



#19 – April 22, 2003

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Analyze This • Games of the Weak • The Bitter End

A monster issue with 14 pages and 22 diagrams! Many kings with many problems. You'll be castling in your sleep after this issue. Think of all the tactics you won't have to worry about with your king safely behind your g-pawn.

Disaster can strike at any time, even in the opening. You'll see a few classic tactics that you might recognize. You'd better make sure you know them well or you could be on the wrong end!

We end with an epic endgame lesson with some new terminology and some old-school methods. Learn how to corral those knights for good.

Q&A: We need your chess questions and games in PGN for our Ask the Masters section. Send them to whitebelt@chessninja.com.

Download all the chess material and annotations in this issue in PGN format (text or reader software) [here](#). In ChessBase (Fritz, etc. format (CBV) [here](#). Online replay page [here](#).

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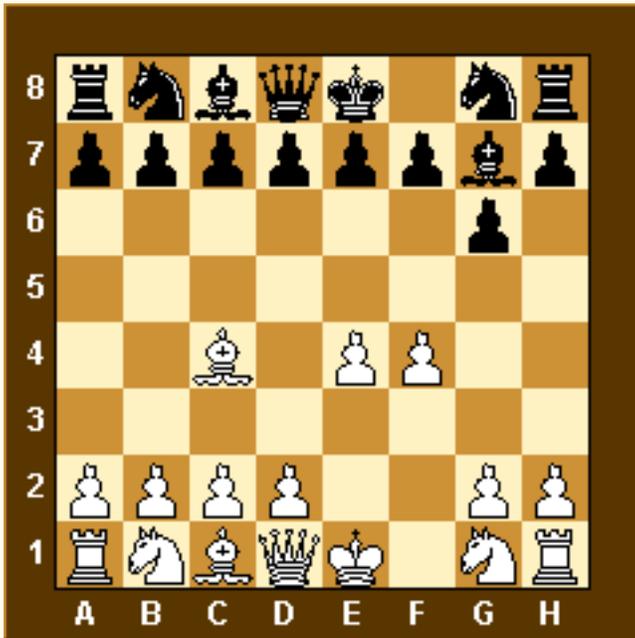
Analyze This

The Centralized King?

This week's reader game illustrates the danger of leaving your king in the center. It is also a good example of how quickly opportunities can slip through your fingers. Even if you have a great position the initiative is crucial. Don't let your attack fizzle out at the first sign of counterplay. Sometimes you have to take a few hits in order to land the knockout blow.

SJiveh8814 (1774) - FirebrandX (1730)
Internet, 31.03.2003

1.e4 g6 2.f4 Bg7 3.Bc4? The saying "knights before bishops" is an old one for good reason. The best squares for the knights are relatively obvious: c3 and f3. You KNOW if you play Nf3 here it's not going to be a mistake. But when a bishop comes out early your opponent can react to its placement and limit its scope. For example, as in this game.



3...e6 Maybe a little early for this, but the idea is definitely correct. The a2-g8 diagonal is usually a good one for a bishop because it intersects f7, the weakest square in the enemy position. It is the only square that is only protected by the king. But after ..e6 the bishop on c4 is, as we say, biting on granite and looks silly.

Note that if Black had already played ..e5, then Bc4 is much better because it can't be so easily blocked out. But here Black can still play moves like ..c6 and ..d5, stuffing the bishop completely and developing with a gain of time.

4.Nf3 d5! Freedom for my people! Black develops his queen and queen's bishop, fights for the center, and all with a gain of time because

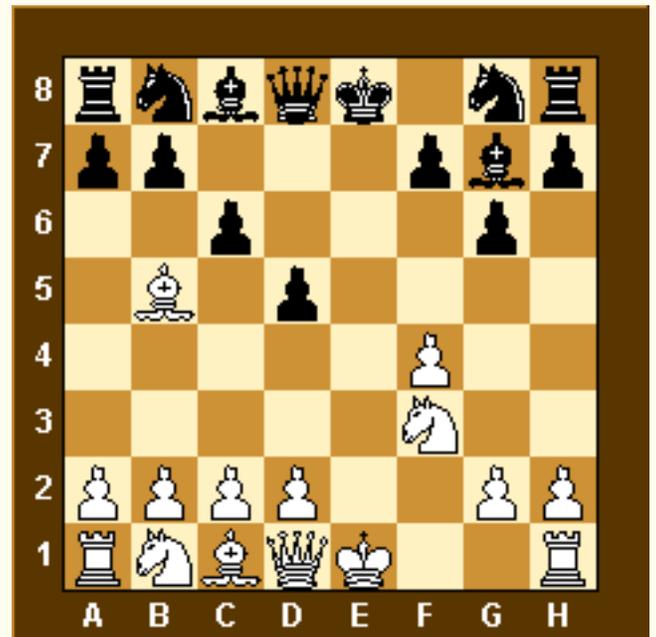
the white bishop will have to move. It's like getting free moves!

5.exd5 exd5 6.Bb5+ It's not necessarily bad to toss in this check because ..c6 takes the best square away from the b8 knight. **6...c6**

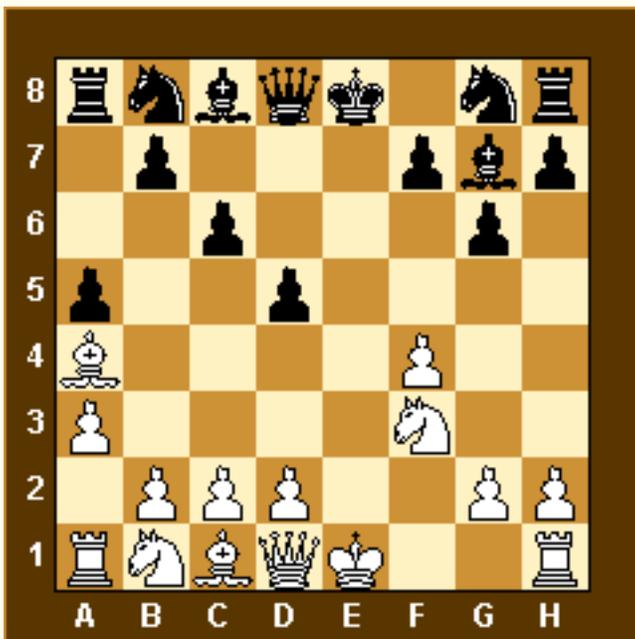
7.Ba4? But this? It's going to take this bishop a long time to get back into the game with that black pawn chain b7-c6-d5 in its face. Be2 kept it in play and on the right side of the fence.

7...a5?! Not bad, but Black is guilty of playing an inferior move while looking for a trap. He's hoping White won't notice the threat of ..b5 and ..a4, trapping and winning the bishop. The move also gains space on the queenside, not a bad thing.

The problem is that White has a defense that is a move he wants to play anyway: c3. That would give his bishop an escape square on c2 where it would be back in the game. Playing for traps is okay if the moves are otherwise justified, but don't force your opponent to play good moves!



8.a3? White sees the threat of ..b5 and ..a4, but opens up the wrong escape square. Why is he so in love with the a7-g8 diagonal when it is completely closed off? [8.c3]



8...Nf6?! Why not continue with the plan started with ..a5? Bury that bishop and gain space with ..b5 and ..a4! Now White still has a chance to play c3 and get his bishop back in the game from c2.

This move is also a little dubious because it blocks in the fine g7 bishop. With the a1-h8 diagonal open for that monster bishop it is going to be hard for White to develop his queenside. The knight could come out to e7, perhaps heading to f5. [8...b5 9.Bb3 a4 10.Ba2]

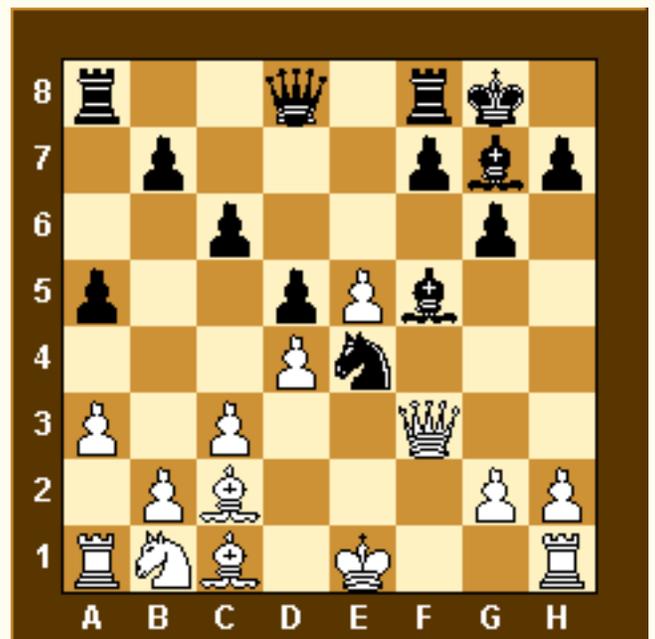
9.d4 0-0 10.c3 The white king is still sitting in the center, creating tactical chances for Black. Because of the poor 3.Bc4 move White has lost a lot of time and is now behind in development.

10...Bf5 A routine move that allows White to castle. Why not develop the rook to the center with check, gaining time? [10...Re8+ 11.Ne5 Bg4 Again developing with gain of TEMPO. Free moves! 12.Qd3 (12.Qd2 Ne4) 12...Bf5 13.Qf3 b5]

11.Ne5 Nbd7 12.Bc2 Ne4 13.Qf3? What does White have against castling?! Now things get ugly against his exposed king. Get your main man out of traffic before he gets hit by a bus. This move doesn't do anything at all and leaves the bishop on c2 without protection.
13...Nxe5 14.fxe5

14...Ng3? One point for seeing the discovered attack tactic on the c2 bishop. Minus three points for believing it was a good move just because it was possible! Don't fall in love with cute moves, they'll break your heart in the end. Just because a tactic is possible doesn't mean the resulting position is better for you.

Meanwhile, Black could have followed-up his fine opening play and taken advantage of his lead in development with 14...f6!. That would open lines, which is almost always good for the better-developed side. It would open the f-file for the f8 rook to attack the white queen on f3 and threaten to open the e-file against the sitting duck white king.



[14...f6! 15.exf6 Qxf6 16.0-0 Qh4 17.Bf4 Rae8 Black lead in development and central control is close to overwhelming.]

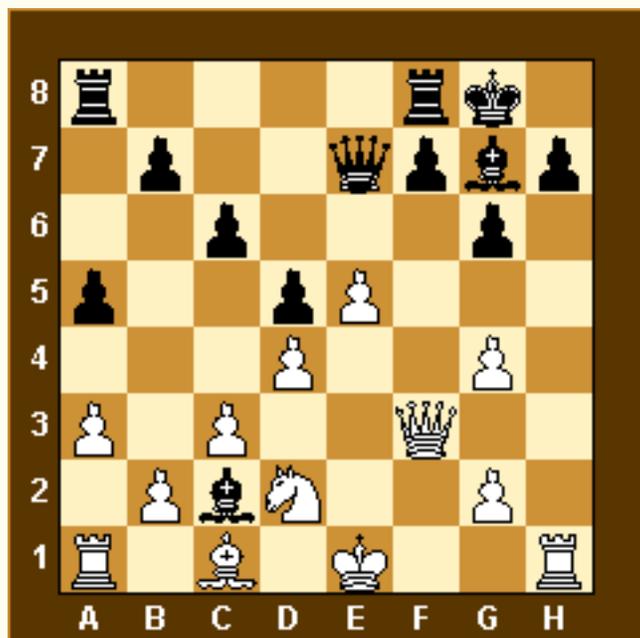
15.hxg3? Seduced by the open h-file, we can only assume. But the problem is the e-file and the king sitting on e1. Beep beep! It wouldn't take more than a minute to see that

White has no real chances of attacking on the h-file.

[15.Qxg3 Bxc2 16.0-0 And Black has little to show for his adventure.]

15...Bxc2 16.Nd2 Where is this poor beast going? Even worse it stuffs the bishop.

16...Qe7 [16...f6 Play the most forcing moves first. The Black queen might want to play to another square later, but you KNOW ..f6 is coming, so play it first.] **17.g4?** Fiddling while Rome burns, still dreaming of Qh3-Qxh7 mate. Does White know that you only get to play one move at a time?



17...f6! Can you hear the bus coming? **18.Qh3** At least he's consistent. The most amusing part of this is that there isn't even a mate threat on h7 anymore and Black could have just ignored it completely and continued with his own attack. Qh3 opened up the f3 square for the knight, so White's position is almost looking reasonable after that.

18...h6?! Reflex, but not best.

18...fxe5! **19.Qxh7+ Kf7 20.0-0+ Ke6** Safe! Black development advantage is massive and he is threatening to win the white queen with ..Rh8. White is doomed. This looks a little scary, but to succeed at chess you have to DO THE MATH when it is required.

Don't think "Eek, he can take on h7 with check" and play a lazy move. There was no real threat at all and Black gained a move for his own attack by capturing on e5.

When you are in an attack/counterattack situation you should only play a defensive move when it is absolutely required, or if you can really shut down your opponent's attack completely with a well-timed defensive shot. The best defense is a good offense, as the saying goes.

19.Nf3 The worst is over for White now. Black is still much better because of the two bishops and the fractured white pawns on the kingside. There is still a lot of chess ahead.

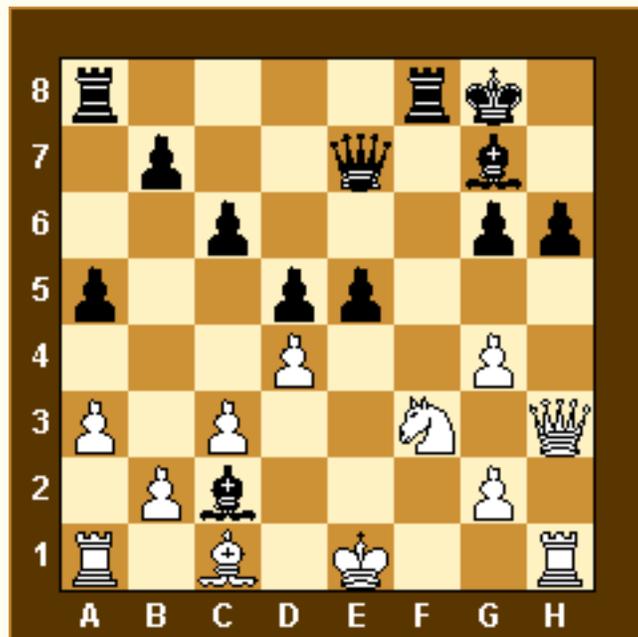
19...fxe5

20.Nxe5?? Well, never mind! Instead of giving up a pawn and escaping with his king, White decides to go down in a big ball of fire. Nothing more than he deserved after leaving his king in the middle for so long, I suppose.

[20.dxe5 The only move. 20...Bxe5 21.0-0! At last! A pawn is a small price to pay for getting the king out of traffic.]

20...Bxe5 21.Kd2 Hari-kiri to end the suffering. Now it's mate in three. Capturing dragged things on into a lost rook endgame.

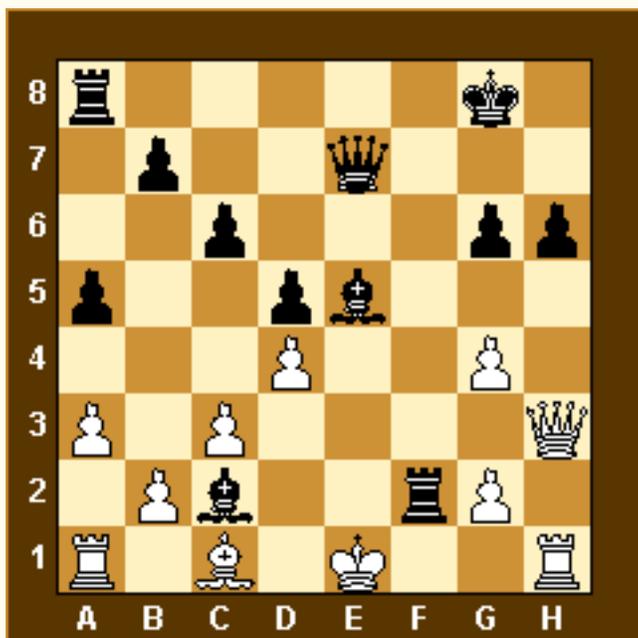
[21.dxe5 Qxe5+ 22.Qe3 (22.Be3 Rae8 23.Qxh6 Qxe3+ The simplest, although ..g5 is faster according to Fritz.]



(23...g5! Covering h7 with the bishop and cutting off the queen's protection of the bishop. 24.Qh3 Bg6 In general play for the most direct road to victory. Black has a tremendous attack going, so why trade down into a rook endgame if you can wrap things up quickly? Only if you are unsure about how much counterplay your opponent is getting should you bail out of a strong attack. 25.Ke2 d4 26.cxd4 Qb5+ 27.Ke1 Qd3 Crunch! 28.Qh8+ Kf7 29.Rf1+ Qxf1+! 30.Kxf1 Rxb2)

24.Qxe3 Rxe3+ 25.Kd2 Rg3 26.Kxc2 Rxc2+ 27.Kd3 Rf3+ 28.Kd4 Rxb2) 22...Rae8 23.Qxe5 Rxe5+ 24.Be3 (24.Kd2 Rf2#) 24...Rxe3+ 25.Kd2 Rg3 26.Kxc2 Rxc2+ 27.Kb3 a4+! 28.Ka2 (28.Kxa4 Rxb2 29.Ka5 Ra8#) 28...Rff2 29.Rab1 Total domination.]

21...Rf2+ 22.Ke1 [22.Ke3 Bg3#]



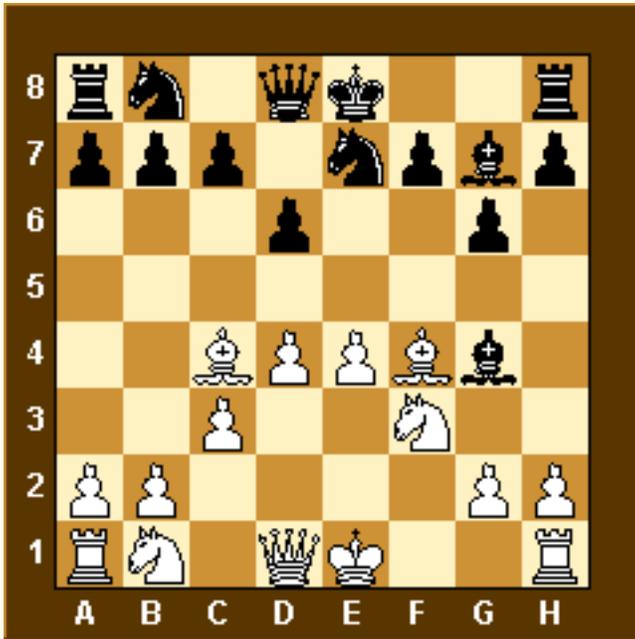
22...Bg3+! The cleanest finish. The joys of discovered check! Fitting that the king expires on the square he refused to leave for the entire game. The white queen and rook are still sitting on the edge, dreaming of an h-file mate that will never come. **0-1**

[22...Bg3+ 23.Be3 Qxe3#]

[Online replay page](#)

Classic Opening Tactics

If you would like to inflict opening disasters instead of suffer them, go through these eight games carefully. Tactical alertness is required even in the first dozen moves. Most of these disasters can be attributed to the same factors. 1) Lack of development. 2) Leaving the king in the center. 3) Greed. 4) Ignoring weak spots, particularly f7 (f2 for white).



(1) Karg,L - Baptistella,J [C34]
Bahn-chN Borkum (5), 1996

**1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Nf3 g6 4.Bc4 d6 5.d4 Bg4
6.Bxf4 Bg7 7.c3 Ne7**

DIAGRAM 8.Bxf7+! Ah, nothing like the classics! A bishop on c4 aiming at f7, what could be sweeter? The knight on e7 blocks the black queen's coverage of the key g5 square, creating all the conditions for this famous combination.

If we had a penny for every time someone fell for this one the Ninjas would have swords made of solid gold. f7 f7 f7!

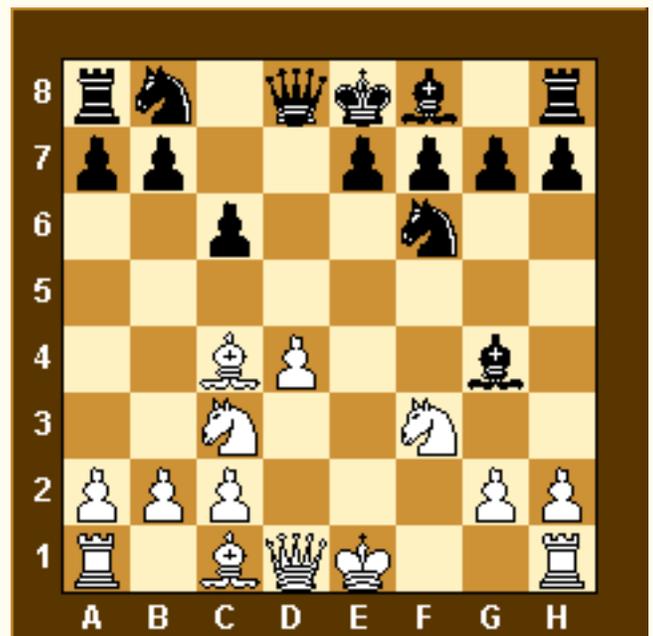
8...Kxf7 9.Ng5+ Kg8 10.Qxg4 Qd7 11.Ne6 Kf7 12.d5 h5 13.Qf3 c6 14.Be5+ And a discovered check to finish, just for fun. **1-0**

(2) Lewald,S - Strauss,P [D00]
Bahn-chV Borkum (2), 1996

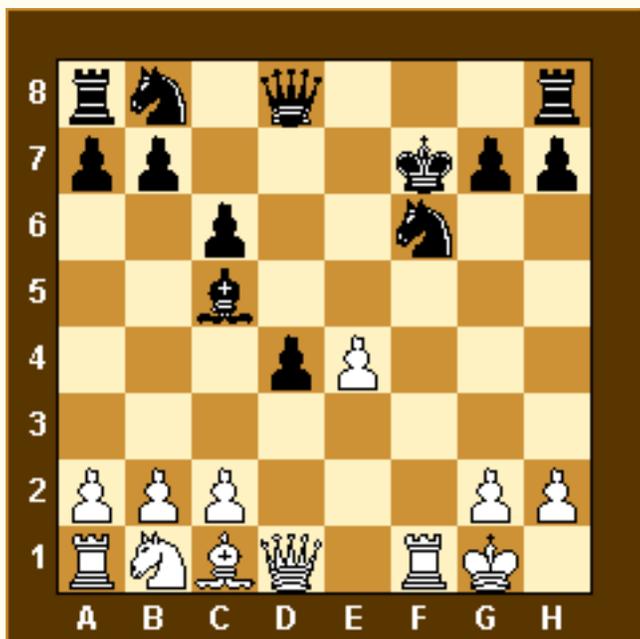
**1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Bc4 Nf6 5.f3
exf3 6.Nxf3 Bg4**

DIAGRAM 7.Bxf7+ Look familiar? Here the bishop on g4 is protected, but the availability of e5 allows for a fork instead of just a check on g5 as in #1. **7...Kxf7 8.Ne5+ Kg8 9.Nxg4 Qe8 10.0-0** Material is equal but the black king is a mess and white has a dangerous lead in development.

10...Nbd7 11.Qe2 Qh5?? Not happy with falling for this trick once, black goes for it again, putting his queen in a perfect place for a discovered attack with check. Now the sacrifice is on f6



instead of f7, but the spirit is the same. **12.Rxf6! exf6 13.Nh6+** Winning the queen. **1-0**



(3) Richardson,B - Charles,F [B12]
NATO-chT Viborg (3), 1996

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.f3 dxe4 4.fxe4 e5 5.Nf3 Nf6 6.Bc4 exd4 7.0-0 Bc5 8.Ne5 Be6 9.Nxf7! Bxf7 10.Bxf7+ Kxf7

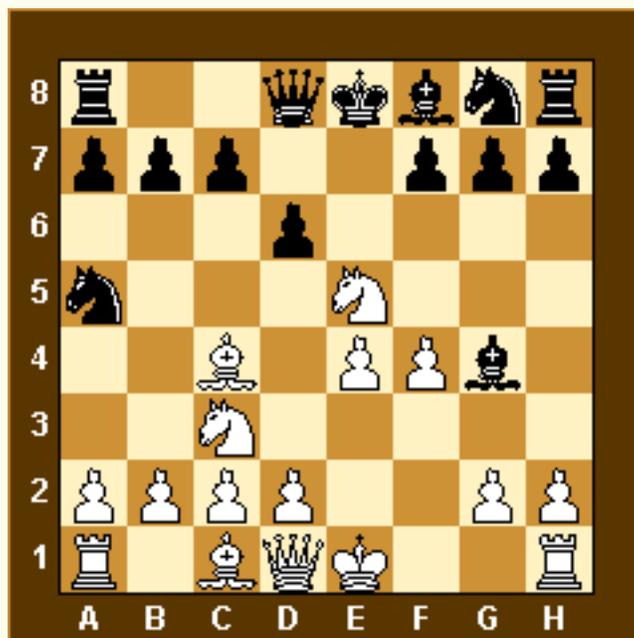
DIAGRAM 11.Qh5+ A fork thanks to a pin. The knight can't move because of the rook on f1 and now the bishop on c5 is in the air. **11...Kg8 12.Qxc5 Nxe4 13.Qf5 Nf6 14.Qe6+ Kf8 15.Bf4** Black has no way to stop the deadly **16.Bd6+ . 1-0**

(4) Clark,M - Kelly,M [C30]
Kilkenny op (2), 1996

1.e4 e5 2.f4 d6 3.Nf3 Bg4 4.Bc4 Nc6 5.Nc3 Na5 6.Nxe5? White must have been excited to play this, but it doesn't work here because the black queen can move with check. But black is kind enough to allow this classic to finish the way it usually does. A free queen!

DIAGRAM 6...Bxd1?? [6...Qh4+ 7.g3 dxe5 8.gxh4 Bxd1 9.Bb5+ c6 10.Kxd1 cxb5 And black is better.] **7.Bxf7+ Ke7 8.Nd5#**

No matter how many times we see it, we love it. How many times have you had the opportunity for this and let it pass by? **1-0**





(5) Baertsch, J - Remeta, V [A02]
Weihnachts op-B Zuerich, 1996

1.f4 e5 2.fxe5 d6 3.exd6 Bxd6 4.Nf3 Believe it or not, this is a known opening called the From's Gambit by black against white's Bird's Opening.

Our words of wisdom? Give yourself a chance to play an entire game instead of risking death in a crazy opening. You can't win in the opening against solid play, so stick with the sane stuff, develop your pieces, castle, and play chess.

4...Bg4 5.d4 White is already lost thanks to the weakness of f2 (the white equivalent of f7).

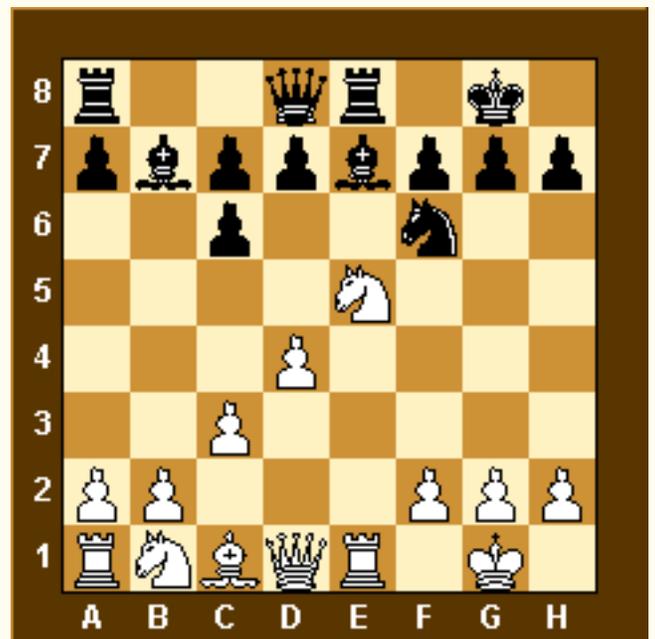
5...Bxf3 6.exf3 Qh4+ 7.Ke2 Nc6 8.c3 0-0-0

9.Be3 Nf6 10.Kd2 Nd5 11.Bb5 Trying to get aggressive with his king in traffic, not good.
11...Nxe3 12.Kxe3 **DIAGRAM** **12...Qg5+** Yep, that's a fork. **13.Kf2 Qxb5 0-1**

(6) Buergi, J - Wagner, S [C55]
Weihnachts op-B Zuerich, 1996

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.0-0 Nxe4?
5.Bd5 Nf6 6.Bxc6 bxc6 7.Nxe5 Be7 8.d4 Bb7
9.Re1 0-0 10.c3 Re8 Just because you have castled doesn't mean you can forget about f7. Black moves the rook and suddenly f7 has the same weakness it does in the beginning. It is only protected by the king.

DIAGRAM 11.Qb3 Bingo! Forking f7 and the unprotected bishop on b7. Leaving the powerful knight on e5 costs black. **11...Rb8** Going out with a bang. [11...Qc8 12.Qxf7+ Kh8 13.Ng6+ hxg6 14.Rxe7 Rxe7 15.Qxe7]

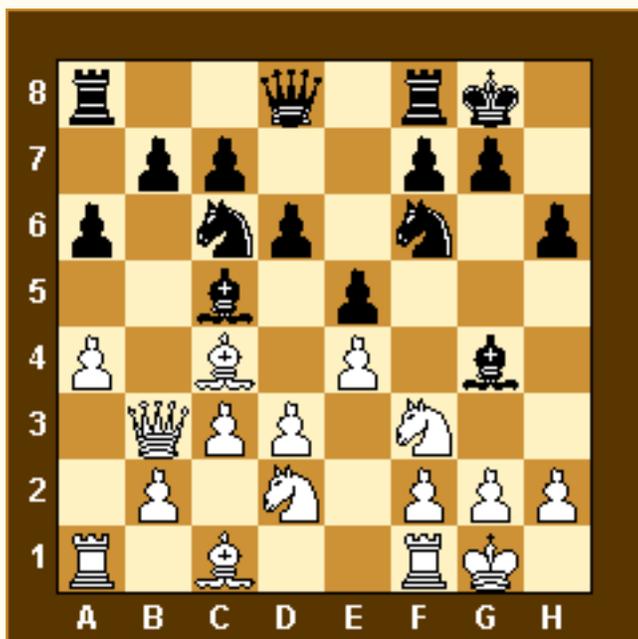


12.Nxf7 Winning the queen or mating. **12...Ba6** [12...d5 13.Nxd8] **13.Nh6+** Beginning a famous mating sequence, called "Philidor's Legacy" by some, although it dates back to the 15th century! **13...Kh8 14.Qg8+ Rxc8 15.Nf7#** Sweet! **1-0**

(7) Suarez,A - Blanco Menendez,R [C53]
Asturia-Galicia U16, 1997

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 d6 5.d3 h6
6.a4 a6 7.O-O Bg4 8.Nbd2 Nf6 9.Qb3 O-O**

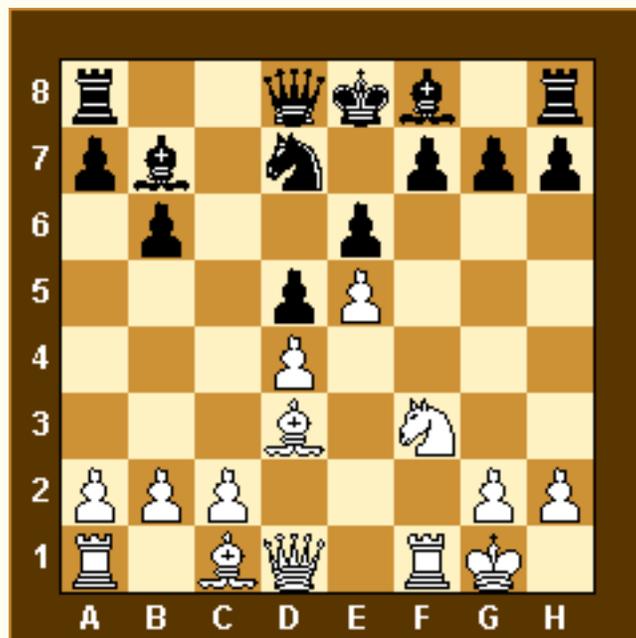
DIAGRAM 10.Qxb7?? Greed kills. **10...Na5** The queen is trapped. **0-1**



(8) Redondo Arguelles,L - Suarez,A [B12]
Asturia-ch U18 Asturia, 1997

**1.e4 c6 2.f3 d5 3.d4 dxe4 4.fxe4 Nf6 5.Nc3
e6 6.Nf3 Nbd7 7.Bd3 b6 8.O-O Bb7?** Black is
sleepwalking! White already has a space and
development advantage and allowing the push e5
is more than the black position can handle. **9.e5
Nd5?** Still unaware of the problem on f7.
[9...Ng4] **10.Nxd5 cxd5**

DIAGRAM 11.Ng5 Is chess this easy?! f7 cannot
be defended. **11...Nxe5** [11...f5 12.Nxe6 Qb8
13.Bxf5] **12.dxe5 Bc5+ 13.Kh1 Rf8 14.Bb5+
Ke7 15.Nxf7** Massacre! The knight gets out of
the way of the bishop. Bg5+ is going to be lethal.
1-0



[Online replay page](#)

The Bitter End



Major Minor

A few weeks ago (WB #16) we gave you the below position to work on. Many readers have said that they had trouble winning against their computers with black. First of all, maybe you have your computer on a high level.

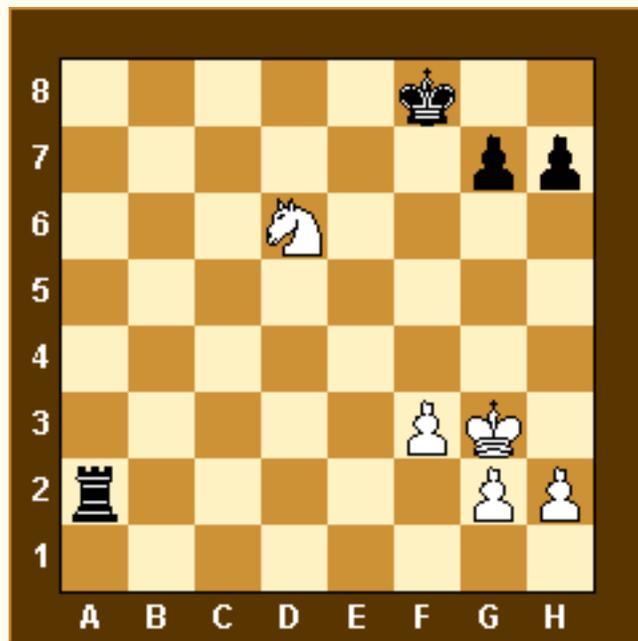
With the best defense it is very hard, or even impossible, for black to win, but in practice (among humans!) the rook usually wins. Why? First we recommend trading places and trying to defend with white against your computer.

One of the problems white has here is that his f-pawn is advanced. This looks insignificant, but it matters because it makes it much easier for the black king to penetrate behind the white pawns. You can't win with the rook alone or by a frontal attack.

The other good thing for black is that his pawns are still at home. This means that they are harder for white to attack when black goes after the white pawns.

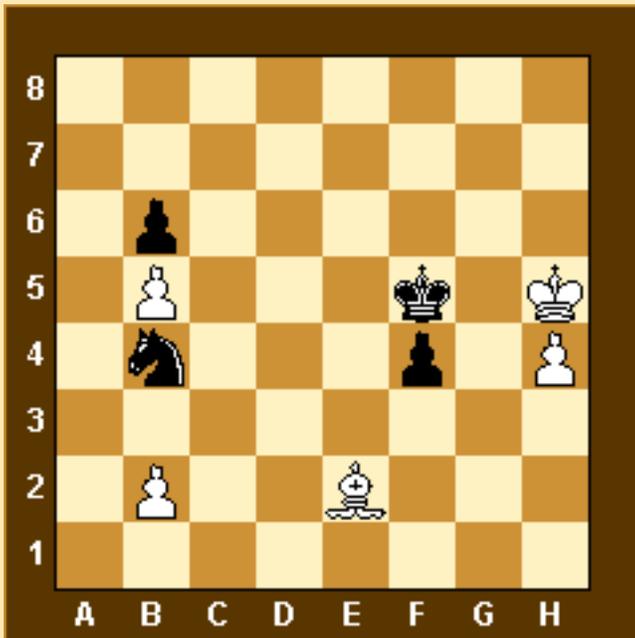
This is a good example of how general guidelines can provide guidance in endgames. Pushing the black pawns is wrong because it would make it easier for white to gain counterplay. In some cases it might be necessary to move a pawn to protect it or take an important square away from white, but this should be done with caution. Black doesn't want to allow pawn exchanges, something that obviously becomes more likely if the pawns come into contact with the enemy pawns.

White won't just sit around applauding the black strategy. Because of the f2 weakness and the ability of the rook to *tempo the knight* away from the action, white should play actively.



Dictionary break: To use tempo in this case means to 'lose a move' or to make a move that passes to the opponent without changing the situation. Line pieces like rooks and bishops can usually do this, knights cannot. Whenever a knight moves it completely changes the squares it controls.

This means they are often poor at defense against line pieces, or even pawns. It makes them vulnerable to *zugzwang*, a German word (and international chess word) for a position in which you would be okay if you didn't have to move, but because you do, you lose something.



Here is a great example of zugzwang play against a knight. This is from the game Nigel Short – Judit Polgar played three days ago in Budapest. It's White (Short) to move.

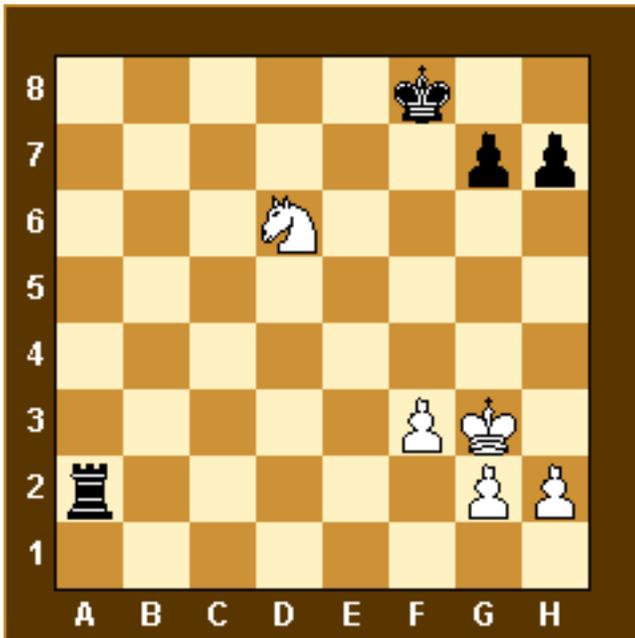
At first it looks like a draw because the white king is trapped against the wall, making it impossible to promote his h-pawn. If the white king moves, the black king just mirrors it down the board, keeping it trapped. If the bishop tries to help, the black f-pawn runs down the board.

The white b-pawns are clearly useless on their own, although they will be essential. (White can't win with just the h-pawn because his bishop is the wrong color! It can't control the queening square. So the h-pawn will be used a decoy.)

White would like to play $Bd3+$ to force the black king away, but the knight controls that square. $1.Bg4+ Kf6$ is one try, but the bishop then has to get out of the way of its king and black uses that time to attack the b-pawns. What to do?

1.b3! Zugzwang! Black's pieces are perfectly placed so the worst possible thing is to have to move. Polgar had to break the defensive arrangement and was soon lost after **1...Nd5**
2.Bd3+ Ke5 3.Kg4

**Vidmar, M - Alekhine, A [E37]
San Remo, 1930**



39.h4 Ke7 40.Ne4 h6 Alekhine takes the attractive g5 post away from the white knight. This is the last pawn move Black will make!
41.Nf2 Ke6 42.Nd3 Kf5 43.Nf4 Ra4 44.Nd3 Rc4 45.Nf2 Rc6 46.Nh3 Ke5 47.h5 Rc2 48.Nf4 Rd2 Dominating the knight. **49.Nh3 Kd4**

Here comes the infiltration. Black can attack the g2 pawn twice. **50.Nf4 Ke3 51.Ne6 Rd5** Defending the g8 pawn tactically. If White takes it, Rg5+ forks king and knight. **52.f4 Rf5**

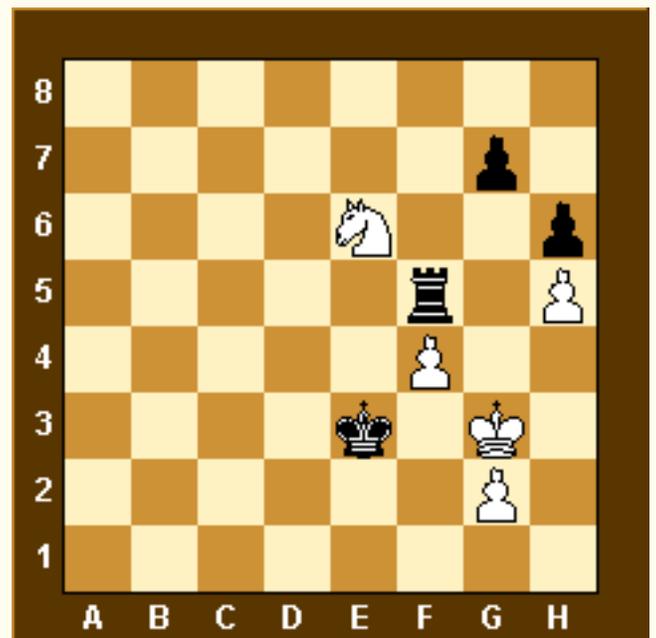
53.Kg4 White declines to exchange pawns with **53.Nxg7 Rxf4**, why? Didn't we say earlier that pawn exchanges are good for White? In general, yes. If all the pawns come off the board the rook vs knight endgame is drawn except in exceptional circumstances.

The problem here is that if White captures on g7 his knight ends up in a very difficult position, far from the protection of his king and pawns. The knight might be trapped and lost, or the white king can get into trouble with the knight far away. Remember that a rook and king are also a potential mating threat!

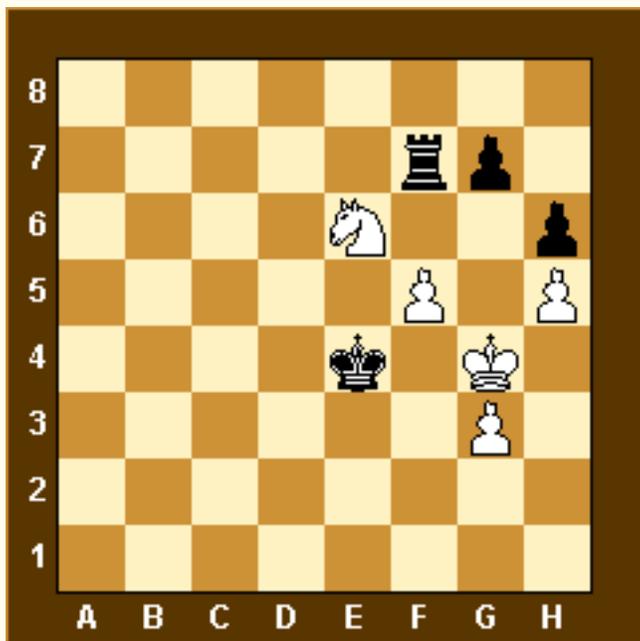
[**53.Nxg7 Rxf4 54.Ne6 (54.Kh3 Rf7 55.Ne6 Re7 56.Nf8 Re5 57.g3** Or else the white king can be trapped in a mating net. The white knight has been driven too far away to help defend. (**57.Kh4? Rg5 58.g3 Kf3**) **57...Kf2!** The g-pawn is the key. The white h-pawn is doing a good job of keeping the white king boxed in, so removing it now is not helpful.

(**57...Rxxh5+?** This looks obvious, but remember that Black doesn't want to let the white king approach the only remaining black pawn. The rook can't win on its own versus the knight. So Black must be patient and continue to play for domination of the king instead of grabbing this pawn. **58.Kg4 Rg5+ 59.Kh4 Kf3 60.g4**)

58.Kg4 Rg5+ 59.Kf4 Rxxg3 60.Nd7 Rf3+ 61.Kg4 Ke3 62.Ne5 Rf4+ 63.Kg3 Ke4 64.Ng4 Rf3+ 65.Kh4 Kf4 66.Nh2 Rf2 67.Kh3 Ra2 68.Ng4 Kg5 69.Ne5 Ra3+ 70.Kg2 Kxxh5 71.Kf2 Kh4 72.Kg2 h5 73.Kf2 Kg5 74.Nc4 Ra2+ 75.Kf3 h4 76.Ne3 h3 77.Nf1 Ra3+ 78.Kf2 Kf4 79.Kg1 Rf3 80.Nh2 Rg3+ 81.Kh1 Rd3 82.Kg1 Kg3 83.Nf1+ Kf3 84.Nh2+ Ke2 85.Ng4 Rg3+ 86.Kh2 Rxxg4 87.Kxxh3 Kf3 88.Kh2 Rh4+ 89.Kg1 Rh3 90.Kf1 Rh1#) **54...Rf5 55.Kh4 Re5]**



53...Rf6 54.f5 White is holding things together, but in order to do so his pawns are getting further apart and overextended. He won't be able to protect everything. For a knight to defend well everything has to be compact. Here the white king, knight and pawns are becoming increasingly uncoordinated. **54...Rf7 55.g3 Ke4**



Uh-oh, here's that *zugzwang* situation we were talking about. White is out of moves that don't lose. If the white king moves the black king captures the f5 pawn. So the knight has to check, but this just leaves it too far away. **56.Nc5+ Kd4 57.Nb3+**

[57.Ne6+ Ke5 58.Nf4 Ke4 59.Ne2 Rxf5 60.Nc3+ Ke5 61.Ne2 Rg5+ 62.Kh4 Kf5 63.Nd4+ Ke4 64.Nc2 Kf3 65.Ne1+ Kf2 66.Nd3+ Ke2 67.Nf4+ Kf3 68.Nd3 Rxf3 69.Ne5+ Kg2 70.Nc6 g5+ 71.hxg6 Rxf6 72.Ne7 Rg5 73.Nc6 Kf3 74.Nd4+ Ke3 75.Nc6 Kf4 76.Nd4 Re5 77.Kh3 Re1 78.Kg2 h5 79.Kf2 Ra1 80.Kg2 h4 81.Kh3 Rh1+ 82.Kg2 Rd1 83.Nf3 h3+ 84.Kf2 Rd3 85.Nh2 Rg3 86.Ke2 Rg2+ 87.Kd3 Rxf2 88.Kc4 Rc2+ 89.Kb3 Rc1 90.Kb4 h2 91.Ka4 h1Q]

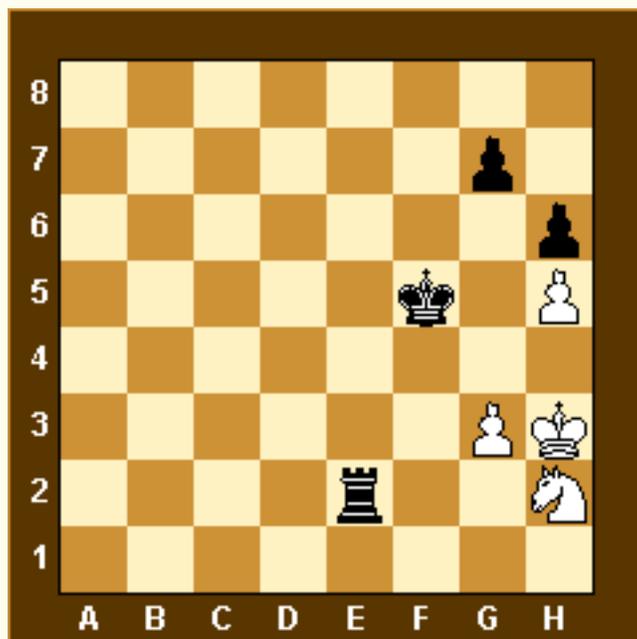
57...Ke5 0-1 The f-pawn falls and Vidmar resigned. Winning this with black is still not trivial against the best defense, so we'll give some winning examples.

[58.Nd2 Rxf5 59.Nc4+ Ke6 60.Ne3 Rg5+ 61.Kh4 Re5 Driving the knight away whenever possible. The knight just cannot stop the black rook and king from penetrating. 62.Nc2 (62.Ng4 Re2 Dominating the knight again. 63.Kh3 Kf5 64.Kh4 (64.Nh2

64...Rxf2+! You have to know which pawn endings are winning in order to successfully play the piece endings! The advanced position of the black king makes this an easy win.

65.Kxf2 Kg4 66.Kg2 Kxf5 67.Kh3 Kg5 68.Kg2 Kg4 69.Kf2 h5 70.Kg2 g5 Grabbing the opposition and pushing the white king away. **71.Kf2 Kh3 72.Kf3 g4+ 73.Kf4 Kg2 74.Ke5 Kxf3) 64...Re4 65.Kh3 Rxf4) 62...Re4+ 63.Kh3 Kf5 64.Na3 Kg5]**

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