However, I think it is safe to bet that a team of 500 grandmasters with two hours on the clock would be quite unlikely to see it either.

74.♔e2?

The king takes the long route to c1, and Fedoseev was relying on a cute stalemate trick to save the day, but allowing the pawn to a2 simply places too large of a burden on White's pieces.

74...a3 75.bxa3 bxa3 76.♔d1 a2 77.♗b3 ♔c4 78.♗a1 ♔c3 79.♔c1 ♗f5 80.h4



80...♗g6!

Zugzwang numero uno: the pawn goes.

81.h5 ♗xh5 82.♗c2 ♗e8 83.♗a1 ♗a4 84.♗c2 ♔b3 0-1

After 85.♗a1+ ♔a3 it is zugzwang numero dos, since 86.♗c2+ no longer works for obvious reasons.

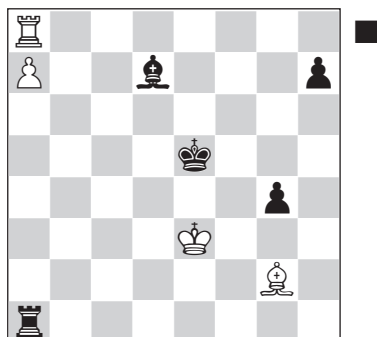
OK, maybe I overhyped it. But to me, ideas like 74.♗b3 directly refute the common endgames-are-boring trope.

Exercise 29 1500 level

□ **Erald Dervishi**

■ **Gadir Guseinov**

World Rapid Championship, Riyadh 2017

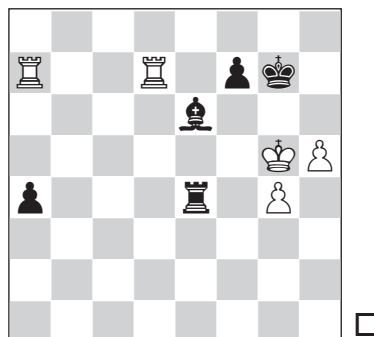


Exercise 30 2000 level

□ **Boris Savchenko**

■ **Peter Svidler**

World Rapid Championship, Riyadh 2017



Solutions on page 99



A Tale of Two Passed Pawns

Remembering Emory Tate

July 6, 2008 is a day that I recall quite vividly. Having drawn my final game at the World Open, I walked over to the skittles room to hang out and play some blitz (read: bughouse). Oddly, most of the chairs were empty, boards and clocks left unattended. And then I saw them: twenty or thirty people clustered around a single board in the center of the room. Each and every one of them was transfixed by the man handling the white pieces. He was rifling through variations at breakneck speed, boom boom boom, sacrifice piling on top of sacrifice. Something special was going on.

For veterans of open tournaments, this scene will undoubtedly sound familiar. The man in the middle was, of course, International Master Emory Tate. He was showing his most famous game, a dazzling victory over GM Leonid Yudasin at the 1997 Chicago Open in which Emory demolished his formidable opponent with a brilliant sacrificial attack straight out of the opening. Upon the conclusion of most tournaments, Emory would set up shop in the skittles room and commentate his Mona Lisa for anyone willing to listen. And boy, did people listen!

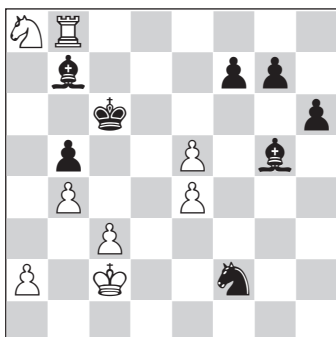
To honor this inimitable juggernaut of American chess, who died at the age of 56 on October 17, 2015, I would like to dedicate this section to Emory. As you can guess, his games seldom reached the endgame; typically, the board resembled an apocalyptic wasteland by move 30. However, Emory had one game in particular – against none other than Maurice Ashley – that did reach the final stage of the game. What you are about to witness is no ordinary endgame, but it can still teach us many lessons and show us the kind of player that Emory was!

Game 103

□ Emory Tate 2325

■ Maurice Ashley 2365

New York Open 1993



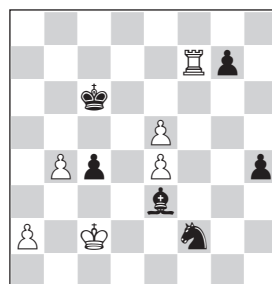
Things started getting crazy around move 14, when Emory sacrificed a bishop to keep Black's king in the center. What ensued was a smoldering mess of hanging pieces and tactical devilry, which rapidly transformed into the wild endgame that you see on the board. In such situations, the most prudent course of action is to leave calculation alone for a few moments, and simply figure out what is going on.

Material is approximately equal, but it is the gross disparity in piece placement and coordination that places White at the edge of the precipice. His rook and knight (especially the latter) are locked in a grotesque embrace with the light-squared bishop, leaving the tandem utterly impotent. On the other hand, each of Black's minor pieces is beautifully situated. We've already mentioned the light-squared bishop, but its colleague on g5 and the cavalier on f2 are also doing a fine job. Indeed, it appears that White is totally incapable of stopping the h-pawn from reaching pay dirt.

33...h5?

Ashley is under the same impression, but he fails to perceive a hidden and deadly source of counterplay that instantly turns the tables.

Black should have started by eliminating White's knight: 33...♙xa8! 34.♖xa8 h5. This rather counterintuitive sequence will become clear as soon as you look at (or find) White's 34th move. As it stands, White's queenside counterplay is very slow, and he is forced to be extremely creative to create counterchances: 35.c4!! bxc4 36.♖a7 ♕e3 37.♖xf7 h4



analysis diagram

38.b5+! (the point of 35. c4!!, deflecting Black's king) 38...♙xb5 39.e6 ♖c6 40.♖b7! ♕xe4 (the best way to stop the e-pawn) 41.♖xg7 with some practical saving chances.

34.a4!

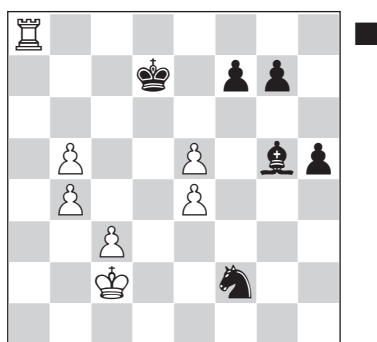
Needless to say, Emory pounces immediately. As ridiculous as the knight appears, its control over the b6- and c7-squares renders 34...bxa4 impossible due to 35.b5+. Black's reply is therefore forced.

Again, 34.c4! was an even better version of this idea.

34...♙xa8 35.axb5+

And there's the rub: this intermezzo creates White's own set of connected passed pawns, fully counterbalancing Black's activity on the other flank.

35...♙d7 36.♖xa8



36...♙f4?

Throughout my endgame experience, I've often found that the best way to deal with passed pawns is to restrain them as soon as possible. A passer on the sixth or seventh rank, especially if supported by a heavy piece, can bring about a litany of undesirable tactical opportunities. This is the case here.

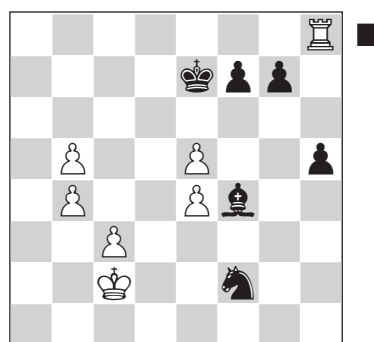
36...♙e3! would have kept the b-pawn under control and maintained the balance. Indeed, the game will end in a rather anticlimactic draw after 37.c4 h4 38.c5 h3 39.♖a7+ ♙c8 40.♖a8+ ♙d7 (40...♙b7 is also a draw after 41.♖h8 g5 – 41...♙h6 is too slow after 42.c6+ ♙c7 43.♖f8 h2 44.♖xf7+ ♙b8 45.b6 – 42.e6! fxe6 43.c6+ ♙c7 44.♖h7+ ♙c8 45.♖h8+) 41.♖a7+. Calculation aside, there is a negatively proportional relationship between a pawn's distance to the promotion square and the damage it inflicts!

37.♖f8?!

By attacking the pawn, Tate draws the king further from the passer, but this move just doesn't have that extra oomph.

Instead, the straightforward 37.♖a7+ ♙e6 38.b6 would have won the game, since Black will have to give up the bishop (what was that about negatively proportional relationships?): 38...♗xe4 39.♖a8 ♙xe5 40.b7 ♙f5 41.b8♖ ♙xb8 42.♖xb8 and Black is toast. The rook will restrain Black's outwardly intimidating trio of passers, while White's own phalanx will easily overrun Black's feeble defenses.

37...♙e7 38.♖h8



38...h4!

Now it is Maurice's turn to pounce! Black gives up the pride of his position, but in return he forces White's rook away onto a terribly awkward square. This will give Black a golden opportunity to set his second passed pawn in motion, as well as capture on e5 and take the b8-square under control.

39.♖xh4 g5 40.♖h8?

Tempting, natural, and... wrong! Emory commits the all-too-common error of underestimating the speed with which the g-pawn will advance.

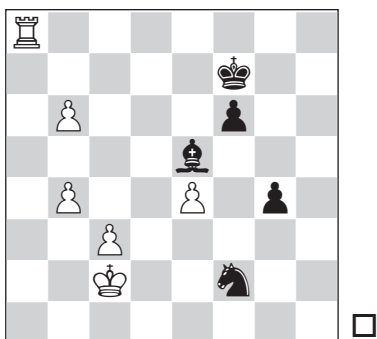
The most important task was not to root out Black's bishop, but rather to eliminate the treacherous little imp on g5. This could have been accomplished with 40.♖h5!. Black can keep the g-pawn temporarily alive with 40...♗g4 41.b6 ♗xe5 42.b7 ♗c6, but 43.e5! forces Black to accept the inevitable.

40...♗xe5 41.♖g8 f6 42.b6 ♗f7!

A nice little sequence, driving the rook away from the g-file.

Passed Pawn Airlines flight 101 is cleared for takeoff!

43.♖a8 g4



44.♖a1?!

Understandably enough, Emory simply loses his nerve.

It was crucial to leave the rook on a8 (to maintain the possibility of promoting the b-pawn) and leave the monarch to deal with the enemy. As it turns out, 44.♗d2 would have led to instant liquidation and a draw. Perhaps Tate was concerned about 44...♗xe4+, but there is absolutely nothing to worry about: 45.♗e2 ♗xc3+ 46.♗f1 ♗d5 47.b7 ♗xb4 48.b8♖ ♗xb8 49.♖xb8 and it is time to shake hands.

44...g3 45.♖g1 ♗xe4

Now, White's pawn no longer constitutes a serious threat, and Black can focus all of his energy on getting the widower a new Lady. Many of us would simply fold at this point (mentally if not literally), but Emory was never one to go gentle into that good night.

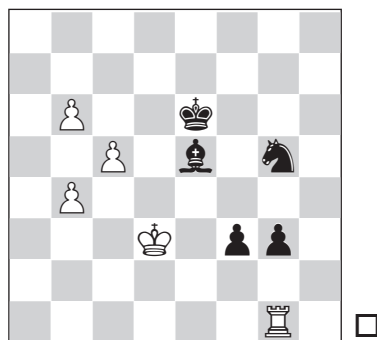
46.c4 ♗e6 47.♗d3 f5 48.♗e3

White could have muddled the waters somewhat with 48.c5 ♗d5 49.♖c1, but 49...♗c6 50.♖c2 ♗c3! puts an end to his resistance: there is no way to stop ...f4-f3 (...f2-f1♖).

48...♗g5!

A dagger thrust. The knight seals off the king, and White is utterly powerless to stop the crushing march of the f-pawn.

49.c5 f4+ 50.♗d3 f3

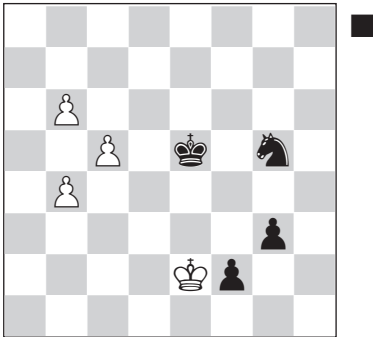


51.♖e1!

Vintage Emory Tate. Nobody would have blamed him for resigning, but he has one last trick up his sleeve – and what a vicious trick it is. The cold-blooded 51...g2 would now have won on the spot: 52.♖xe5+ ♗xe5 53.b7 g1♖ 54.b8♖+ ♗f5 and Black will easily promote the second pawn. But Ashley – presumably in acute time pressure – is unable to resist his instinct.

51...f2??

If one explained the phrase ‘natural move’ to a Martian learning chess, this is the example he would show. And yet, by an absolute miracle, this move opens the tiniest crevice for White’s king, enabling it to halt Black’s passers in stunning fashion. Watch this!

52.♖xe5+! ♜xe5 53.♔e2!

Simply incredible. Black needs three moves to promote (...♞h3 or ...♞e4, ...g3-g2 and ...f2-f1♞ or ...g2-g1♞), but White will do so with check! Black

therefore has no choice but to relegate both of his pieces to utter passivity, acquiescing to an improbable draw.

53...♞f3 54.b7 ♞d4+ 55.♔f1 ♞c6 56.b5! ♞b8 57.c6! ♔d6

Draw agreed. After 58.♔g2, neither side can make progress.

At the most general level, endgame mastery consists of three distinct elements. Most players are familiar with theoretical knowledge and practical understanding (the latter is the theme of this section), but few place a high premium on the third aspect: *tenacity*. And what Emory Tate lacked in the first two categories, he made up for with his tactical wizardry and endless supply of perseverance. What this titanic battle lacked in objective quality, it more than made up for with instructive and entertainment value.

You will be sorely missed, Emory!

Exercise 132 1500 level

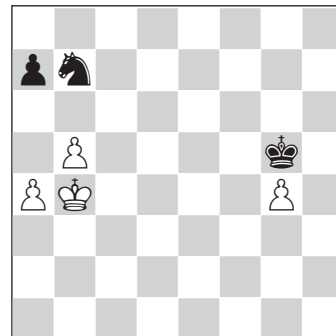
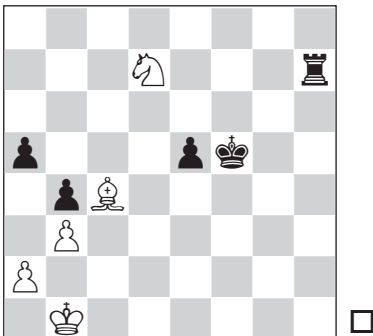
□ Emory Tate	2380
■ Howard Cohen	1971

Oak Park 1996

Exercise 133 2000 level

□ Emory Tate	2378
■ Paul Fricano	1920

Chicago 2008



Solutions on page 431