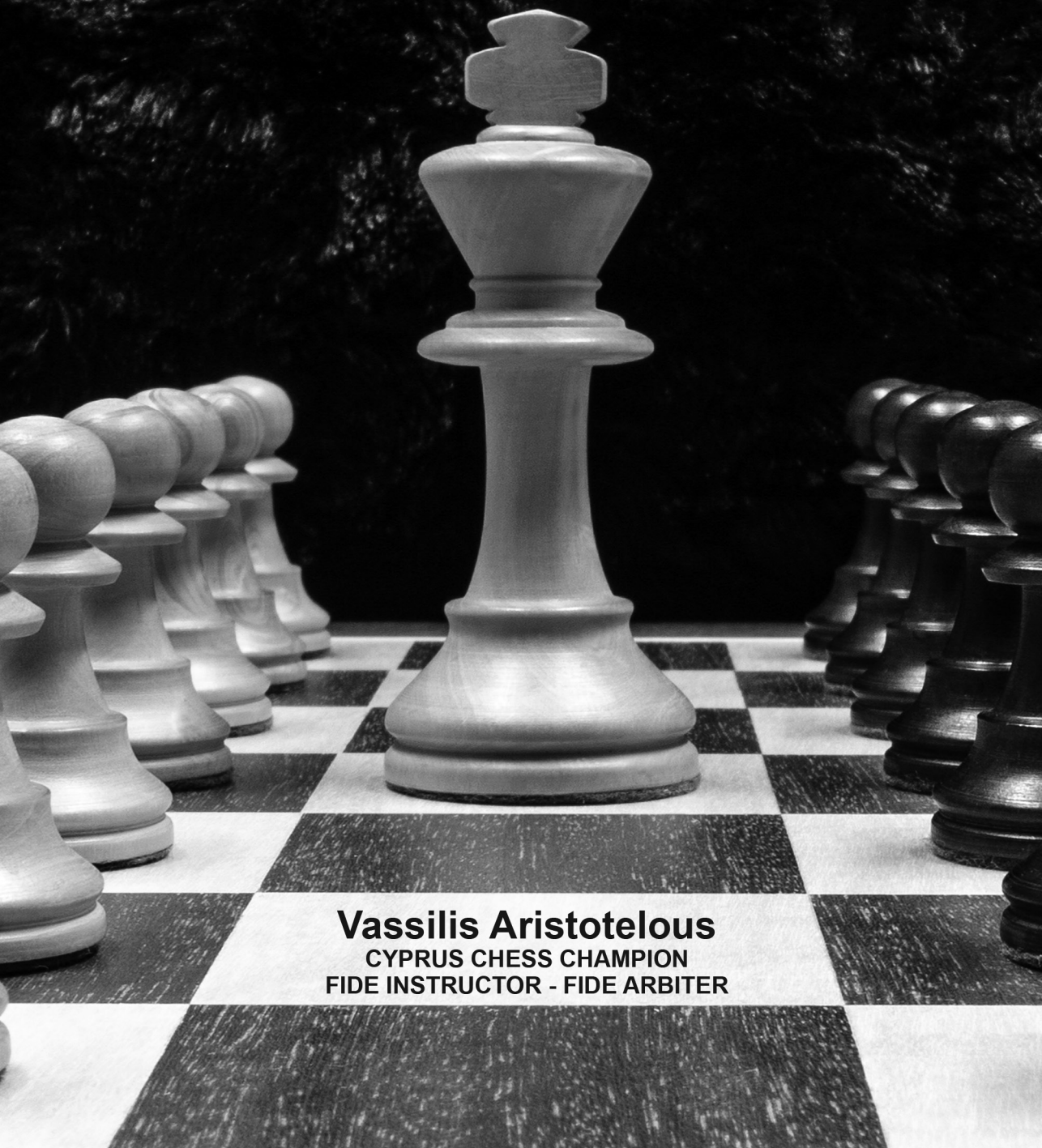


KING & PAWN ENDGAME

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNIQUES



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FIDE INSTRUCTOR - FIDE ARBITER

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PREFACE

I have always been asked about endgames. Once people realize the importance of the endgames and how critical they can be in their games, they start asking for them. So the idea to do a book about endgames was always there waiting for the right opportunity to pop up and get materialized.

The endgame theory is concrete, fixed material to be learned, contrary to the opening theory which is always evolving and changing and one needs to keep updated constantly. But students need to learn endgame once and for all and then, they will be able to enjoy their knowledge, collecting the fruits of their labour every time they play. That's the beauty about the endgame!

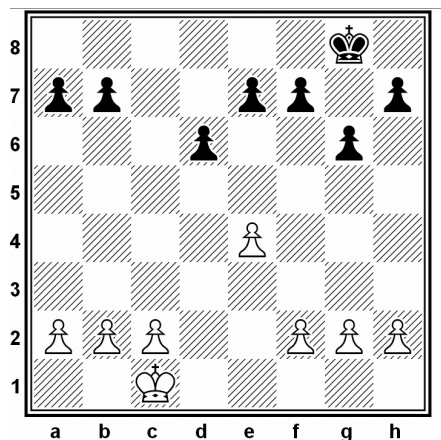
Plenty of material for endgames available, so I decided for now, to concentrate on specific endings, like the most basic but also the most popular one, King and pawn endgames. And this book is the product of my efforts!

Endgame tactics with opposition, triangulation, trebuchet and zugzwang are well presented here in every detail and with lots of examples. The making of a passed pawn and techniques for promotion are also extensively covered. The power of the outside passed pawn, the connected passed pawn, the protected passed pawn are all thoroughly presented.

I tried to present a review on all endgames, the different types of endings which might occur in practice, endings with pieces and pawns, just pieces with no pawns, just pawns with no pieces and then all the combinations: Rook and pawn (Lucena and Philidor's Positions), Bishop and pawn, Knight and pawn, Queen and pawn, Rook with pawns against Bishop and pawns, etc, quite a long list of all the different combinations of endings. Most of these cases are presented here briefly with an example, but the King and pawn endgame which is the subject of this book is thoroughly expanded and completely analysed with many examples. For the examples, I used memorable games played by the great Grandmasters and here I grabbed the opportunity to present these great chess players, a short biographical note with a picture, a classical chess game and some of their characteristic quotes. Alekhine Alexander, Mikhail Tal, Aron Nimzowitsch, William Steinitz, Mikhail Botvinnik, Jose Raul Capablanca, Savielly Tartakower, Luis Ramirez de Lucena, Andre Danican Philidor, Siegbert Tarrasch, Emanuel Lasker, Domenico Lorenzo Ponziani, Johann Nepomuk Berger, Rudolf Spielmann, Boris Badai, Akiba Rubinstein, Richard Reti, they are all presented here.

Enjoy your study!

Vassilis Aristotelous
Palodia, Limassol
September 2018



Black's pawn structure is better. Would you blame the opening for that?

a promotion race, you will be able to force yourself to visualize the final position, which is the key to deep calculation.

Pawn structure is something that many players don't pay specific attention to in the opening and middlegame, but it becomes very important in the endgame. A damaged pawn structure in the endgame is like a forest with broken trees.

The problem with a damaged pawn structure is that the pawns are weak and cannot defend each other. Instead of being a strong force, they become vulnerable, needing constant help from the pieces and are practically targets waiting to be hit and captured.

Without good endgame understanding you wouldn't know when you should exchange pieces and transpose to an endgame.

By having an endgame knowledge, and understanding what positions are holdable, won or lost, you will be able

to take correct decisions more often, leading to more winning games.

By having a deeper endgame understanding and a better technique you would be able to exchange the pieces and pawns correctly and save otherwise lost endgames. There are many situations in all types of endings, especially in the Rook endings or opposite-colour Bishops, when a player with two pawns down but with correct play is able to save the game.

By studying different pawn structures, the importance of the centre, strong and weak squares, and the difference between pawns located on different files you will be able to understand both openings and middlegames better. For example you will learn why certain openings lead to more favourable middlegame positions, which in turn transpose into winning endgames. You would know when you should battle it out in the middlegame or cooling the fight off, driving the game to a favourable endgame.

By knowing how to win typical endgames you will be able to plan your game starting from the opening, to lead you for the favourable middlegame and endgame position.

After you learn how to handle typical endgame positions, such as King and Pawn and Rook Endgames you will feel much more comfortable exchanging off and getting an easy endgame win, instead of taking unnecessary risks.

By having endgame knowledge and most importantly the skill to play these endgames, you will be able to outplay

Nimzovich once said that a passed pawn has a “lust to expand”. An outside passed pawn is particularly deadly, because it can be used as a decoy and while the defending King is preventing it from queening, the attacking King wins the pawns on the other side.

Unlike most positions, King and pawn endgames can usually be analyzed to a definite conclusion, given enough skill and time. An error in a King and pawn endgame almost always turns a win into a draw or a draw into a loss – there is little chance for recovery. Accuracy is most important in these endgames. There are three fundamental ideas in these endgames: opposition, triangulation, and the Réti manoeuvre.

Opposition

Opposition is an important technique that is used to gain an advantage. When two Kings are in opposition, they are on the same file (or rank) with an empty square separating them. The player having the move loses the opposition. He must move his King and allow the opponent’s King to advance.

Endgame tactics

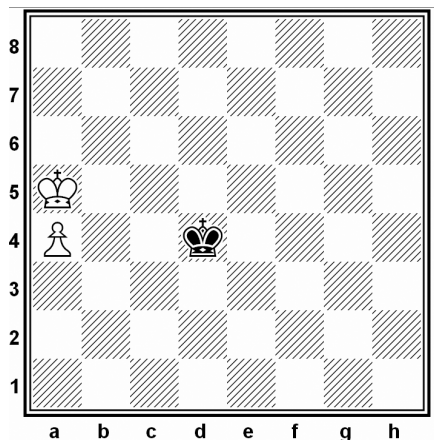
The tactics of triangulation and zugzwang as well as the theory of corresponding squares are often decisive.

King and pawn versus King

This is one of the most basic endgames. A draw results if the defending King can reach the square in front of the pawn or

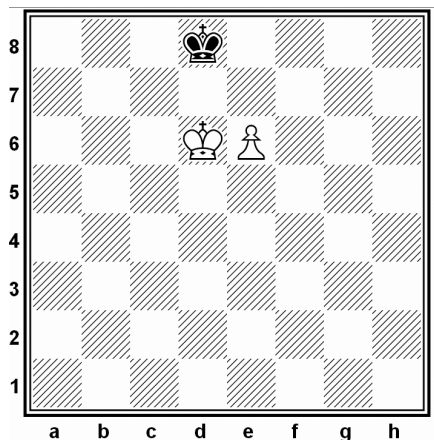
of course capture the pawn. If the attacking King can prevent that, the King will assist the pawn in being promoted, and checkmate can be achieved.

The attacking King is a great shepherd!



In the diagram above, White to move wins with 1.Kb6. Black to move draws with 1...Kc5.

In the diagram below, Black to play loses after 1...Ke8 2.e7 Kf7 3.Kd7 and queens. If it had been White’s turn then it would have been a draw.



forward, occupying the squares c5, d5. Note that if our King went to the alternative c5 square then we would be moving our Bishops to the e5, f5 squares.

9...Kd6 10.Kf6

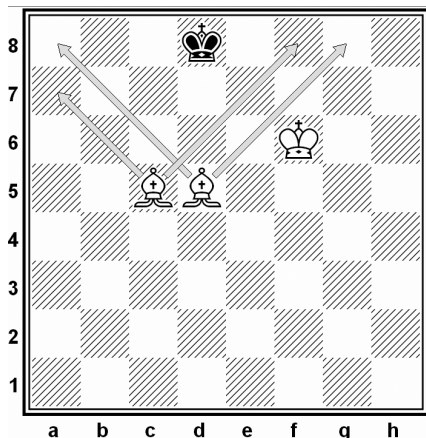
Again doing a waiting move and when the black King goes away then we would place our Bishops to the desired squares.

10...Kd7 11.Bc5

This is the right Bishop to move first, keeping the black King away. And not 11.Bd5? Kd6 as we don't want this to happen, the black King attacking our Bishop.

11...Kd8 12.Bd5

We shift our Bishops up by one rank and now we restrain the black King to only 6 squares.



12...Kd7

Now following a similar procedure as before, we need to put our King to either b6 or e6. And if our King is on b6 then we would be shifting our Bishops to d6,

e6, while if our King is on e6 we will be shifting our Bishops to b6, c6.

13.Ke5

A waiting move again and when the black King goes away then we move to e6.

13...Ke8 14.Ke6 Kd8

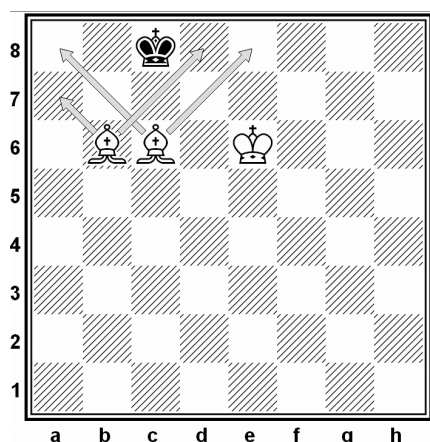
And now, as before, we need to move our Bishops to b6 and c6. And the right Bishop to move first is the dark-squared Bishop as we don't want the black King to attack our Bishops. Not 15.Bc6? Kc7

15.Bb6+

Now the black King has two choices. Either to go right, where we would be checkmating him on the h8 corner square or to go left, where we would be checkmating him on the a8 corner square.

15...Kc8 16.Bc6

And again by moving our Bishops one rank up we confine the enemy King even further, just two squares now.



Now we need to move our King to the a6 square.

The same technique again to drive back the enemy King.

6...Ke6 7.Kc4 Kd6

The black King knows that the dark corner will be his grave so he is trying to find refuge on the white corner. He would be trying hard to stay away from the dark corner but we will ultimately force him to go there.

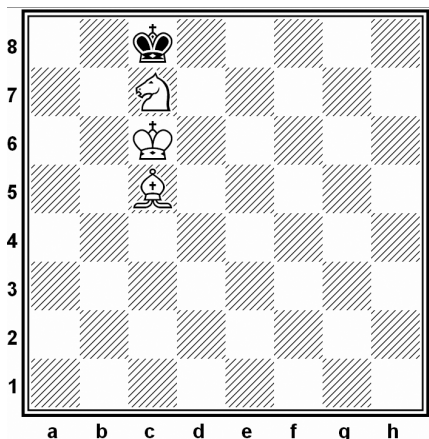
8.Nf5+ Ke6 9.Ne3

And again the Knight and Bishop create a cage for the black King from which he cannot get out.

9...Kd6 10.Kb5 Kc7 11.Kc5 Kb7

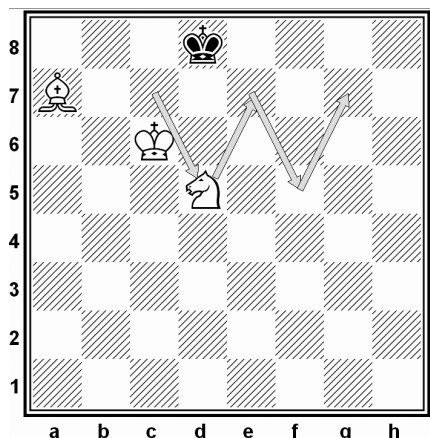
If 11...Kd7 12.Be5 Ke6 13.Kd4 Kd7 14.Kd5 Ke7 15.Ng2 Kf7 16.Nf4 and with the Knight manoeuvre the cage of the black King is getting smaller and smaller 16...Ke7 17.Kc6 Kd8 18.Nd5 Ke8 19.Kd6 Kf7 20.Ne7 Ke8 21.Ke6 and now having the black King on the edge of the board, the next thing to do is to drive him to the dark corner to checkmate him.

12.Nd5 Ka7 13.Kc6+ Kb8 14.Nc7 Kc8 15.Ba7



15.Bc5 this is the typical starting position from where we drive the black King to the correct corner to checkmate him. A very simple technique but you need to know how it is done. It's called "the w manoeuvre" which refers to the Knight performing a manoeuvre in the shape of a "w".

15...Kd8 16.Nd5



And the Knight starts its manoeuvre.

16...Ke8 17.Kd6 Kf7

This is a critical moment in the whole procedure, it seems for a moment that the black King will escape but he will not.

If 17...Kd8 18.Ne7 Ke8 19.Ke6 Kd8 20.Bb6+ reaching the same position as our mainline.

18.Ne7

The Knight continues its "w" manoeuvre.

18...Kf6

If 18...Kg7 don't let the black King out of the cage, bring the Bishop to cover the escaping square 19.Be3 Kf6

Mikhail Botvinnik



Mikhail Botvinnik (1911-1995) was a Soviet and Russian International Grandmaster and World Chess Champion (1948-1963). Working as an electrical engineer and computer scientist at the same time, he was one of the very few professional chess players who achieved distinction in another career while playing top-class competitive chess. He was also a pioneer of computer chess.

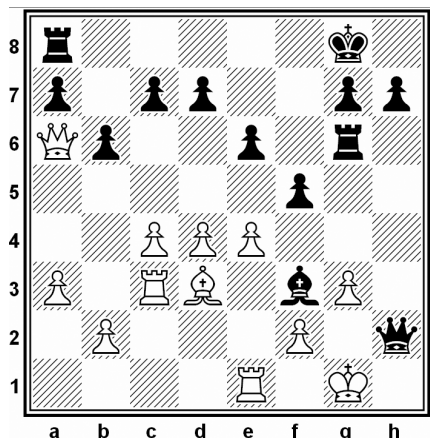
Botvinnik also played a major role in the organization of chess, making a significant contribution to the design of the World Chess Championship system after World War II and becoming a leading member of the coaching system that enabled the Soviet Union to dominate top-class chess during that time. His famous pupils include World Champions Anatoly Karpov, Garry Kasparov and Vladimir Kramnik.

G. Abramovic

Mikhail Botvinnik (13 years old)

Soviet Union, 1924

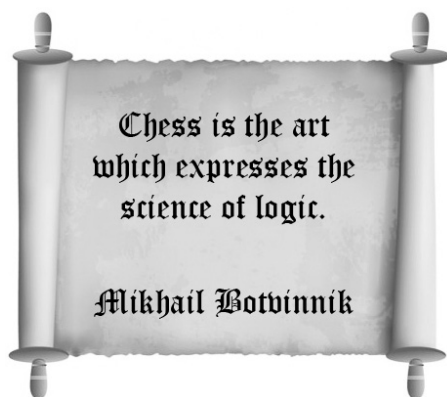
1.d4 f5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.Nc3 b6 5.Bg5 Be7 6.e3 Bb7 7.Bd3 O-O 8.O-O Ne4 9.Bxe7 Qxe7 10.Rc1 Na6 11.a3 Rf6 12.Qa4 Nxc3 13.Rxc3 Bxf3 14.Qxa6 Rg6 15.g3 Qg5 16.Re1 Qh5 17.e4 Qxh2+



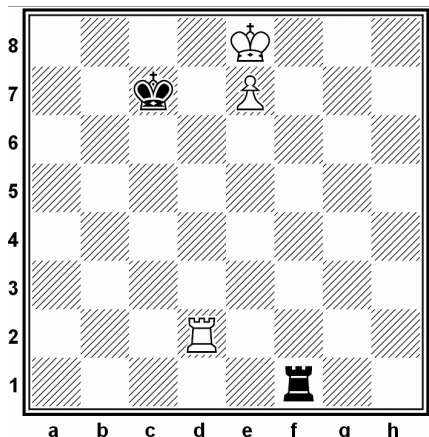
White resigned.

0-1

White cannot escape the checkmate:
18.Kxh2 (18.Kf1 Qh1#) 18...Rh6+
19.Kg1 Rh1#



Lucena Position



1.Rd4!

Setting up the bridge. Rook goes two rows away separated from the pawn.

1...Rf2

If 1...Rh1 2.Rc4+ Kb7 (2...Kd6 3.Kd8 and White is winning) 3.Kd7 Rd1+ 4.Ke6 Re1+ 5.Kd6 Rd1+ 6.Ke5 Re1+ 7.Re4 Rxe4+ 8.Kxe4 and White is winning.

If 1...Rc1 2.Rf4 and White is winning.

2.Rc4+ Kb7

If 2...Kd6 3.Kd8 and nothing can stop the pawn from queening, White wins.

3.Kd7 Rd2+ 4.Ke6 Re2+ 5.Kd6 Rd2+

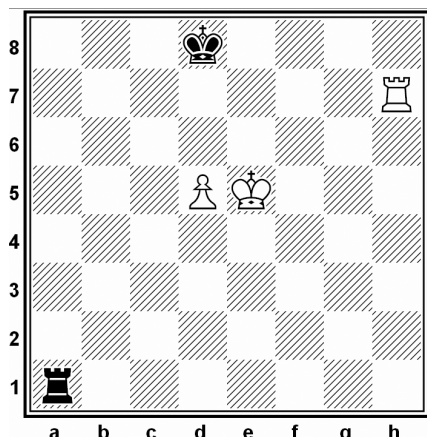
If 5...Re1 6.Rc5! shifting the bridge.

6.Ke5 Re2+ 7.Re4 Rxe4+ 8.Kxe4

and White is winning

1-0

Philidor's Position



1...Ra6!

Rook goes to the sixth row and stays there till the pawn advances, then goes from behind giving endless checks. Basically this is the best position for the defender, the King in front of the pawn and the Rook on the sixth.

2.Rg7 Rb6 3.Ra7 Rh6 4.Rb7 Ra6 5.Rh7 Rb6 6.d6 Rb1! 7.Ke6

If 7.Rh4 Re1+ 8.Re4 Rxe4+ 9.Kxe4 Kd7 10.Kd5 Kd8! 11.Ke6 Ke8! 12.d7+ Kd8 13.Kd6 draw.

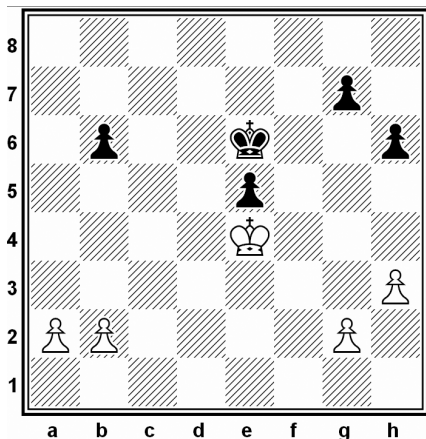
7...Re1+ 8.Kd5 Rd1+ 9.Kc5 Rc1+ 10.Kb6 Rb1+ 11.Ka6 Rd1

Draw.

1/2 - 1/2

The side with the pawn tries to reach the Lucena position to win, while the other side tries to reach the Philidor position to draw.

Creating an outside passed pawn



White to play

Creating an outside passed pawn is a winning element, but correct and careful play is always needed. Easily one could from the winning side end up in the losing one!

1.a4!

The correct pawn to push forward, the one which extends out of the pawn chain and shouts “I’m extra!” If the wrong pawn is pushed, White loses!

1.b4?? b5! now one black pawn controls two white’s 2.a3 Kd6 3.g3 Ke6 4.g4 g5 5.Ke3 Kd5 6.Kd3 e4+ 7.Ke3 Ke5 8.Ke2 Kd4 9.Kd2 e3+ 10.Ke2 Ke4 11.Ke1 Kd3 12.Kd1 e2+ 13.Ke1 Ke3 putting White in zugzwang 14.a4 bxa4 15.b5 a3 16.b6 a2 17.b7 and now amazingly any piece Black promotes checkmates! a1Q# (17...a1B 18.b8Q Bc3#) (17...a1N 18.b8Q Nc2#) (17...a1R#).

1...g6

If 1...Kd6 2.b4 Ke6 3.a5 bxa5 4.bxa5 and an outside passed pawn is born! 4...

Kd6 5.a6 luring the black King away 5...Kc6 6.Kxe5 White wins.

2.b4 g5 3.a5 bxa5 4.bxa5

And an outside passed pawn is born!

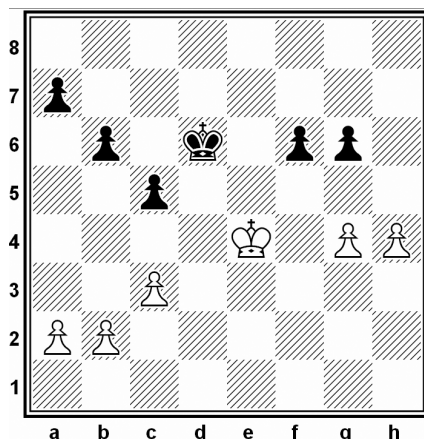
4...Kd6 5.a6

Luring the black King away.

5...Kc6 6.Kxe5

And the white King will collect all the black pawns, White wins. **1-0**

Another exercise for creating an outside passed pawn and winning, try it!



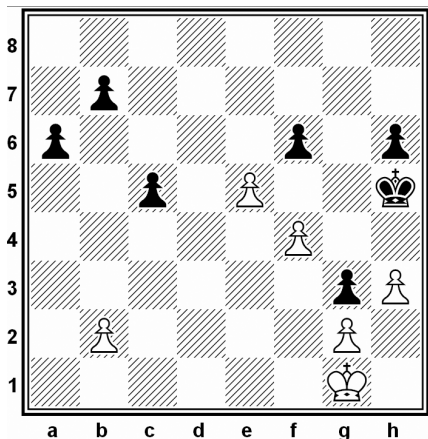
1.h5 gxh5 2.gxh5 Ke6 3.h6 f5+ 4.Kf4 Kf6 5.h7 Kg7 6.Kxf5 Kxh7 7.Ke6 Kg6 8.Kd5 Kf6 9.Kc6 Ke6 10.c4 Ke5 11.Kb7 Kd4

If 11...Kd6 12.Kxa7 Kc7 13.a4 Kc6 14.a5 bxa5 15.b3 Kc7 16.Ka6 Kc6 17.Kxa5 Kd6 18.Kb6 Ke5 19.Kxc5 White wins.

12.Kxa7 Kxc4 13.Kxb6 Kb4 14.a3+ Ka4 15.Kxc5 Kb3 16.a4 Kxa4 17.b4 Ka3 18.b5 White wins.

1-0

The Pawn Square Rule

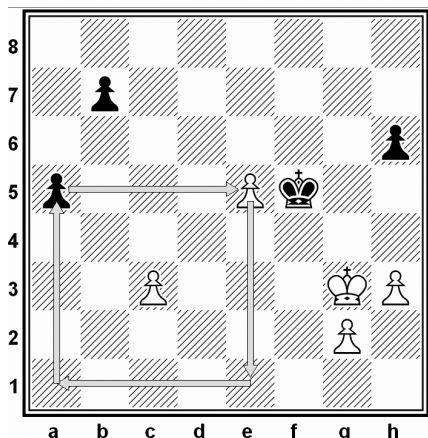


White to play

A beautiful composition by the great **Boris Badai** demonstrating the usefulness of the pawn square rule technique in action. The clever pawn checkmate of course steals the show!

1.f5!

If 1.Kf1 fxe5 2.fxe5 Kg5 3.Ke2 Kf5 4.Kf3 c4! 5.Kxg3 c3! 6.bxc3 a5 and the white King cannot catch the passed pawn, since he's out of the square of the pawn, Black wins.



If 1.e6 Kg6 2.f5+ Kg7 3.Kf1 b5 4.Ke2 a5 5.Kd2 Kf8 6.Ke3 a4 7.Ke4 c4 8.Kd4 Ke7 9.Kc3 (9.Kc5?? c3 10.bxc3 a3 Black wins) 9...h5 10.h4 Kd6 11.Kb4 Ke7 12.Kc3 Kd6 draw.

1...fxe5

If 1...c4 2.e6 Black wins.

2.h4!! c4

If 2...b5 3.Kf1 c4 4.Ke2 b4 5.Kf3 c3 6.Kxg3 cxb2 7.Kh3 b1Q 8.g4#

If 2...Kxh4 3.f6 White wins.

3.Kf1 a5

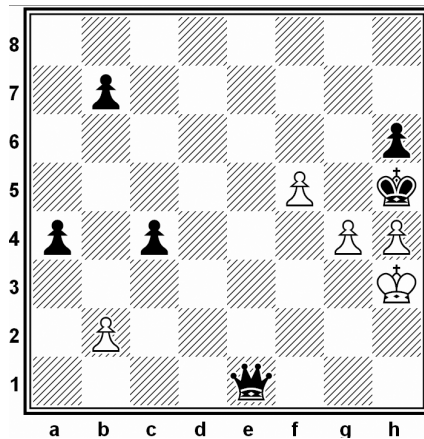
If 3...b5 4.Ke2 b4 5.Kf3 Kxh4 6.f6 c3 7.bxc3 b3 (7...bxc3 8.Ke3! White wins) 8.f7 b2 9.f8Q b1Q 10.Qxh6#

4.Ke2 e4 5.Ke3 a4 6.Kf4!! e3

If 6...c3 7.bxc3 a3 8.Kxg3 a2 9.Kh3 a1Q 10.g4#

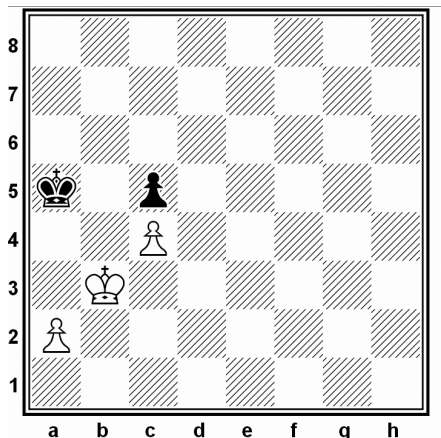
If 6...Kxh4 7.f6 c3 8.bxc3 a3 9.f7 a2 10.f8Q a1Q 11.Qxh6#

7.Kxg3 e2 8.Kh3! e1Q 9.g4#



1-0

Trebuchet



A study demonstrating a few endgame techniques like the opposition, the triangulation, and the trebuchet.

White to play

1.Ka3!

White will perform triangulation to change the turns, to get this same position but with Black to move.

If 1.a3? Kb6 2.Kc3 Ka5 3.Kb3 (3.Kd3 Ka4 4.Ke4 Kxa3 5.Kd3 (5.Kd5? stepping first onto the trebuchet mechanism is always a bad idea 5...Kb4 Black wins) 5...Kb3 6.Kd2 Kxc4 7.Kc2 White saves the game because he has the opposition, draw) 3...Kb6 4.a4 (4.Ka4 Ka6 5.Kb3 Ka5 draw) 4...Ka5 5.Ka3 Ka6 6.Kb3 Ka5 7.Ka3 draw.

If 1.a4? Ka6 2.Kc3 Ka5 3.Kb3 draw.

If 1.Kc3? Ka4 2.Kd3 Kb4 3.a3+ Kxa3 draw.

1...Kb6 2.Kb2 Ka5

If 2...Ka6 3.Kc3 Ka5 4.Kd2 White wins.

3.Kb3! Kb6 4.Kc2 Ka5 5.Kd2!

Heading for the d5-square.

If 5.Kd3?? Kb4 6.a3+ Kxa3 7.Kc3 (7.Ke4 Kb3 8.Kd5? again, White steps first onto the trebuchet mechanism and loses 8...Kb4 Black wins) 7...Ka4 8.Kc2 Kb4 9.Kb2 Kxc4 10.Kc2 White saves the game because he has the opposition, it's a draw.

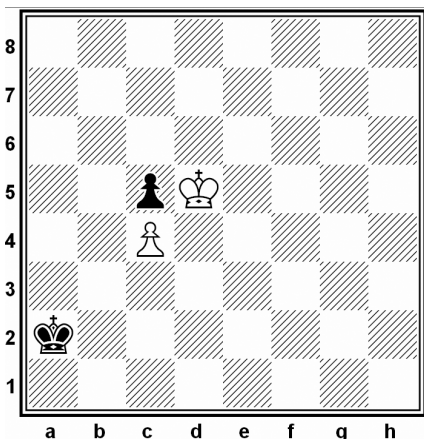
5...Ka4

If 5...Kb4 6.Kd3! Ka3 7.Ke4 Kxa2 8.Kd5 White wins.

6.Ke3! Ka3

If 6...Ka5 7.Ke4 Ka4 8.Kd5 Kb4 9.a4 the extra pawn with its tempo turns the tables, White wins.

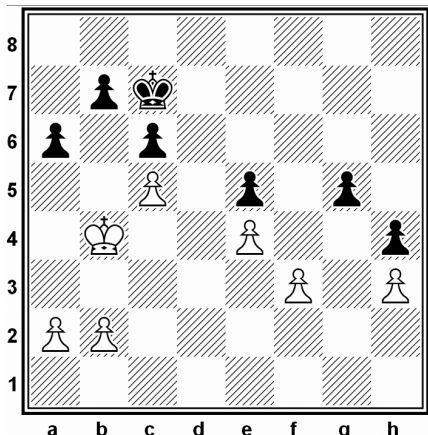
7.Ke4 Kxa2 8.Kd5



White wins.

1-0

Triangulation



White to play

The above position is from the game Kasparov S. (2487) - Ivanov M. (2388), Apokoronas 2016.

Use all the tools necessary to get the job done - opposition, trebuchet, triangulation, zugzwang.

1.Ka5 Kc8

If 1...Kb8 2.Kb6 Kc8 3.b4 Kb8 4.a4 Kc8 5.b5 axb5 6.axb5 cxb5 7.Kxb5 Kc7 8.Kb4 transposes to the main line, White wins.

2.Kb6 Kb8 3.b4

If 3.a3 Kc8! 4.Ka7 Kc7 5.Ka8 Kc8 6.Ka7 Kc7 7.b4 Kc8 8.Kb6 Kb8 9.a4 Kc8 10.b5 axb5 11.axb5 cxb5 12.Kxb5 Kc7 13.Kb4 transposes to the main line, White wins.

3...Kc8 4.a4 Kb8 5.b5 axb5 6.axb5 cxb5 7.Kxb5 Kc7

If 7...Ka7 8.Ka5 Kb8 9.Kb6 Kc8 10. c6 White wins.

8.Kb4!

Synchronized to put Black in zugzwang. It's like the trebuchet, the first one that would step into the mechanism, c4-c6, that one would be blown off!

If 8.Kc4?? Kc6 9.Kb4 b6 10.cxb6 Kxb6 draw.

If 8.Ka5?? Kc6 9.Kb4 b6 10.cxb6 Kxb6 draw.

8...Kd7

If it was Black's turn then the white King could penetrate and win. Let's do then a triangulation to change the turns.

If 8...Kc6? 9.Kc4! Kd7 (9...b6 10.cxb6 Kxb6 11.Kd5 White wins) 10.Kd5 White wins.

If 8...Kc8? 9.Kc4 Kc7 10.Kd5 White wins.

9.Kc3 Kc7 10.Kb3 Kd7

If 10...Kc6? 11.Kc4 White wins.

11.Kb4

Mission accomplished! The same position but with Black to play.

11...Kc7

If 11...Kc6 12.Kc4 White wins.

12.Kb5 Kd7 13.Kb6 Kc8 14.c6 Kb8

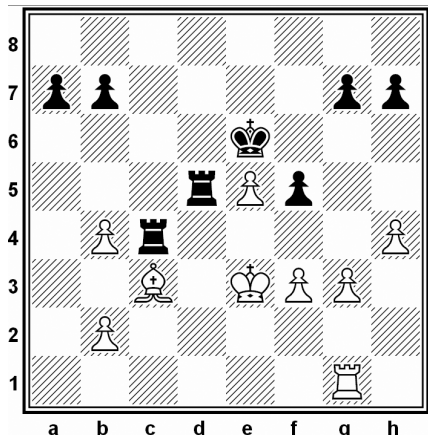
If 14...bxc6 15.Kxc6 and the white King will walk and collect all the black pawns, White wins.

15.Kc5 Kc7 16.cxb7 Kxb7 17.Kd6

White wins.

1-0

Exchanging down



White to play

The position in the diagram above is from the game Lombardy William James against Fischer Robert James, USA championship 1960. The great Fischer has a deep understanding of the position and he knows when to exchange down to a winning King and pawn ending.

30.Re1

Black is the exchange up for a pawn but it's not easy to convert this advantage to a win. White Bishop holds his position well. That's why Black decides to return the exchange and generally exchanging down to a winning King and pawn endgame.

30...Rxc3+! 31.bxc3 Rxe5+ 32.Kd2 Rxe1 33.Kxe1 Kd5

Black can create an outside passed pawn, the a-pawn.

34.Kd2 Kc4 35.h5

If 35.Kc2 h5 fixing the other side, Black wins.

35...b6 36.Kc2 g5 37.h6 f4 38.g4

And the other side is fixed.

38...a5

Now the operation create-a-passed-pawn begins.

39.bxa5 bxa5

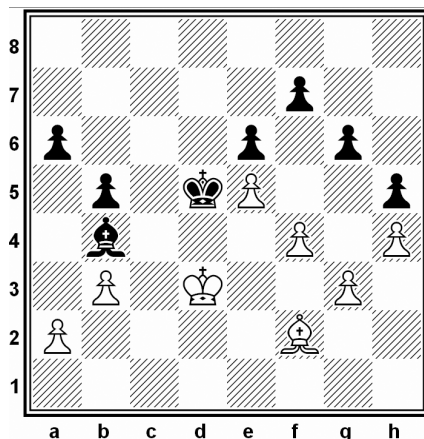
And the outside passed pawn is created.

40.Kb2 a4 41.Ka3 Kxc3 42.Kxa4 Kd4 43.Kb4 Ke3

And the black King will take the f and g pawns and wins.

0-1

Another example of exchanging down to a winning endgame follows:



White to play

The position in the diagram above is from the game Sveshnikov Evgeny(2545) - Kasparov Garry (2545), URS championship 1979. Kasparov exchanges down to a winning King and pawn endgame.