The cover features a large, dark brown wooden puzzle piece in the foreground, which is being inserted into a slot in a larger wooden structure. Inside the slot, a chessboard with a green and white checkered pattern is visible. Several chess pieces, including a king, queen, and pawns, are positioned on the board. The background is a warm, reddish-brown color with a subtle gradient.

**The Chess**  
**PUZZLE**  
**Book**

**2**

**Test and Improve  
Your Positional Intuition**

**Karsten Müller**

Foreword by Susan Polgar

The  
Chess  
Puzzle Book 2

Test and Improve Your  
Positional Intuition

by

Karsten Müller

Foreword by  
Susan Polgar



2013

Russell Enterprises, Inc.  
Milford, CT USA

The Chess Puzzle Book 2

Test and Improve Your Positional Intuition

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Karsten Müller

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## Foreword

This is a unique training program that aims to help intermediate and advanced players by offering a large number of examples carefully selected by the author, German grandmaster Karsten Müller. While there are many books and software programs available to assist chess players in improving their tactical ability, there are relatively few that focus on strategic and positional considerations. Working through these positions and exercises is a great way to improve your positional understanding. I recommend it!

Susan Polgar  
New York, May 2008

## Signs and Symbols

1-0	White wins (Black resigns)
0-1	Black wins (White resigns)
½-½	draw agreed
+	check
#	mate
!	a strong move
!!	a brilliant or unobvious move
?	a weak move, an error
??	a grave error
!?	a move worth consideration
?!	a dubious move
=	an equal position
±	White stands slightly better
±	White has a clear advantage
+−	White has a winning position
∓	Black stands slightly better
∓	Black has a clear advantage
−+	Black has a winning position
∞	an unclear position
∞	with compensation
↑	with the initiative
→	with an attack
△	with the threat or idea of
△	better is
ol	Olympiad
m	match
ch	championship
wch	world championship
corr	correspondence game

## Introduction

Why is it so much easier to find books that focus on tactical exercises rather than positional tests? One reason is that it is easier to locate suitable examples of tactical combinations – at least for me. Moreover, the computer can be used to check the accuracy and uniqueness of the solution. With positional exercises, different computer programs may favor different moves and completely disagree about the evaluation of a given position. This is, of course, never the case when a clear-cut tactical solution exists. In a way, this problem is similar for humans, making it difficult to find examples with unique positional solutions. Therefore, in the tests offered in this book, when I think that different moves also deserve points, I have mentioned these as well.

I suggest that you begin with the introductory chapters of motifs, but you can, of course, start with the exercises as a warm up. If you are able to solve them quite quickly, then you should turn to the tests. You cannot expect to solve the puzzles on positional grounds alone. Positional motifs do not exist in a vacuum and concrete calculation almost always plays a role. So use your intuition to judge how far you must calculate to get full scores. Sometimes it is sufficient to find the first move, at other times you must calculate several moves ahead to ensure that your idea really works. Themes like “counterplay” or “opening the position” tend to be more tactical of course, but do not make your decisions on these grounds alone. Always let your intuition be your guide in any given position. You should repeat the tests after some time to train your memory and to recognize the patterns more readily. I hope that after studying this book, you will look at positional matters afresh, e.g. evaluate each exchange of a piece carefully (this problem is extremely important, believe me), look at the plans and ideas of your opponent and add the positionally desirable move to your list of candidates before you start calculating variations.

Many thanks to Hanon W. Russell for adding many explanations, Susan Polgar for her foreword, and special thanks to Jacob Aagaard for testing the exercises.

I wish you plenty of fun with the puzzles and I hope that your overall performance improves!

Karsten Müller  
Hamburg, May 2008

## Motifs

### Good and Bad Bishops

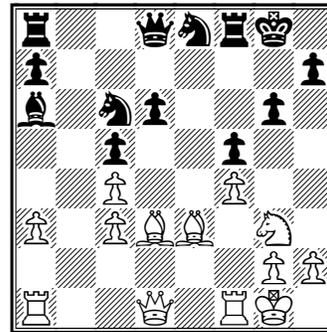
The bishop can only move on half the squares of the chessboard and this has many positional implications. If one bishop is exchanged, the other is also weakened, as the enemy pieces can find a safe haven on opposite color squares of the remaining bishop. So the bishop-pair is an important weapon and you should not give your opponent a strong unopposed bishop. This is especially true when an attack with opposite-colored bishops is possible (see Part B).

#### A) Bad Bishop

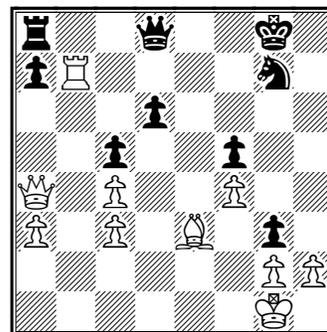
Trying to restrict and finally dominate minor pieces is an important part of chess strategy. Pawns are usually used to make the bishops “bite on granite.” In Hollis – Hovde, the d3-bishop bites on the f5-h7 pawn chain, while the e3-bishop is restricted by the d6- and c5-pawns. Conversely, Black’s a6-bishop cannot be similarly restricted. These pawn chains are the active strategy to restrict an enemy bishop. Of course, especially long pawn chains in the center can restrict the bishop. One famous example is the c8-bishop in the French Defense after 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5.

In our first example, White’s dark-squared bishop is permanently bad, as the doubled c-pawns and the blocked f4-pawn form a cage. The light-squared bishop is only on a bad square, but it will get stuck protecting c4 if White does not play actively. So **16. ♗×f5!** is White’s best bet. Black is better after 16. ♗a4 ♖a5 17. ♗f2 ♖f6 18. ♖fe1 ♗g4.

*Hollis, Adrian Swayne (2606) –  
Hovde, Frank (2534)  
Corr. 1991 (8)*



**16...g×f5 17. ♗d5+ ♖f7 18. ♗×c6 ♗b7!?** This is more in the spirit of an attack with opposite-colored bishops than 18... ♗×c4. **19. ♗a4 h5 20. ♖ab1** 20. ♗×h5? is asking for trouble: 20... ♗h4 21. ♗g3 ♖h7 22. ♗f2 ♗×h2 23. ♖g1 ♖g7 →. **20... ♗g7 21. ♖f2?** Now Black’s attack gains momentum and White’s bishop will play no role. 21. ♖fd1 was called for. **21...h4 22. ♖fb2 22. ♗f1** h3 23. g×h3 ♗e4 and Black’s attack is very strong. 23... ♗h4?! allows the positional exchange sacrifice 24. ♖×b7!. **22...h×g3 23. ♖×b7 ♖×b7 24. ♖×b7**

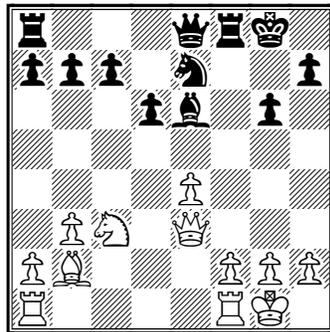


**24...♖e8!** This is the application of another positional principle: the more pieces that are exchanged, the higher the disadvantage of a bad piece. Black's knight will reign supreme: **25.♖×e8+ ♜×e8** **26.♗d2 ♜e2** **27.♞b2 ♖h5** **28.h×g3 ♖×g3** **29.♞b8+** **29.♗c1 ♞×b2** **30.♗×b2 ♖e2+** **31.♖f2 ♖×f4** **32.♖f3 ♖d3** **33.♗a1** this bishop is really ugly **33...♖f7+-** **29...♖f7** **30.♗e1 ♞×e1+** **31.♖f2 ♜e4** **32.♖×g3 ♞×c4** **33.♞b7+** **♖e6** **34.♞×a7 ♖d5** **35.a4 ♞×c3+** **36.♖h4 ♖e4#** and Black later converted his advantage.

**B) Attack with Opposite-Colored Bishops**

Pure opposite-colored bishop endgames have a very drawish nature (see *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* or *Fundamental Chess Endings*). However, when more pieces come into play, then the rule is that the side with the attack (resp. initiative) is favored by the presence of opposite-colored bishops, as the defending bishop cannot contribute to the defense:

*Seidler – Ruiz*  
Buenos Aires, 1974



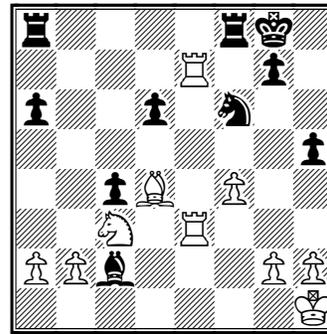
Black's king is feeling the danger, but

nothing can stop White's attack on the long diagonal: **16.♖d5!** **♖×d5** **17.e×d5 ♗×d5** **18.♖d2!** The point. **18.♖d4?** can be met by **18...♖e5**. **18...♞f5** **19.f4 ♖d7** **19...♞b5** **20.♞f2 ♞af8** **21.♖d4 ♞5f6** **22.f5+-** **20.♖d4 ♖f8** **21.♞ae1** **21.g4 ♞h5** **22.f5** wins as well. **21...♗c6** **22.g4 1-0** **22.♞h8+** **♖f7** **23.♖g7#**.

Even without queens such an attack is possible, as long as tactical elements are present and king safety is an issue:

*David, Alberto (2487) – Plaskett, Jim (2525)*

Mondariz zt 1.1 (10), 13.09.2000



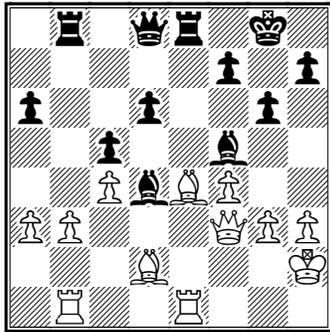
White's powerhouse on d4, combined with the attacking rooks, decides the issue: **26.♖d5!** **26.♞g3? ♖e8** **27.♗×g7** (**27.♞g×g7+ ♖×g7** **28.♞×g7+ ♖h8** **29.♖d5 ♞ae8**) **27...♖×g7** **28.♞g×g7+ ♖h8** **29.♞g5 ♞×f4** **30.♞×h5+ ♖g8** **31.h3 ♞b8** and in both cases Black is still fighting. **26...♞f7** **26...♖×d5?** **27.♞×g7+ ♖h8** **28.♞a7+ ♖f6** **29.♗×f6+-** **27.♖×f6+ ♖×f6** **28.♞7e6!** Black cannot defend the dark squares around his king. White wants to keep as much attacking potential on the board as possible, so he does not exchange pieces. **28...d5** **28...♖g7** **29.♞×d6 ♖g6** **30.♞e5 ♗f5** **31.♞a5+-**.

## The Chess Puzzle Book 2

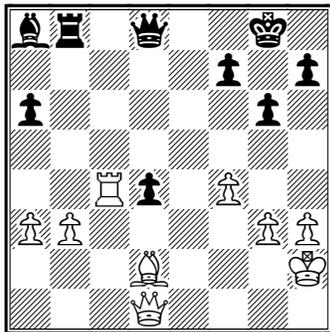
**29. ♖×f6 d4 30. ♖g3+ ♜h7 30... ♜f8**  
**31. ♗e5!+- . 31. ♖g5!? d3 31... ♖d7**  
**32. ♖×h5+ ♜g6 33. g4 ♜f7 34. f5 ♖aa7**  
**35. ♗×d4+- Ftacnik in CBM 79.**  
**32. ♖×h5+ ♜g6 33. ♖g5+ ♜h7**  
**34. ♗c3 ♗d1 35. ♖e3 1-0**

The next example shows a nice combination based on an attack with opposite-colored bishops:

*Taimanov, Mark (2530) –*  
*Vitolinsh, Alvis (2415)*  
 Jurmala (9), 1978



**24... ♖×e4! 25. ♖×e4 d5 26. ♖×d4**  
**26... c×d5? ♜×d5 27. ♖be1 (27... ♖e8+?**  
**♖×e8 28. ♜×d5 ♖e2+ 29. ♜h1**  
**♗×b1 +-)** **27... ♗×e4 28. ♖×e4**  
**♜×b3 +- . 26... c×d4 27. ♖c1 ♗e4**  
**28. ♜d1 d×c4 29. ♖×c4 ♗a8!**



Black's initiative is very strong, as White cannot block the long diagonal: **30. ♜g1?! 30. ♖c5 ♜e7 31. b4 ♜e4 32. ♜f1** was more tenacious. **30... ♜d5 31. ♖×d4 ♜f3 32. ♗e1 ♖e8 33. ♖d2 h5!** Initiative is more important than material here. Black wants to undermine White's shelter: **34. ♖f2 ♜×b3 35. ♗b4 h4 36. f5 ♖e3 37. ♗d6 g5 38. f6 ♖d3 39. ♗c7 ♖d1 0-1**

### C) The Bishop-Pair

Two bishops are usually very strong. Jonathan Rowson describes this in *The Seven Deadly Chess Sins* (page 130) as follows:

“Although the pair of knights can be very effective, we don't see them as ‘a pair’ because there is nothing one knight can do that the other can't in principle...There may be something good about ‘the two knights’ in a particular position, but this is purely accidental, for there is no reason in principle why a pair of them should be more than the sum of their parts. On the other hand, one bishop makes up for the shortcomings of the other, and takes care of its own shortcomings in the process. So what happens when you capture the opponent's bishop is not only that you remove one piece of value, but that you ‘weaken’ the other bishop too.”

A single bishop can operate on both wings simultaneously, so it is easy to understand that the bishop-pair are a tactical powerhouse (especially in open positions) and are a strong endgame weapon. Therefore, it is no wonder that many positional operations aim to obtain the bishop-pair: