



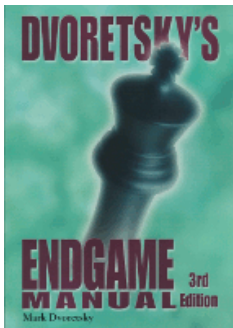
COLUMNISTS

The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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Recent Analytical Finds

The third edition of my [Endgame Manual](#) is now available. The new text contains a number of clarifications and additions based on recent analytical finds. This month I would like to tell you about some of the most interesting changes.

Theoretical discoveries in the endgame are rare nowadays. I'm not talking about accumulating new analyses and correcting old ones, of course, but about conclusions that change the previous ideas about positions that are important for practical chess players. One such discovery, concerning the rook ending "with three pawns on one side and an extra knight's pawn on the other" was made by the Russian master Igor Yanvarev and Wilburt Micawber from Holland independently from each other. Of course, it is reflected in the new edition of my *Manual*, but, as Karsten Müller already wrote about it in his [February 2011 column](#), there's no point in reproducing the same analyses again in this article.

In exactly the same way I'll just mention the recently-discovered mistakes in the classic ending with opposite-colored bishops from the game Euwe-Yanofsky (Groningen, 1946) – Müller talked about these in his [August 2010 column](#).

I like endgame positions with an unapparent and only solution. They can be used as exercises in coaching work. The strong aesthetic impression they make on students helps them to more deeply understand the plans, evaluations, and technical methods that are hidden behind the variations and remember them more confidently.

Here's one of those examples. With its help we can discuss the situation where the rook belonging to the stronger side, the player who is a pawn up, is defending all its pawns along the rank.

Marshall – Capablanca
Ninth match game, New York, 1909



[FEN "8/5K2/8/p1r5/P4R2/1k5P/8/8 b - - 0 57"]

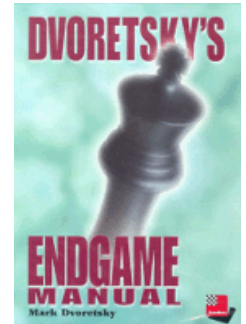
1...?

This is an excerpt from the book.

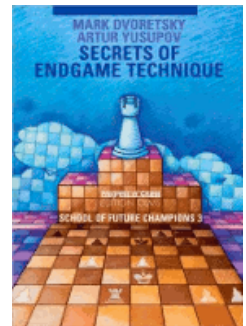
"Only active defense leaves the weaker side with chances of saving himself. Let's identify the two most important defensive methods:

"1) **Attacking a pawn with the king**. Sometimes you can manage to give up the rook for one pawn, eat another with the king and save

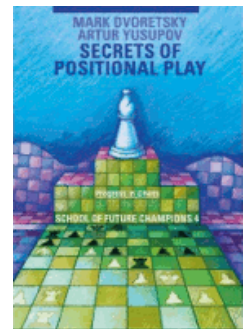
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yourself with pawn versus rook.

"2) **Exchanging rooks.** If the pawn endgame is drawn, then by offering an exchange the weaker side drives the enemy rook off the rank on which it was defending the pawns."

The ending of the game illustrates what's been said.

1...Rc7+ 2.Kg6 Rb7 3.h4 Rb4! 4.Kg5

In the case of 4.Rxb4+ ab! 5.a5 Kc4 6.a6 b3 7.a7 b2 8.a8Q b1Q+ a drawn queen ending arose.

4...Kxa4 5.h5 Ka3!

Of course, not 5...Kb5(b3)?? 6.Rxb4+ ab 7.h6+-.

6.h6 Rb8 7.h7 a4 8.Rh4 Rh8 9.Kg6 Kb3 10.Kg7 Rxb7+ 11.Kxb7 a3 1/2-1/2

In the new edition two significant corrections have been made that turn this ending into a real study.

It turns out that if Frank Marshall had figured out his opponent's idea in time, he could have neutralized it by playing 2.Kf6(e6)! Rb7 3.Ke5! Here Black's situation is bad, as exchanging rooks no longer works: 3...Rb4 4.Rxb4+ ab 5.a5 Kc3 6.a6 b3 7.a7 b2 8.a8Q b1Q



[FEN "Q7/8/8/4K3/8/2k4P/8/1q6 w - - 0 65"]

9.Qf3+ Kd2 (9...Kc4 10.Qc6+) 10.Qf2+ Kc3 11.Qd4+, and the queens are exchanged.

The plan to transfer the rook to b4 is still correct, but as grandmaster Igor Zaitsev established, it should have been implemented slightly differently. A draw was achieved with **1...Rc6!!** (preventing the white king from moving into the center) **2.h4 Rb6 3.h5** (3...Rb4= was threatened) **3...Rh6! 4.Rh4.**



[FEN "8/5K2/7r/p6P/P6R/1k6/8/8 b - - 0 60"]

1...?

4...Ka3! 5.Kg7 Rxb7! (a move earlier the rook sacrifice wouldn't work: it was essential to wait for the appearance of the king on g7) **6.Rxb7 Kxa4 7.Kf6 Kb4=.**

Wouldn't you agree that the theoretical ideas expressed above have now been proven considerably more clearly and vividly than they were previously?

I'll take advantage of this convenient excuse to remind you of a simple but important truth: knowledge of theory doesn't give you a guarantee of success, it only increases its likelihood. Every (well, almost every) position is unique; in order to choose the best continuation you have to demonstrate inventiveness in your search for strong moves and calculate the variations accurately. Theoretical recommendations usually only orient our thinking in the right direction, but they don't dictate the exact solution.

Let's get acquainted with a small episode (after three introductory moves) from an instructive ending that illustrates the exceptional importance of activity in a rook endgame.

Ilivitsky – Taimanov

Soviet Championship, Moscow, 1955



[FEN "8/8/p4pk1/6p1/6Pp/r4P1P/
P1R2K2/8 w - - 0 39"]

1.?

In the game there was **4.Rb2 Rc3?** (4...Kf7 left him with more chances of success) **5.Kg2 a5?** (5...Ra3), and White, by playing **6.Rf2**, continued the waiting tactic that led him to perish in the end.

I pointed out in the *Manual* that White could have forced a draw by sacrificing a pawn for the sake of activating his rook and keeping the enemy king out of the game: 6.Rb7! Rc2+ 7.Kg1 Rxa2 8.Ra7 with a subsequent Kg1-h1-g1. Black brings his pawn to a3, but there's nothing for him to do from there: his king is hemmed in on g6 and the try f6-f5 will always be met with Ra7-a6+.

It seemed to me that this method of defense became correct only after the black rook retreated to c3 and the pawn got to a5, giving the rook the a6-square. Grandmaster Vugar Gashimov justifiably pointed out that it was also possible to activate the rook immediately: **4.Rc7! Rxa2+ 5.Kf1!** (but not 5. Kg1? Re2! 6.Rc6 a5, and on 7.Rc5 there's7...Re5) **5...Rb2**.



[FEN "8/2R5/p4pk1/6p1/6Pp/5P1P/
1r6/5K2 w - - 0 41"]

1.?

6.Rc6! a5 7.Rc5! a4 8.Ra5 Rb4 (on 8...Ra2 the same reply follows) **9.Ra7! Rf4 10.Kf2 f5** (and how else to improve the position?) **11.Ra6+ Kf7 12.gf** with equality.

In the section dedicated to using a passed pawn in a playable queen endgame, I give the following ending.

Prandstetter – Gheorghiu

Zonal tournament, Warsaw, 1979



[FEN "8/7Q/p4k2/1p4q1/1P2p3/P6P/7K/8 b - - 0 47"]

1?

In the previous edition, there was no question mark with the diagram that would indicate that the position could be used as an exercise. I didn't see a way to make the best of Black's obvious positional advantage (his passed pawn has advanced significantly further than his opponent's pawn). An invasion of the king into the enemy camp to support its passed pawn led to success, but how to do that? In my analysis of various tries I've put the variations that were added in the new edition in square brackets.

In the game there followed **1...Qf4+?! 2.Kg1 Qg3+** [evidently there was no win with 2...Qc1+ 3.Kg2 Qd2+ 4.Kf1! either] **3.Kf1 Qf3+ 4.Ke1=**. The white king has moved in front of the pawn and a draw can now be achieved without difficulty. In his search for winning chances Black forgot about caution, "blundered" an exchange of queens that was favorable to his opponent and even lost.

4...Ke5 5.Qc7+



[FEN "8/2Q5/p7/1p2k3/1P2p3/P4q1P/8/4K3 b - - 0 51"]

5...Kd4?? 6.Qc5+ Kd3 7.Qd5+ Kc3 8.Qd2+ Kb3 9.Qd1+! Kxa3 10.Qxf3+ ef 11.h4 1-0

But what should he have done?

1...e3? 2.Qe4!= [or 2.Qc7!]= is useless.

It's tempting to try and activate the king immediately with the move **1...Ke5?!** In the variation **2.Qc7+ Kd4 3.Qc5+? Qxc5 4.bc** a pawn ending arises that

soon switches to a queen ending again, which is winning for Black: 4...Kxc5!
 (4...e3? 5.Kg2=) 5.h4 (5.Kg2 Kd4 6.Kf2? Kd3 7.Ke1 a5-) 5...Kd4! 6.h5 e3
 (6...Ke5? 7.Kg3 a5 8.h6 Kf6 9.Kf4 b4 10.ab a4 11.b5=) 7.Kg2 (7.h6 e2 8.h7
 e1Q 9.h8Q+ Qe5+) 7...Kd3 8.h6 e2 9.h7 e1Q 10.h8Q Qd2+ and 11...Kc2-+.

[But instead of the exchange of queens 3.Qd6+! Kc4 4.Qe6+! Kd3 5.Qb3+
 gives a draw. And a move earlier it was possible to play 2.Qh8+! Kd5 (with
 2...Kf4 3.Qf8+ Ke3 4.Qc5+ the pawn ending is already drawn) 3.Qc3!, and
 the king hasn't managed to get in front.]

After 1...Qd2+ 2.Kg3 e3?, a subsequent pawn advance is threatened, as well
 as 3...Ke5.



[FEN "8/7Q/p4k2/1p6/1P6/P3p1KP/
 3q4/8 w - - 0 49"]

1.?

But an elegant defense can be found: 3.Qh4+! (it's important to take control of
 the f2-square) 3...Ke5 4.Kf3! =.

The additions given above aren't too significant, as nothing changes in the
 evaluation of the variations. The solution to a position that only appears in the
 new edition is much more important.

1...Qd2+! 2.Kg3 Qe3+! (instead of 2...e3?) **3.Kg2 Qe2+! 4.Kg3 Ke5!**



[FEN "8/7Q/p7/1p2k3/1P2p3/P5KP/
 4q3/8 w - - 0 51"]

White's position is difficult. He's no longer able either to exchange queens on
 c5 or to prevent the forward march of his opponent's king.

The example under examination is associated in my memory with the ending
 of the following old game.

Marants – Dvoretzky
 Minsk, 1972



[FEN "8/8/3p3Q/8/2P1p3/5kqP/8/7K w - - 0 1"]

1.Qf6+ Ke2?!

In the variation 1...Qf4! 2.Qxf4+ Kxf4 3.Kg2 (3.h4? Kg4) 3...Ke3 4.h4 Kd3! 5.h5 e3 6.h6 e2 7.h7 e1Q 8.h8Q Qe4+ and 9...Qxc4 a "queen and pawn versus queen" endgame arose, the evaluation of which I was uncertain (the [Nalimov tablebase](#), which confirms that Black's position is winning, didn't exist back then, and nor did ChessBase). At the same time I realized that I would have to play this ending for a long time, and finding precise moves would be very difficult for me (and also for my opponent, on the other hand). So I decided to decline the exchange of queens in the hope that the e4-pawn would soon manage to get through and queen. From the analytical point of view this was an incorrect decision, but from the practical one it was very sensible.

2.Qb2+ Kf1 3.Qc1+ Qe1 4.Qf4+ (4.Qb2 Qe3) 4...Ke2+ (4...Qf2 5.Qc1+ Ke2 6.Qb2+! Kf3 7.Qf6+ is useless) 5.Kg2 e3



[FEN "8/8/3p4/8/2P2Q2/4p2P/4k1K1/4q3 w - - 0 6"]

1.?

I wasn't afraid of 6.Qf3+ Kd2 7.Qd5+ Kc1. But instead of checking with the queen on d5 White can play more strongly: 7.c5! dc 8.Qd5+ Kc1 9.Qxc5+ Kd1, and now, for example, 10.Qf5!? – according to my database the position is drawn.

6.Qg4? Kd2?

Evidently 6...Kd3! 7.Qf5+ (7.Qg6+ Kc3) 7...Kd2 8.Qa5+ (8.Qd5+ Kc1!) 8...Kd1! 9.Qa4+ Ke2 10.Qc2+ Qd2 11.Qb1!? Qc3! was winning. But I thought there was a quicker way of sheltering from the checks.

7.Qd4+ Kc2? (7...Ke2)



[FEN "8/8/3p4/8/2PQ4/4p2P/2k3K1/4q3 w - - 0 8"]

1.?

8.Kf3!

The same resource as in the position in the penultimate diagram of the game Prandstetter-Gheorghiu – I overlooked it, of course. The e-pawn doesn't advance, and the game equalizes.

8...Qf2+ 9.Ke4 Qe2 10.Qxe3 Qxc4+ 11.Kf5 1/2-1/2

A number of corrections were made in endings where one side was the exchange up. In preparing the previous edition I didn't use a six-piece computer tablebase for this class of positions (I don't remember why any more). The computer helped me to draw interesting new conclusions in the following endgame.

Sturua – Yusupov

Tournament of young masters, Baku, 1979



[FEN "8/7p/5k2/r7/5NK1/6P1/8/8 w - - 0 53"]

1.?

I'll quote my introduction to this example from the *Manual*.

"When Yusupov showed me the ending he had just played I came up with the suggestion that it was worth keeping the white knight on h3 (and the pawn on g4). Why? From there it not only makes the approach of the black king more difficult, but also prepares for an attack on the h7 pawn with the move Ng5. And if it goes to h6 the opponent has to deal with the advance g4-g5.

"Subsequently Yusupov analyzed the position in detail and proved that indeed by retreating the knight White got a draw."

There's no point in reproducing the analysis that confirms the correctness of the given evaluation – it didn't undergo any changes. But later in the new edition you will read:

"In the indicated variations White has a considerable reserve of stability: the majority of his moves aren't only ones. In the game it was more difficult for him to defend. Yusupov and I even thought that White's

position had immediately become lost, and this point of view was reflected in the first editions of the Manual. However, a new computer review showed that in fact a draw was missed much later."

Having retreated his knight to the wrong square in the game, Zurab Sturua then defended brilliantly, finding only moves for a long time. I won't get bogged down in a refutation of alternative tries, I'll just stop at the point where White finally made a mistake.

1.Nh5+?! Ke5 2.Kg5 Ra6 3.Nf4 Ke4 4.Kg4! (but not 4.Nh3?! Rg6+!) **4... Ra5 5.Ne6!** (5.Nh3? h6!) **5...h6 6.Kh4!** (6.Nf4? Rg5+) **6...Re5**



[FEN "8/8/4N2p/4r3/4k2K/6P1/8/8 w - - 0 59"]

1.?

White chose **7.Nd8? Kf5!?** (7...Re7!? 8.Kh5! Kf5! 9.g4+ Kf6! 10.Kxh6 Rg7 11.Ne6 Rg8 12.Kh7 Rxc4 13.Nf8 Kf7 is no less strong) **8.Nc6** (8.Nf7 Rd5! 9.Nxh6+ Kg6) **8...Re4+! 9.Kh5**, and now the simplest way to the goal was 9... Kf6 10.Kxh6 Rc4 11.Nb8 (11.Na5 Rg4 or 11...Rc1 12.Kh7 Rc5) 11...Ke6 with a subsequent 12...Kd6+.

7.Nf4? Kf3 8.Nh3 Re1+ didn't work, and in the case of 7.Nf8? only 7...Rg5! 8.Ne6 Rg8! led to a win.

The only correct knight retreat was **7.Ng7!!**. For example, 7...Kf3 8.g4! Re1 9.Kh5 Rh1+ 10.Kg6 Kxc4 11.Ne8!.

An even more paradoxical variation was **7...Rg5 8.Nh5 Kf3 9.Nf6 Rg6**



[FEN "8/8/5Nrp/8/7K/5kP1/8/8 w - - 0 62"]

1.?

10.Nh5 Rg4+ 11.Kh3 Rd4 12.Nf6 Rd1 13.Kh2 Rd6 is hopeless. Only **10.Nh7!! Rxc3 11.Kh5 Rh3+ 12.Kg6=** rescues him. Obviously finding this idea at the board, which is associated with a sacrifice (not an exchange) of the last pawn in all variations, was virtually impossible.

In conclusion I'll give an ending whose analysis is almost unchanged, except that the evaluation was corrected.

J. Enevoldsen, 1949



[FEN "6k1/1R5p/4K3/7P/8/2b5/8/8 b - - 0 1"]

First I'll give a paragraph from the previous edition, which remains unchanged.

"The situation with the pawn, which has crossed the middle of the board with the enemy king in a dangerous corner, is probably more favorable for the stronger side. White forces h7-h6, then pushes the black king further back, and cuts it off on the file, after which he returns the king to the pawn and sacrifices the exchange."

(I'll explain that by "dangerous" corner I mean a corner that is the same color as the bishop. Black doesn't manage to avoid the move h7-h6; for example, 1... Bd2 2.Kf6 Bc3+ 3.Kf5 Bd2 3.Rd7 Bc1 4.Rd1 Be3 5.Kf6. After 1...h6 2.Kf5 Bd2 3.Kg6 Kf8 4.Rf7+, White easily carries out the described plan.)

And now a new addition to the paragraph given above, which practical players should bear in mind.

"It's necessary, though, to make an important proviso. We can easily implement this particular plan only because the black king is cut off on the 8th rank. With the king on g7 the position is drawn: White doesn't manage either to push it off to the edge of the board, or to carry out h5-h6, or to force his opponent to play h7-h6."

When I was writing the *Manual* for some reason I didn't pay any attention to this rather important detail, and I only became aware of it after I saw the following game.

Carlsen – Anand
Morelia/Linares, 2008



[FEN "8/4k3/5p2/6p1/4P1Bp/5PP1/1r5P/6K1 b - - 0 1"]

1...?

White intends 2.gh gh 3.f4, after which an exchange of his e- and f-pawns for the f6-pawn is inevitable. Analyzing the ending, I realized that the position that arises is winning if Black manages to force h2-h3 or keep the king confined to the first rank. What was news to me was that if White plays Kg2 with his pawn on h2, the position turns out to be drawn. As, for example, in the variation 1...Kd6? 2.gh gh 3.f4 Rd2 4.Bh3 Kc5 5.e5 Rd4 6.ef Rxf4 7.Kg2 Rxf6 8.Bc8.

Viswanathan Anand understood the situation that had been created superbly.

1...Re2!! 2.gh gh



[FEN "8/4k3/5p2/8/4P1Bp/5P2/4r2P/6K1 w - - 0 3"]

Now, in order to play f3-f4, he either has to put the bishop on the bad f5-square or prepare Kf1 by playing h2-h3. On 3.Bf5, there follows 3...Kd6 4.f4 Kc5 5.e5 fe 6.fe Rxe5 (with a tempo!) 7.Bg4 (7.Bc8 Re2!) 7...Rg5!, forcing h2-h3.

The subsequent events were easy to understand and hardly require any commentary.

3.h3 Kd6 4.Kf1 Rb2 5.f4 Kc5 6.e5 Rb4 7.ef Rxf4+ 8.Ke2 Kd4 9.Bf3 Rxf6 10.Bb7 Rb6 11.Bc8 Ke4 12.Bg4 Rb2+ 13.Ke1 Ke3 14.Kf1 Kf4 15.Ke1 Kg3 16.Kf1 Rf2+ 17.Ke1 (17.Kg1 Rf7!, and White is in zugzwang) **17...Rf4** (threatening 18...Rxc4 19.hg h3) **18.Bc8 Rf8 19.Bg4 Kg2 20.Ke2 Re8+ 21.Kd3 Kf2 22.Bf5** (22.Kd4 Re3) **22...Re3+ 23.Kd4 Kf3 24.Bg4+ Kf4 25.Kd5** (25.Bc8 Re8 and 26...Rd8+) **25...Re5+ 26.Kd4 Rg5 0-1** There could have followed 27.Be6 (defending against 27...Rxc4) 27...Rg6 28.Bc8 Rd6+ 29.Kc5 Rd2 30.Bg4 Kg3 31.Bf5 Rh2 32.Kd4 Rxc3.

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