



**#1 – December 19, 2002**

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**Welcome to the first issue of Black Belt.** Each week we present 3-5 rotating [content sections](#). Most are chess training sections on tactics, openings, game analysis, puzzles, and endgames.

We'll also include fun things like trivia, interviews, book and software reviews, and highlights from chess history. Make sure to let us know your favorite sections.

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**Q&A:** We need your chess questions games in PGN for our Ask the Experts sections! Send them to [blackbelt@chessninja.com](mailto:blackbelt@chessninja.com).

**FEEDBACK:** Please tell us what you like and don't like, if things are too easy or too hard, and suggest new sections. Post your comments in the ChessNinja [message boards](#) or e-mail us at [blackbelt@chessninja.com](mailto:blackbelt@chessninja.com).

## NINJA NEWS



One of the hottest topics in the chess world right now is drug testing. Is it part of being a serious sport or is it just a way to intimidate players and try to make money for bureaucrats? Can drugs improve your chess? Doesn't a strong cup of coffee or a Pepsi or two make you more alert? What do you think? Vote in a poll on the matter and speak your mind in the message boards. Go the [Hall of Flame](#) to vote.

The Master Writes



**This week we welcome  
International Master  
Cyrus Lakdawala of  
Southern California**

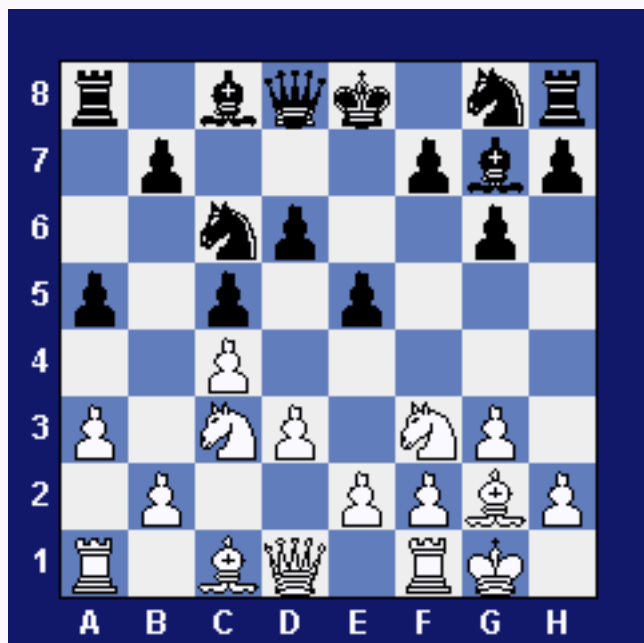
**Lakdawala,C (2437) - Yermolinsky,A (2575) [A37]  
38th American Open Los Angeles USA (7), 01.12.2002**

**Yermo is a tough opponent for me (or anyone for that matter).**

Problem is, Yermo and I have exactly the same style, except that he outrates me by 100 points. The result when this sort of thing happens is that your minds are thinking along the same lines, except that his processor is faster and better.



If you are the lower rated player I have found that its much more in your favor to play and opponent with a totally opposite style. **1.Nf3 g6 2.c4 Bg7 3.Nc3 c5 4.g3 Nc6 5.Bg2 e5 6.O-O d6 7.a3 a5 8.d3?!**



The normal move here is 8.Ne1 with the idea to transfer to e3, via the c2 square. On e3 white has a lock on the important d5 square. Trouble was, paranoia set in: "What if he plays ...h5!? and mates me on the h-file? A lot of good control of d5 would do me then," I thought.

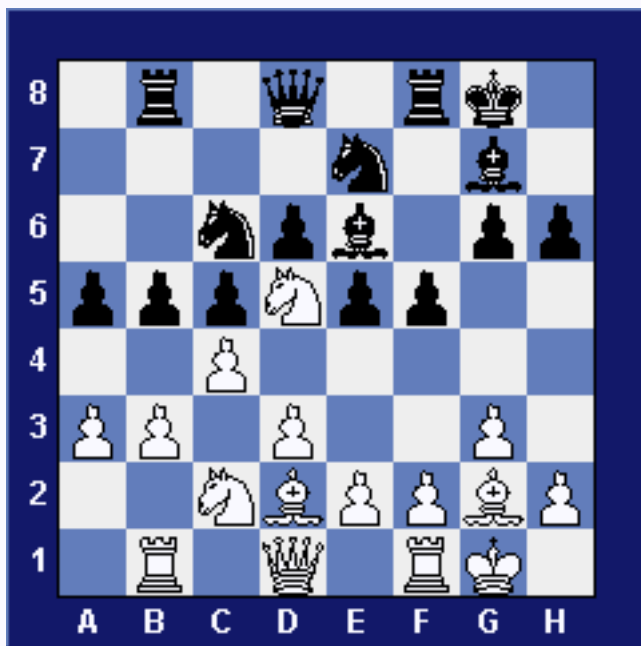
Looking back it looks like an irrational decision. i.e. 8.Ne1 h5?! 9.Nc2 ( 9.Nf3!?) 9...h4 10.Ne3 Be6 11.Ned5 and Black can't play either ...Qd7 or ...Qc8 due to the fork on the b6 square. White should be able to generate punishing counterplay then with a b2-b4 later.

**8...Nge7 9.Ne1 Be6** Threatening to grab the initiative with 10...d5. **10.Nd5** Had I played

8.Ne1! I could then have played here 10.Ne3!

**10...O-O 11.Nc2 Rb8 12.Bg5 f6 13.Bd2 b5 14.b3 h6 15.Rb1 f5**

Here it comes. Now the principle is that a wing attack is best met by a counter in the center, so 16.f4 is an option. Another idea is to chicken out and head for a very drawish position with mass exchanges. I should have played this or gone for 16.f4. Now Yermo's pieces come to life.

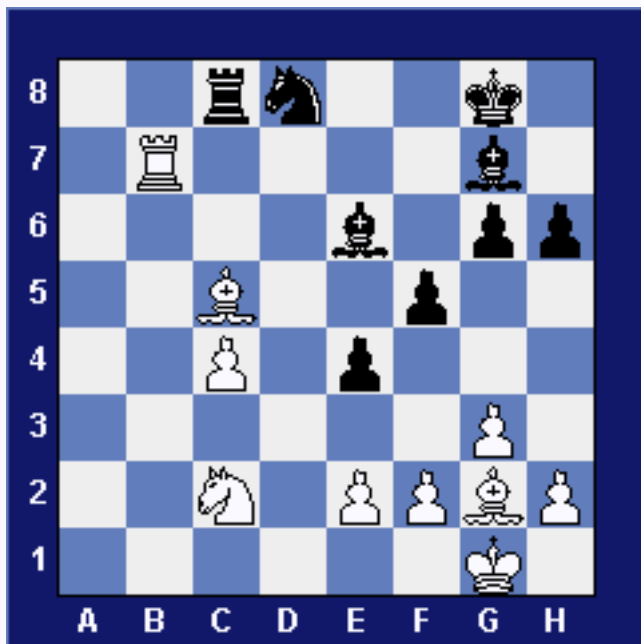


**16.b4?** [ 16.Nxe7+ Nxe7 17.cxb5 Rxb5 18.b4 axb4 19.axb4 cxb4 20.Rxb4 Rxb4 21.Bxb4 is the chicken line.] **16...axb4 17.axb4 bxc4 18.dxc4 e4!** Now what? White's position has soured quickly. **19.bxc5** [ 19.b5?! Ne5 20.Nce3 Nxc4! is what I overlooked when entering this variation.] **19...Rxb1 20.Qxb1 dxc5 21.Rd1!**

[ 21.Nxe7+?! Qxe7 22.Qb5 Rc8! and now ...Nd4 becomes a major strategic threat. 23.e3? Ne5 is no help also. At least 21.Rd1 fights for the initiative. ( 22...Nd4? 23.Nxd4 cxd4 24.Bb4 favors white.) ]

**21...Qb8 22.Nxe7+ Nxe7 23.Be3 Qxb1 24.Rxb1 Rc8?!** [ 24...Bxc4! 25.Bxc5 Rc8

26.Bxe7 Ba2! 27.Rb7 Rxc2 is not so easy for white to hold.] **25.Rb7?** A typical time trouble "active" move. Alex told me after the game that the simple 25.Na3 should hold easily. **25...Nc6 26.Bxc5 Nd8!** I had counted on [ 26...Na5? 27.Rb5!]



**27.Re7!?** I just couldn't stomach the endgame arising from 27.Rxg7+, so I was willing to get my Rook into a horrible tangle just to stay alive. I looked over at Yermo's clock and noticed he had less than 5 minutes, then noticed that I was under 2 minutes to reach move 40!

**27...Bf6 28.Re8+ Kf7 29.Rf8+ Kg7 30.Ba3**

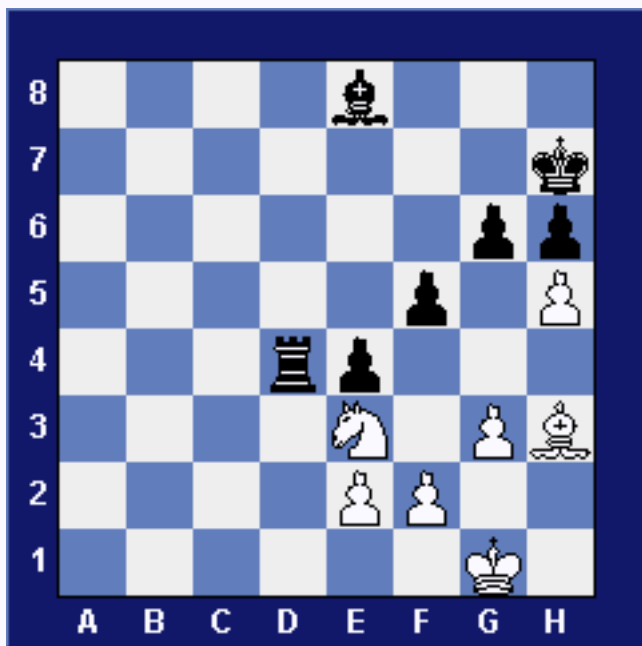
**Bxc4 31.Ne3!?** **Bf7?!** It was all a bluff.

31...Bxe2 wins after [ 31...Bxe2 32.Bf1 Bxf1 33.Kxf1 Ra8 34.Nd5 Bg5! 35.Bb4 Ra4!] **32.h4 Ra8 33.Bb4 Ra4 34.Bc5 Be6!** Not falling for [ 34...Ra1+ 35.Bf1 Ne6 36.Rc8 Rc1?? 37.Bf8+!+- 34...Be6! covers the c8 square!]

**35.Re8 Bd7!** He is all set for 36.Rf8 Ne6!

**36.Bf8+! Kh7!** [ 36...Kf7?! 37.Rxd8 Bxd8

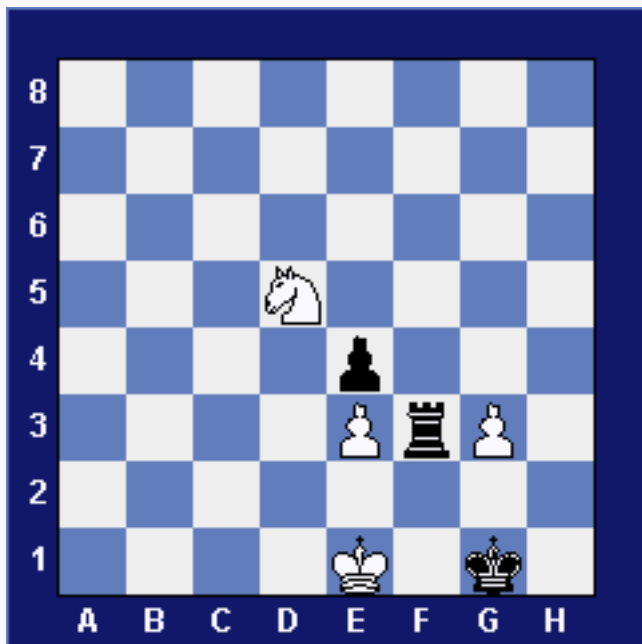
38.Bxh6 Gives white chances to hold.] **37.Be7! Bxe8 38.Bxf6 Ne6 39.h5 Nd4 40.Bxd4 Rxd4 41.Bh3** I felt pretty sure the position was a draw now.



**41...gxf5!!** After a deep think Yermo uncorked 41...gh5!! A profound idea. Alex foresees the coming Rook vs N endgame and reasons that his only winning chance is in creating a passed h-pawn. The first doubled pawn is traded for the white g-pawn, the second h-pawn then emerges as a passer.

**42.Bxf5+ Bg6 43.Bxg6+ Kxg6 44.Ng2 Kf5 45.Nh4+ Kg4 46.e3 Rd6 47.Kh2 Ra6 48.Kg2 Rf6** Breaking down the white fortress. Black's king enters. Now the question is: can the Knight pick off enough black pawns before black's king and rook win white's pawns? **49.Kf1 Kh3 50.Ng2 Ra6 51.Nf4+ Kg4 52.Ng2 Ra1+ 53.Ke2 Ra5 54.Nh4**

Forced. 54.Nf4? would be met by 54...h4! and black gets his passer. **54...Kh3 55.Ng6 Kh2 56.Nf4 Ra1 57.Nxh5 Kg1 58.Nf4 Ra2+ 59.Ke1 h5! [ 59...Rxf2?? 60.Nh3+ ] 60.Nxh5 Rxf2 61.Nf4 Rf3 62.Nd5**



**62...Kg2!** Accurate to the end. [ 62...Rxf3? 63.Nf6! Rxe3+ 64.Kd2 Rd3+ 65.Ke2 Rd4 66.Ke3 draws.] **63.g4 Rg3 64.Kd2 Kf3 65.Kc3 Rxf3 66.Kd4 Rg8 0-1** [67.Nf6 Rd8+ 68.Ke5 Kxe3 69.Nxe4 Re8+ ]

[View this game online](#)

[Download annotated game in PGN](#)

Piece & Harmony



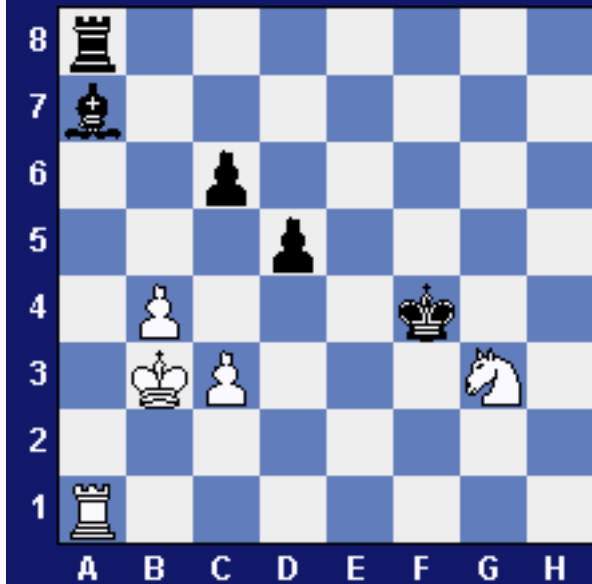
## Study by Jan Timman, 1981

### White to play and win

Things look easy for white thanks to the a-file pin. The key to the defense is that **some** of the R vs. B endings are drawn. There is also a beautiful mutual zugzwang to be wary of.

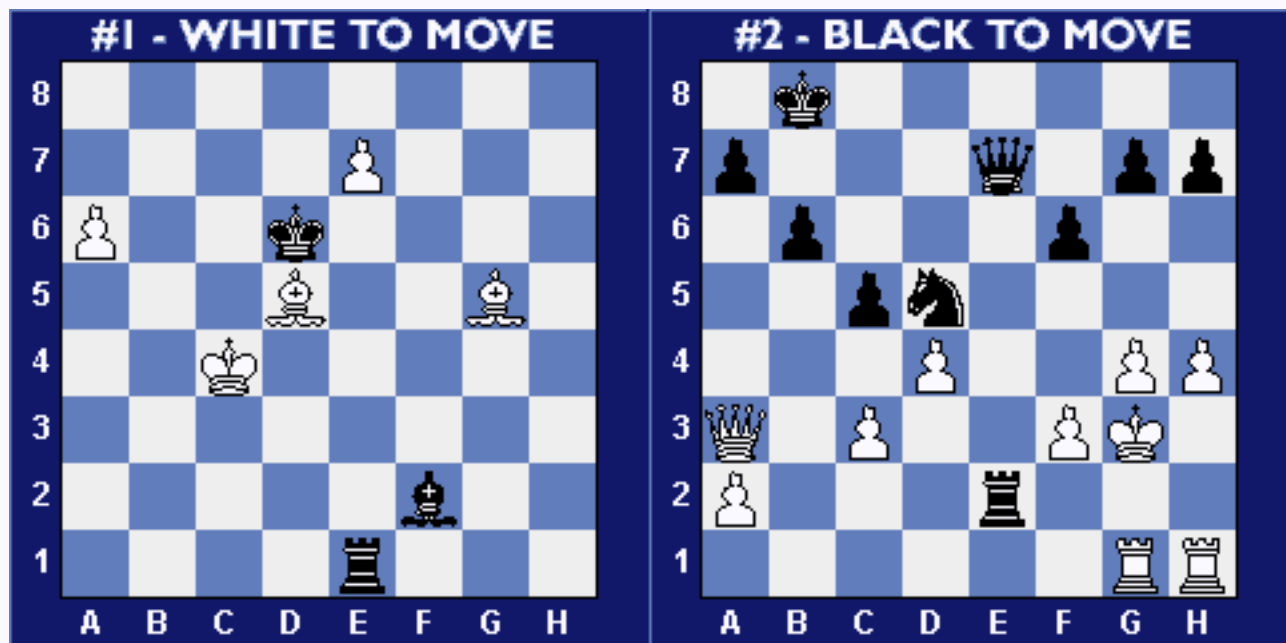
The solution is at the end of this issue, or you can view it online.

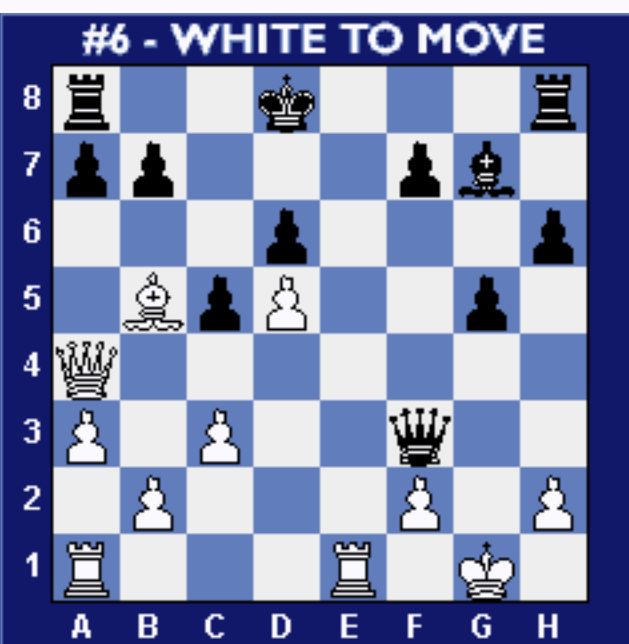
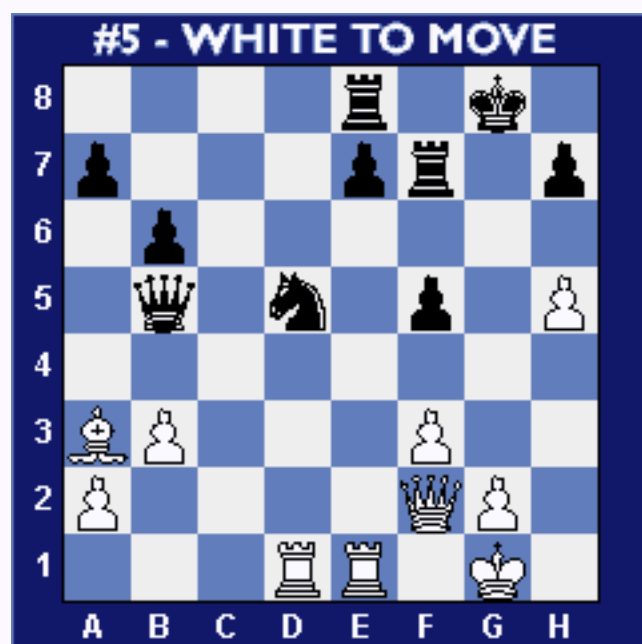
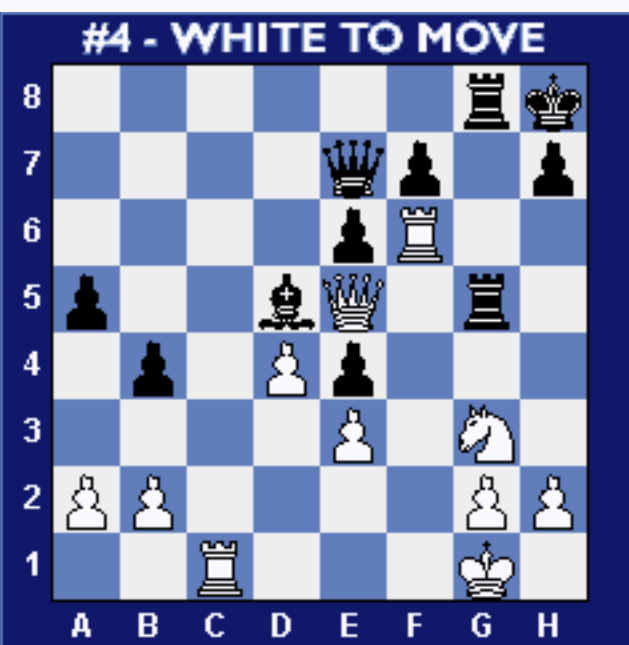
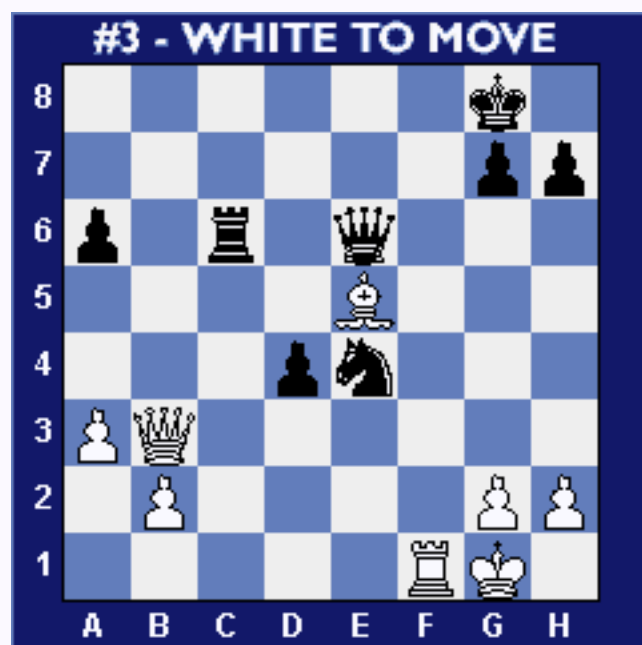
[Play over the solution online](#)



**Solving tactical problems is fun and good practice.** It can be even more useful if you take a few extra seconds to look at the pattern that created winning position and the characteristics that formed the ingredients. While just about every position you encounter is unique, these characteristics rarely are.

Find the best move for the side to move. The answers are at the end of the page, but don't check them until you've spent at least a few minutes on each position.





[Play over the positions and solutions online](#)

Assume the Position







**In this section we give you some homework.** Analyze the position in the diagram. Consider the strengths and weaknesses for both white and black, and potential continuations for either side. We strongly encourage you to make notes of your thoughts and variations.

In the next issue we will present Master analysis of the position and you can compare this with your own notes and the game continuation.

If you believe that two heads (or 200!) are better than one, then we encourage you to post your ideas and analysis to the Black Belt [message board](#) at ChessNinja.com. Please don't look the game up in a database, that won't help you learn

very much!



## Ninja Tactics

(1) Interference - Level 3

**1.Be3! Rxe3** [ 1...Bxe3 2.e8Q] **2.a7 1-0**

(2) Interference - Level 4

**1...Qc7+ [1...Qd6+] 2.Kh3 Nf4+ 3.Kg3 Nh5+ 4.Kh3 Qg3+ 5.Rxg3 Nf4# 0-1** Here the key ingredient is the rook on the 7th rank that cuts off the white king.

(3) Interference - Level 3

**1.Bd6! Rxd6** [1...Nxd6 2.Qxe6+; 1...Qxb3 2.Rf8#] **2.Qb8+ Rd8 3.Qxd8+ Qe8 4.Qxe8# 1-0** The familiar theme of a weak back rank is critical here. The Bd6+Rf8 mate position is worth noting.

(4) Halkias,S - Mastrovasilis,D

**27.Nf5 Rxf5** [27...Rxg2+ 28.Kh1 Qf8 29.Rxf7+ Qg7 30.Rxg7 R2xg7 31.Nxg7 h6 32.Nxe6+ Kh7 33.Rc7+ Rg7 34.Qxg7#] **28.Rxf5+ f6 29.Rxf6 1-0** Many themes here. The pin on the e-pawn allows White to attract the black rook to f5. The threat of discovered check is terribly strong, and the back rank weakness is exploited by the c1 rook's placement on an open file.

(5) Janssen,R - Van Blitterswijk,S

**29.Qg3+ Rg7 30.Qe5 Rd8** [30...e6 31.Bb2 Qc5+ 32.Kh1 Ree7 ( 32...Qc7 33.Qxg7+ Qxg7 34.Bxg7 Kxg7 35.Rxd5) 33.Rc1] **31.Bb2 1-0** A good look at the position reveals that the black king cannot be defended without heavy material loss. The key is the long diagonal. The clues are: Black has no dark-squared bishop to counter White's; White gains

control of the diagonal with tempo due to the awkward position of the black knight; Black's king is open to a critical check.

#### **(6) Interference - Level 4**

**1.Be8 Qf5 2.Re6! 1-0** It is very unusual to have your Q2 under attack in such an open position, but the black rooks are not connected and this permits a quick finish. With only the queen available to stop mate in one, the interference tactic is found quickly.

### **Piece & Harmony**

**Study by Jan Timman 1981**

**1.Ne2+ Ke5 2.Nd4 Kd6 3.b5!** [ 3.Ra6 Bxd4 4.Rxa8 Be5= 5.c4 dxc4+ 6.Kxc4] **3...cxb5** [ 3...Bxd4 4.Rxa8 Bb6 5.Ka4 cxb5+ ( 5...Kc7 6.Rf8! cxb5+ 7.Kxb5 Be3 8.Rf3 Bg1 9.Rd3 Kd6 10.c4+-) 6.Kxb5 Bf2 7.Rd8+ Ke5 8.Kc6 d4 9.c4 Ke4 10.c5 d3 11.Kb5+- ] **4.Nxb5+** [ 4.Rxa7? Rxa7 5.Nxb5+ Kc6! 6.Nxa7+ Kc5= A mutual zugzwang position!] **4...Kc5 5.Rxa7** [ 5.Nxa7 In his book "Games and Studies" Timman calls this move a mistake, but instead of his 6.Ra5+? white wins with 6.cxd4+ since the pawn is immune. 5...d4 6.Ra5+? ( 6.cxd4+ Kb6 ( 6...Kxd4 7.Nc6+ Kc5 8.Rxa8) 7.Kc4) 6...Kb6= ] **5...Rb8 6.Ka4! Rxb5 7.Rc7+ Kb6 8.Rb7+ 1-0** [ 8.Rb7+ Kxb7 9.Kxb5 Kc7 10.Kc5 Kb7 11.Kxd5 Kc7 12.Kc5 Kb7 13.Kd6 Kb6 14.c4 Kb7 15.c5 Kc8 16.Kc6 Kd8 17.Kb7]

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