

TO EXCHANGE OR NOT?

THE ULTIMATE
WORKBOOK

by
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KEY TO SYMBOLS

!	a good move
?	a weak move
!!	an excellent move
??	a blunder
!?	an interesting move
?!	a dubious move
□	only move
=	equality
∞	unclear position
∞	with compensation for the sacrificed material
±	White stands slightly better
∓	Black stands slightly better
±	White has a serious advantage
∓	Black has a serious advantage
+−	White has a decisive advantage
−+	Black has a decisive advantage
→	with an attack
↑	with initiative
↔	with counterplay
Δ	with the idea of
⊃	better is
≤	worse is
N	novelty
+	check
#	mate

PREFACE

When should we exchange a piece in the endgame and when should we keep it? Why is it so important? How to make a right choice? Different types of endings and guidance on how to make the correct decision were the subject of my book *The Correct Exchange in the Endgame*. Two editions were very well accepted by chess players of different levels.

I am especially happy that many chess coaches and teachers found it useful for their training programmes. The book was announced as a silver winner of the Boleslavsky Award 2016 by the FIDE Trainer's Commission.

Many readers and coaches expressed a wish to see more instructive exercises, so together with Thinkers Publishing we decided to make an exercise book. It can be widely used by chess teachers in schools, coaches in chess clubs and all chess players.

Trying to solve 120 instructive exercises and then going through the correct solutions, you will certainly improve your decision-making ability and analysing skills, as well as enrich your knowledge and understanding of the final stage of the chess game.

Eduardas Rozentalis
May 2020

INTRODUCTION

This is an exercise book. 120 endgame positions are offered for you to solve. Exchange a piece or not? Which piece to exchange? When and where to exchange?

Before starting to solve these exercises, let's recall the way of thinking in order to make the correct decisions about the exchange of the piece(s).

First of all, we have to evaluate all the positional ingredients of the current position. Then we have to calculate the consequences of the possible exchange(s) until the position has been clearly assessed. Based on our knowledge, intuition or understanding, we should be able to do so.

We can compare the resulting position with the current position or the position we will reach as a result of the alternative continuations. After these careful considerations we should be able to make the final decision.

Quite often the correct choice will be unique, providing our calculation and assessment were correct.

Sometimes the decisions whether to exchange or not were clearly correct or wrong. No alternatives whatsoever.

However quite often it is not possible to define the best option that easily. Then we have to compare our chances in the case when we exchange a piece with the case when we refrain from this exchange.

In most cases we make such a decision based on our intuition and our positional understanding.

We can prefer simplifications to get a pure technical position, avoiding any counterplay. Or we can go for complications which contain exchanges in order to muddy the waters in an unfavourable position, in spite of the fact

that maybe an alternative was more solid and provided more chances for survival.

Sometimes we may conclude that initially the exchange might be wrong, but can be correct a bit later when the position has changed. Also it might be correct on one square but be wrong on another square. We should remember that some exchanges may cause a change of the pawn structure.

So please do not hurry! Check all your options carefully!

In complicated positions, looking for the best way to improve our position, we should think about the possibility of an exchange of one or several pieces.

As already mentioned, most often we make our decisions in such cases based on pure intuition and positional understanding.

Sometimes we simply aim for a more complicated game, and then we will refrain from the exchange(s). Alternatively, if we want to obtain a quieter position, we are looking for some exchanges.

I would still warn you not to make such decisions blindly. In every case a preliminary evaluation and calculation are really needed!

And last but not least regarding complicated positions, we need to have a plan and an understanding of which piece or pieces we want to exchange and which we want to preserve. It will ease our task in calculating variations and making correct decisions.

And now, my dear reader, let's start solving the exercises. There are three levels of difficulty: Warm up, Intermediate and Advanced.

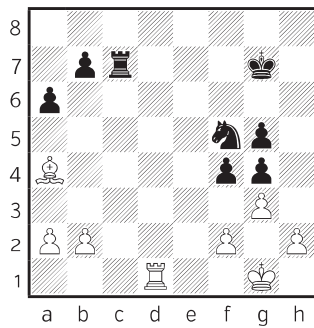
They require a wide range of your endgame skills. All the solutions contain explanations and analysis. Solving and working on the positions will allow you to check your abilities and enrich your endgame skills.

Good luck!

WARM UP

————— 1 —————

▷ E. Rozentalis ▶ P. Jaracz
Augustow 1996

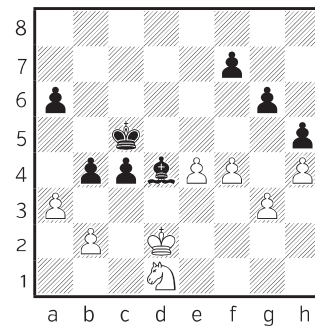


41.—

Should White exchange the rook or not?

————— 2 —————

▷ B. Wyczling ▶ E. Rozentalis
Warsaw 2018



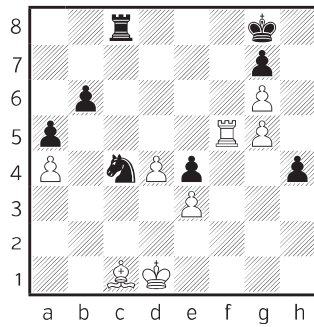
44...—

Black has more active pieces and a pawn majority on the queenside. What is the best way to use his advantage?

————— **3** —————

▷ **E. Bareev** ▶ **E. Rozentalis**

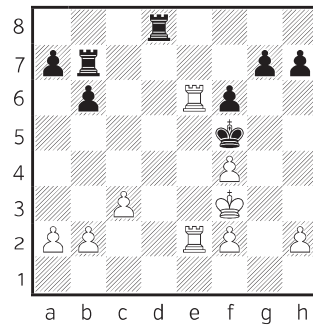
Tallinn 1986



————— **5** —————

▷ **E. Rozentalis** ▶ **M. Nikolov**

Odense 2013



44...—

Black has a dangerous passed pawn.
How to use it?

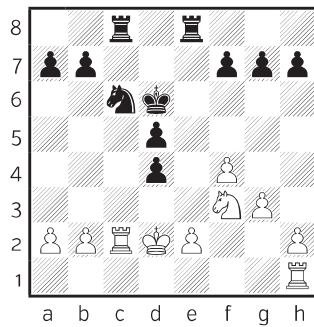
32...—

Black is a pawn down. What should
he do to save the game?

————— **4** —————

▷ **R. Hallerod** ▶ **E. Rozentalis**

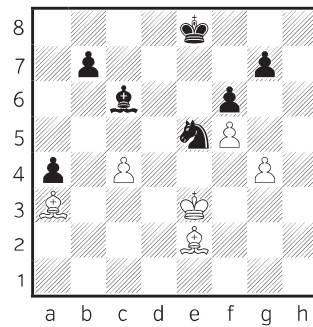
Stockholm 2005



————— **6** —————

▷ **R. Kholmov** ▶ **E. Rozentalis**

Ekaterinburg 1984



17...—

Black is a pawn up, but a doubled
one. What to do?

47...—

Black is a pawn up, but White has
a bishop pair. What to do?