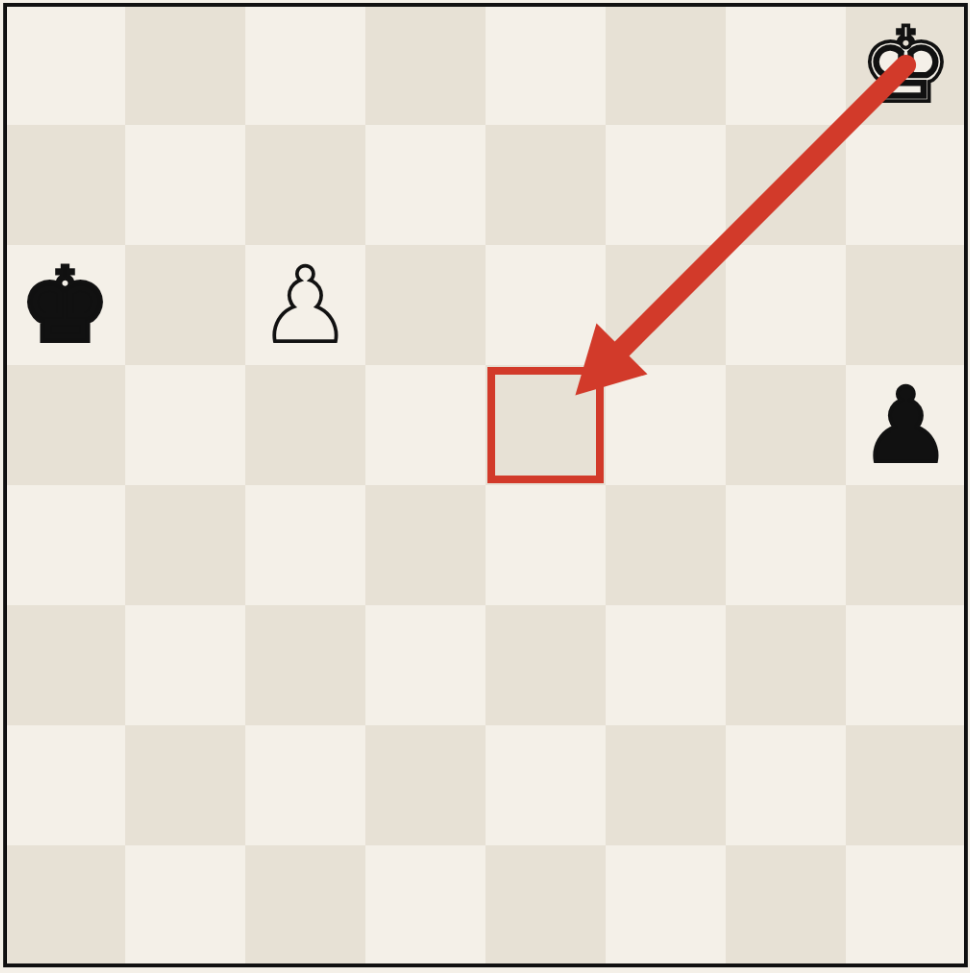
64 BASIC endgames



Réti, 1921 · White to play and draw · 1.♔g7!

Pawns, bishops, knights, rooks and queens

JOSE SANDE

64 BASIC ENDGAMES

Jose Sande

64 Basic Endgames
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How to study this book

This book brings together 64 model positions for learning how to win and how to defend the fundamental endgames: key squares, the opposition, triangulation, the wrong bishop, Lucena, Philidor, Vancura, the rook behind the pawn and the queen against a pawn on the seventh rank.

The material is divided into 16 pawn endings, 10 bishop endings, 8 knight endings, 24 rook endings and 6 queen endings. Rooks get the most space because they are the endings that arise most often in practice.

Before reading the solution, decide the result and look for a plan. Calculate a line, compare it with the one in the book and play the position again with both colours. Lines stop once the rest is obvious.

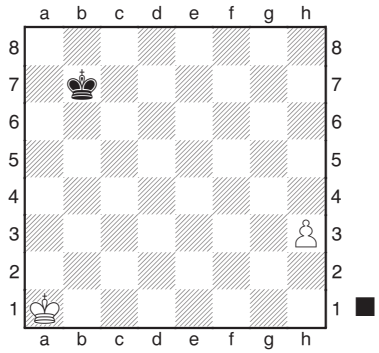
Every position and every line has been checked with an analysis engine. Diagrams are always shown from White's side; the square next to the diagram shows who is to move.

Notation: pieces are shown as figurines: ♔ king, ♕ queen, ♖ rook, ♗ bishop, ♘ knight; x capture, + check, # mate. A white square next to the diagram means White to move; a black square, Black to move.

I. Pawn endings

An active king, key squares and counting tempi decide almost every pawn ending. Master them and you will also know when to exchange pieces and go into one.

1. The rule of the square



Can the black king catch the pawn?

Draw. 1...♔c7 2.h4 ♔d7 3.h5 ♔e7 4.h6 ♔f7 5.h7 ♔g7 6.h8=♕+ ♔xh8

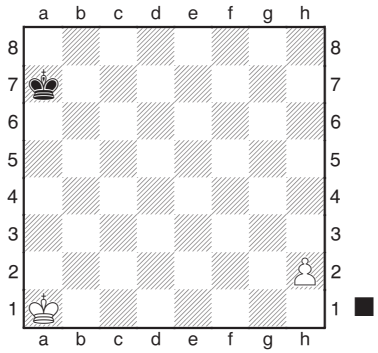
Draw the pawn's square: from h3 to h8 there are five ranks, so the square runs from h3 to c3, c8 and h8. Since Black is to move, it is enough for the king to step into it with its first move: from b7, 1...♔c7 does it.

From there the king marches diagonally, gaining ground towards the h-file and the eighth rank at the same time. When the pawn promotes on h8, the king is already on g7 and takes the queen.

Note. Count from the square the pawn stands on and take into account who is to move. With White to move, 1.h4 would leave the black king outside the square.

If the king enters the square, it catches the pawn.

2. The initial two-square advance



What changes when the pawn starts on its original square?

White wins. 1...♔b7 2.h4 ♔c7 3.h5 ♔d7 4.h6 ♔e7 5.h7 ♔f7 6.h8=♕

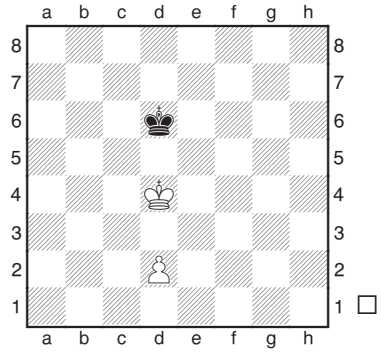
The black king is one file further away than in the previous example, but the pawn is also one rank further back. It looks the same and it isn't: from h2 the pawn jumps to h4 in one go.

To apply the rule, count the square from h3, the square the pawn reaches «for free». That square starts on the c-file, and from a7 the black king cannot enter it in one move. It reaches f7 when the pawn is already a queen.

Note. A pawn on its original square counts as if it were already one rank further up.

The double step is worth a whole tempo in the race.

3. The king in front of the pawn



Why can the pawn advance without losing the advantage?

White wins. 1.d3 ♔e6 2.♔c5 ♔d7 3.♔d5 ♔e7 4.♔c6 ♔d8 5.♔d6 ♔e8 6.d4 ♔d8 7.d5 ♔e8 8.♔c7

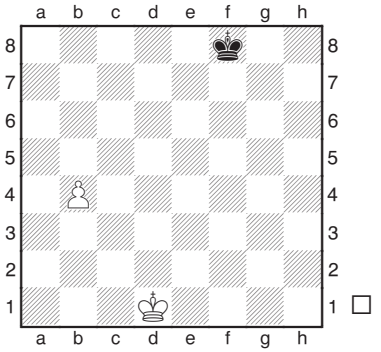
For a pawn that has not yet crossed the middle of the board, the key squares are the three squares two ranks in front of it. With the pawn on d2 they are c4, d4 and e4, and the white king already stands on d4. That is enough to win, whoever is to move.

The move d3 is a waiting move that spoils nothing: the key squares shift to c5, d5 and e5, and the king reaches them at once. Then the king walks in front of the pawn to d6, and the pawn moves only when the king can make no further progress. After 8.♔c7 Black cannot stop the pawn from promoting.

Note. The rule holds for bishop, knight and centre pawns; the rook pawn is the exception.

First the king occupies a key square; then the pawn advances.

4. Choosing the furthest key square



Why does the king head for the queenside?

White wins. 1.♔c2 ♔e7 2.♔b3 ♔d6 3.♔a4 ♔c6 4.♔a5 ♔b7 5.♔b5

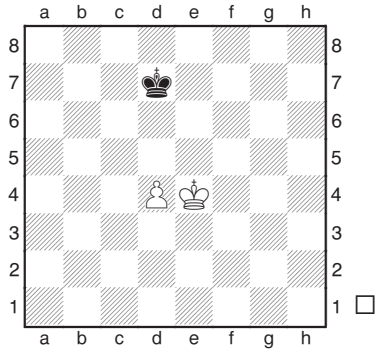
It is the only winning move: 1.♔c1 and 1.♔d2 draw. The key squares of the b4-pawn are a6, b6 and c6. The one furthest from the black king is a6, and that is where White must walk.

If the white king went towards c6, Black would arrive in time to defend it. Along the route c2-b3-a4 Black has to cover a5 and b5 at the same time, and cannot. After 5.♔b5 the white king has the opposition in front of its pawn and the win is simple.

Note. King distance is measured in moves, and diagonals count the same as straight lines.

Aim for the key square furthest from the defending king.

5. Opposition and outflanking



How is the opposition exploited?

White wins. 1.♔d5 ♔d8 2.♔d6 ♔c8 3.♔e7 ♔c7 4.d5 ♔c8 5.d6 ♔b7 6.d7 ♔c6 7.d8=♕

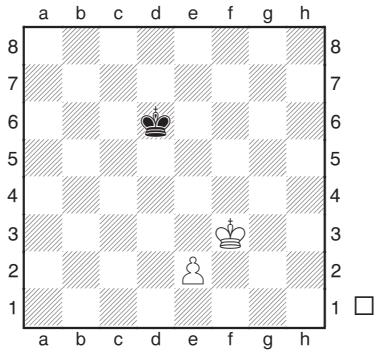
It is the only winning move: 1.♔e5 and 1.d5 draw. With the king on d5, in front of the pawn and facing the black king, White has the opposition: Black must move and let the white king through on one side or the other.

After 1...♔d8 2.♔d6, the black king steps aside to c8 and White goes round the other side with 3.♔e7. From there the king controls d8, the promotion square, and the pawn advances untouched.

Note. Do not move the pawn while the king can still gain ground: every premature advance hands the opposition to the defender.

Take the opposition and go round the enemy king on the side it abandons.

6. Regaining the opposition with the pawn



What is the point of the small pawn move?

White wins. 1.♔e4 ♔e6 2.e3 ♔d6 3.♔f5 ♔e7 4.♔e5 ♔d7 5.♔f6 ♔e8 6.♔e6 ♔d8 7.e4 ♔e8

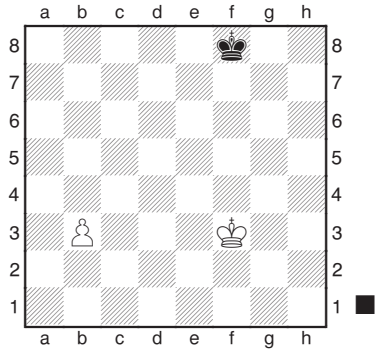
After 1.♔e4 ♔e6 the kings stand in opposition with White to move, exactly what White does not want. The move 2.e3 solves the problem: it passes the turn without moving the king, and now Black is the one who has to give way.

After 2...♔d6, the white king goes in on the opposite side with 3.♔f5. At the end of the line the white king is on e6, in front of its pawn and two ranks ahead of it. That is a textbook winning position.

Note. Had you played e3 or e4 too early, you would not have that spare tempo at the decisive moment.

The pawn moves you still have are spare tempi.

7. Distant opposition



How does the defender keep the opposition from far away?

Draw. 1...♔f7 2.♔e3 ♔e7 3.♔d3 ♔d7 4.♔c3 ♔c7 5.b4 ♔b6 6.♔c4 ♔c6

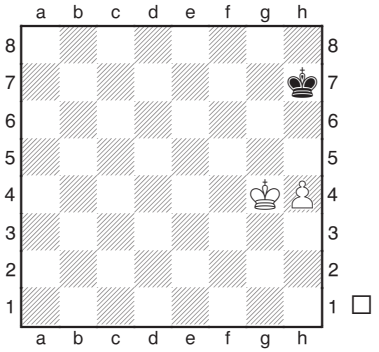
Black looks at the file the white king is on and places his king on the same file, with an odd number of ranks between the two kings: that is the distant opposition. That is why 1...♔e8 loses: it leaves an even number and the white king advances.

Every move of the white king towards the pawn is copied by the black king on the same file. When White finally plays 5.b4, Black steps in front of the pawn with 5...♔b6 and, after 6.♔c4, takes the close opposition with 6...♔c6. The white king never reaches a key square.

Note. Standing opposite once is not enough: the opposition must be kept throughout the approach.

Distant opposition prepares the close opposition.

8. The rook-pawn exception



Is an active king enough to win with a rook pawn?

Draw. 1.♔h5 ♔g7 2.♔g5 ♔h8 3.♔h6 ♔g8 4.h5 ♔h8 5.♔g6 ♔g8 6.h6 ♔h8 7.h7

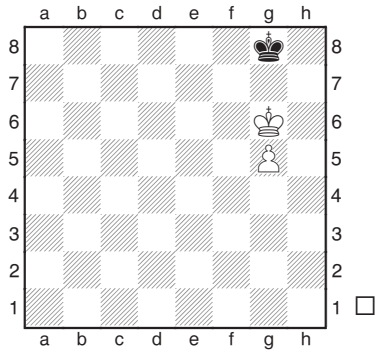
No. With a rook pawn there is no outflanking: the edge of the board takes away one of the white king's two ways in. As soon as the black king reaches the h8 corner, nobody can drive it out.

White can advance as far as he likes, but the line always ends the same way: after 7.h7 the black king has no moves and is not in check. It is stalemate.

Note. The rules for a centre pawn do not apply to a rook pawn. Before exchanging pieces, check whether the enemy king can reach the corner.

Against a rook pawn, reaching the corner saves the game.

9. Avoiding stalemate with a knight pawn



How do you avoid boxing the black king in completely?

White wins. 1.♔h6 ♔h8 2.g6 ♔g8 3.g7 ♔f7 4.♔h7

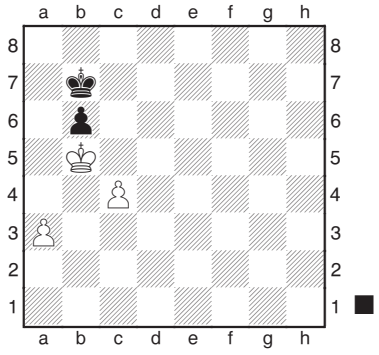
With 1.♔h6 the white king stands beside the pawn, not in front of it, and leaves g6 free for the pawn to advance. The defender has no choice but to go into the corner with 1...♔h8.

The danger is leaving the black king without a move: with Black on g8, the pawn on g7 and the white king on g6, it would be stalemate. That is why the pawn goes to g7 while the black king still has the f7 square, and the white king takes h7. Then the pawn promotes.

Note. If the enemy king is not in check and has no legal moves, the game is drawn.

Before sealing a corner, count the defender's legal moves.

10. A spare tempo



Why does it matter that the pawn is still on a3?

White wins. 1...♔c7 2.♔a6 ♔c6 3.a4 ♔c7 4.♔a7 ♔c6 5.♔b8 ♔c5 6.♔b7

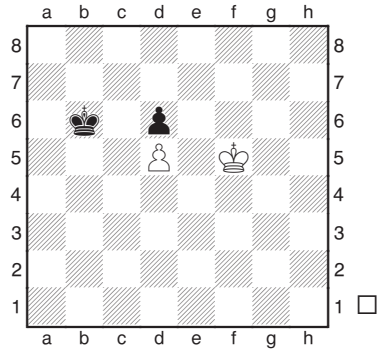
White wants to win the b6-pawn, but every time his king approaches, Black answers with the opposition. The way out is the waiting move a3-a4: the pawn has a move to spare and with it White passes the turn.

After 3.a4 it is Black who must move, and his king has to leave the pawn. The white king goes round via a7 and b8, reaches b7 and the b6-pawn falls.

Note. If the pawn had been on a4 from the start, White would not have that tempo and the position would be very different.

Keep the spare tempo until it forces your opponent to give way.

11. Mined squares



Should White capture the enemy pawn at once?

White wins. 1.♔f6 ♔b5 2.♔e7 ♔c5 3.♔e6 ♔c4 4.♔xd6 ♔d4 5.♔e6

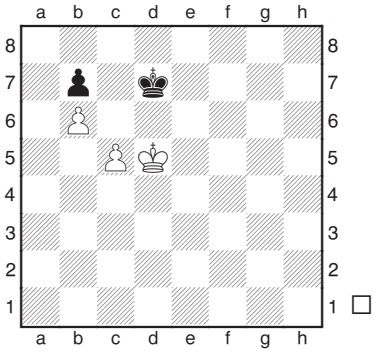
The pawns on d5 and d6 create mined squares: if the white king reaches e6 with White to move, it has to let go of the pawn, and the same happens to Black on c5. It is the only winning move: 1.♔e4 and 1.♔f4 lead to a draw.

With 1.♔f6 White deliberately loses a tempo so that, when his king steps onto e6, it is Black to move. The black king has to leave c5, the d6-pawn falls and the d5-pawn promotes with the help of its king.

Note. Do not confuse a pawn that looks defenceless with a pawn you can capture under good conditions.

Before capturing, check who will be forced to move.

12. King triangulation



How do you hand over the move while keeping the same position?

White wins. 1.♔e5 ♔c6 2.♔d4 ♔d7 3.♔d5 ♔c8 4.♔e6 ♔d8 5.♔d6 ♔c8 6.♔e7 ♔b8 7.♔d7 ♔a8 8.c6 bxc6 9.♔c7 c5 10.b7+ ♔a7 11.b8=♕+

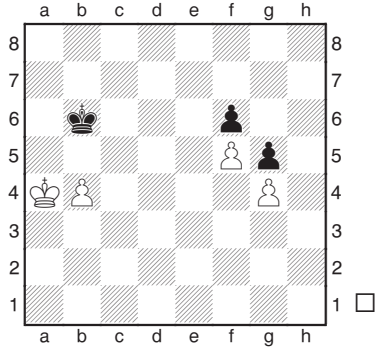
With the king on d5 and Black's on d7, White would like it to be Black's move. The white king describes a triangle, d5-e5-d4-d5, and returns to the same position after three moves. The black king has no equivalent triangle, because it must watch both c7 and the entry via e6.

With the tempo gained, the white king goes in via e6 and reaches d7. The break 8.c6 leaves the b6-pawn passed and, after 9.♔c7, nothing stops it from promoting.

Note. Triangulation works when your opponent has fewer waiting squares than you.

Losing a tempo on purpose can be the way to win.

13. Sacrificing to let the king in



Why is the queenside pawn given up?

White wins. 1.b5 ♔b7 2.♔a5 ♔a7 3.b6+ ♔b7 4.♔b5 ♔b8 5.♔c6 ♔c8 6.♔d6 ♔b7 7.♔e6 ♔xb6 8.♔xf6 ♔c7 9.♔xg5 ♔d8 10.♔g6 ♔e8 11.♔g7

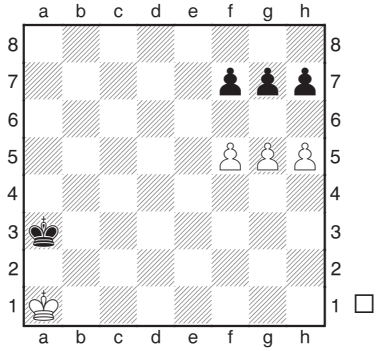
The b-pawn is an outside passed pawn: it ties the black king to the queenside while White prepares the entry of his own king. When Black finally takes it with 7...♔xb6, the white king is already on e6, one step from f6.

White collects f6 and g5 and is left with two connected pawns with the king beside them. Moreover, the black king is far away. The pawn given up has bought the tempi the king needed.

Note. Before giving up the pawn, count both kings' routes to the other wing.

An outside passed pawn opens the way for the king on the other wing.

14. The three-against-three breakthrough



How can one pawn break through against three?

White wins. 1.g6 hxg6 2.f6 gxf6 3.h6 f5 4.h7 f4 5.h8=♕

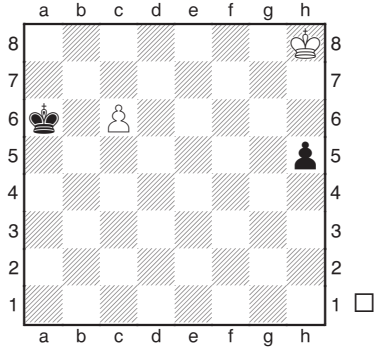
It is the only winning move; 1.♔b1, for example, only draws. Three white pawns on the fifth rank against Black's on the seventh allow the classic breakthrough: the middle pawn is given up to deflect one of the defenders.

If 1...fxg6, then 2.h6! gxh6 3.f6 wins, and if 1...hxg6, then 2.f6! gxf6 3.h6 wins. In both cases one white pawn is left that nobody can stop, and the kings are too far away to intervene.

Note. If Black captures with the other pawn, look for the symmetrical sacrifice on the opposite side.

In a breakthrough, count which pawn survives all the captures.

15. Réti's double threat



Can the king chase a pawn and help its own at the same time?

Draw. 1.♔g7 h4 2.♔f6 ♔b6 3.♔e5 h3 4.♔d6 h2 5.c7 h1=♕ 6.c8=♕

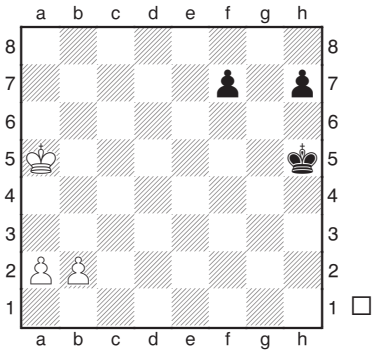
Réti's study (1921) looks lost: the white king is outside the square of the h-pawn and Black threatens to take on c6. But the diagonal march h8-g7-f6-e5 brings the king closer to the h-pawn and to its own pawn at the same time.

If Black runs with the pawn, the white king reaches d6 or d7 and supports c7: both sides promote. If Black takes on c6, the white king enters the square of the h-pawn and catches it. The two threats together save the game.

Note. Do not judge the position only by straight-line distance: one diagonal can serve two goals at once.

A diagonal brings the king closer to two targets at the same time.

16. Promoting and exchanging queens with check



What is gained by promoting with a threat of check?

White wins. 1.b4 f5 2.b5 f4 3.b6 f3 4.b7 f2 5.b8=♕ f1=♕ 6.♕b5+ ♕xb5+ 7.♔xb5 ♔g4 8.a4 h5 9.a5 h4 10.a6 h3 11.a7 h2 12.a8=♕

Both sides promote together, but the white queen is born on b8 with a move in hand. With 6.♕b5+ she offers the exchange with check, and Black cannot avoid it: the black king stands on h5, on the fifth rank.

After the exchange a pawn ending remains in which the a-pawn arrives before the h-pawn. Note the final detail: the new queen on a8 controls h1 and stops the black pawn.

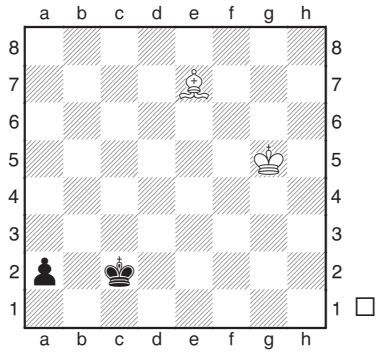
Note. The race does not end with the first promotion: also count the checks and exchanges that follow.

A promotion with check or with a forced exchange can decide even if the opponent also promotes.

II. Bishop endings

The colour of the squares rules: a bishop controls only half the board. Learn to recognise the wrong bishop, blockades and interference.

17. Stopping a pawn from afar



Can the bishop stop the pawn without help from its king?

Draw. 1.♗f6 ♔b1 2.♗h8 ♔c2 3.♗g7 ♔b1 4.♗f6 a1=♕ 5.♗xa1

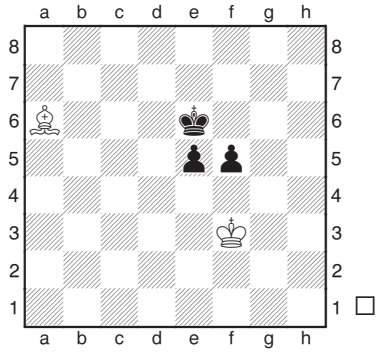
Yes. From f6 the bishop reaches the long diagonal h8-a1 and controls the promotion square. The black king cannot block the diagonal on b2, because the bishop attacks that square, and from any point on the diagonal the bishop keeps watching a1.

The bishop moves along the diagonal without leaving it, and if the pawn promotes, 5.♗xa1 leaves bare kings. White could also bring his king closer, but there is no need.

Note. Before writing a pawn off as unstoppable, look for the long diagonals that reach the promotion square.

A bishop stops from afar a pawn that seems to have escaped.

18. Two connected pawns against the bishop



How is the defence against two connected pawns organised?

Draw. 1.♗d3 ♔f6 2.♗b1 ♔g5 3.♗d3 ♔f6 4.♗b1 ♔e6 5.♗d3 e4+ 6.♗xe4 fxe4+ 7.♔xe4

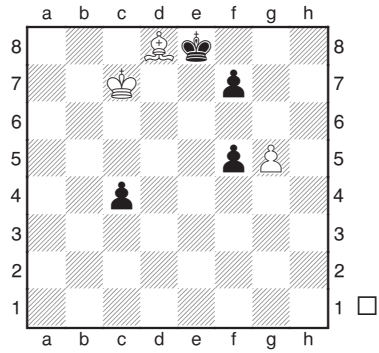
The white king blockades the pawns from f3 and the bishop watches e4 and f5 from the b1-h7 diagonal. The pawns on e5 and f5 cannot advance without losing one of them.

If the black king tries to go round via g5, the bishop waits on the diagonal. When Black forces matters with 5...e4+, the bishop is given up for both pawns and bare kings remain.

Note. Two connected pawns are dangerous, but blockaded by king and bishop they cannot advance without giving one up.

The king blockades; the bishop watches the advance squares.

19. Bringing the threats onto one diagonal



How do you stop the bishop from having two incompatible tasks?

Draw. 1.g6 fxg6 2.♗g5

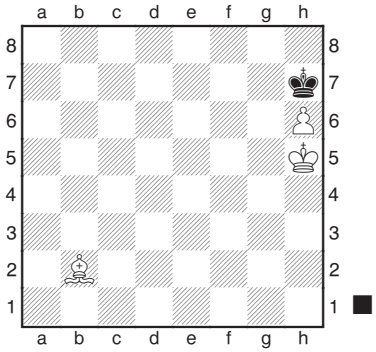
It is the only saving move; after 1.♗f6 or 1.♔c8 Black wins. The bishop has to watch the c4-pawn and the kingside pawns, and from d8 it cannot cover everything. With 1.g6 White gives up his pawn to change Black's structure.

After 1...fxg6 2.♗g5, the bishop controls c1 and f4 from the same diagonal: it stops the c-pawn and the f-pawn at once. If instead of capturing Black plays 1...f6, the white king goes via d6 and d5 to take the c4-pawn, and the kingside pawns are not enough to win.

Note. A piece that must look after two separate diagonals is overloaded.

If you can, put all the bishop's tasks on a single diagonal.

20. The right-coloured bishop



What does control of h8 by the bishop achieve?

White wins. 1...♔g8 2.♔g6 ♔f8 3.h7 ♔e7 4.h8=♕

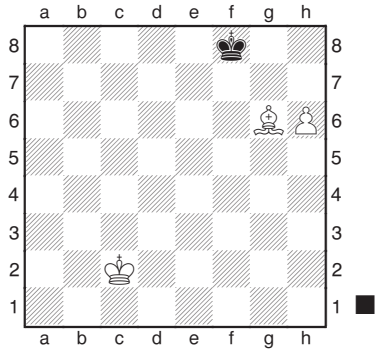
The bishop on b2 runs along the long diagonal and controls h8, the promotion square. The black king cannot stay in the corner: after 1...♔g8 2.♔g6, h8 is forbidden and the only way out is to move away.

Compare with the next example: the same material, but with the bishop of the other colour, is a draw.

Note. The right bishop is not enough on its own: the attacking king must also be close to drive the defender out.

With a rook pawn, first look at the colour of the promotion square.

21. The corner of the wrong bishop



Which square must the black king reach immediately?

Draw. 1...♔g8 2.♔d3 ♔h8 3.♔e4 ♔g8 4.♔f5 ♔h8

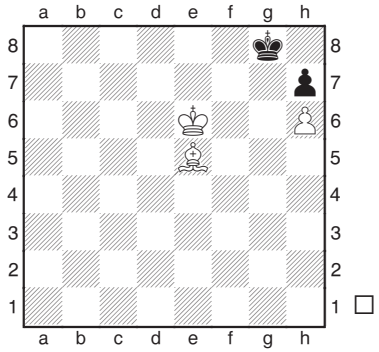
The bishop on g6 is light-squared and the promotion square, h8, is dark. If the black king reaches h8, there is no way to drive it out. It must go now: 1...♔e7? loses, because the bishop controls f7 and the pawn runs to h8.

From the corner, Black simply shuttles between g8 and h8. The white king comes closer, but as soon as it takes both squares from the black king, it is stalemate.

Note. The wrong bishop only saves the game if the defending king reaches the corner in time.

With the wrong bishop and a rook pawn, the corner is a fortress.

22. A barrier with h6 and h7



Why doesn't the right-coloured bishop win here?

Draw. 1.♔f6 ♔f8 2.♔e6 ♔g8

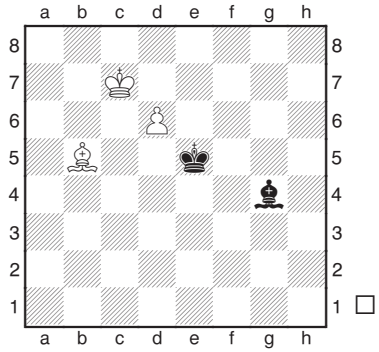
The bishop controls h8, but Black's h7-pawn blocks White: the h6-pawn cannot advance. To win, White would have to mate or capture h7, and the black king always has two squares, f8 and g8, to move between.

If White squeezes with 3.♔e7, Black is stalemated on g8. The only danger for the defender is going into h8 when the white king can reach f7: then a bishop check on the long diagonal would be mate.

Note. The right-coloured bishop does not win if the pawn is blocked by an enemy pawn.

A pawn barrier can matter more than the colour of the promotion square.

23. Interfering on the diagonal



How do you break the defending bishop's watch?

White wins. 1.♗d7 ♗d1 2.♗h3 ♗a4 3.♗g2

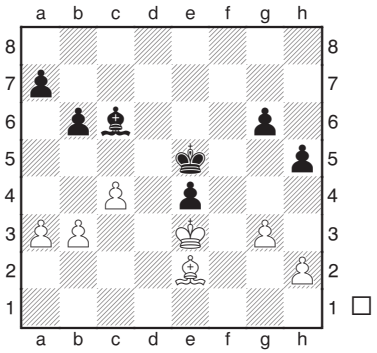
The black bishop on g4 stops the d6-pawn from the h3-c8 diagonal, which passes through d7. With 1.♗d7 the white bishop blocks that diagonal and forces Black to watch d7 from the other one, a4-e8.

After 2.♗h3 ♗a4 3.♗g2 comes 4.♗c6, which also blocks the a4-e8 diagonal, and the pawn advances to d7 and d8. The black king, on e5, is too far away to prevent it.

Note. If the defending king could reach the promotion square in time, interference would not be enough.

Interfering on a diagonal frees the pawn without capturing anything.

24. Good bishop and bad bishop: fixing the pawns



How do you widen the difference between the two bishops?

Plan. 1.h4 ♗d7 2.♗f1 a5 3.♗g2 ♗c6 4.♗h3 ♗a8 5.♗d7 ♗b7 6.b4 axb4 7.axb4 ♗a8 8.c5 bxc5 9.bxc5 ♔d5 10.♗e8

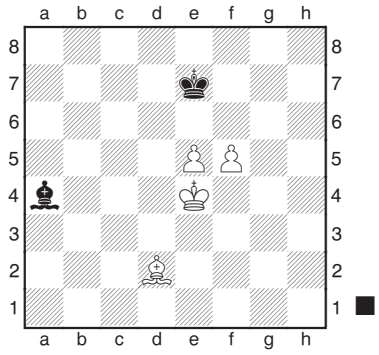
Black's pawns on e4, g6 and h5 stand on light squares, the squares of the black bishop, which becomes a passive defender. With 1.h4 White fixes the h5-pawn on its square: it can no longer be exchanged.

The white bishop comes into play via f1, g2 and h3 to d7, from where it dominates c6 and leaves the black bishop shut in on a8. With the enemy bishop out of play, the queenside majority advances with b4 and c5 and creates a passed pawn, and 10.♗e8 also attacks the g6-pawn.

Note. Do not put your own pawns on the colour of your bishop if that restricts it.

Fix the weaknesses before opening a second front.

25. Holding two pawns from one diagonal



From which square should the black bishop work?

Draw. 1...♗d7 2.♗g5+ ♔f7

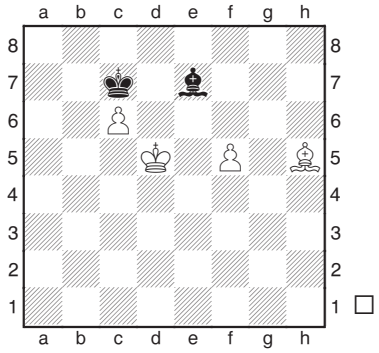
From d7 the bishop watches e6, the advance square of the e-pawn, and also attacks f5. The black king blockades on e7 and f7. White cannot advance either pawn without losing it, and his king has to keep protecting f5.

The check 2.♗g5+ changes nothing: the black king steps to f7 in front of the pawns and the bishop stays on its diagonal. White has no way in.

Note. A similar diagonal that did not attack the f5-pawn would leave the white king free.

Blockade one pawn and force the enemy king to defend the other.

26. Two separated passed pawns



Which pawn should the white king go to?

White wins. 1.♗f3 ♔d8 2.♔e6 ♗b4 3.f6 ♗a5 4.f7 ♗b4 5.♔f6 ♗c3+ 6.♔g6 ♗b4 7.♔g7

The black king watches the c6-pawn and the black bishop watches the f5-pawn. The white king must go to the f-pawn, the one the bishop is holding, so that it can advance with his help. The c6-pawn defends itself: the white bishop protects it from f3.

With the white king on e6 and then on g7, the f-pawn reaches f8 and the black bishop can only give itself up for it. The two pawns are so far apart that the black king cannot help on both wings at once.

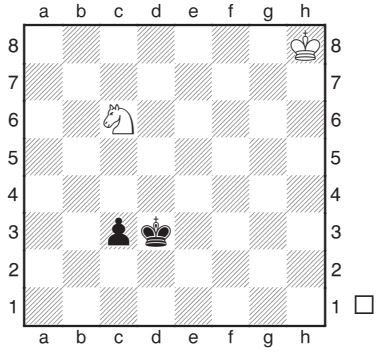
Note. Two separated pawns do not always win: the distance between them, their files and the kings' access all count.

Take your king to the pawn the enemy bishop is holding.

III. Knight endings

The knight is slow and short-ranged. Count its jumps, use checks to gain tempi and be wary of rook pawns.

27. Stopping a bishop pawn



Which squares allow the knight to stop the pawn?

Draw. 1. ♘**b4+** ♔**c4 2.** ♘**c2** ♔**b3 3.** ♘**d4+** ♔**b2 4.** ♔**g7 c2 5.** ♘**xc2**

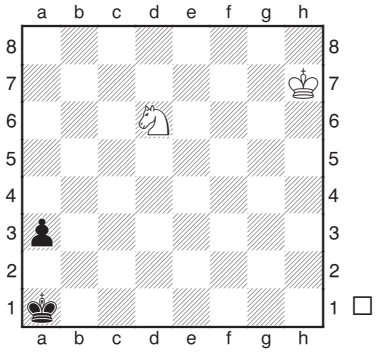
The knight on c6 reaches c2, the square the pawn must cross, in two jumps: b4 and c2. The check 1. ♘b4+ is what gains the time; without check, the black king would support the advance.

If the black king attacks the knight, it comes back with check from d4. When the pawn finally advances to c2, the knight captures it. The white king has not even taken part.

Note. Do not measure the knight's distance in a straight line: count its jumps and the checks it has.

An intermediate check keeps the knight in the race.

28. The rook pawn on the sixth rank



Can the knight stop a rook pawn on the sixth?

Draw. 1. ♘**b5 a2 2.** ♘**c3**

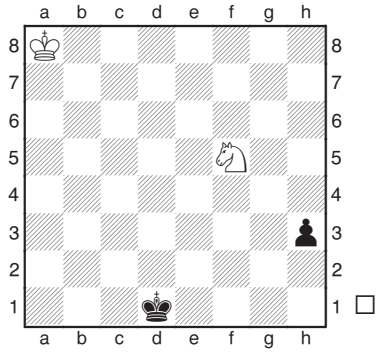
It is the only move: after 1. ♔g6 or 1. ♔h6 the pawn promotes. From b5 the knight controls a3 and reaches c3, from where it watches a2 and b1.

After 1...a2 2. ♘c3, the pawn is on a2 and its own king on a1 blocks the promotion square. If the black king leaves the corner, the knight takes the pawn.

Note. The knight works worse on the edge: it has fewer squares, and one jump too many leaves it out of the race.

Against a rook pawn, work out the knight's circuit before the pawn reaches the seventh.

29. Choosing the knight's circuit



Which route keeps the knight close to h2?

Draw. 1.♘e3+ ♔e2 2.♘g4 ♔f3 3.♘h2+ ♔g2 4.♘g4 ♔g3 5.♘e3 ♔f3 6.♘f1

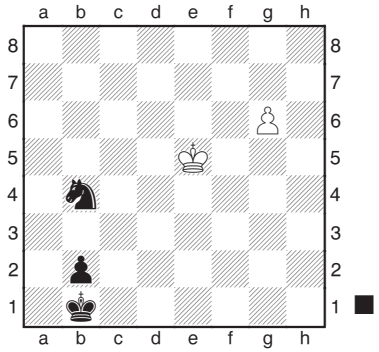
The black pawn is heading for h2 and h1; the knight must be able to control those squares. With 1.♘e3+ it enters the game with tempo and, after 2.♘g4, watches h2 from g4.

If the black king attacks the knight, it jumps to h2 with check, returns to g4 or takes refuge on f1, always one jump from h2. The pawn cannot advance without the knight capturing it.

Note. Reaching a blockading square is not enough: you also need a safe retreat.

A defensive circuit has a way in, a waiting square and a way out.

30. Interrupting a pawn race



Can the knight stop the pawn while its own advances?

Black wins. 1...♘d5 2.g7 ♘e7 3.♔e6 ♘g8 4.♔f7 ♔c1 5.♔xg8 b1=♕

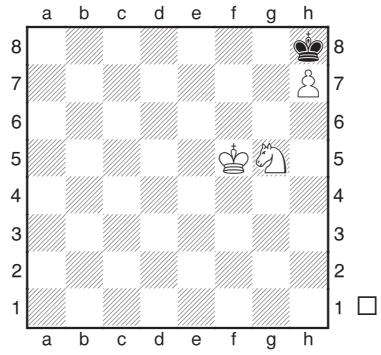
The b2-pawn cannot promote at once because its own king stands on b1, and while the king gets out of the way, the g6-pawn would run. With 1...♘d5 the knight heads for e7 and g8 to block the white pawn's path.

The white king has to spend two moves capturing the knight on g8, and in that time the black king steps out to c1 and the pawn promotes. Queen against a g7-pawn blocked by its own king remains, and the queen wins.

Note. Compare the tempi after the knight is captured, not before.

A knight can sacrifice itself so that its own pawn wins the race.

31. Knight and rook pawn on the seventh



Can the black king be driven out of h8?

Draw. 1.♔e6 ♔g7 2.♔f5 ♔h8 3.♔g4 ♔g7 4.♔h5 ♔h8 5.♔h6

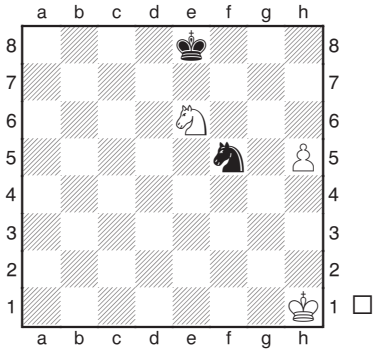
No. The black king shuttles between g7 and h8, and White cannot take both squares away without stalemating it. For example, with the white king on f7 and the knight on g5, Black on h8 has no legal move.

At the end of the line, after 5.♔h6, the black king again has no moves. The knight cannot «lose a tempo», so it cannot change the turn.

Note. Before closing the net, count the black king's legal squares.

The corner can be a fortress even against knight and pawn.

32. Sacrificing to free the pawn



What is the point of giving up the knight with check?

White wins. 1.♘g7+ ♘xg7 2.h6 ♔f7 3.h7

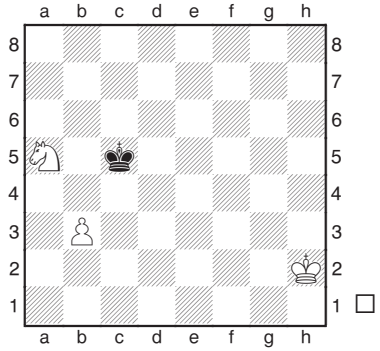
The black knight on f5 blockades the h-pawn. With 1.♘g7+ White forces a capture: if 1...♔f7, the black knight on f5 falls and the pawn advances with the blockader gone.

After 1...♘xg7 2.h6, the pawn attacks the knight: wherever it goes, the pawn runs to h8 and the black king arrives too late.

Note. Check the distance of the enemy king after the sacrifice, especially with a pawn near the edge.

Removing the blockader is worth more than a piece.

33. Defending the pawn without tying down the king



How can the white king give up defending the pawn?

White wins. 1.♘c4 ♔b4 2.♘d2 ♔c3 3.♔g3

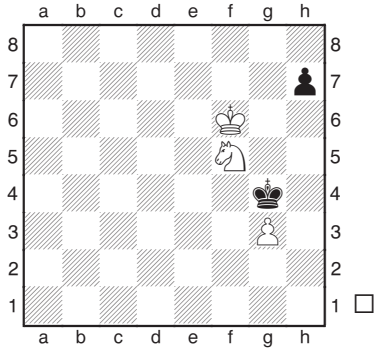
The white king is far away on h2, and the knight on a5 defends b3 from an awkward square. With 1.♘c4 and 2.♘d2, the knight protects the pawn from d2 and also controls c4 and b1.

If 2...♔c3, the knight defends the pawn, and if the black king takes the knight, 4.b4 and the pawn is out of reach. The white king can now approach with 3.♔g3 and help it promote.

Note. A passively placed knight can prevent its own king from taking part.

Defend the pawn from a square that lets the king work.

34. Preparing the passed pawn's advance



What must be prepared before advancing the g-pawn?

White wins. 1.♔e5 ♔g5 2.♘e3 h5 3.♔e4 h4 4.g4 h3 5.♔f3

The g3-pawn is attacked and Black's h7-pawn threatens to advance. With 1.♔e5 and 2.♘e3 White reorganises his defence: the knight on e3 covers g4 and the king is free to stop the h-pawn.

When Black advances 2...h5 and 3...h4, White replies 4.g4 and the king reaches f3. The h3-pawn falls and the g-pawn, defended by knight and king, decides.

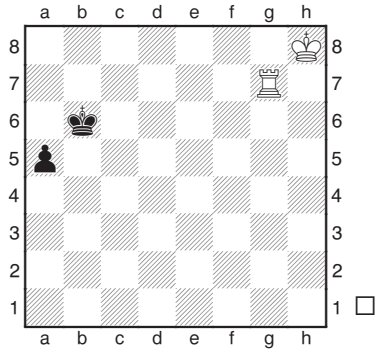
Note. Checking out of habit can take the knight away from the key squares.

The knight's best square combines defence with support for the pawn.

IV. Rook endings

Lucena, Philidor, side checks and Vancura are the theory every player must know. An active rook placed behind the passed pawn links that theory to practice.

35. Cutting the king off before it advances



Find the only move that stops the black king from escorting its pawn.

White wins. 1.♖g5 a4 2.♔g7 a3 3.♖g3 a2 4.♖a3 a1=♕+ 5.♖xa1

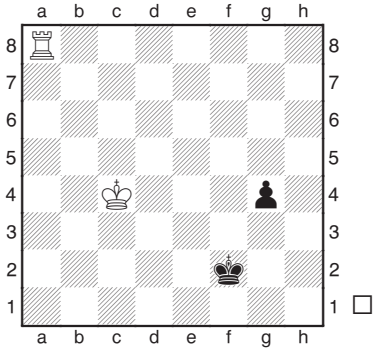
The black king wants to go to b5 and b4 to escort its pawn. With the rook on g5, the fifth rank is cut and the black king cannot cross it.

The pawn advances alone, and the white king has time to come closer. The rook returns to g3 and to a3, behind the pawn, and wins it as soon as it promotes.

One lost tempo changes the result. 1.♔h7? ♔b5 The black king crosses the fifth rank, escorts its pawn and the ending is a draw.

Cut the king off before it crosses the barrier.

36. The check that gains a tempo



Which move wins? Compare the check with bringing the king straight over.

White wins. 1.♖f8+ ♔e2 2.♖g8 ♔f3 3.♔d3 g3 4.♖f8+ ♔g2 5.♔e2

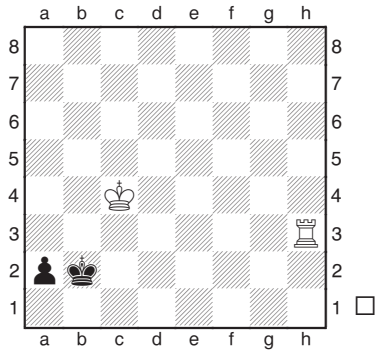
The check is the only winning move; 1.♔c3 or 1.♔d3 draw. After 1...♔e2, the rook goes behind the pawn with 2.♖g8 and the black king has to return to f3 to defend it.

The black king has lost a square: it is on f3, not f2. That difference lets the white king reach e2 in time, after 4.♖f8+, and the pawn falls.

The move order that lets the win slip. 1.♔d3? g3 2.♖f8+ ♔e1 The check comes one move too late: the black king hides on e1, and if the rook leaves the g-file the pawn promotes. It is a draw.

Before bringing your king over, check whether a check worsens the enemy king's position.

37. The king shoulders the enemy king



After 1.♖h2+, should Black answer 1...♔a3 or 1...♔b1?

Draw. 1.♖h2+ ♔a3

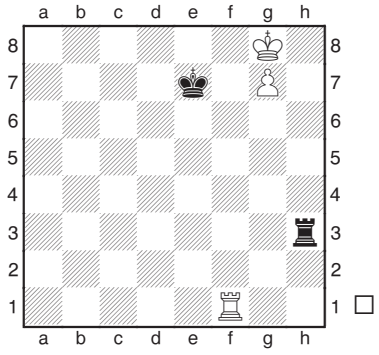
The black king must go towards the white king. From a3 it stops White from entering b3, the square he needs to attack the pawn. The rook alone cannot win: if it gives itself up for the pawn, bare kings remain.

It is a resource every defender should know: sometimes the king protects its pawn by getting in the other king's way, not by standing next to it.

The apparent shelter that loses. 1...♔b1? 2.♔b3 a1=♘+ 3.♔c3 With the king on b1, White reaches b3. Promoting to a knight with check does not help: after 3.♔c3, the knight on a1 is trapped and lost.

The defending king can protect its pawn by blocking the other king.

38. Lucena: building the bridge



Build a bridge to get the king out of g8.

White wins. 1.♖e1+ ♔d7 2.♖e4 ♖h2 3.♔f7 ♖f2+ 4.♔g6 ♖g2+ 5.♔f6 ♖f2+ 6.♔g5 ♖g2+ 7.♖g4

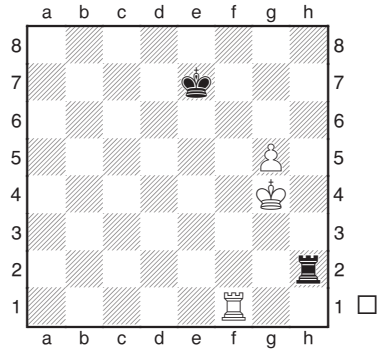
This is the Lucena position. First the check 1.♖e1+ drives the black king one more file away. Then the rook goes to the fourth rank with 2.♖e4: that is the bridge.

The white king leaves g8 and approaches the black rook via f7, g6, f6 and g5. When there are no useful checks left, 7.♖g4 interposes and the pawn promotes.

Leaving before the bridge is ready. 1.♖e1+ ♔d7 2.♔f7 ♖f3+ 3.♔g6 ♖g3+ White still wins, but the king is exposed to checks without a prepared shelter and will have to repeat manoeuvres.

Prepare the rook that will interpose before exposing the king.

39. Reaching the Lucena position



Use the cut-off king to reach a winning position.

White wins. 1.g6 ♖g2+ 2.♔h5 ♖h2+ 3.♔g5 ♖g2+ 4.♔h6 ♖h2+ 5.♔g7 ♖a2 6.♔h7 ♖h2+ 7.♔g8 ♔e8 8.g7 ♖h4

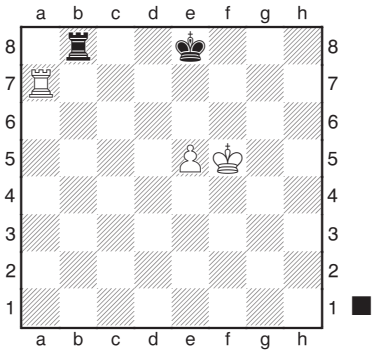
The rook on f1 cuts the black king off on the f-file. White advances king and pawn together: the king always stands beside the pawn, and the black rook's checks only make it change sides.

In the end, king on g8 and pawn on g7, with the black king cut off: this is the Lucena position of the previous example, and it is won by building the bridge.

Note. During the king's march, check after every check that the pawn is still defended and that the black king cannot cross the f-file.

Keep the defending king cut off while your king and pawn advance.

40. Philidor: the barrier and the checks



When should the rook leave the sixth rank?

Draw. 1...♖b6 2.e6 ♖b1 3.♔f6 ♖f1+ 4.♔e5 ♖e1+ 5.♔d6 ♖d1+

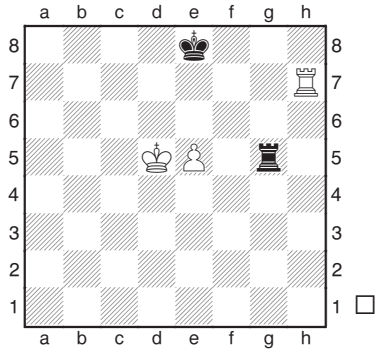
The rook on the sixth rank stops the white king from advancing. If White plays e6 to take that rank away, the pawn also leaves the white king without shelter in front of it.

At that moment the rook drops to the first rank and checks from behind. The white king cannot hide and the pawn cannot advance without being lost.

Keeping the barrier when it no longer works. 1...♖b6 2.e6 ♖b8? 3.♔f6 After e6, the rook on the eighth rank is passive: the white king comes in and White wins.

First stop the king from entering; then check from behind.

41. Preventing the Philidor defence



Stop Black from setting up the Philidor barrier.

White wins. 1.♔d6 ♖g2 2.♖h8+ ♔f7 3.e6+ ♔f6 4.♖f8+ ♔g7 5.e7 ♖d2+ 6.♔c5 ♖c2+ 7.♔d4 ♖d2+ 8.♔c3 ♖e2

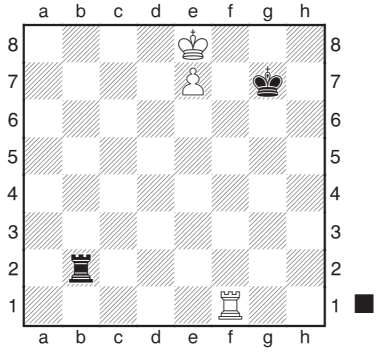
The white king reaches the sixth rank before the black rook. Without the Philidor barrier, the black king faces the white king and pawn with a passive defence.

The check 2.♖h8+ pushes the black king aside, the pawn reaches e7 with check and the white rook covers f8. When the side checks run out, the pawn promotes. 1.♖h8+ also won in the starting position.

Waiting concedes the defence. 1.♖h1? ♖g6 2.e6 ♖g2 The black rook reaches the sixth rank: after e6, it drops down to check from behind. That is the Philidor defence and White no longer wins.

Occupy the sixth rank before the enemy rook closes the way.

42. When side checks are not enough



Are side checks enough to draw here?

White wins. 1...♖b8+ 2.♔d7 ♖b7+ 3.♔d6 ♖b8 4.♔c7 ♖a8 5.♖a1 ♖h8 6.♔d7

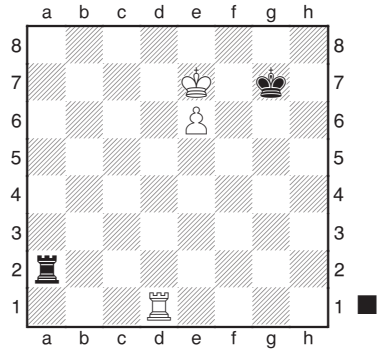
No. The pawn is already on the seventh and the rook on f1 cuts off the black king, which cannot return to the f-file. The white king approaches the black rook via d7 and d6 and, when it chases it to c7, the rook has no useful checks left.

After 5.♖a1, the white rook also covers checks along the a-file, and Black's rook has to go back to the eighth rank, where it no longer bothers the white king.

Another side defence is not enough either. 1...♖b8+ 2.♔d7 ♖b7+ 3.♔d6 ♖b6+ 4.♔c7 ♖e6 5.♔d7 If the rook returns to the pawn's file, the white king drives it away and the pawn advances protected.

Side checks need distance: once the king reaches the rook, they stop working.

43. The essential side check



Find the only defensive resource before the pawn advances.

Draw. 1... ♖a7+ 2. ♖d7 ♖a8 3. ♖d8 ♖a7+ 4. ♔d6 ♖a6+ 5. ♔e5 ♖a5+ 6. ♖d5 ♖a1 7. ♔d6 ♔f8

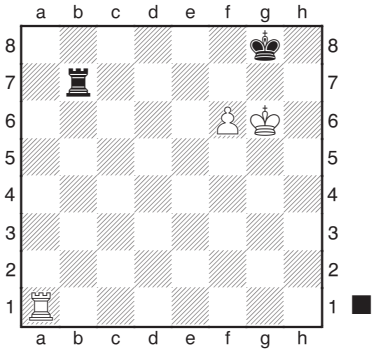
The check is the only move: it forces 2. ♖d7, and the black rook returns to a8 to watch the eighth rank. The white king has no time to get out of e7.

When the white king comes out, the black rook chases it with side checks from the a-file. Meanwhile the black king returns to f8, next to the promotion square.

A waiting move that loses. 1... ♖a3? 2. ♖g1+ Without the immediate check, White pushes the black king aside, brings his king out of e7 and the pawn promotes.

Against a king about to come out, the check must come first.

44. Saved by stalemate



Find the only move that saves Black.

Draw. 1... ♖g7+ 2. ♔f5 ♖g2

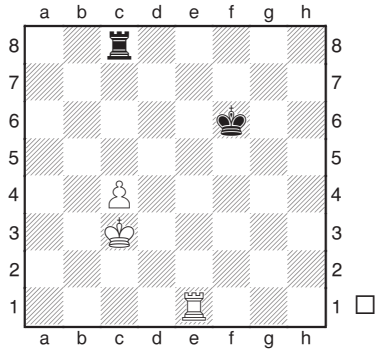
The rook offers itself on g7 with check. If 2.fxg7, the black king on g8 is not in check and has no moves: stalemate.

If White does not capture, the black rook becomes active again with 2... ♖g2 and checks from behind, and the black king stays close to the pawn. Every other move loses: the white rook threatens 2. ♖a8+ and mate.

Accepting the rook leads to stalemate. 1... ♖g7+ 2.fxg7 Before capturing the opponent's last piece, check whether his king has any moves.

A rook offered with check can rely on stalemate.

45. The two-file cut



Use the black king being cut off two files away to gain ground.

White wins. 1.♔b4 ♖b8+ 2.♔a5 ♖c8 3.♔b5 ♖b8+ 4.♔a6 ♖c8 5.♖c1 ♔e6 6.♔b7 ♖c5 7.♔b6 ♖h5 8.♖d1

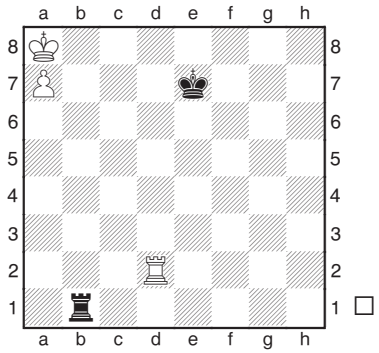
The black king is cut off two files from the pawn by the rook on e1. The white king advances beside its pawn and the black rook's checks push it forward, to a5 and a6.

With 5.♖c1 the white rook protects the pawn from behind. The white king drives the black rook away with 6.♔b7, and after 8.♖d1 the black king is still cut off on the d-file.

Advancing the pawn before improving the king. 1.♔b4 ♖b8+ 2.♔a5 ♖c8 3.♔b5 ♖b8+ 4.♔a6 ♖c8 5.♖c1 ♔e6 6.c5? ♔d7 The black king reaches c7, in front of the pawn, and it is a draw. The correct move is 6.♔b7.

Improve the king before spending the pawn's advance.

46. The king trapped in front of the pawn



Can the white king get out of the corner without losing the pawn?

Draw. 1.♖h2 ♔d7 2.♖h8 ♔c7 3.♖b8 ♖c1 4.♖b7+ ♔c8

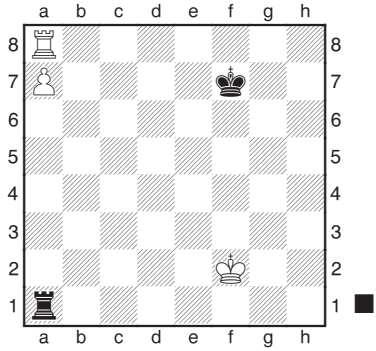
No. With the pawn on a7 and the king on a8, White needs to bring the rook to b8 to let the king out. The black king reaches c7 in time and shuts the white king in.

With the black king on c7 or c8, White can do nothing. The practical rule: if the defending king reaches the c-file, it is a draw.

Moving away from the critical square. 1.♖h2 ♔d7 2.♖h8 ♔e7? 3.♖b8 One square makes the difference: the black king does not reach c7, the white king comes out via b7 and White wins.

Against the king trapped in front of its pawn, reach c7 in time.

47. The rook tied in front of the pawn



Hold the draw without freeing the white rook.

Draw. 1...♔g7 2.♔e3 ♔h7 3.♔d4 ♔g7 4.♔c5 ♔h7 5.♔b6 ♖b1+ 6.♔a6 ♖a1+ 7.♔b7 ♖b1+ 8.♔c6 ♖a1

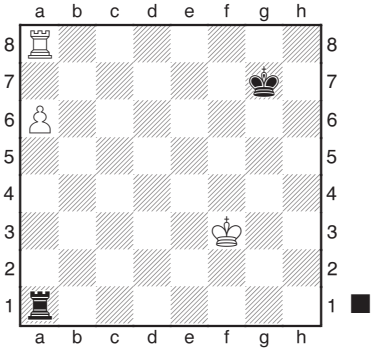
The white rook on a8 is tied to the pawn and the black king waits on g7 and h7, the squares where it cannot be checked in a way that frees the rook. The black rook stays behind the pawn, on the a-file.

When the white king approaches, the black rook checks it from behind. The white king has no shelter: if it hides on b7, the black rook returns to the a-file.

A rook that abandons its task. 1...♖a3? 2.♖h8 ♖xa7 3.♖h7+ The rook stops watching the pawn: White's rook gets out with 2.♖h8, and if 2...♖xa7, 3.♖h7+ wins the black rook with a skewer.

With the enemy rook in front of the pawn, the defending king stays on g7 and h7.

48. Vancura: defending from the side



Which defence stops the white king from freeing its rook?

Draw. 1...♖f1+ 2.♔e4 ♖f6 3.♔d5 ♖b6 4.♔c5 ♖f6 5.♔b5 ♖f5+ 6.♔b6 ♖f6+ 7.♔a7 ♖f7+ 8.♔b8 ♖f8+ 9.♔b7 ♖f7+

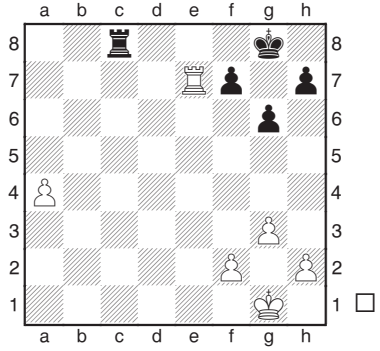
This is the Vancura position: the black rook goes to the sixth rank, on f6, and attacks the a6-pawn from the side. The white rook is forced to stay in front of the pawn.

When the white king comes to protect the pawn, the black rook gives side checks and does not let it hide. If the pawn advances to a7, the rook returns to the a-file and attacks it from behind.

Waiting with the king is not enough. 1...♔h7? 2.♔e4 ♔g7 3.♔d5 ♔h7 4.♔c6 ♔g7 5.♔b6 ♖b1+ 6.♔a7 The white king reaches b6, the white rook is freed and the pawn promotes. The black rook had to go to f6 first.

In the Vancura, the rook attacks the pawn from the side.

49. The rook behind its own pawn



Where should the rook stand to support the passed pawn?

Plan. 1. ♖e1 ♖a8 2. ♖a1

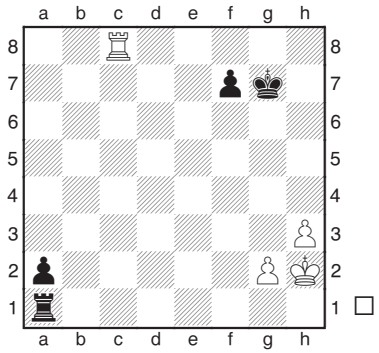
The white rook goes to a1, behind the passed a4-pawn. From there it defends the pawn without taking squares from it and gains scope each time the pawn advances.

The black rook, in front of the pawn on a8, becomes passive and loses activity with every step of the pawn. Then White centralises his king and prepares the advance.

Note. Tarrasch's rule, rook behind the passed pawn, is a guide: always check the concrete threats.

Behind the pawn, the rook supports it without blocking its advance.

50. The rook behind the enemy pawn



How do you tie down the rook protecting a pawn on the seventh?

Draw. 1. ♖a8

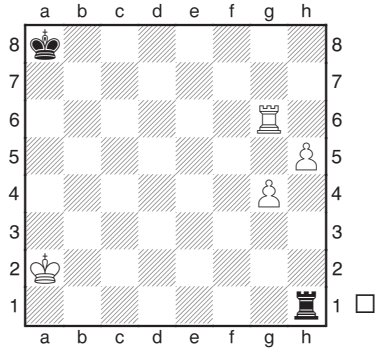
It is the only move: after 1. ♖c2 or 1. ♖c5 Black wins. From a8 the rook attacks the pawn from behind and the black rook on a1 is tied down in front of it.

The black king cannot come closer either: if it heads for the pawn via the b-file, the white rook checks it. White only has to wait with his king near g2 and h2.

Note. A rook that stops attacking the pawn suddenly frees the enemy rook.

Attacking a passed pawn from behind ties down its rook.

51. Connected pawns advancing with their rook



How do two connected pawns advance without immediate help from the king?

White wins. 1.h6 ♔b7 2.g5 ♔c7 3.♖g7+ ♔d6 4.h7 ♔e6 5.g6 ♔f6 6.♖g8

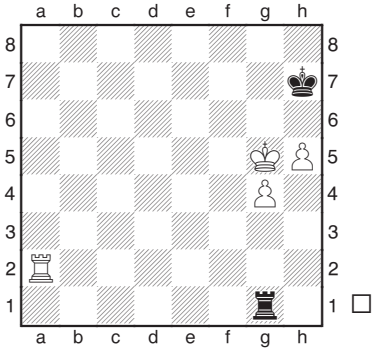
The two pawns and the rook take turns protecting each other. First the leading pawn advances, then the rear pawn supports it and finally the rook moves up to a protected square.

The black rook cannot attack the pawns from behind because they defend each other, and the black king arrives too late. After 6.♖g8 the h-pawn promotes.

Note. Do not change the order if that leaves a pawn or the rook unprotected.

Advance the leading pawn, protect it and bring the rook up.

52. Two connected pawns: coordinating the advance



Coordinate the two pawns without falling into a stalemate trap.

White wins. 1.♖a7+ ♔g8 2.h6 ♖b1 3.♔h5 ♖b5+ 4.g5 ♔h8 5.♖e7 ♖a5 6.♔g6 ♖a6+ 7.♔f5 ♖a1 8.g6 ♖f1+ 9.♔e6 ♖e1+ 10.♔d7 ♖d1+ 11.♔e8 ♖d6 12.♔f7 ♖d8 13.♖e8+ ♖xe8 14.♔xe8

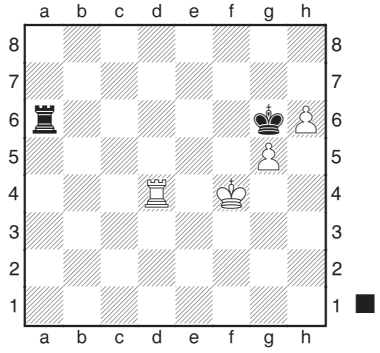
The check 1.♖a7+ sends the black king to the eighth rank and h6 takes g7 away from it. The white king advances under cover of its pawns and the rook goes to e7 to prepare ♖e8.

In the end, after the exchange of rooks, the black king cannot stop both pawns. This is a sample line: there are other defences and other winning moves.

Advancing the wrong pawn. 5.h7? ♖xg5+ 6.♔xg5 The black king on h8 has no moves: stalemate. White had to improve the rook first.

With two connected pawns, calculate stalemate before taking away the king's squares.

53. Two connected pawns that do not win



Can Black hold against the two connected pawns?

Draw. 1...♖b6 2.♖d8 ♖b4+ 3.♔e5 ♖b7 4.♖g8+ ♔h7 5.♖e8 ♔g6 6.♔f4 ♖b4+ 7.♖e4 ♖b6

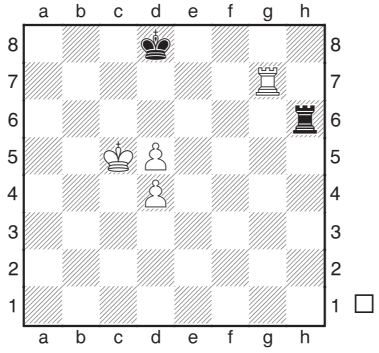
Yes. The black king on g6 holds both pawns: if h7, it takes it, and g5 cannot advance. The black rook keeps its distance on the b-file and checks the white king when it approaches.

Black does not need to win a pawn: keeping the blockade is enough. Two extra pawns do not win if they cannot advance.

Capturing breaks the blockade. 1...♖b6 2.♖d8 ♖b4+ 3.♔e5 ♔xg5? 4.h7 The black king leaves the h-pawn and it promotes.

Do not trade a stable blockade for the capture of a pawn that frees the other.

54. Doubled pawns: the Philidor method again



Do two doubled pawns change the defensive procedure?

Draw. 1.♖b7 ♖g6 2.♖b6 ♖g4 3.d6 ♖g1 4.♔c6 ♖c1+ 5.♔d5 ♖h1 6.♖b8+ ♔d7 7.♖b7+ ♔d8 8.d7 ♖h5+ 9.♔c6 ♖h6+ 10.♔c5 ♖h5+ 11.d5 ♖h6

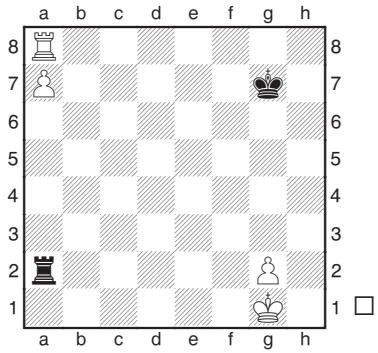
No. The black king stands in front of the pawns and the rook uses the same ideas as in the Philidor: a barrier on the sixth rank while possible and checks from behind once the pawn reaches the sixth.

The two pawns are on the same file and give the white king no shelter from the checks. The rear pawn only serves to block a check now and then.

Note. Do not be impressed by two pawns if both can be held from the same area.

Doubled pawns allow the same defence as a single pawn.

55. Rook pawn and knight pawn: the defence



Why is a second pawn not enough to win?

Draw. 1.♔h2 ♔h7 2.♔g3 ♔g7 3.♔f3 ♔h7 4.g4 ♔g7 5.g5 ♔h7 6.g6+ ♔g7 7.♔e4 ♖a1 8.♔f5 ♖a2 9.♔e5 ♖a1 10.♔d5 ♖a2 11.♔c6 ♖a1 12.♔b6 ♖b1+ 13.♔c7 ♖a1

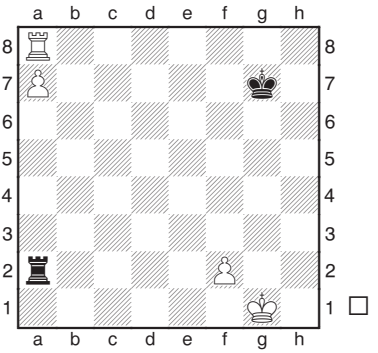
The black rook stays behind the a-pawn and the black king on g7 and h7, as in the position without the g-pawn. The g6-pawn does not manage to drive the black king off those squares.

Note 6.g6+: the black king must not capture, because after 6...♔xg6? 7.♖g8+ the a-pawn promotes; it must go to g7, which is still a safe square. If the white king approaches the a-pawn, the black rook checks it from behind.

Note. Count the threats the extra pawn creates, not just the material.

A second pawn only helps if it breaks one of the defence's functions.

56. The second pawn breaks the blockade



What difference does a pawn on the f-file make?

White wins. 1.♔g2 ♔h7 2.♔f3 ♔g7 3.♔e3 ♔h7 4.f4 ♔g7 5.f5 ♖a6 6.f6+ ♔f7 7.♖h8 ♖xa7 8.♖h7+ ♔xf6 9.♖xa7

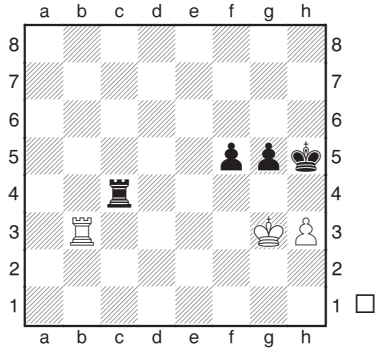
With the pawn on the f-file, the check 6.f6+ forces the black king to f7, and that is a square where Black can be skewered.

The white rook gets out with 7.♖h8 and, if Black takes on a7, 8.♖h7+ checks the king and wins the rook on a7. The extra pawn has served to change the black king's square.

Note. Check whether capturing the a-pawn leaves the enemy rook exposed to a double attack.

A pawn that gives check can disorganise a fortress.

57. Two against one on the same wing



How do you stop the attacking king from penetrating?

Draw. 1.♖b8 f4+ 2.♔g2 ♖c2+ 3.♔f3 ♖c3+ 4.♔g2 ♖g3+ 5.♔h2 ♖e3 6.♔g2 ♔g6 7.♖f8 ♖e2+ 8.♔f3 ♖h2 9.♖h8

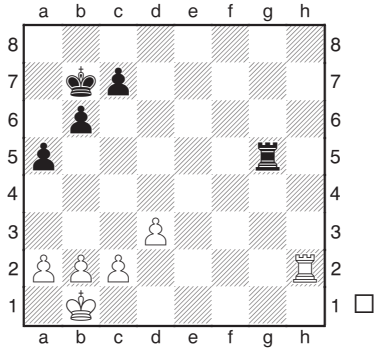
With all the pawns on the same wing, two against one is usually a draw. The white rook stays active on the eighth rank, ready to check the black king from behind.

The white king holds g2 and f3, in front of the black pawns, and the rook keeps watch from f8 or h8. Black cannot create a passed pawn that gets through to promote.

Note. A passive rook or a king that retreats needlessly lets the enemy king in.

With all the pawns on one wing, activity is the best defence.

58. Active defence and pawn exchanges



How should the side a pawn down defend?

Plan. 1.♔c1 ♖g1+ 2.♔d2 b5 3.a3 ♔b6 4.♔c3 c6 5.♔d4 ♖b1

White has an extra pawn on the queenside, and Black defends with an active rook on the first rank and advanced pawns ready to be exchanged.

The black rook on b1 attacks b2 and keeps the white rook busy. Every pawn exchange brings Black closer to a draw. Exchanging rooks is not advisable: the resulting pawn ending would be dangerous.

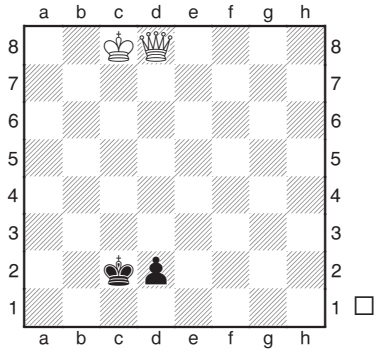
Note. An active defence must watch both the king's entry and the pawn breaks.

Exchange pawns when you can, but keep the rook active.

V. Queen endings

A queen stops a pawn on the seventh rank with checks, but stalemate and the distance between the kings decide the result. With queens on both sides, king safety comes first.

59. Forcing the king to block its pawn



How is a tempo gained to bring the king closer?

White wins. 1.♕c7+ ♔b1 2.♕b6+ ♔c2 3.♕c5+ ♔b1 4.♕b4+ ♔c2 5.♕c4+ ♔b2 6.♕d3 ♔c1 7.♕c3+ ♔d1 8.♔c7 ♔e2 9.♕c2 ♔e1 10.♕e4+ ♔f2 11.♕d3 ♔e1

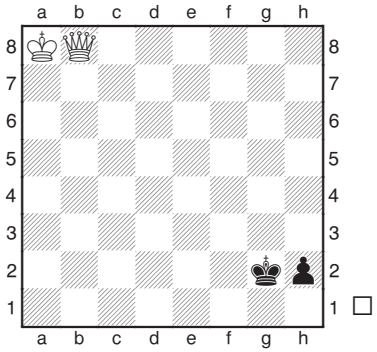
The queen approaches with zigzag checks, always threatening the pawn. After 7.♕c3+ ♔d1, the black king stands in front of its pawn: d1 is occupied and the pawn cannot promote.

That is the moment for the free move: 8.♔c7. The procedure repeats, checks until the black king blocks its pawn and one step of the white king each time, until it arrives to win the pawn or give mate.

Note. Do not bring your king closer while the opponent can still promote.

Force the defending king to block its pawn; then bring yours closer.

60. Rook pawn and the stalemate resource



Why does the rook pawn offer a special defence?

Draw. 1.♕g8+ ♔h1 2.♕d5+ ♔g1 3.♕g5+ ♔h1 4.♕d2 ♔g1 5.♕e3+ ♔h1 6.♕f3+ ♔g1

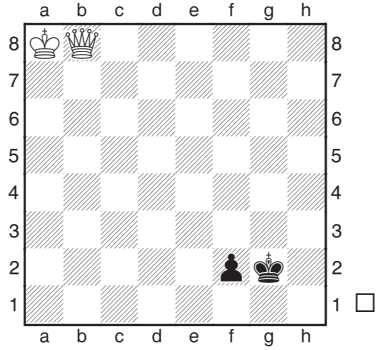
Against the rook pawn the previous method does not work: when the black king goes to h1 in front of its pawn, it is not blocking but stalemated, and White cannot use that tempo to bring his king closer.

If the queen does not give check, Black promotes or is left in stalemate. With the white king so far away, on a8, it is a draw.

Note. If the attacking king were much closer, there would be mating nets and the result would change.

The corner and stalemate explain the rook pawn's resistance.

61. The bishop pawn's refuge



What happens if the queen takes the f2-pawn?

Draw. 1.♕g8+ ♔h1 2.♕h7+ ♔g1 3.♕g6+ ♔h1 4.♕h5+ ♔g1 5.♕g4+ ♔h1 6.♕f3+ ♔g1 7.♕g3+ ♔h1 8.♕xf2

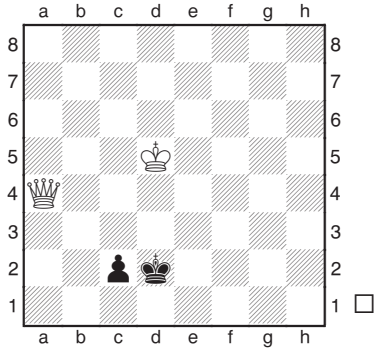
With the bishop pawn, the black king goes to h1 instead of f1. If the queen takes the pawn, Black is stalemated: that is the bishop pawn's defensive resource.

And if the queen does not take it, Black threatens to promote. With the white king so far away, there is no way to win.

Note. Before capturing the last pawn, check whether your opponent is stalemated.

The bishop pawn defends itself indirectly through stalemate.

62. A nearby king breaks the defence



Why can the white king join in here?

White wins. 1.♕d4+ ♔e2 2.♕c3 ♔d1 3.♕d3+ ♔c1 4.♔c4 ♔b2 5.♕c3+ ♔b1 6.♔b3 c1=♕ 7.♕d3+ ♔a1 8.♕a6+ ♔b1 9.♕a2#

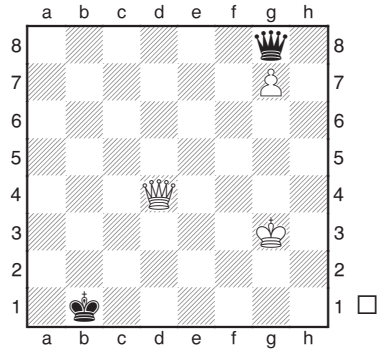
The white king is on d5, very close. After 3.♕d3+ ♔c1, the black king blocks its pawn and White brings his king closer with 4.♔c4.

Even if Black promotes with 6...c1=♕, the mating net is ready: the white king on b3 and the checking queen finish with 9.♕a2#.

Note. Compare this position with the previous one: the distance of the attacking king changes the result.

With the attacking king nearby, the stalemate exceptions disappear.

63. Finding a shelter for the king



Where can the white king take shelter?

White wins. 1.♔g2 ♕e6 2.♕g1+ ♔b2 3.♔h1 ♕g8 4.♕g3 ♔c1 5.♔g1 ♔b1 6.♕g2 ♔c1 7.♕f1+ ♔d2 8.♕f8

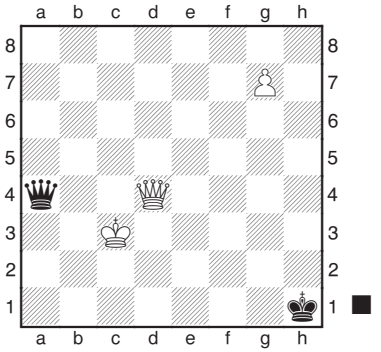
The g7-pawn is one step from promoting, but the white king is exposed to the black queen's checks. The first job is to hide it: with 3.♔h1 and 5.♔g1, in the corner, it no longer receives any check.

With the king safe, the white queen goes to f8 to support promotion or force the exchange of queens. Chasing the black king with checks would not have helped: the shelter for one's own king decides.

Note. If you give checks without a plan, the enemy queen will keep checking too; look for the shelter first.

First make your king safe; then organise the promotion.

64. The checking wheel



How does the black queen keep up a wheel of checks?

Draw. 1...♕a1+ 2.♔d3 ♕d1+ 3.♔e3 ♕g1+ 4.♔e4 ♕g4+ 5.♔d5 ♕d7+ 6.♔c5 ♕a7+ 7.♔c4 ♕a4+ 8.♔c3 ♕a1+

White threatens to promote, but his king has no shelter. The checks from a1, d1, g1, g4, d7, a7 and a4 form a closed circuit.

The line returns to its starting point. The white queen can never interpose with check, and the white king finds nowhere to hide.

Note. Not every check works: the chosen square must keep the king away from shelter.

Perpetual check relies on the enemy king having no shelter.

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