



AN EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW INTO THE BEST ENDGAME BOOK EVER

ENDGAME THEORY IS EVOLVING!

The theory of knight endings with pawns on one side receives a new treatment in Dvoretsky's *Endgame Manual 5th Edition*. Many people know Botvinnik's rule: knight endings are evaluated as pawn endings. However, there are many exceptions.

By GM Alex Fishbein



▲ Mark Dvoretsky, Moscow 2016. Photo: David Llada

Mark Dvoretsky's magnum opus was *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* (DEM), rightly regarded as the definitive work on the endgame. It is a textbook, instruction manual, and a reference book all in one. Russell Enterprises published the first edition in 2003, and as new theory was added, Mark Dvoretsky revised the DEM three more times.

The great trainer and writer left us too early, in 2016. He had left notes for a new edition, and even after that, new endgame discoveries were made. Hanon Russell keenly realized that it is time to create DEM5, and he asked German grandmaster Karsten Mueller to revise the book.

Karsten is unquestionably today's foremost endgame authority. He has published many highly-regarded books of his own and made numerous discoveries in important positions. Hanon asked me to assist Karsten Mueller in the revising effort, and of course I felt very honored and immediately agreed.

Little did I know that this would become the most interesting project I have ever worked on! It was not just a matter of checking Karsten Mueller's work, which was of the highest quality. In addition to reassessing some historic

endgames, we found ourselves exploring new horizons of modern endgame theory. In the rook ending chapter, large sections were revised. There are now new defensive methods in the "♖+♔+♔+outside rook-♔ vs ♖+♔+♔" position. We tried to make some of the most complicated analysis clearer.

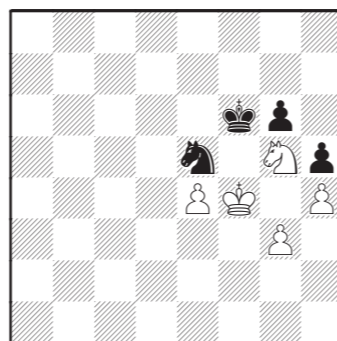
Making the book more accessible to the general audience, indeed, was Hanon Russell's top priority in DEM5. To this end, the book features a new highlighting style. The sections that everyone (and not just master-level players) should understand are now more clearly highlighted in gray. The new book is easier to follow, and more people will learn these key endgames. I don't want you, my readers, to be left behind! DEM5 should be available at most chess retailers, including Amazon, in May or June.

As a preview of DEM5, I would like to share with you just a small selection of

what I learned while helping Karsten revise this book. The theory of knight endings with pawns on one side receives a new treatment in DEM5. Many people know Botvinnik's rule: knight endings are evaluated as pawn endings. However, there are many exceptions.

Alexander Grischuk	2719
Alexander Moiseenko	2662

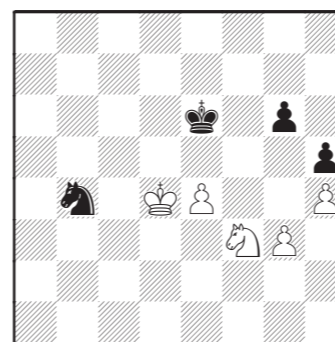
Russian Championship, Sochi 2006



The "♖+♔+♔ vs ♖+♔" ending, with the passed e-pawn, has occurred many times in practice. The diagrammed position is drawn.

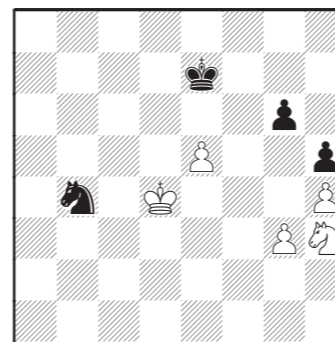
85.♖f3 ♖d3+ As long as White cannot conduct a coordinated advance, Black can hold. Also drawing is 85...♖g4 86.e5+ ♖e6 87.♖g5 ♖f7 88.e6+ ♖g7! 89.e7 ♖f6 90.♖e5 ♖h7+ 91.♖f4 ♖f6.

86.♖e3 ♖b4 87.♖d4 ♖e6?



But the passive king move is a serious mistake. Black needed to harass the white king with 87...♖c2+! 88.♖d3 ♖b4+ 89.♖c4 ♖c2 90.♖d5 ♖e3+ 91.♖d6 ♖c4+ 92.♖c5 ♖e3=.

88.♖g5+! ♖d6 89.e5+! ♖e7 90.♖h3!



An important move. The f4-square is key for the knight, where it not only prevents a blockade on e6, but also attacks the pawn on g6.

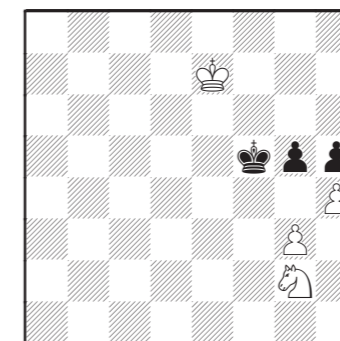
90...♖e6 90...♖f7 91.♖f4 ♖c6+ 92.♖d5 ♖e7+ 93.♖d6! and White wins.

91.♖f4+ ♖f5 92.e6 ♖c6+ 92...♖f6 93.♖d5+ is an immediate win: now it really is a pawn ending!



Alex Fishbein is an American grandmaster, residing in New Jersey. He was the winner of the inaugural Denker Tournament of High School Champions in 1985. He won several national and international tournaments in the 1990s, including in Denmark and Norway, and became a grandmaster in 1992. He then began a career in finance but continued to compete in his spare time, including four times in the U.S. Championship in the 2000s. He is known for his endgame knowledge, having won the Best Endgame Prize in the 2004 U.S. Championship and written a well-received book on pawn endings in 1993.

93.♖c5 ♖e7 94.♖d6 ♖g8 95.e7 ♖xe7 96.♖xe7 g5 97.♖g2!



A nice finish. The knight protects the pawn from behind, and the black king can only touch it while leaving the h-pawn to its own devices.

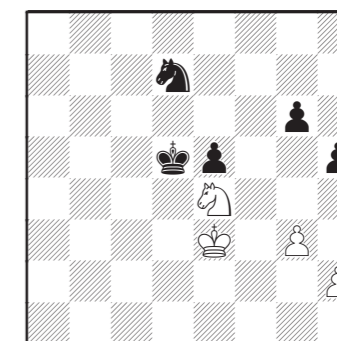
97...♖g4 98.♖f6 gxh4 99.gxh4 ♖g3 100.♖g5 ♖xg2 101.♖xh5 ♖g3 102.♖g5

White won

Let's look at another example.

Andrey Esipenko	2593
Nigel Short	2646

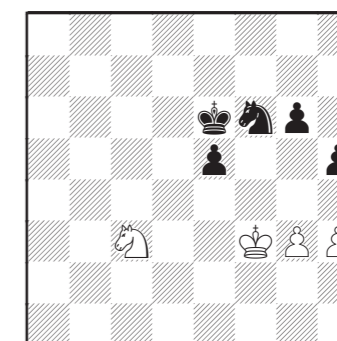
Nutcracker (rapid), Moscow 2018



Here, again, White should draw.

51.h3 ♖e6 52.♖c3?! 52.g4 is an easier draw: 52...hxg4 53.hxg4 ♖f6 54.♖g5+ ♖d5 55.♖f3 ♖d4 56.♖e6+ ♖d3 57.♖c5+, harassing the king like Black should have done in the previous game.

52...♖f6 53.♖f3?



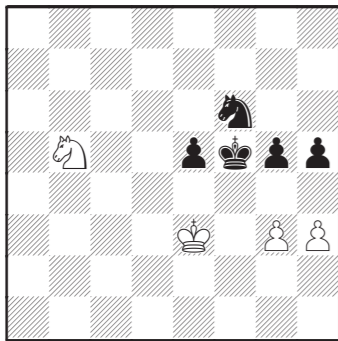
In knight endings, you have to watch for forks, exchanging checks, etc. The c3-square is unfortunate for the knight, and correct was 53.♖b5 g5 54.♖d3 ♖f5 55.♖d6+ with a draw.

53...♖f5? 53...g5! wins. If 54.h4 g4+ 55.♖f2 (55.♖e3? ♖d5+ illustrating why the knight had to leave c3.) 55...♖d6! 56.♖e2 e4 57.♖b5+ ♖e5 58.♖a7 ♖d5

59.♖c6+ ♗d6 60.♗d4 ♗e7 61.♗d2 ♗e5 62.♗e2 ♗d5 63.♗c2 ♗d6 64.♗d4 ♗e3+ 65.♗c3 ♗d5 66.♗e2 ♗c5 67.♗d2 ♗d5 68.♗c2 ♗c4 69.♗d2 e3+, breaking through.

54.♗e3? 54.h4! was correct. We should not fault the young Russian grandmaster for not finding this in a rapid game against the former world #2. But if he had seen the previous game, he might have used it as a guidepost. The position with g3-h4 vs g6-h5 pawns has strong drawing tendencies. For example, 54...e4+ 55.♗e3 ♗e5 56.♗e2! ♗d5+ 57.♗f2 ♗f5 58.♗d4+ ♗g4 59.♗e2 e3+ 60.♗g2.

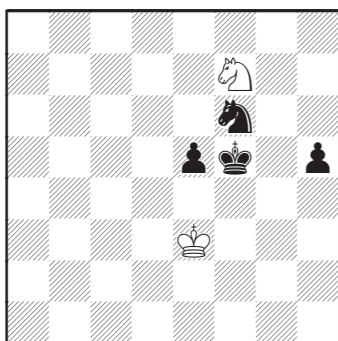
54...g5! 55.♗b5



Black to play and win. There is only one way.

55...g4! 56.hxg4+ Black wins a pawn by force; if 56.h4 ♗e4.

56...♗xg4 57.♗d6 ♗xg3 58.♗f5+ ♗g4 59.♗h6+ ♗g5 60.♗f7+ ♗f5



With two extra pawns, the win is not difficult.

61.♗d6+ ♗e6 62.♗c4 ♗e8 63.♗f3

♗d6 64.♗e3 ♗f6 65.♗d5+ ♗g5 66.♗c3 h4 67.♗d1 e4+ 68.♗f2 ♗f5 69.♗c3 ♗f4 70.♗e2+ ♗g4 71.♗c3 e3+ 72.♗g2 h3+ 73.♗h2 ♗d4

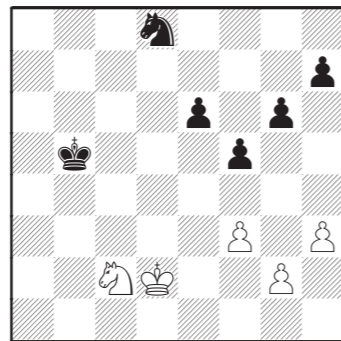
Black won

I have noticed that, unlike in the 20th century, these days young kids play the endgame very well. It could be because books like the *Dvoretsky Endgame Manual* were not around in my time!

Abhimanyu Mishra 2396

Oliver Barbosa 2532

Chess Max Academy Closed GM,
New York 2019



Here, Abhimanyu Mishra, the 10-year-old American who became the world's youngest ever IM in this tournament, confidently holds this pawn-down endgame against an experienced grandmaster.

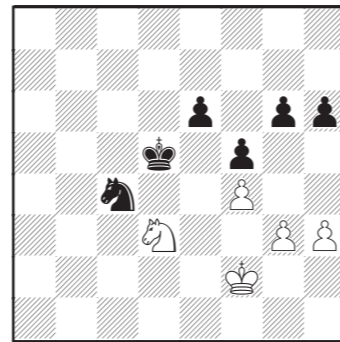
1.f4! Very good technique. White should often move the pawn to f4 even if Black's pawn is not on f5, because after the exchange of pawns on e5 we get the drawn position that we have seen in the last two games. But here, it is even clearer: Black cannot form a passed pawn at all without trading off almost everything.

1...♗c5 2.♗e3 ♗c6 3.♗e1 ♗b4 4.g3 ♗d5+ 5.♗d3 ♗f6 6.♗e3 Mishra points out that even 6.♗f3 ♗e4 7.♗e3 ♗xg3 8.♗g5! is a draw.

6...♗e4 7.♗d3+ ♗d5 8.♗f3 ♗d2+ 9.♗e2 ♗c4 10.♗f2 10.♗f3? would fall into a trap: 10...e5! 11.fxe5 ♗xe5+ with a winning pawn ending – always something to watch out for! And

otherwise the black pawn moves to e4 and that should be winning.

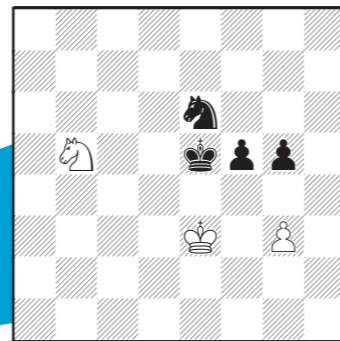
10...h6



11.h4! Excellent technique again! To advance pawns, Black must pay a price.

11...♗d6 12.♗b4+ ♗e4 13.♗a6 ♗b7 14.♗c7 ♗c5 15.♗e2 e5 16.fxe5 ♗xe5 17.♗f3 ♗e6 18.♗b5 g5 18...♗d4+ is not dangerous: 19.♗xd4 ♗xd4 20.♗f4! ♗d5 21.h5! =.

19.hxg5 hxg5 20.♗e3



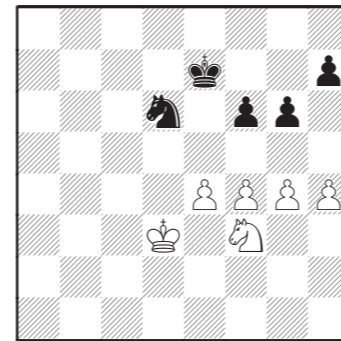
A two against one knight ending is drawn.

20...♗c5 21.♗d4 ♗e4 21...f4+ 22.gxf4+ gxf4+ 23.♗f3 ♗xd4 24.♗xf4 and Black has run out of pawns! The game is similar.

22.♗f3+ ♗d5 23.♗xg5 ♗xg5 24.♗f4 ♗e4 25.♗xf5 ♗xg3+ **Draw**

I have tried to save the best for last. The general case of “♗+♗♗♗ vs ♗+♗♗♗” on one side was considered a win, dating back to Reuben Fine's analysis many years ago. But now we cannot claim this anymore: many positions are borderline.

♗+♗♗♗ vs ♗+♗♗♗



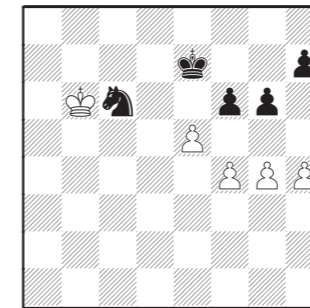
The diagrammed position, however, is winning. Finding and proving that win leads to some amazing discoveries!

1.e5! White does not mind the “♗+♗♗♗ vs ♗+♗♗♗” ending that seems similar to the drawn positions we have covered. The differences here are that:

(1) the g- and h-pawns are further advanced than their counterparts, and (2) the white knight can control the blockading square e6.

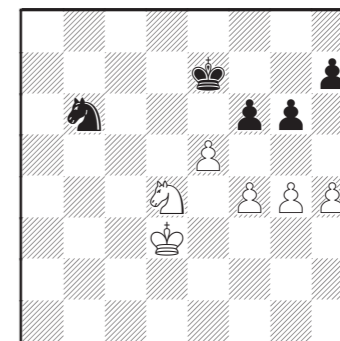
1...♗c8 The toughest defense. If

Black trades immediately on e5, a similar (though not exactly the same) position appears as in our main line, and I will omit the precise proof of the win there (but it is shown in the book). I do want to highlight another interesting line, however: 1...♗b5 2.♗d4 ♗c7 3.♗c4 ♗a6 4.♗b5 (the black knight is running out of squares) 4...♗c7+ 5.♗c6 ♗a6 (5...♗e8 6.g5 is terrible for Black.) 6.♗b6 and Black must trade on e5 after all, because 6...♗b4? 7.♗c6+ ♗xc6



8.exf6+! and with the intermediate check, White converts into a winning pawn ending.

2.♗d4 ♗b6



3.♗b5!! By all appearances, this is the only winning move! The more obvious 3.♗e4? ♗c4 4.♗c6+ ♗e6 5.f5+ gxf5+ 6.gxf5+ ♗d7 7.♗b8+ ♗e7 8.e6 ♗d6+ 9.♗f4 ♗c4 leads to a position where, strange as it may seem, we could not find a way for White to break through.

3...♗d7 4.♗d4 ♗f8 5.♗c7! The point of 3.♗b5. The knight aims for the d5-square, from where it will not only force the trade on e5, but also have access to f4, preventing a blockade of the passed pawn.

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The Fifth Edition of a Classic

Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual

Revised by Karsten Müller with Alex Fishbein

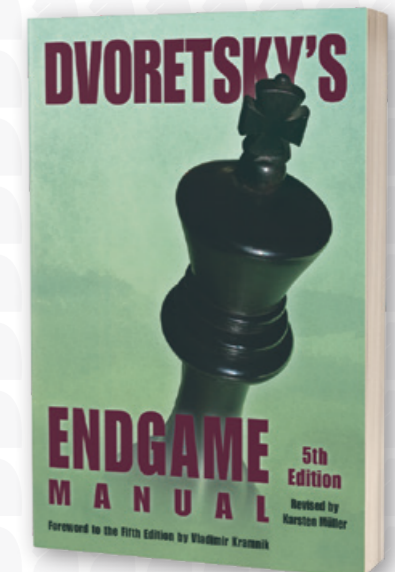
“I consider Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual an absolute must for every chess professional, and no less important even for a club player... I always recommend this book... I consider it to be one of the very best chess books published in recent times and I am very pleased with the new enhanced edition...”

– From the Foreword by Vladimir Kramnik

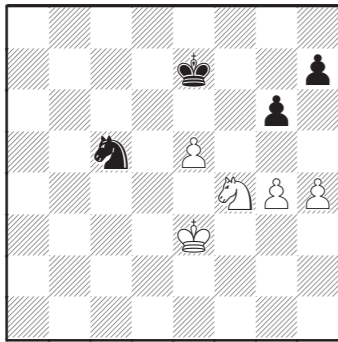
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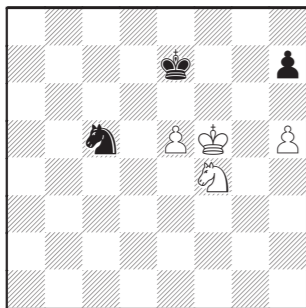


5...♔d7 6.♘d5 ♘e6+ 7.♗e3 fxe5
8.fxe5 ♘c5 9.♖f4! ♗e7

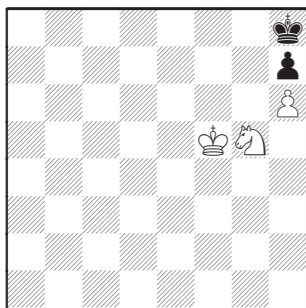


White is winning here, but the win is exceptionally difficult.

10.♗d4! 10.h5? throws away the win:
10...gxf5 11.gxf5 ♗f7 12.♗d4 ♖a4
13.♗e4 ♗e7 14.♗f5 ♘c5



Amazingly enough, this position is one of mutual zugzwang. With Black to move, he has to give ground, and after e5-e6 with check White wins easily. But with White to move, he cannot win: 15.e6 ♗d6! 16.h6 (16.♗f6 ♘e4+ 17.♗g7 ♘g5=) 16...♗e7 17.♗e5 ♘xe6! 18.♘xe6 ♗f7 19.♗f5 ♗g8 20.♗g5 ♗h8

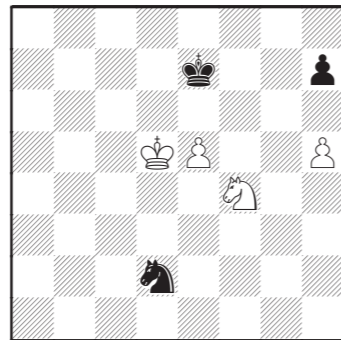


with a well-known fortress in the corner: the best White can achieve is stalemate. This happened because White, on the move, had to push his pawn to h6.

10...♖b3+ 11.♗d3 ♘c5+ 12.♗e3
Triangulation! Now the zugzwang position we just saw will be reached with Black to move.

12...♖b3 13.h5 gxf5 14.gxf5 ♗f7 A tougher defense than 14...♘c5 15.♗d4 ♖b3+ 16.♗e4 ♘c5+ 17.♗f5, reaching the zugzwang we already know.

15.♗e4 ♗e7 16.♗d5 ♘d2

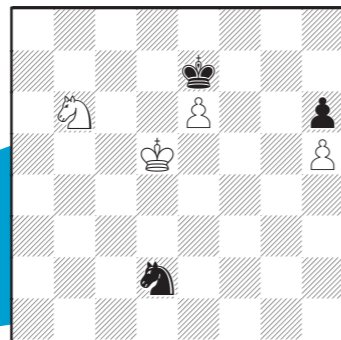


White to play and win!

17.♗g6+!! Perhaps not too difficult to find, but the only way to win!

17...♗f7 17...hxf6 18.h6!

18.e6+ ♗f6 19.♖f8! h6 20.♖d7+ ♗e7 21.♖b6!



The black knight is dominated by the white king, but the white knight can hop around.

21...♗f6 22.♘c8! ♘f3 23.e7 ♗f7 24.♗d6 ♗e8 25.♗e6 ♗g5+ 26.♗f6 ♘e4+ 27.♗g7 and **White wins**

This long variation can only be found with a computer. But I hope it illustrates some interesting ideas in knight endings.

In conclusion, I would like to mention the role of the computer in revising this book. It is fair to say that Karsten and I performed the most thorough verification of lines that was ever done for a general endgame book. Engines (when properly used) are much more accurate now than in 2014 when the previous edition of DEM4 was published.

While I will eat my words if I claim that there are no errors in DEM5, we did make quite a few corrections. Several famous endings, played by people like Rubinstein, Lasker and Botvinnik, and even more recently Karpov and Anand, are shown in a different light.

For example, Karsten found a mistake by Rubinstein in his most famous rook ending (against Spielmann). It is one of the most analyzed endgames of all time and until now no one had found any flaws in Akiba's play in that ending. You'll have to buy the book to see this and many other re-evaluations!

One can react to these findings in different ways. You can say "well, even world champions make mistakes, that means I am a good player too, and besides I shouldn't be learning from them anyway because a computer can teach me a lot more." My approach is closer to that of Anatoly Karpov, who wrote in 1977: "However, what is a 'correct' game? Ideally played games by both sides almost never happen, because people are not machines. There can only be different degrees of fallibility."

So, what level of endgame mastery should we, as humans, strive for? I think finding these errors even in games of the greats was eye-opening, but, more importantly, it helped me figure out what level of play I can hope to imitate. A reasonable goal can perhaps be reached, while an unreasonable one (of playing like a computer) just invites failure.

In his foreword to DEM5, Vladimir Kramnik talks about how he uses the book. It was humbling for me to read it, as it was to work on some of the intricate positions in the book. None of us can learn all endgames or play the endgame perfectly. But all of us can improve our endgame play, and *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* will help you in that endeavor.

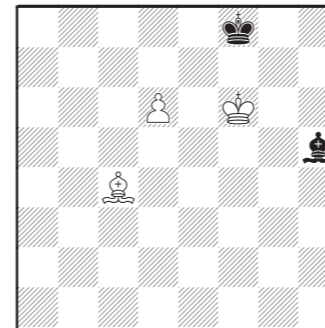


CAN YOU SOLVE THE RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX?

By Pete Tamburro

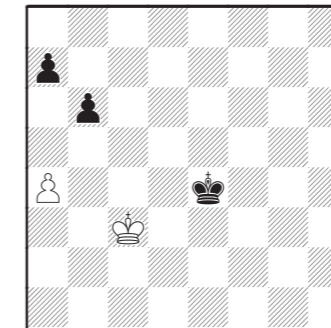
Solutions on page 96

01



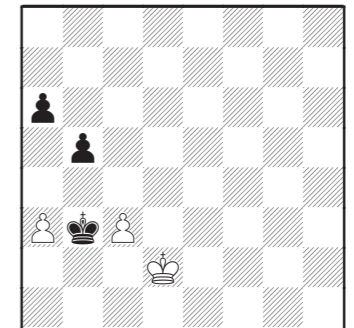
White to Play and Win

02



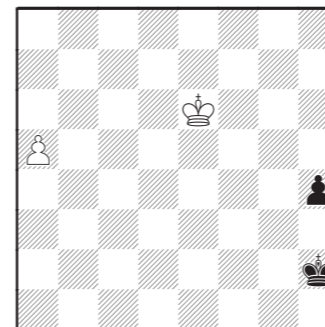
White to Play and Draw

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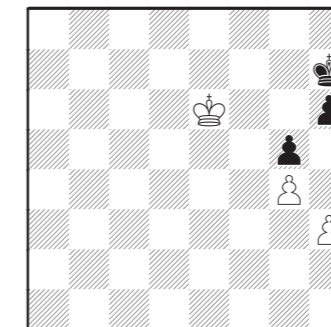
White to Play and Draw

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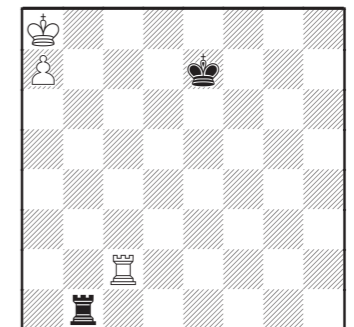
White to Play and Win

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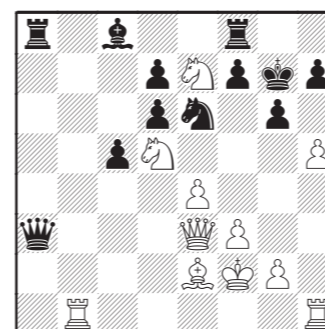
White to Play and Win

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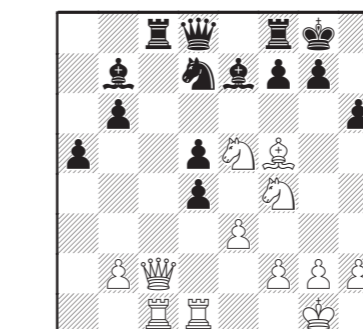
White to Play and Win

07



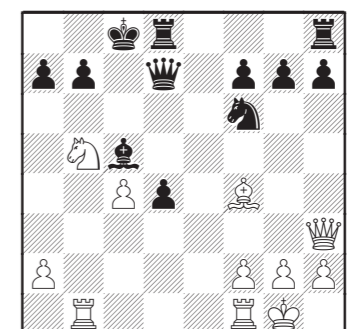
White to Play and Mate

08



White to Play and Mate

09



White to Play and Win