

VAN PERLO'S
ENDGAME
TACTICS

A Comprehensive Guide to the Sunny Side of Chess Endgames

NEW, IMPROVED AND EXPANDED EDITION

2014

Foreword by the author

'Endgame Tactics' is the result of approximately 30 years of collecting, analysing and categorizing. It has grown into a collection of endgames that have a particular charm for me on account of their special character. I have cast them into a framework and little by little, a course of instruction developed, treating many varieties of tactical possibilities that occur in endgame practice. I have drawn on every source I could find. Original analyses I have often rewritten or placed in a different context. I have used the original manuscript for a series on the endgame in the Dutch correspondence chess magazine *Schaakschakering*. Relevant reactions by readers I have later incorporated in this book.

Many players consider the study of the endgame a necessary evil. Resignedly, they plough their way through one or more standard works, restricting themselves to basic positions or, on the contrary, a few exceptionally ingenious studies. Most of them do not find it very exciting.

Actually this is a pity, for in the endgame, too, there is a lot to be enjoyed and a thorough study of a great number of practical fragments has taught me that even this phase of the chess struggle can produce many different types of drama. Clever tactical tricks, gruesome blunders and other tragicomic scenes, it's all possible. When after many hours of toil the end of the game is nigh, it is a difficult task for many to keep a clear head, to control their nerves and to make optimal use of the opportunities that present themselves.

Especially a well-developed feeling for the multitude of tactical possibilities contained in the endgame often signifies the difference between a full point and an annoying zero!

Of course, an investigation like this can always be continued, supplied and extended with new and previously undiscovered older material. I don't know if I will be able to do this, or if others will take over. But it is clear to me that it is important that the entire field of tactical possibilities is charted and will be in the future.

I owe many thanks to the New In Chess staff, who have cooperated with me, screened my work scrupulously and moulded it into a form which suited my purposes perfectly.

I sincerely hope that the reader will derive as much pleasure from studying the presented material as I have derived from writing it.

G.C. van Perlo

Preface to the new, improved and expanded edition

For this new edition of Van Perlo's Endgame Tactics we have prepared a special surprise for you: an extra part with almost 300 fresh examples!

In 1998, after Wim Andriessen had started working on the first edition of this legendary tome, Ger van Perlo sent him another 100-page manuscript which had not yet been published in Dutch. It consisted of some fantastic new material in rook endgames, organized in the same structure as Part III in Endgame Tactics, which corresponds with booklets 2 and 3 of the version that had been published in Dutch in the 1990s. The Dutch correspondence chess grandmaster and chess author suffered a stroke shortly afterwards and passed away in 2010.

At the time it was decided not to include this new part into the compilation, for various practical reasons. First we wanted to see if there was a market for this work at all. Well, as you may know, worldwide the reactions exceeded all expectations. So now that the time came for a fourth edition, six years after the third, we decided to take another plunge and add Van Perlo's 'secret book' to the manuscript, expanding it to a whopping 600-odd pages.

We could have added this material to the chapters in Part III, but decided against this as Van Perlo had written it as an independent new book in Dutch, and in order to keep the work 'pure Van Perlo' we thought it better to present it as a separate part in the back of this book. As a new feature, the Dutchman had added a series of exercises for the reader to test himself with. You'll find all this in Part V from page 465 in this edition!

Also in this new part you will find a fresh number of exciting endgame struggles, brilliancies and tragic mistakes, all celebrated by Van Perlo in his contagiously humoristic style. This part has also been scrutinized by my colleague René Olthof with the help of Houdini 1.5 and the tablebases. And, infected by Van Perlo's enthusiasm, we couldn't help but make an addition here and there. For example, when I saw position 1294 (Smyslov-Flohr), I was immediately reminded of the very recent fragment Peng-Burg, played in Groningen last year.

And then of course there were still enthusiastic readers from all over the world who kept writing through the years, enriching and refining the already published material. With the help of Steve Murdoch we were able to refine the analysis of fragment 127 (Zhilin-Chernov), and both Eckhard Hoffman and David Hotham pointed out to us that in Smirin-Polovodin we had given a wrong line. Karsten Müller told us that Grünfeld may not actually have resigned in fragment 5, against Colle, and Hans Ree told us how his victory over Polugaevsky actually went (diagram 439).

And so we're getting ever closer to the truth, although, like Achilles in the race with the Tortoise in Zeno's paradox, we will never quite catch up with it!

Many thanks to all these contributors to this wonderful project, which will undoubtedly remain alive for years to come.

Peter Boel
New In Chess
March 2014

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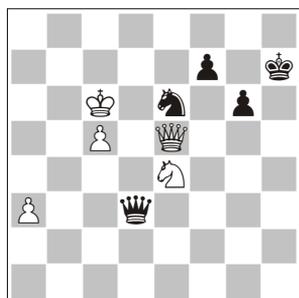
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C) Queen + Knight versus Queen + Knight

After playing around with the niceties that we may come across in endgames with queens and bishops, we move on to a highly fanciful subject, a type of endgame of which some are scared to death.

We start with a trick that we may justifiably call the dream of every chess player. In certain positions the queen can be sacrificed with a terrific blow, to be regained by a knight fork, with a transfer to a winning endgame or a rescue from a hairy predicament, or simply with the infliction of severe psychological injury upon the enemy!



129

Our first example is Ljubojevic-Karpov, Linares 1991. White served the organizers of this tournament – always keen on a spectacle – quite well:

1. ♖f6+ ♜h6?

There is no lethal discovered check after 1...♔g7!

2. ♞e3+!

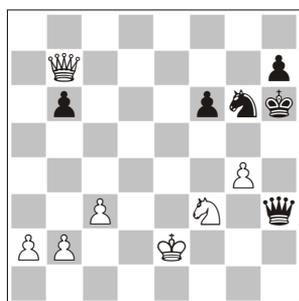
There it is. Black lands in a lost endgame, as soon becomes clear.

2... ♞xe3 3. ♘g4+ ♜g5 4. ♘xe3 ♜f4

and now, very sadistically,

5. a4!

and White won with his unstoppable a-pawn.

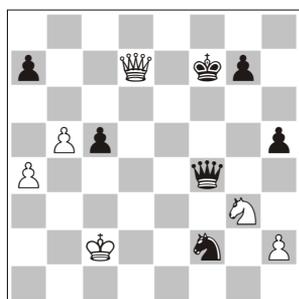


130

Diagram 130 stems from Maroczy-Rubinstein, Prague 1908. At first sight things do not look good for White, as 1. ♞xb6? fails miserably to 1...♘f4+. But Maroczy, who knew a thing or two about the game, thought of something better – you probably see it already.

1. g5+! fxg5 2. ♞xh7+!

and Black resigned. The resulting knight endgame offers him no chance at all.



131

This position is from Timman-Kosashvili, Curaçao 2002. After a move like 1...♔f8 there is not much going on. However, the second player, though certainly tactically gifted, produced the unbelievable

1... ♔g6?

We jump up enthusiastically with Timman and unleash

2. ♞xg7+! ♜xg7 3. ♘h5+ ♜f7 4. ♘xf4

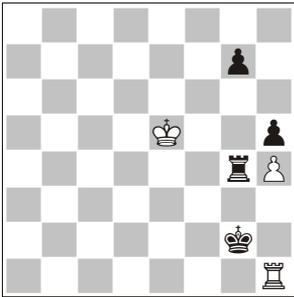
Probably too upset to resign immediately, Kosashvili played on for a few more moves, deprived of his leading position in the tournament and also of another illusion.

Chapter 3

Pure Rook Endgames with Extra Pawn(s)

We will now examine rook endgames in which one side has one or several extra pawns and investigate how much this increases the tactical possibilities. In the previous chapter, we have already paid attention to the ‘simple’ rook plus one or several pawns versus bare rook and that is why we now start with:

A) Rook + 2 Pawns versus Rook + 1 Pawn



□

367

As an intro, a cunning trap set by White in the game Rozenfeld-Nei, Estonia 1955.

1. ♖a1

Nei fell for it:

1... ♜xh4?

He should not have done that, as with a little more patience he would have won quickly, by playing first 1... ♔g3 and only then 2... ♜xh4, for instance 1... ♔g3 2. ♖h1 ♜xh4 3. ♖g1+ ♔f3 4. ♜xg7 ♜e4+ 5. ♔f5 ♜f4+ 6. ♔e5 h4.

2. ♜a2+! ♔g3 3. ♜a3+ ♔g4

and here it comes – watch out:

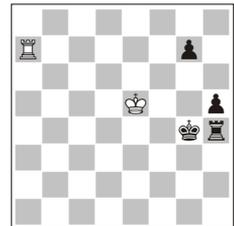
4. ♜a7!

with the nasty point that 4...g6 or 4...g5 is met by 5. ♔f6!.

There followed

**4... ♔f3 5. ♜a3+! ♔g4 6. ♜a7 ♜h1
7. ♜xg7+**

and Black settled for the draw.



4. ♜a7!

Chapter 5

The Exchange – Rook versus Minor Piece

One of the most interesting elements of the chess game is the exchange sacrifice in the middlegame. In the endgame, too, things get no less lively if one side has an exchange less, whether or not compensated for by pawns or other sorts of counterchances.

As these counterchances are often based on tactical elements, it will be clear that there is a lot of material for us in this area!

To retain some consistency in my arguments, it seems advisable to make a clear division of the material. It seems feasible to do so as follows:

- A) Rook versus Bishop
- B) Rook versus Knight
- C) Two Rooks versus Rook plus Bishop
- D) Two Rooks versus Rook plus Knight
- E) Rook + Minor Piece versus two Minor Pieces

A) Rook versus Bishop

I must prepare you for the fact that we are not at all dealing with simple material here. There are precious few general rules that can be formulated. Sometimes the exchange is more than compensated for by one pawn, sometimes not even two or three pawns are sufficient compensation.

And in the case of strongly reduced material, for instance in endgames of rook + 1 pawn versus bishop + 1 pawn, the win can be quite difficult, as was shown, for instance, in the famous endgame Timman-Velimirovic, Rio de Janeiro 1979, which, by the way, lies outside the scope of this book. For this endgame we must refer you to theoretical works, where it has been discussed exhaustively.

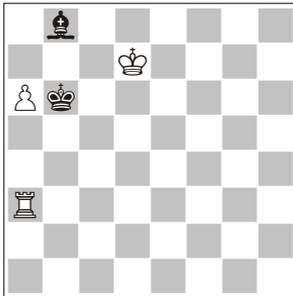
It is possible to claim in general that the outcome of this type of endgame is mainly determined by many combinations of details in the position and out of those many details, we will select the tactical aspects to examine in the following. Here also, for the sake of clarity and transparency, it seems desirable to make a further division. We have chosen:

- A1) Positions where the rook side dominates;
- A2) Positions where the bishop side dominates;
- A3) Balanced positions.

With the help of the above, we hope to develop some feeling as to how positions should be assessed in which one side or the other has tactical chances, and to increase our tactical skills in practice.

A1) The Rook side dominates

Firstly, we will discuss a few examples where the rook side has an extra pawn, but with reduced material.

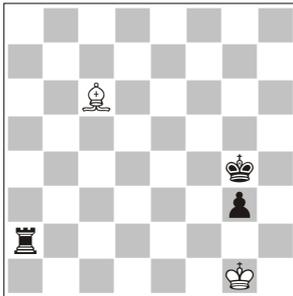


614

The first of this small series is Larsen-Miles, Portoroz 1979. You should study this position well, as White has a sinister little joke at his disposal that is worth keeping in mind. Do you see it?

1.a7!

and there was nothing left for Miles but to resign, as 1...♙xa7 is obviously met by 2.♖c8 and the bishop is lost.



615

There was another complete surprise for the white player in Baratz-Tartakower, Paris 1933:

1...g2!

in order to answer 2.♙xg2 with 2...♖g3 (3.♙f1 ♖a1). White did not give up all hope yet and tried to elude his fate, but in vain.

2.♖h2 ♖f2! 3.♙d7+

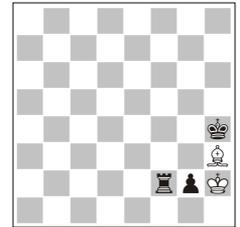
Or 3.♙b7 g1 ♖+! 4.♖xg1 ♖g3.

3...♖h4 4.♙h3

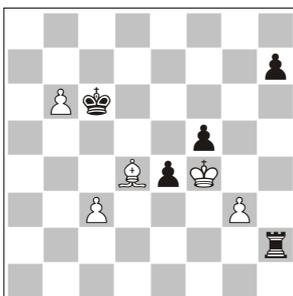
and now it is possible:

4...g1 ♖+! 5.♖xg1 ♖g3

White resigned.



4...g1 ♖+



616

From the classics, we can learn a different possibility to convert surplus material. We move back in time towards a game Bird-Janowski, played in Hastings 1895, though not in the famous tournament.

1...♖d2!

Coming straight to the point: a favourable liquidation by returning the exchange.

2.g4

2.♖xf5 is also met by 2...♖xd4 and if White tries to avoid this by 2.♙e3, then 2...♖d3 leaves him without any chance.

2...♖xd4 3.cxd4 e3!

Pay attention! Not 3...fxg4 4.♖xg4 and White escapes.

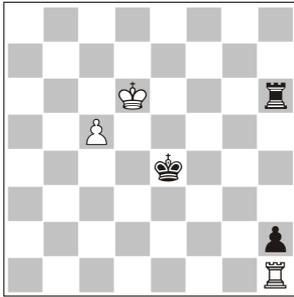
4.♖xe3 fxg4 5.♖f4 h5 6.d5+ ♖xb6 7.♖e5 ♖c7

White resigned.

C) Rook Endgames with equal number of Pawns

C1) Rook + Pawn versus Rook + Pawn

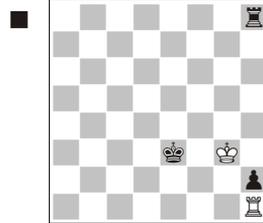
We cannot expect great fireworks here, but nevertheless I have found a few remarkable examples.



1129

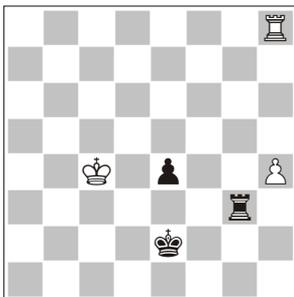
Diagram 1129, from Neishtadt-Volkevich, Moscow 1958, should certainly be regarded as such. White stands appallingly. He tries to save himself with a long king march towards the pawn on h2.

**1.♔e7 ♕d5 2.♔f7 ♕xc5 3.♔g7 ♖h3 4.♔g6 ♕d4
5.♔g5 ♕e3 6.♔g4 ♖h8 7.♔g3**



The aim seems to have been achieved.

EXERCISE 8 – Do you see the tactical refutation?
(solution on page 486)



1130

Now let's follow the course of the game from diagram 1130, Eisinger-Haag, European team championships, Oberhausen 1961.

1...e3 2.h5 ♕e1 3.h6 e2

A fully-fledged pawn race.

4.♖f8

Or 4.h7 ♖g7, threatening 5...♖f7. White wants to avoid this.

4...♖h3 5.♖f6 ♕d2 6.♖d6+ ♕c2 7.♖e6

7...♖h4+!

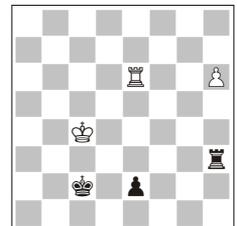
Again an intermediate check, which is often so important to obtain a decisive advantage. Here the point is that the white king cannot go to the 6th rank, for instance 8.♕c5 ♕d2 9.♖d6+ ♕c3 10.♖e6 ♖h5+ 11.♕c6 and now, as we saw, 11...♖xh6!

**8.♕b5 ♕d3 9.♖d6+ ♕c3
10.♖e6 ♖h5+ 11.♕a4**

Forced, as we know.

11...♕d3 12.♖d6+ ♕c4

And wins, as 13.♖e6 is still met by 13...♖h1! and the black e-pawn cannot be taken on account of 14.♖a1 mate.



7.♖e6