

Dvoretsky's
Endgame
Manual

Third Edition

by

Mark Dvoretsky

Foreword by
Artur Yusupov

Preface by
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2011
Russell Enterprises, Inc.
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Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual

Third Edition

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Mark Dvoretsky

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Foreword

My cooperation and friendship with Mark Dvoretzky has already lasted almost 30 years. He was more than just a coach or second. He was my most important chess teacher. I owe my greatest victories to him and we are still in contact with each other quite often.

Mark has developed a method that can catapult a talented player from Elo 2200 to grandmaster level in 4 to 5 years. An important part of this procedure is the study of the endgame. Mark firmly believes that endgame technique is of universal value. He recognized this when he prepared several endgame sessions for the education of prospective Russian chess trainers. At first he thought that the job was routine work, only requiring him to write down what he already knew. But suddenly he realized that he was playing better!

I also believe in the *interactive* effect of endgame study. It makes it easier to judge and use the potential of the pieces and to understand their interaction. So not only our endgame technique, but also our intuition and positional understanding are refined. In the endgame, plans must be found all the time – so it sharpens our strategic eye as well.

So I was very happy when Mark told me two years ago, that he was planning to write an endgame manual. Now this work by one of the world's leading endgame specialists has appeared and you can enjoy the fruits of his labor. I am sure that those who study this work carefully will not only play the endgame better, but overall, their play will improve. One of the secrets of the Russian chess school is now before you, dear reader!

International Grandmaster Artur Yusupov
Weissenhorn
September 2003

Preface

The first time I heard about the book you are now holding in your hands was in the summer of 2000, when Mark Dvoretsky was giving lectures in Copenhagen for a group of the best Danish players. I had only just been able to put my jaw back in place after being rushed through a rook ending I was badly prepared to understand. What had fascinated me most was not that rook endings could be explained the way Mark explained them, but that the simplicity of dicta like *the rook should always be active* had such far reaching practical implications. *Hey, I can actually understand this!* was the thought running through my head. The game Flohr-Vidmar 1936 (p. 215) especially impressed me. Mark then told us that he was indeed working on a new book on the endgame, a comprehensive manual which would be finished within a year.

In fact it took far more than a year, and to be honest, I am not really sure that Mark will ever finish his work with this book – or that he should. In the summer of 2002 the German version, titled *Die Endspieluniversität*, was published. And I am the proud owner of the first ever signed copy of the book I called *The best chess book ever written* in a 10-page review in the Swedish chess magazine *Schacknytt*.

Since the book was released (and I wrote my review) I have worked with it, in both my own training and my work with juniors, and I have come to the following conclusion: Going through this book will certainly improve your endgame knowledge, but just as important, it will also greatly improve your ability to calculate variations. In particular, the section on pawn endings has convinced me that solving studies and pawn endings should be an important part of my pre-tournament training (and when am I not preparing for the next tournament?). So the book is practical indeed, more so than any other book in my extensive library.

But there is another point, just as important, regarding the general sense of aesthetics in the book. The studies, both those selected and those created by the author himself, are not just instructive, but some of the finest studies I have ever seen.

But what really impresses me is the deep level of analysis in the book. Rules and techniques are important for the practical player in the development of ability, but if the analysis is less than thorough, it is hard to really get into the text. Improvements have been found to the analysis of the German edition and incorporated into the English edition and Mark is always ready to discuss and improve his analysis with anyone. He understands fully that a book has a life and rights of its own. Greatness is possible, but perfection may not be. I must admit that I personally feel as if Shakespeare asked me to write a foreword to Hamlet, and yes, I must admit that I suffer from a lot of confusion as to why he did this. All I can say is: This is a great book. I hope it will bring you as much pleasure as it has me.

International Grandmaster Jacob Aagaard
Copenhagen
September 2003

From the Author (First Edition)

Endgame theory is not a complicated subject to study!

All one needs is thorough knowledge of a limited number of “precise” positions (as a rule, elementary ones) plus some of the most important principles, evaluations, and standard techniques. The question is, how to select the most important material from the thousands of endings analyzed in various handbooks? That is why this book was written: it offers the basic information you need as the foundation of your own personal endgame theory.

As long ago as 1970, when I was just a young chess master and a student at Moscow University, I was unexpectedly invited to give some endgame lectures to the chess faculty of the Moscow High School for Sports. It was then that I had to think about what exactly a practical chess player must study. I defined sound methods of studying endgame theory (from the point of view of logic, rather obvious ones) and prepared examples of the most important types of endgames (pawn, rook-and-pawn endgames, and those with opposite-colored bishops). I also prepared a series of lectures on the general principles of endgame play. By the way, the main ideas of that series became (with my permission) the basis of the popular book *Endgame Strategy* by Mikhail Shereshevsky (I recommend that book to my readers).

Later on, these materials, continually corrected and enlarged, were used in teaching numerous apprentices. They proved to be universal and useful for players of widely different levels: from ordinary amateurs to the world's leading grandmasters. My work with grandmasters, some of them belonging to the world's Top Ten, have convinced me that almost none of them had studied chess endings systematically. They either did not know or did not remember many important endgame positions and ideas, which can be absorbed even by those of relatively modest chess experience. As a result, even among grandmasters, grave errors occur even in elementary situations: you will find plenty of examples in this book. Some grandmasters asked me to help them, and our studies resulted usually in a substantial improvement of their tournament achievements. Two weeks of intensive study were usually more than enough to eliminate the gaps in their endgame education.

So, what will you find in this book?

Precise positions. This is our term for concrete positions – positions with a minimum number of pawns, which should be memorized and which will serve as guideposts again and again in your games.

The hardest part of preparing this book was deciding which positions to include and which to leave out. This required rejection of many examples that were intrinsically interesting and even instructive, but of little practical value. Common sense dictates that effort should be commensurate to the expected benefit. Human memory is limited, so there is no sense in filling it up with rarely-seen positions that will probably never occur in our actual games. One should study relatively few positions, the most important and most probable, but study and understand them perfectly. One should not remember long and perplexing analyses. We may never have an opportunity to reproduce them in our games, and we will certainly forget them sooner or later. Our basic theoretical knowledge must be easy to remember and comprehend. Some complicated positions are also important, but we may absorb their general evaluations and basic ideas, plus perhaps a few of their most important lines only.

The positions that I consider part of the basic endgame knowledge system are shown by diagrams and comments in blue print. If the explanatory notes are too complicated or less important the print is black; these positions are also useful but there is not much sense in committing them to memory.

Endgame ideas. These represent, of course, the most significant part of endgame theory. Study of certain endgame types can be almost fully reduced to absorbing ideas (general principles, standard methods and evaluations) rather than to memorizing precise positions.

When discussing precise positions, we will certainly point out the endgame ideas in them. But many standard ideas transcend any particular precise position. These ideas should be absorbed with the help of schemata – very simple positions where a technique or a tool works in a distilled form and our attention is not distracted by any analysis of side lines. Over the course of time we may forget the precise shape of a schema but will still remember the technique. Another method of absorbing endgame ideas is to study practical games or compositions where the ideas have occurred in the most attractive form.

The schemata and the most instructive endgames are represented by color diagrams as well. Plus, important rules, recommendations and names of the important tools are given in *bold italics*.

As I am sure you realize, the choice of the ideas and precise positions included in this system of basic endgame knowledge is, to some extent, a subjective matter. Other authors might have made slightly different choices. Nevertheless I strongly recommend that you not ignore the information given in the colored font: it is very important. However you of course are free to examine it critically, and to enrich it with the other ideas in this book (those in black print), as well as with examples you already know, from other books or your own games.

Retention of the material. This book would have been rather thin if it included only a laconic list of positions and ideas related to the obligatory minimum of endgame knowledge. As you see, this is not so.

Firstly, the notes are definitely not laconic, after all, this is a manual, not a handbook. In a handbook, a solution of a position is all one needs; in a manual, it should be explained how one can discover the correct solution, which ideas are involved.

Secondly, in chess (as in any other sphere of human activity), a confident retention of theory cannot be accomplished solely by looking at one example: one must also get some practical training with it. For this purpose, additional examples (those with black diagrams and print) will be helpful.

You will see instructive examples where the basic theoretical knowledge you have just studied is applied in a practical situation. The connection between the theory and the practical case will not always be direct and obvious. It is not always easy to notice familiar theoretical shapes in a complicated position, and to determine which ideas should be applied in this concrete case. On the other hand, a position may resemble the theory very much but some unobvious details exist; one should discover them and find how this difference influences the course of the fight and its final outcome.

Some practical endings are introduced by the “tragicomedy” heading. These are examples of grave errors committed by various players (sometimes extremely strong ones). The point is not to laugh at them: you know that there are spots even on the sun. These cases are simply excellent warnings against ignoring endgame theory. Additionally, experience shows that these cases tend to be very well remembered by the student, and are therefore very helpful in absorbing and retaining endgame ideas.

Practical training, by which I mean solving appropriate exercises, is essential. You will find a large number and wide variety of exercises in this book, from easy to very difficult. Some solutions are given directly after the exercises, other are placed in the special chapter that concludes the book.

Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual

Some exercises do not involve a search for a single correct solution. They are designed for solving in the playing mode, when a series of contingent decisions is required. The best result can be achieved if a friend or coach assists you by referring to the book. But you can also play through the example without assistance, choosing moves for one side and taking the answering moves from the text of the book.

Of course, one need not study all these examples, nor must one solve all the exercises. But still, if you do, your knowledge of the basic theory will be more sound and reliable. Also, self-training develops one's ability to calculate lines deeply and precisely; this skill is essential for every player.

Analyses. When working on the manuscript, in addition to the large volume of material I had collected myself, I also – quite naturally – used endgame books by other authors. Checking their analyses, I found that an amazingly high number of endings, including many widely known and used in book after book, are analyzed badly and evaluated wrongly. In those cases I went deeper than the concept of the endgame manual required. I felt I had to do it. As I wrote above, studying endgame theory is not a very labor-intensive process, but analysis of a particular endgame, or practical play under time restriction in a tournament, can be a much more sophisticated and complicated matter. Therefore, my readers will find corrected versions of many interesting endgame analyses, plus some entirely new analyses that are important for endgame theory.

Presentation of the material. The material here is presented mainly in a traditional manner, classified according to the material relationships on the board. First pawn endings are analyzed, then those with minor pieces, then rook-and-pawn, etc. But this method is not followed too strictly. For example, the queen-versus-pawns section is in chapter 1, to demonstrate immediately what can arise in some sharp pawn endings.

In the chapter on pawn endings, you will meet some terms and techniques (such as “corresponding squares,” “breakthrough,” “shouldering” etc.) that are important for many kinds of endgame. Some of these techniques are illustrated by additional examples with more pieces on the board; as the book continues, we may refer to these cases again.

Some chapters (for example, those on pawn and rook-and-pawn endings) are quite long while others are rather short. Chapter length does not reflect the relative importance of a kind of endgame; rather it has to do with the richness of ideas and number of precise positions required for full understanding.

The final chapter deals with the most general principles, rules and methods of endgame play, such as king's activity, zugzwang, the fortress etc. Of course, these themes appear earlier in the book, but a review of already familiar ideas improves both understanding and retention.

What this book does not contain. Obviously, one cannot embrace the infinite. I have already described how the book's material has been selected. Now about other limitations.

My own formal definition of “endgame” is: the stage of a chess game when at least one side has no more than one piece (in addition to the king). Positions with more pieces are not discussed here (except for cases when the “extra” pieces are exchanged).

Our subject is endgame theory. Some problems of chess psychology that belong to “general endgame techniques” are beyond our discussion. Interested readers may turn to the aforementioned *Endgame Strategy* by Shereshevsky, or to *Technique for the Tournament Player*, a book by this writer and Yusupov.

Special signs and symbols. The role of colored fonts in this book is already explained. Now the time has come to explain special signs and symbols.

To the left of diagrams, you will find important information. First of all, the indication of who is on move: “W” means White and “B” Black.

If a question mark is shown, the position can be used as an exercise. Most often, there is no special explanation of what is expected from the reader – he must make a correct decision on his own, because in an actual game nobody will tell you whether you should play for a draw or for a win, calculate a lot or simply make a natural move. Sometimes, however, a certain hint is included in a verbal question.

Exercises with solutions that are given separately, in the end of the book, have two sets of numbers beside the diagrams. For example, diagram 1-14, the 14th diagram of chapter 1, also has the designation 1/1, meaning it is the first such exercise of chapter 1.

The combination “B?/Play” means that the position is designed for replaying, and that you are to take the black pieces.

Beside some black diagrams, the symbol “\$” appears. This indicates that the position and the idea behind it have theoretical value, though less compared to those from basic theory (blue diagrams).

Many years ago the publication *Chess Informant* developed a system of symbols to describe the evaluation of a position or move. This system is widely used now and, with minimal changes, is applied in this book, too.

Finally, a work of this scope cannot be produced by a single individual. I am grateful to many others for their assistance during the many stages of producing this book. I would like to thank Artur Yusupov and Jacob Aagaard for their encouragement and eventual contributions, the Introduction and Preface respectively; Mark Donlan for his editing and layout work; Karsten Müller for his help proof-reading the text and checking the accuracy of variations; Taylor Kingston for his assistance editing the final version of the text; Jim Marfia and Valery Murakhveri for their translations of the original Russian text; Harold van der Heijden for his assistance checking sources; and Hanon Russell, the publisher, for coordinating the efforts of all concerned.

This book is an improved and expanded version of the German-language edition, and in that regard, it is also appropriate to thank Ulrich Dirr, who provided invaluable assistance in the preparation of the German edition and Jürgen Daniel, its publisher. Without their fine work, it would have been significantly more difficult to bring out this English-language edition.

Mark Dvoretzky
Moscow
September 2003

Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual

From the Author (Second Edition)

An author usually has a hard time predicting whether his book will be popular; in this case, however, I was confident that *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* would be a success. And it was, as witnessed by the almost uniformly favorable (and in some cases – ecstatic) reviews and the rapidly sold-out first edition. Now, only two years later, it is time to prepare a second edition.

The theory of the endgame is constantly evolving – although not, of course, as fast as opening theory. New instructive endgames are constantly being played and then analyzed; commentaries on endgames played earlier are corrected – in large measure, thanks to the use of rapidly improving computer programs. On the other hand, if we understand endgame theory, not as the mechanical accumulation of all the information we have, but as the results of our consideration of it, then the authors of endgame books (as opposed to the authors of opening books) have no need to be continuously expanding and reworking their texts, since very few new analyses have any practical value in forcing us to reexamine our approaches to the study and play of endgames.

In the past two years, very important discoveries have been made in the theory of one particular area of rook endgames – and I have completely reworked the corresponding chapter of this book. However, there have also been a number of corrections made in other chapters as well – perhaps not as fundamental, and some that are barely noticeable. A few of them involve corrections to the names of players and composers; but most of them, of course, are analytical. And here, the letters from readers to the author and to the publisher, Hanon Russell, have been most valuable. I am truly grateful to everyone who has written to us. All these notes have been considered in the preparation of the new edition – as a result, a number of new names now appear in the index of composers and analysts. Special thanks are due to that exacting aficionado of the endgame, Karsten Müller, who helped me eradicate a number of inaccuracies and outright errors in the original text, just as he did with the preparation of the first edition.

Mark Dvoretsky
Moscow
September 2005

Publisher's Note to the Third Edition

It is with a great sense of pride that we present the third edition of *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* by Mark Dvoretsky. When it was first released in 2003, it was embraced by the chess world. Since then, it has set the standard by which all other works on the endgame are measured.

From the outset, the author's comprehensive coverage of this critical phase of the game has been both staggering in its depth and impressive in its accuracy. However, rather than rest on his laurels, Mark Dvoretsky has continued to re-examine and re-work the material.

The result is this revised and updated third edition. Not only working independently, but also with the help of attentive readers, masters and grandmasters, the author's efforts have resulted in what can only be described as the definitive work on endgame theory and practice.

No doubt, when confronted by this massive volume, many chessplayers are intimidated. After all, there are over four hundred large-format pages and over one thousand positions contained in the book. Recognizing the challenge set before the reader, and with an eye to making the material accessible to as many players as possible, Dvoretsky devised a system whereby his *Manual* could be effectively used by both those wishing to immerse themselves in theory, as well as those wishing a more practical approach.

The key is the author's concept of using two colors in the text. If your objective is to study and master all the secrets of the endgame, then go through the entire text thoroughly. On the other hand, if you wish to get practical, working knowledge of endings more quickly, then focus your attention only on the text in blue. Either way, you will be rewarded with better results in your games. That is particularly important in this era of rapid time controls and sudden-death finishes.

We hope you will appreciate the author's passion for the endgame and dedication to producing the most accurate work possible. Regarded by many as Dvoretsky's *magnum opus*, it is truly a masterpiece. We wish you good chess, and, of course, better endgames...

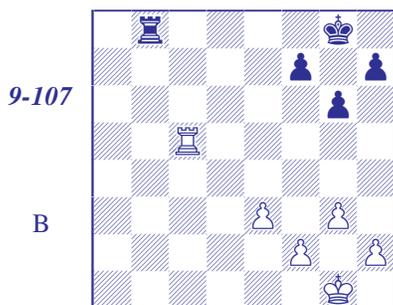
Hanon W. Russell
President, Russell Enterprises, Inc.
Milford, Connecticut
July 2011

Four Pawns vs. Three on the Same Wing

If all pawns are on the same wing, bringing the advantage home is frequently impossible (it is more precise to say, it should not be possible against correct defense). The fewer pawns, the easier the defense is.

Say, with 3 pawns against 2 or even with 4 against 3, in case of standard pawn structures, the task of the defender is not too difficult (once in a lightning tournament I managed to hold two such endings: against Tal and Vasiukov). As for the case of five pawns against four, the probability of losing is rather great.

Petrosian – Keres
USSR ch, Moscow 1951



1...h5!

In this way Black makes his task of reaching a draw considerably easier. *The defender should advance his h-pawn. The stronger side, whenever possible should prevent this by means of g3-g4!*

The explanation consists in the fact that White's most logical plan is an advance of his e- and f-pawns in order to create a passed pawn. To accomplish this plan, he must sooner or later play g3-g4, allowing a pawn exchange on g4. But, as we know, *pawn exchanges are usually favorable for the weaker side, and improve the drawing chances.* Without ...h7-h5, the h-pawns would have stayed on the board.

In this game, Petrosian gradually carried out another plan: h2-h4 followed with f2-f3 and g3-g4, but also could not obtain victory.

2 ♖c2 ♗g7 3 ♗g2 ♖b5 4 ♗f3 ♗f6 5 h4 ♖f5+ 6 ♗g2 ♖a5 7 ♗h3 ♖a4 8 ♖d2 ♗e5 9 ♖b2 ♗f6 10 ♖b5 ♖a2 11 ♗g2 ♖a4 12 ♗f3 ♖a3 13 ♗f4 ♖a2 14 f3 ♖e2 15 e4 ♖e1 16 ♖b6+ ♗g7 17 ♖a6 ♖b1 18 ♖c6 ♖g1 19 ♖c2

♗f6 20 ♖a2 ♗g7 21 ♖e2 ♗f6 22 ♖e3 ♗g7 23 e5 ♗f8 24 g4

If 24 ♗g5, the most simple is 24...♗g7, although 24...♖xg3+ 25 ♗f6 ♗g8 26 ♖d3 ♖h3 27 e6 fe 28 ♗xg6 ♖g3+ 29 ♗xh5 ♗g7= or 27 ♖d8+ ♗h7 28 ♗x7 ♖x3+ 29 ♗e7 g5 30 hg h4 31 e6 h3 32 ♖d2 ♗g6= is also playable.

24...hg 25 fg ♗g7 26 ♗g5 ♖f1 27 ♖e4 ♖f3 28 h5 (28 e6?? f6#) **28...gh 29 gh f6+ 30 ♗g4**

Or 30 ef+ ♖x6 31 ♖e7+ ♖f7 32 h6+ ♗g8=.

30...♖f1 31 h6+

A little trap before the curtain falls. 31...♗xh6? loses to 32 e6 f5+ (if 32...♖g1+, then either 33 ♗f4 ♖g8 34 ♗f5 or 33 ♗f5 ♖f1+ 34 ♖f4 ♖x4+ 35 ♗x4 ♗g6 36 ♗e4) 33 ♗h3! fe 34 e7.

31...♗g6! Draw.

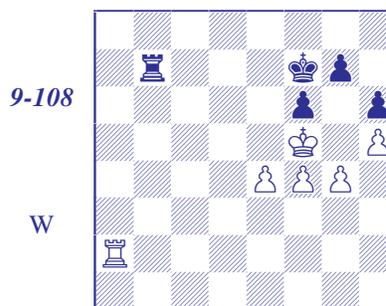
As can be seen, Black did not have serious troubles.

It should be mentioned that, when the white pawns had been set into motion, Keres used a typical strategic policy for this sort of position: *attacking the pawns from the rear.*

What if Black could not play ...h7-h5 in time? We shall analyze two important endings that may serve as landmarks for both sides: the stronger side may pursue them while the weaker side should avoid these situations.

These endings are thoroughly analyzed in endgame handbooks. We skip some less important lines but bring respective conclusions.

Botvinnik – Najdorf
Moscow ol 1956



1 ♖a5 ♖c7 2 ♖d5 ♖a7 3 e5 fe 4 fe (5 ♖d7+! is threatened) **4...♗e7 5 e6 ♖a4!**

Rook Endgames

5...♖a6 6 ♖d7+ ♜f8 7 ♜g6! ♗×e6+ 8 ♜h7 is quite bad for Black.

6 g5!

6 ♖d7+ ♜f8 7 ♖f7+ ♜g8 8 g5 fails in view of 8...♖a5+! (8...hg? 9 ♜g6) 9 ♜e4 ♖a6=.

6...♖a7!

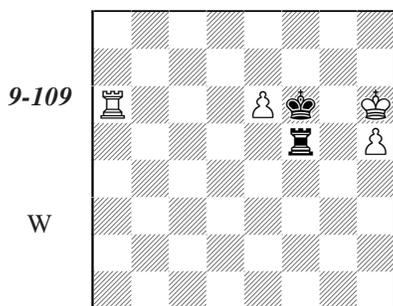
The best defense as suggested by Aronin. The rook may return because there is no danger of trading the rooks anymore: 7 ♖d7+? ♖×d7 8 ed ♜×d7 9 ♜g6 hg 10 ♜×g7 g4=.

The actual continuation was 6...hg?! 7 ♖d7+ ♜f8 8 ♖f7+ ♜g8 9 ♜g6 g4 10 h6! (the shortest way to a win) 10...gh 11 e7 ♖a8 12 ♖f6 (Δ ♖d6-d8) Black resigned.

7 ♖e5!

A key move! White protects the pawn and prepares a king invasion.

An anticipatory pawn exchange is erroneous: 7 gh? gh 8 ♖b5 (Δ ♖b6) 8...♖c7! 9 ♖b6 ♖c5+! 10 ♜g6 ♖e5! 11 ♜×h6 ♜f6! 12 ♖a6! ♖f5!.



In this position, Black must play very precisely in order to achieve a draw, but theory says that this goal is within his reach.

7...hg

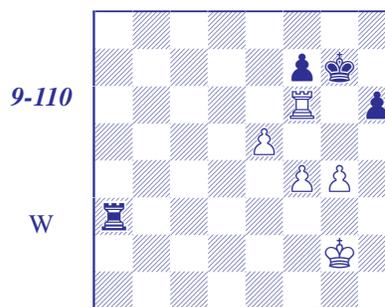
7...♜d6 8 gh gh 9 ♜f6; 7...♖a6 8 ♜g6 ♜f8 9 ♜h7 hg 10 e7+ ♜e8 11 ♜×g7 g4 12 h6+-.

8 ♜×g5 (8 ♜g6 ♜d6 9 ♖e1 g4 10 h6! gh 11 ♜f6 is also strong) 8...♖a1 9 ♜g6 ♖f1 (9...♖g1+ 10 ♖g5) 10 ♜×g7 ♖g1+ 11 ♜h6! ♖g2 12 ♖g5+-.

In the next diagram, White's position is winning (the same evaluation is valid with the black pawn on h7 and the white pawn on g5). The winning plan is a rook transfer to the 8th rank followed by f4-f5-f6+. If the black rook aims at the e5-pawn, White defends it with the rook from e8.

Capablanca carried this plan through; however, as renowned rook endgame expert Kopaev demonstrated, the opponents made a number of

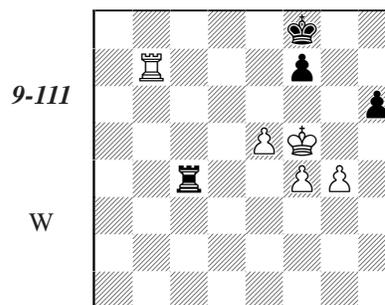
Capablanca – Yates Hastings 1930/31



instructive errors on the way to the final outcome.

1 ♖b6?

White should have played 1 ♖d6! in order to use the rook to protect against checks from the side. The correct reply to the move actually played in the game was 1...♖a4! 2 ♜f3 (2 ♜g3 ♖a3+ 3 ♜h4 ♖a4 4 f5 ♖a5 5 e6 fe 6 fe ♜f6=) 2...♖a3+ 3 ♜e4 ♖a4+ 4 ♜f5 ♖c4 5 ♖b7 (Δ 6 e6) 5...♜f8.



White missed the correct way: he has brought his king, not his pawn, to f5, so he cannot win anymore.

1...♖e3? 2 ♖b4

2 ♖b8 suggested itself, however after 2...♖e4 3 ♜f3 ♖e1 a straightforward 4 ♖e8? enables the salvation through 4...h5! 5 g5 (5 gh ♖f1+! 6 ♜e4 ♖e1+ 7 ♜f5 ♖h1) 5...♖f1+ 6 ♜e3 h4.

The most precise is 2 ♖b1! (temporarily denying the black rook the 1st rank). Black is in zugzwang. He must either worsen his king's position or move his rook off the e-file where it is best placed. In both cases, the invasion of the white rook gains in effectiveness. For example, 2...♖e4 (2...♖e2+ 3 ♜f3 ♖h2 4 f5 h5 5 ♖b7 hg+ 6 ♜g3 ♖h5 7 ♜×g4 ♖h1 8 e6+-) 3 ♜f3 ♖a4,

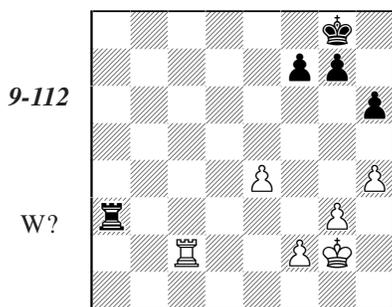
and now time has come for the main plan: 4 ♖b8! ♖a3+ 5 ♜g2 ♖e3 6 ♖e8! ♖e2+ 7 ♜f3 ♖e1 8 f5 ♖f1+ 9 ♜e2 ♖f4 10 ♜e3 ♖xg4 11 f6+ ♜h7 12 e6+-.

2...♖c3 3 ♜f2? (3 ♖b8) 3...♖a3?

Both adversaries missed the fact that after 3...h5! Black either trades a pair of pawns (4 gh ♖h3) or (in case of 4 g5 h4) obtains enough counterplay to save the game.

4 ♖b7?! (4 ♖b8!) 4...♜g8?! (4...♖a2+!?) 5 ♖b8+! ♜g7 6 f5 (Δ 7 f6+), and White won.

Korchnoi – Antoshin
USSR ch, Erevan 1954



1 h5!

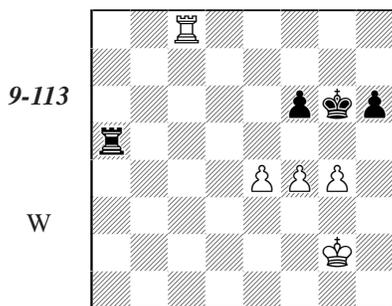
Black, if he was on move, could have considerably simplified his task by placing his own pawn to h5. If 1 g4?!, then all the same 1...h5!.

1...♖a5!

As Korchnoi noted in his exceptionally deep and far-reaching comments to this endgame, it is useful for Black to force the advance g3-g4.

2 g4

2 ♖c8+ ♜h7 3 g4 is not dangerous yet because of 3...g5! 4 hg+ ♜xg6 (Δ 5...h5) 5 f4 f6!.



The last move is worth special attention. *It is vitally important for Black to prevent the pressing advance e4-e5* that leads to the setup from the Capablanca-Yates game. By the way, in that game the white pawn stood on e4 a few moves

before the position of the diagram 9-110 arose, and Yates could have had an easy draw by means of ...f7-f6.

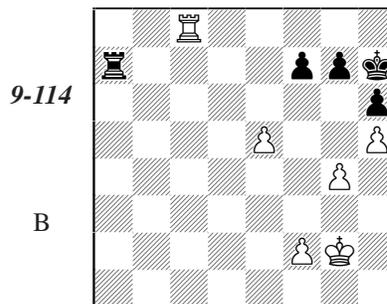
2...♖a7?

Antoshin had to keep in mind the danger of a check along the 8th rank: his king, when standing on h7, is too far removed from a passed e-pawn if White manages to create it. Therefore here, and later on too, he should have played f7-f6!. Black could then parry the threat of transposition into the winning position from the Botvinnik-Najdorf game by means of catching the white pawns from behind. A characteristic variation was demonstrated by Korchnoi: 2...f6! 3 ♖c8+ ♜f7 4 ♖c7+ ♜g8! 5 ♜f3 (5 f4 ♖a3 – White's king is cut off from his pawns) 5...♖a3+ 6 ♜f4 ♖a2 7 ♜f5 ♜h7! (this is why the black king drew back to g8) 8 f4 ♖f2! = as White fails to create the passed e-pawn.

It is time to explain why the move 1...♖a5 was given an exclamation mark. With a pawn on g3, this defensive plan does not work: the f4-pawn is protected, so White can play ♜e6, while Black can hardly prevent the penetration of the white king to f5 (via g4) at an earlier stage.

3 ♖c6?

After 3 ♖c8+! ♜h7 4 e5! (Δ ♜g3, f4, ♖e8+-) Black would have been faced with problems one can hardly tackle over the board.



As Korchnoi showed, almost all defensive methods are doomed to lose: White either creates a dangerous passed e-pawn or transposes to positions from the game Capablanca-Yates. For example, 4...g5? 5 hg+ ♜xg6 6 f4+-, or 4...♖a4?! 5 ♜g3 ♖e4 6 ♖e8 g5 (6...♖a4 7 ♖f8 ♖a7 8 f4+-; 6...f6 7 e6 g5 8 hg+ ♜xg6 9 f3 ♖e1 10 ♜f2 ♖e5 11 f4+-) 7 hg+ ♜xg6 8 f3!+- (8 f4? is not precise, Black holds after 8...h5!). Of course, only basic results are shown here, as a detailed explanation would have been rather complicated

Rook Endgames

and too vast.

4...♖e7! (the only defense) 5 f4 f6! 6 ♖c5 fe 7 fe, and now Black must prevent the white king's march to the center, that would transpose to the Botvinnik-Najdorf ending, by 7...♖f7!. Here Korchnoi gives 8 ♖g3 g6!= and 8 e6 ♖e7 9 ♖c6 g6 10 ♖d6 (Δ 11 ♖d7) 10...♖e8 11 ♖f3 gh 12 gh ♖g7 13 ♖e4 ♖f6 14 ♖d5 ♖e7=.

The prophylactic move 8 ♖d5! is more dangerous for Black. He cannot play 8...g6? on account of 9 e6 ♖f8 (9...♖e7 10 ♖d7) 10 ♖d7+ ♖g8 11 e7 ♖e8 12 ♖d8 ♖f7 13 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 14 g5!+-, and 8...g5? 9 e6 ♖f8 10 e7 ♖e8 11 ♖e5 ♖g7 12 ♖e6+- is also bad. Therefore he must wait: 8...♖f8 9 ♖g3 ♖f1, and if 10 ♖d3, then 10...g5!. But I doubt whether Black can hold this endgame after 10 ♖d7!○ ♖f8 (the same reply follows to 10...♖g8) 11 ♖d3 g5 12 ♖f3 ♖e8 13 ♖f5 followed by 14 ♖f3.

3...♖a3? (3...f6!=) 4 f3?

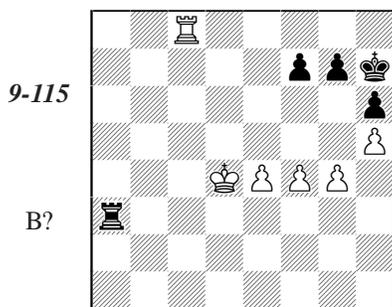
4 ♖c8+! ♖h7 5 e5! was winning.

4...♖a5!? (4...f6!)

Now White can gradually strengthen his position by means of ♖c8-d8, ♖g3-f4 or f3-f4, but, as his pawn cannot come to e5, the game will be drawn if Black defends precisely.

Korchnoi decided to force the events and was successful, but only due to a new mistake by Black.

5 ♖c8+ ♖h7 6 f4?! (Δ 7 e5+-) 6...♖a2+ 7 ♖f3 ♖a3+ 8 ♖f2 ♖a2+ 9 ♖e3 ♖a3+ 10 ♖d4



Black can hold the game rather simply: 10...♖f3! 11 ♖e5 (11 f5 f6=) 11...f6+ 12 ♖f5 ♖f1, achieving the position from the note to Black's move 2.

10...♖g3?

He chases after material gain but lets White create a passed pawn that will cost him a rook.

11 ♖f8! f6 12 e5! ♖xg4

12...fe+ 13 fe ♖xg4+ 14 ♖d5 ♖g1 15 e6 ♖d1+ 16 ♖c6 ♖e1 17 ♖d7 ♖d1+ 18 ♖e8+- is no better.

13 e6 ♖xf4+ 14 ♖d5 ♖f5+ 15 ♖d6 ♖xh5 16 e7 ♖e5 17 e8 ♖x e8 18 ♖xe8

The fight is almost over. When the white king comes back to his home side of the board, the rook will be stronger than 3 pawns.

18...♖g6 19 ♖d5 ♖f5!? 20 ♖e1

20 ♖d4 ♖f4 21 ♖d3 ♖f3 22 ♖g8 g5 23 ♖f8+- is also strong.

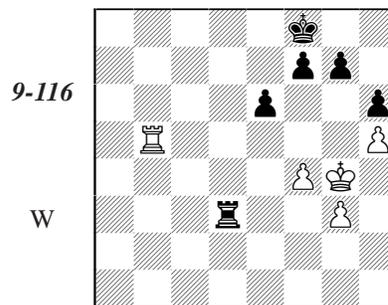
20...h5 21 ♖f1+ ♖g4 22 ♖e4 g5 23 ♖xf6 h4 24 ♖e3 ♖g3 25 ♖e2 g4 26 ♖f1 ♖h2 27 ♖f4 h3 28 ♖xg4 ♖h1 29 ♖f2 h2 30 ♖g3 ♖g1 31 ♖h3+ Black resigned.

Tragicomedies

The two last endings fully fit this category, but I would like to add some new examples, the last of which has some theoretical value.

Bellón – Chekhov

Barcelona 1984

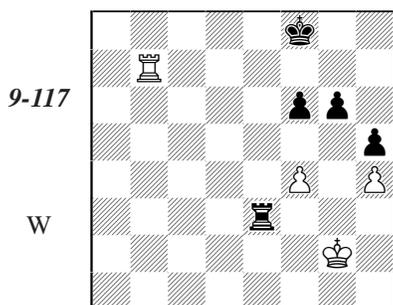


The waiting policy (1 ♖a5 or 1 ♖b7) gave a rather easy draw, but Bellón decided to chase after the g7-pawn.

1 ♖b8+ ♖e7 2 ♖g8?? ♖d8!

White resigned. The pawn endgame is quite hopeless for him, while after 3 ♖xg7 his rook is lost: 3...♖f8 4 ♖h7 ♖g8 5 ♖xh6 ♖g7 6 ♖g5 ♖d5+.

Norri – Svidler
Erevan ol 1996



Here again White did not have enough patience and made an analogous error.

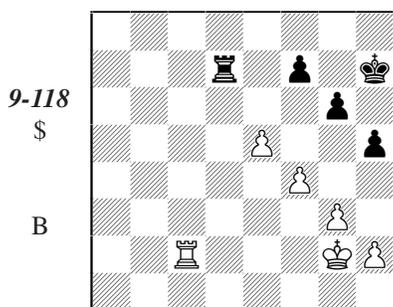
1 f5? (1 $\text{B}a7=$) **1...gf 2 B h7 ♖g8 3 B x h5??**

3 $\text{B}a7$ could still hold the game.

3...B e5 4 ♖f3 f4! White resigned.

Piket – Kasparov

An Internet Tournament, 2000



White succeeded in bringing his pawn to e5 (generally speaking, it would have been favorable for Black if he prevented this by playing ...f7-f6 at an earlier stage). On the other hand, ...h6-h5 is already played, so reaching a draw should not be a very difficult problem.

Kasparov had to decide how to behave in case of the white king's march to g5 via h3 and h4. The simplest method was to play ...♖h6 at a proper moment. For example 1...♖g7 2 ♖h3 B a7 3 ♖h4 ♖h6!, and one cannot see how White could make any progress.

Moreover, a king invasion to g5 is not too dangerous. Even with the white rook on the 7th rank Black can survive. Averbakh analyzes 3...B a6 (instead of 3...♖h6) 4 B c7 B b6 5 B e7 B a6 6 ♖g5 (6 e6 ♖f6! 7 B x f7+ ♖x e6=) 6...B a5! (as Bologan says, even 6...B b6!? 7 e6 B b5+! or 7 f5

gf does not lose) 7 f5 gf 8 e6 (8 ♖x h5 ♖f8 Δ 9...B x e5) 8...f4+! 9 ♖x f4 ♖f6 10 B x f7+ ♖x e6=.

1...B d3?!

In many similar situations, to place the rook behind the e-pawn makes some sense; particularly, such a maneuver is not bad when h-pawns are absent. But here this transfer is erroneous. Its slightly modified version does not work, either: 1...B d4?! 2 ♖h3 B e4? (in case of 2...g5? White does not play 3 fg ♖g6, he has 3 B c7! instead) 3 B c7! (3 ♖h4 ♖h6 Δ 4...g5+) 3...♖g7 4 ♖h4 B e2 5 ♖g5!, and we come to situations that have actually occurred in the game.

2 ♖h3 B e3?

2...B d7 3 ♖h4 ♖h6= was necessary.

3 ♖h4?!

Playing 3 B c7! ♖g7 4 ♖h4, Piket could have chained the hostile rook to the e-file and, as we shall see, this was a winning method.

3...♖g7?

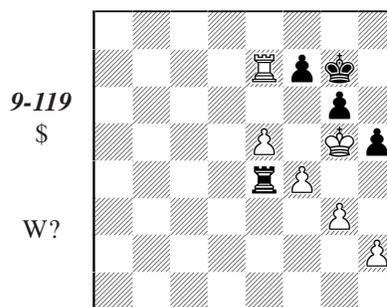
He should have tried 3...♖h6! 4 B c7 B e2!. If 5 ♖h3, then 5...♖g7 (5...g5!? is also playable) 6 B b7 g5! 7 fg ♖g6. The line 5 g4 hg 6 B x f7 B x h2+ 7 ♖x g4 is more dangerous for Black, but after 7...B e2 he seems to be surviving.

4 ♖g5?

An erroneous order of moves, again 4 B c7! B e2 5 ♖g5 is correct. Now Black could return to Averbakh's plan: 4...B a3! 5 B c7 B a5=. However Piket could hardly expect that his opponent would suddenly change his mind and move the rook back.

4...B e1? 5 B c7 B e2 6 B e7! B a2 7 f5! gf 8 e6 h4 9 B x f7+ ♖g8 10 ♖f6 Black resigned.

Let us look at 6...B e4 (instead of 6...B a2).



This position occurred in the following games: Stean-Hartston (Great Britain ch, Brighton 1972), Ionov-Karasev (Leningrad 1983) and Matveeva-Rappoport (Baku 1983). In all these games, White found a forced win.

Rook Endgames

7 e6! ♖×e6 8 ♜×e6 fe 9 h3 ♝f7 10 ♞h6 ♝f6
 11 g4 h4 (11...hg 12 hg ♞+-) 12 g5+ (12 ♞h7?
 g5) 12...♝f5 13 ♝g7 ♝×f4 14 ♝×g6 e5 15
 ♝f6! e4 16 g6 e3 17 g7 e2 18 g8 ♝ e1 ♝ 19
 ♝g4+ ♝e3 20 ♝e6+ ♝f2 21 ♝×e1+ ♝×e1 22
 ♝g5+-

Finally, instead of 5...♞e2 Black could have played 5...♞e4! at once. The point is to meet 6 ♞e7 with 6...♞a4!, and 7 f5, as was played by Piket, is not possible anymore, while if 7 e6, then 7...♞a5+ 8 ♝h4 ♝f6 9 ♝×f7+ ♝×e6=.

White must wait: 6 ♞b7! ♞ ♞a4 (6...♞e2 7 ♞e7! transposes to the actual course of the game), and here Bologan has discovered a brilliant solution: a double pawn sacrifice 7 g4!! hg (7...♞e4 8 gh gh 9 h4 is hopeless) 8 f5! gf 9 e6+-.

A gain of another pawn is much weaker: 7 e6 ♞a5+ 8 ♝h4 ♝f6 9 ef ♝g7 10 ♞e7 ♝f8! 11 ♞e5 ♞a2, or 10 h3 ♝f8 11 g4 hg 12 hg ♞c5 13 f5 ♞c6! (rather than 13...gf? 14 g5+-). It looks like Black holds in both these lines.

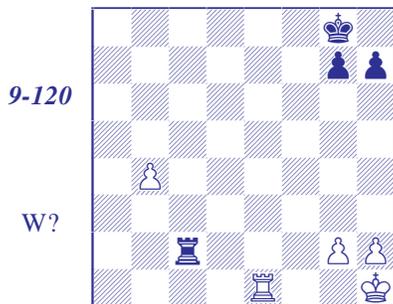
Balance on One Wing and an Extra Pawn on Another

Situations with an extra remote passed pawn occur now and then, therefore it is very important to learn their correct evaluation and handling. *The decisive factor in this sort of endgame is the position of the rook of the stronger side. In majority of cases the rook is placed best “à la Tarrasch,” behind its own passed pawn; sometimes its sideways position is preferable.*

Quite often, however, we lack free choice, so the rook mostly stands in front of the pawn in practical games. Therefore we shall pay more attention to these cases.

The Rook Behind its Own Pawn

Botvinnik – Boleslavsky
 Leningrad/Moscow 1941



1 ♞b1!

The rook has occupied its correct position behind the pawn. After 1 h3? ♞b2! 2 ♞e4 Black could have achieved a draw.

1...♝f7?

The passed pawn should be blocked as soon as possible. Black had to play 1...♞c6! 2 b5 ♞b6. I do not think this was enough for a draw but, anyway, his opponent would have then been

faced with more complicated problems. After a king's march to the queenside Black removes his rook from b6 either for protecting his own pawns or for attacking the hostile ones.

2 b5 ♝e6 3 b6 ♞c8 4 h3

4 b7? ♞b8 is erroneous because it allows Black to eliminate the b-pawn and thereafter to bring his king back to the kingside in time. For example, 5 ♝g1 ♝d6 6 ♝f2 ♝c6 7 ♝e3 ♞×b7 8 ♞×b7 ♝×b7 9 ♝e4 ♝c6 10 ♝e5 ♝d7=.

4...♞b8 5 ♝h2 ♝d5

If the black king stays with his pawns, his adversary heads to the b-pawn. Black cannot prevent this by means of the opposition because White can make a waiting rook move; Black will then be obliged to give way to the white king because his rook has no waiting moves. This clearly demonstrates the difference between the rook positions.

6 ♝g3 ♝c6 7 ♝g4 ♝b7

A capture on b6 is impossible now; therefore *Black blocks the pawn with his king, releasing the rook from this duty.* A standard and often quite useful method; but alas, it does not bring any relief to Black in this particular case.

8 ♞e1!

Excellently played! While the rook was pinning the black rook down it was superbly placed on b1, but now it will be more active when placed sideways. In case of 8...♝×b6 9 ♞b1+ Black loses the pawn endgame.

8...♞g8 9 ♞e6 ♝a6 10 ♝g5 ♝b7 11 h4

The rest is simple. White attacks on the kingside, having an extra piece there.

11...♝a6 12 h5 ♝b7 13 g4 ♝a6 14 ♝h4 ♝b7 15 h6 gh 16 ♞×h6 ♞g7 17 ♝h5

(Δ g5, ♞e6, ♝h6+-) 17...♝a6 18 ♞c6 ♞e7 19 ♞c7 ♞e5+ 20 g5 ♝×b6 21 ♞×h7 ♝c6 22