



Grandmaster Technique, Part Four

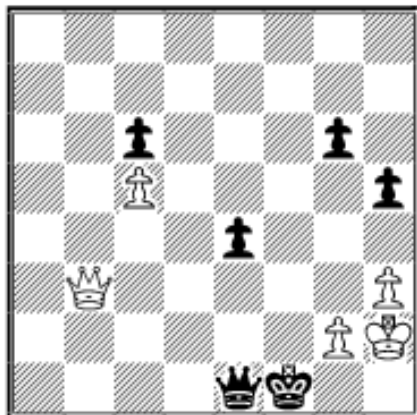
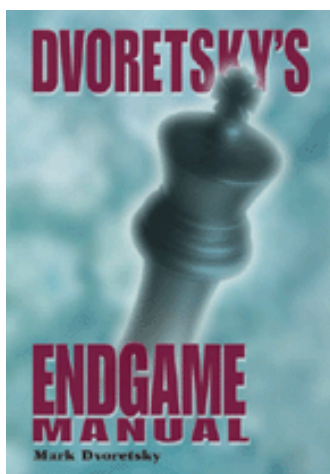
Let's examine a few more (less well-known) examples, where one of the players faced the same problem: finding the optimum method of exploiting his advantage. You could look at this selection as a set of exercises, finding your own solutions. All are taken from my notebook of exercises.

Szily – Ozvath

Hungarian Championship 1954

COLUMNISTS

*The
Instructor*
Mark Dvoretsky



1...?

White's a pawn down, and the enemy passed pawn is also very dangerous. His only hope is either a perpetual check or his own c-pawn (that is, if he can quickly get rid of the c6-pawn).

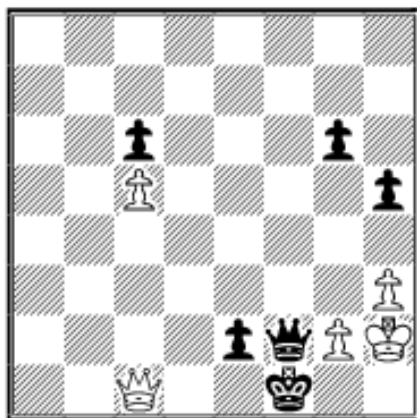
Black would do well to look at direct play first – i.e., queening his pawn. And only if it turns out that this plan will not succeed, should he look for a more subtle way to

capitalize on his advantage.

44...e4-e3! 45.Qb3-c4+

45.Qf7+ Qf2 46.Qxg6 Qf4+ 47.Kh1 e2 48.Qd2 Kf2 49.Qc2 Qg5+- is no help.

45...e3-e2 46.Qc4-f4+ Qe1-f2 47.Qf4-c1+



1...?

Ozvath undoubtedly calculated this variation, and decided that it would end in perpetual check: 47...e1Q 48.Qc4+ Qfe2 49.Qf4+ Q1f2 50.Qc1+, etc.

But the perpetual check could have been avoided by a knight promotion!

47...e2-e1N!! 48.Qc1-c4+ Qf2-e2 49.Qc4-f4+

Ne1-f3+! 50.Qf4xf3+ Qf2xf3 51.g2xf3 Kf1-f2-+

Perhaps the game could have been won another way as well. But no other direct route appears to exist. Black was unable to resolve the problem, and allowed his opponent to escape.

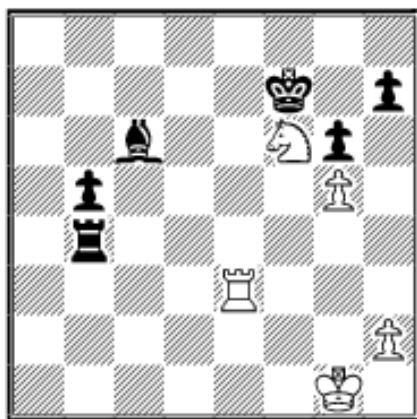
44...Qc1? 45.Qf7+ Ke1

If 45..Ke2, then 46.Qxg6 Qf4+ 47.Kg1 Qe5 48.Qd6! =, but not 48.Qxc6? Qa1+ 49.Kh2 Kf2, with a forced mate.

46.Qxg6 Qf4+ 47.Kg1 Qf1+ 48.Kh2 Qc4 49.Qxc6 e3 50.Qd6, and a draw was agreed.

Browne – Timman

Stockholm 1972



1...?

The game continued **38...Rc4?!**, and if White had replied 39.Nxh7!, he could have set his opponent serious problems with realizing his advantage, in view of the small amount of material remaining on the board; for example, 39...b4 40.Nf6 Rc3 41.Kf2!.

Browne chose **39.Rh3?!** instead, but after **39...b4 40.Rxh7+ Ke6**, the enemy king came into play, and his position became hopeless.

The conclusion was: **41.Rh3 Kf5 42.Rg3 Rc3 43.Rg4 b3 44.Rb4 Kxg5 45.Ng4 Be4** (45...Bd5 46.h4+ Kxh4-+) **46.Rxe4 b2 47.Rb4 Rc1+ 48.Kg2 b1Q 49.Rxb1 Rxb1 50.Nf2 Rb2 51.Kg3 Rb3+ 52.Kg2 Kf5 53.Nh3 g5 54.Ng1 Kg5 55.h3+ Kh4 56.Nf3+ Rxf3 57.Kxf3 Kxh3 58.Kf2 g4 59.Kg1 Kg3 60.Kh1 Kf2** White resigned.

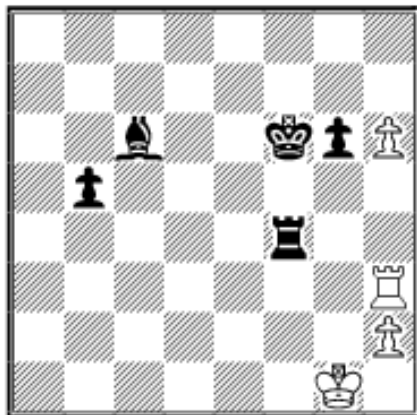
Why should Black give up the h-pawn? Why not push it instead – 38...h6 or 38...h5? Evidently, Timman rejected it because of the following combination:

38...h7-h6! 39.g5xh6!? Kf7xf6 40.Re3-h3

Igor Zaitsev, however, showed how the passed pawn could be stopped.

40...Rb4-g4+! 41.Kg1-f2 Rg4-f4+ 42.Kf2-g1

42.Kg3 Rf3+; 42.Ke1 Re4+ and 43...Re8.

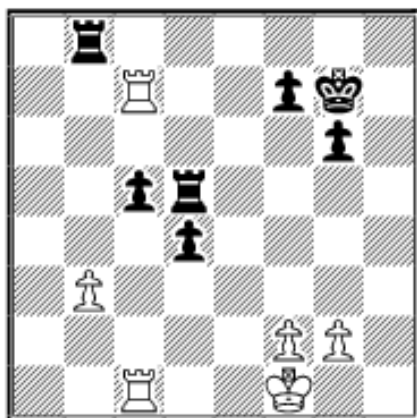


1...?

**42...Bc6-d7!! 43.h6-h7 Rf4-f1+! 44.Kg1xf1
Bd7xh3+ 45.Kf1-f2 Kf6-g7**

Kunitz – Dvoretzky

Bad Wiessee 1997



1...?

Any position where Black has an extra pawn gives him good chances to win; but everywhere you look, the struggle continues. For example, after 34...Rb5 35.Ke2 or 34...d3 35.R1xc5 Rxb3 36.Rc1!. However, he does have a combination at his disposal, leading to a forced win.

34...d4-d3! 35.Rc1xc5

35.R7xc5? d2 is just bad.

35...Rb8-h8!! 36.Kf1-g1

The rook is untouchable: 36.Rxd5 Rh1 mate. On 36.Ke1 d2+ decides; and on 36.g3 Rxc5 37.Rxc5 Rh1+ 38.Kg2 d2.

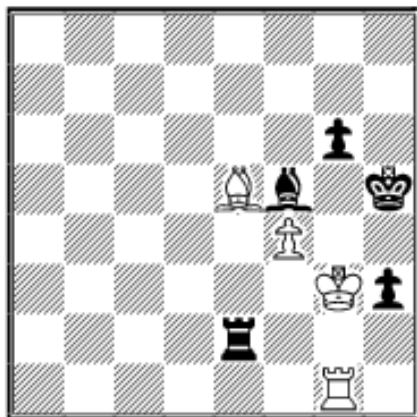
36...Rd5-d8! 37.Rc5-c1 d3-d2 38.Rc1-d1 Rd8-e8!

Of course not 38...Rhe8? 39.Kf1. The d-pawn cannot be taken, because of mate.

39.Rd1-f1 Re8-e1 40.Rc7-d7 Rh8-h1+! White resigned.

Shirazi – Vasiukov

Thiruchirappalli 1978



1...?

Converting the extra pawn is hardly possible without resorting to strong measures. A combination comes to Black's aid.

80...g6-g5!

This breakthrough suggests itself: 81...g4 and 82...Be4 is the threat. But you can't play this sort of thing "on general principles," without accurate calculation: the attack on the rook

also had to be taken into account.

81.Kg3-f3 h3-h2!

The exchange sacrifice 81...Rxe5? 82.fe Kh4 is only sufficient to draw: 83.Ra1! g4+ (83...Be6 is not dangerous: 84.Ra6 Bd5+ 85.Kf2=) 84.Kf4 Bg6 (84...h2 85.Kxf5=) 85.e6 g3 86.e7 h2 (86...g2? 87.Kf3! would even lose) 87.Ra8! Kh3!=. Paradoxically, it is the sacrifice of far more material – a whole rook – that leads to the win!

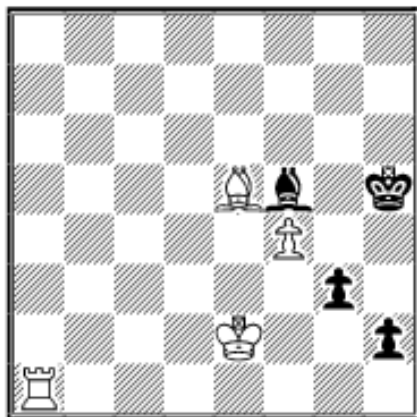
82.Rg1-a1

82.Rh1? is bad: 82...Be4+ 83.Kxe2 Bxh1 84.fg Bf3+.

82...g5-g4+!!

Strictly speaking, there was a second solution: 82...Ra2! 83.Rh1 g4+ (but not 83...Bh3? 84.Ke3! g4 85.f5=) 84.Kg3 Ra3+ 85.Kxh2 g3+ (85...Be4 would be insufficient because of 86.Re1! Rh3+ 87.Kg1 Rh1+ 88.Kf2 g3+ 89.Ke2 followed by Bd4) 86.Kg2+ Kg4 87.Re1 (87.Ra1 Rd3+) 87...Ra2+ 88.Kg1 Rc2! and 89...Kh3 – and White could not hold this position. But if White had played 82.Rc1! (instead of 82.Ra1), then the rook sacrifice 82...g4+!! would have become necessary: 82...Rc2? is no longer of any use after 83.Rh1 g4+ 84.Kg3, since there's no longer that check on the 3rd rank, now that the bishop controls the c3-square.

83.Kf3xe2 (83.Kg3 Be4) 83...g4-g3



1.

The far-advanced passed pawns turn out to be stronger than the rook. On 84.Ra8, Black can continue either with 84...Bh3 or with 84...g2.

**84.Ke2-f3 Kh5-h4 85.Be5-d4 Kh4-h3
86.Bd4-f2**

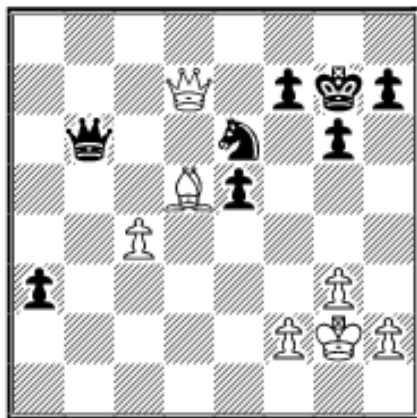
On 86.Rh1, transferring the bishop to the a8-h1 diagonal with 86...Bd7 decides.

86...g3-g2

White resigned, in view of 87.Ra8 Bg4+ 88.Ke3 g1Q.

Krantz – Yudovich

World Correspondence Team Championship, 1979-80



1...?

Black could easily get a “four pawns to three on one side” queen endgame: 39...a2?! 40.Bxe6 Qxe6 41.Qa4 Qxc4 42.Qxc4 a1Q. But can he win it? Are there any stronger lines?

After the exchange of minor pieces on e6, the white queen occupies the a-file, when the a3-pawn can only be defended via the diagonal – then, White continues Qa5 and c4-c5. The idea of breaking through to support the passed pawn via the currently blockaded e-file is not one that would spring immediately to mind.

39...e5-e4!! 40.c4-c5

40.Bxe4? a2 41.Qa4 Qd4 or 41...Qb2 would lose immediately for White.

On 40.Bxe6 Qxe6 41.Qa4, Black gets nothing from 41...Qd6 42.Qa5, threatening 43.c5; and on 41...Qe7, White continues, not with 42.Qa5 e3!, but with 42.Qb3 instead. The decisive move is 41...e3! 42.Qxa3 (42.fe Qxe3 is completely hopeless) 42...e2 43.Qc3+ Kf8 (43...Kg8) 44.Qe1 Qe4+! (but not 44...Qxc4 45.f3 and 46.Kf2, with equality) 45.f3 Qe3, and White’s position is lost: the queen has no moves, the king cannot come to its aid, and the c-pawn is held by the black king.

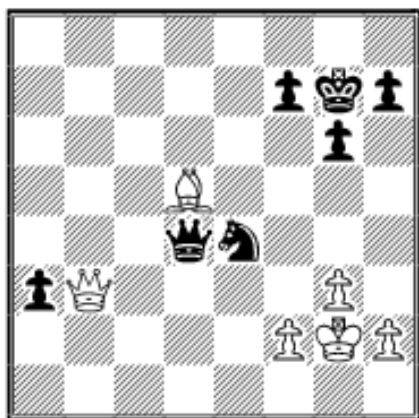
Roughly the same picture occurs after 41.Qa7 e3! 42.fe (42.Qxa3 e2 transposes into the previous variation) 42...Qe4+ 43.Kh3 Qf5+ 44.Kg2 (44.g4 Qf3+ 45.Kh4 h6-+) 44...Qc2+ 45.Kh3 Qb2, and the a-pawn queens.

40...Qb6-c7! 41.Qd7-a4

If 41.Bxe6 Qxd7 42.Bxd7, then Black continues, not 42...a2? 43.c6 a1Q 44.c7 = (in this line, insertion of the moves 42...e3 43.fe changes nothing), but 42...Kf8! instead (or 42...Kf6!) 43.c6 Ke7. The c-pawn is stopped, but the bishop cannot stop the a3-pawn.

41...Qc7xc5 42.Qa4xe4

White can't continue two pawns down. On 42.Bxe4, the simplest decision would be 42...Qd4.

42...Qc5-d4 43.Qe4-f3 Ne6-g5 44.Qf3-b3 Ng5-e4

1.

45.f2-f4

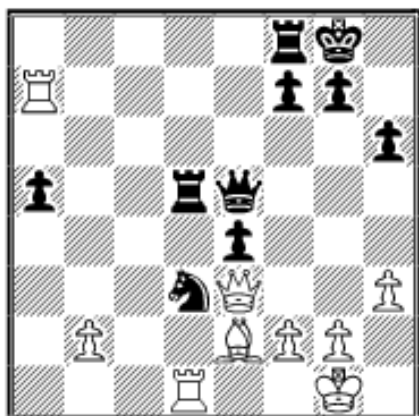
On 45.Bxe4 Qxe4+ 46.Kf1 (46.Kg1 Qe1+ 47.Kg2 Qa1-+), 46...Qa8 47.Qa2 Qa6+ 48.Kg1 (48.Ke1 Qe6+) 48...Qa4, followed by Qb4-b2, and 46...Qh1+ 47.Ke2 Qc1 48.Kd3 Qf1+ 49.Ke3 Qe1+ 50.Kd3 Qxf2 are equally strong.

45...Qd4-f2+ 46.Kg2-h3 Qf2-f1+ 47.Kh3-h4

Qf1-e2 White resigned.

Petrosian – Kholmov

Vilnius 1951



1...?

Kholmov carried out a little combination, allowing him to win a second pawn:

33...Qe5xb2!? 34.Qe3xe4

34.Bxd3 ed 35.Rxd3? Qb1+ is altogether bad.

34...Nd3xf2!! 35.Ra7-b7

In the faint hope that Black might continue 35...Qxb7? 36.Qxd5 Qb6?! 37.Qd4 Qxd4 38.Rxd4, when his knight is trapped. 35.Kxf2 Rxd1 would leave White the exchange down, while 35.Qxd5 Nxd1 leaves him unable to recapture the knight, because of the threatened 36...Qb6+.

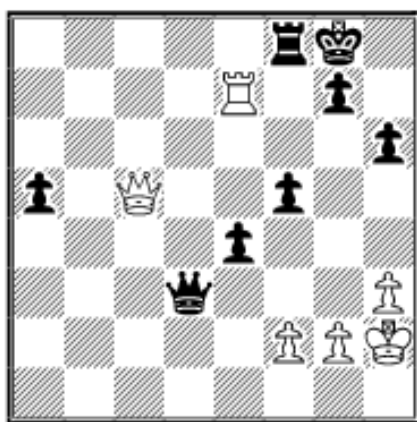
35...Rd5xd1+

35...Nxe4 would also be good.

36.Be2xd1 Qb2-d2 and wins:

37.Qe2 Qxd1+ 38.Kxf2 Qxe2+ 39.Kxe2 Ra8! 40.Kd2 a4 41.Kc2 a3 42.Kb1 a2+ 43.Ka1 g6 44.Rc7 h5 45.Rb7 Kg7 46.Rd7 Ra3 47.Re7 h4 48.Re4 g5 49.Rb4 f5 50.Rb6 f4 51.Rb5 Kg6 52.Rb6+ Kh5 53.Rf6 Re3 (of course not 53...Rg3 54.Ra6 Rxcg2? 55.Rh6+! Kxh6 – stalemate!) White resigned.

And now I must explain why I did not give Black's 33rd move an exclamation mark, but rather an "!" – signifying doubt. The problem is that White could have replied 34.Re7! instead. The only way to keep his two extra pawns would have been 34...f5 35.Bxd3 Rxd3 36.Rxd3 Qb1+ 37.Kh2 Qxd3, but then comes 38.Qc5!, intending 39.Qe5.



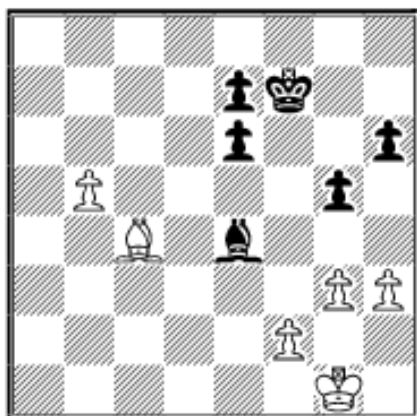
1...

I doubt whether Black could have exploited his advantage in that case. Which leads us to the question: should he have made the combination? Wouldn't it have been better to play the simple 33...Rfd8-/+ instead?

Conclusion: When you choose to force matters after gaining a great advantage, it's important to check the variations carefully, and assess their consequences – or you may soon find yourself with much less!

Pigusov – Atalik

Reykjavik 1994



1.?

A standard technique for capitalizing on an advantage is to trade off the last pieces to get a pawn endgame. Pawn endgames can usually be calculated to a finish. If the results of your calculation look favorable to you, then it's usually not necessary to play out the position move by move (with no guarantee of the outcome, and the constant risk of error) – by forcing matters, we do nothing more, really, than just demonstrate the solution we've

found.

In this case, the trade is accomplished by maneuvering the bishop to g2. Let's check the variations.

33.Bc4-f1! Kf7-e8 34.Bf1-g2 Be4-d5

34...Bxg2 35.Kxg2 is hopeless – White’s outside passed pawn decides the game automatically. Avoiding the exchange also creates no problems: 34...Bd3 35.Bc6+! Kd8 36.b6 Kc8 37.f3, with Kf2-e3 to follow.

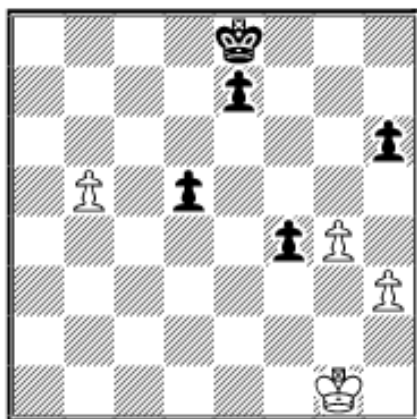
35.Bg2xd5!

A tough move – usually, repairing the opponent’s pawn structure is not recommended. Here, it’s justified by the chance of a pawn breakthrough on the kingside.

35...e6xd5 36.f2-f4 g5xf4

36...Kd7 37.fg hg 38.h4+- would be pointless.

37.g3-g4!



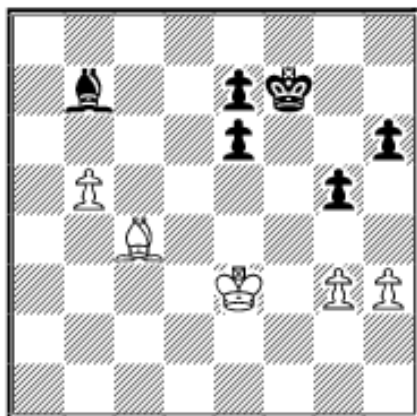
1...

White will queen just in time. Some of the moves that follow could have been transposed.

37...d5-d4 38.Kg1-f1 d4-d3 39.h3-h4 e7-e5
40.Kf1-e1 f4-f3 41.b5-b6 Ke8-d7 42.b6-b7
Kd7-c7 43.g4-g5 h6xg5 44.h4xg5 e5-e4
45.g5-g6 e4-e3 46.g6-g7 f3-f2+ 47.Ke1-f1 d3-d2
48.b7-b8Q+ Kc7xb8 49.g7-g8Q+

It was not so easy to find and calculate this variation accurately. But there is no other solution. For example, 33.b6?! does not work: 33...Bb7 (33...Ke8? 34.Bxe6+-) 34.Bf1 (if 34.f4, then 34...gf 35.gf Kf6 and 36...e5) 34...e5! 35.Bg2 e4 36.Kf1 Ke6 37.Ke2 Ke5 38.Ke3 Bc6, and White can make no progress.

The game continuation was **33.f3?! Bxf3 34.Kf2 Bb7 35.Ke3**



1...?

After **35...Ke8?? 36.Bxe6 Kd8 37.b6**, Black’s position was hopeless. The conclusion was **37...Bg2 38.Kd4 Bf1 39.Kc5 Bg2 50.Kb5 Bf1+ 41.Kc6**, and Black resigned.

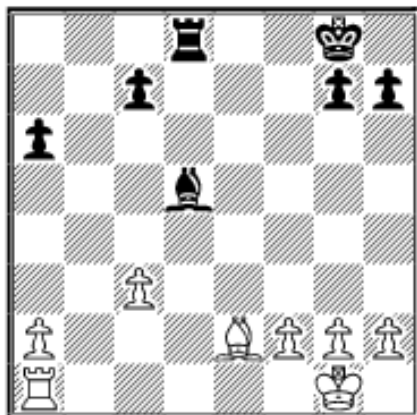
But by playing 35...Kf6! 36.Kd4 e5+, Black saves himself. For example: 37.Ke3 e4 38.Kd4 Kf5 39.Kc5 Ke5 40.Kb6 Bd5, or 37.Kc5 e6 (37...e4?? 38.Kb6+-) 38.Kd6 (38.Kb6 Bd5 39.Bxd5 ed 40.Kc5 d4=) 38...e4 39.Bxe6 (39.b6 e3 40.Kc7 Bd5

41.b7 Bxb7 42.Kxb7 Ke5 43.Kc6 Kd4=) 39...e3 40.Bc4 Kf5!?

In our final example, Paul Keres gives an impressive display of outstanding technique, based upon accurate calculation of variations - a characteristic of the Estonian grandmaster's work.

Keres – Geller

Budapest 1952



1.?

White has a healthy extra pawn. The pawn at a6 is under attack too; and White can also pin the bishop by 26.Rd1. White's great advantage could be maintained by practically any number of tempting continuations – the problem consists in evaluating their relative worth and choosing the best.

On 26.Rd1, Black replies 26...Re8! 27.Bxa6 (27.Rd2!? a5±) 27...Bxa2. As a rule, pawn exchanges favor the weaker side, which means this can hardly be the preferred path.

26.Bxa6 Ra8 would allow White to enter a bishop endgame a pawn up: 27.Be2 Rxa2 28.Rxa2 Bxa2, but White's advantage might then prove insufficient to win – again, we can recycle the evaluation given after 26.Rd1. And on 27.c4, Black may choose between 27...Rxa6 28.cd Ra5 29.a4 Kf8±, and 27...Bxg2 28.Kxg2 Rxa6±. “Rook endings are always drawn” is a well-known rule: only one pawn down, Black could very likely hope to save the half-point.

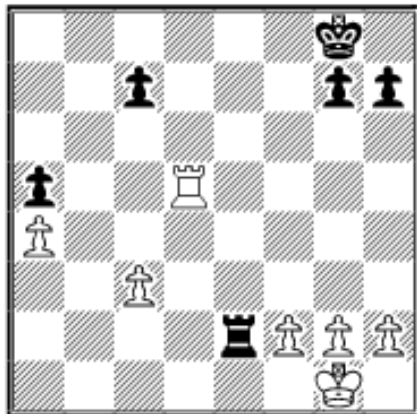
One more idea deserves study: to advance the a-pawn so that it's no longer attacked, and thus to maintain both threats: Bxa6 and Rd1 (another well-known rule is: “the threat is sometimes stronger than its execution”).

On 36.a3?!, Black would have either 26...Rd6 27.Rd1 Kf7!?, or 26...a5! 27.Rd1 Re8 28.Rxd5 Rxe2 29.Kf1 Rc2 30.Rc5 a4 – Black has not lost another pawn, and his drawing chances are quite real.

But what if we move the a-pawn two squares forward? Then Black will have a hard time in the rook endgame, and the additional possibility of fixing the weakness on a6 by a4-a5 now arises.

26.a2-a4! Rd8-d6

White would also have to play accurately after 26...a5 27.Rd1 Re8 28.Rxd5 Rxe2.

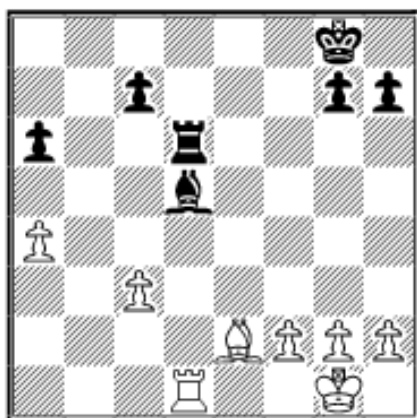


1.?

On 29.g3? (or 29.Kf1?), Black manages to avoid losing the second pawn by playing 29...Re4! 30.Rxa5 Rc4. The only correct line is 29.f3! Rc2 30.Rc5, when the loss of another pawn is unavoidable.

27.Ra1-d1

27.a5?! would be premature because of 27...Rc6. First, White must tie the rook to the bishop's defense.



1...

Threatening 28.Rxd5 Rxd5 29.Bc4 – this is why Black has no time for 27...a5. On 27...Bb7, there comes 28.Rxd6 cd 29.a5!, when the bishop endgame is probably a win for White: Black is not only a pawn down, but now has the weakness on a6 also, fixed on the same color square as his bishop.

I believe Geller should have tried 27...Re6!?

The variations 28.Bf1 Bb3 29.Rb1 Bd5 and 28.Bg4 Re8 (28...Re7 29.a5 is worse) 29.f3 (29.a5 Bb3) 29...Bb3 30.Rd7 c6 (or 30...Bxa4) don't seem convincing enough to me: in any event, Black could still have fought on here. Meanwhile, in the rook endgame after 28.Rxd5 Rxe2 29.Kf1 Ra2, White can't win a second pawn. But still, here we have the most favorable version for White of the rook endgame, compared to what we examined earlier. By continuing 30.Ra5 Rc2 31.Rxa6 Rxc3 32.Ke2 Kf7 33.a5 Ra3 34.Ra7 Kf6 35.a6, White would still most likely win.

27...Kg8-f7 28.a4-a5!

Creating the threat of 29.Bxa6. White does not win after 28.Rxd5? Rxd5 29.Bc4 Ke6 30.Kf1 Kd6 31.Bxd5 Kxd5 32.Ke2 Kc4 34.Kd2 Kb3.

28...Rd6-e6

On 28...Ke6 29.f4 Rc6 30.Bg4+ decides.

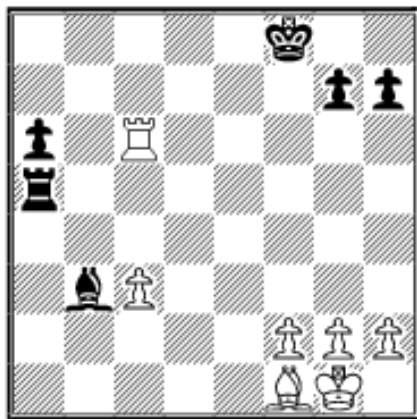
29.Be2-f1!

29.Bxa6? Bb3 would be a mistake. Nor does White win the second pawn after 29.Rxd5?! Rxe2 30.Kf1 Ra2 31.Rc5 c6.

29...Bd5-b3 30.Rd1-d7+ Kf7-f8 31.Rd7xc7

White increases his material advantage. Here 31...Re1 is useless: 32.f3 Ra1 33.Rc5.

31...Re6-e5 32.Rc7-c6 Re5xa5



1.?

33.Rc6-b6!

Accuracy to the end! On 33.Rxa6? Rc5, the c3-pawn is lost.

33...Bb3-c2 34.Rb6xa6 Ra5-c5 35.Ra6-a3 Rc5-d5 36.f2-f3 Rd5-d1 37.Kg1-f2 Rd1-c1 38.h2-h4 Bc2-g6 39.Bf1-c4 Kf8-e7 40.g2-g4 h7-h6 41.Bc4-d5 Black resigned.

With his last moves, White has maximally improved his position, and further resistance would be futile.

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