

Annotation Time with FM Alex King



Mississippi Scholastic Individual Championship

2/27/2022, Round 5

White: Diego H. Delgado - 1365
Black: John Wesley Ozier - 1362

Italian Game

This was the final round of the Mississippi Scholastic Individual Championship. In 2020 Diego won the Grade K-5 section of this tournament, qualifying for the Rockefeller National Tournament of Elementary School State Champions. This year, as a 7th grader he was playing in the Grade 6-8 section, the winner of which would qualify for the Barber National Tournament of Middle School State Champions. **1.e4**



After having beaten John Wesley's brother William in the previous round, Diego was now the only player with 4.0/4, while John Wesley was the only player with 3.5/4. Diego therefore had effective draw odds in this game, meaning that even if he drew, he would still be guaranteed clear first place.

He decided to play solidly and not take any big risks.

1...e5 2.Nf3 Nc6



3.Bc4 Nf6



Before the game Diego was expecting that he would reach this variation of the Italian Opening. To prepare for it, I told him to review a training game that we played in one of our lessons, where I used the maneuver Nb1-d2-f1-g3 to generate kingside play against Black's castled king. He was able to use the same maneuver in this game, and although it did not lead to any kingside attack, it gave him helpful direction in the early middlegame.

2022 MS Scholastic
Individual Championship,
February 27, 2022, Round 4.
William Ozier vs Diego Delgado
Result: 0-1 Scan QR Code



4.d3 Bc5 5.O-O h6



6.Be3 Bb6 7.Nbd2 d6



8.h3 Be6 9.Bb3 O-O



10.c3 d5 11.Bxb6 axb6



12.a3 dxe4 13.dxe4 Bxb3



14.Qxb3 Re8 15.Rfe1 Qe7



16.Nf1 Rad8 17.Ng3



White's knight maneuver is complete, but in the meantime Black has also played sensible moves, and the position remains equal.

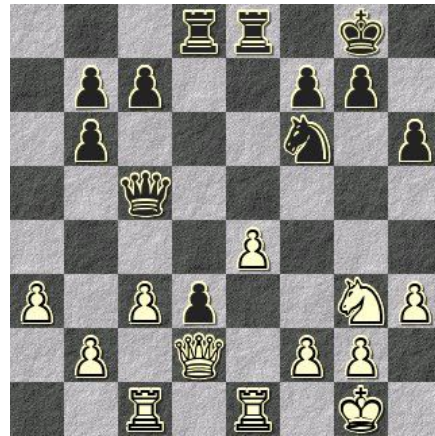
17...Qc5 18.Qc2 Nd4



19.Nxd4 exd4 20.Rac1 dxc3



Riskier but more ambitious would be 20...d3!? 21.Qd2 when Black's passed pawn could in the worst case become overextended and weak, or in the best case cramp and tie down White's pieces.



21.Qxc3 Qxc3 22.Rxc3 c6



23.f3 Nd5 24.Rd3 Nf4



25.Rxd8 Rxd8



White has drifted into a slightly passive position, but it is still defensible with careful play.

26.Ne2 Ne6 27.Nc3 Rd2



28.Re2 Rd3 29.Kf1 Nf4



30.Rc2 b5 31.Ne2 Rd1+



32.Kf2 Nd3+ 33.Kg3



33.Ke3? Ne1! winning the g2-pawn.



33...Rb1 34.Rc3 Rxb2



35.Rxd3 Rxe2

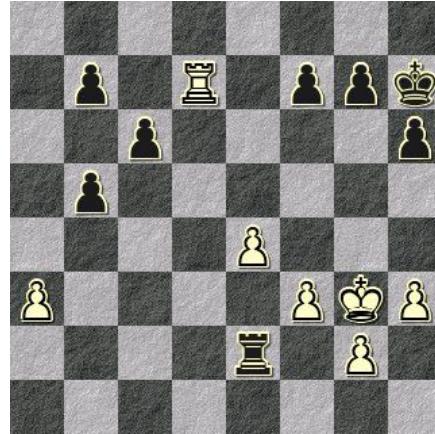


The endgame turns out to be the most interesting phase of this game.

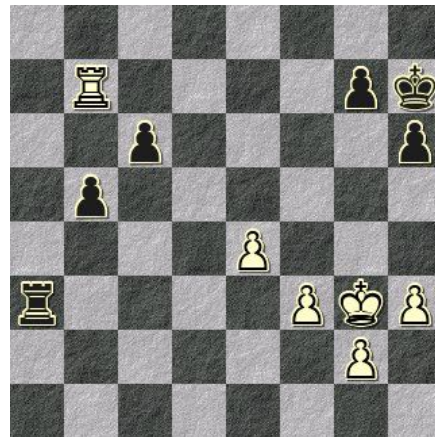
36.Rd7?



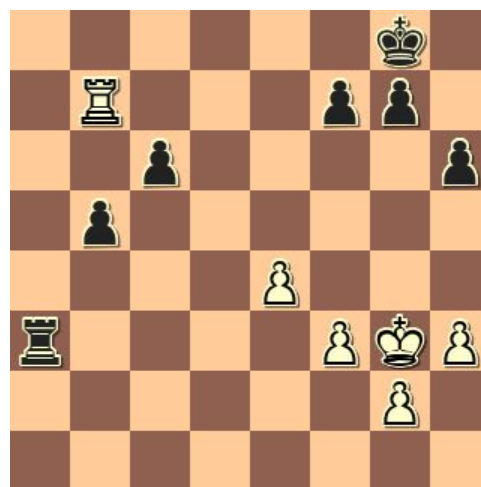
Remaining down a pawn. Instead 36.Rd8+! Kh7 37.Rd7 would win back the pawn,



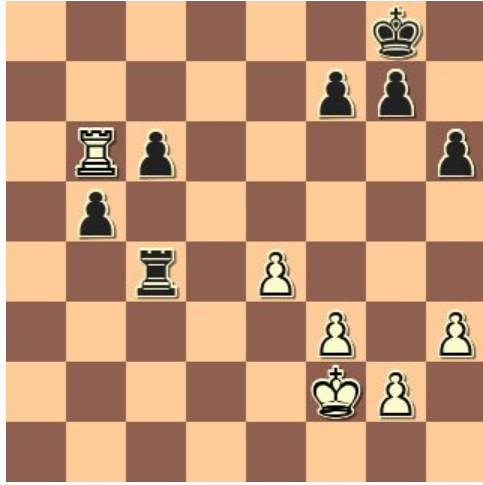
e.g. 37...Re3 38.Rxf7 Rxa3 39.Rxb7 with an unclear position.



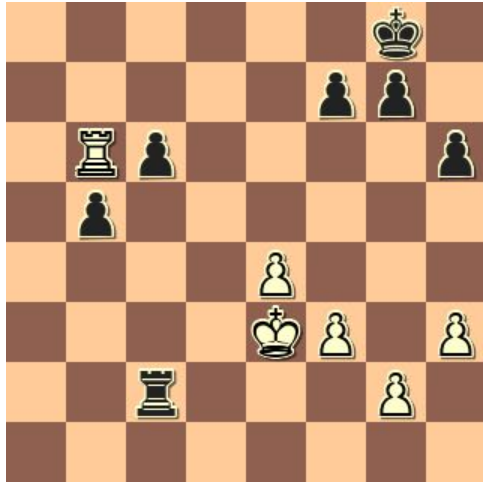
36...Ra2 37.Rxb7 Rxa3



38.Rb6 Rc3 39.Kf2 Rc4

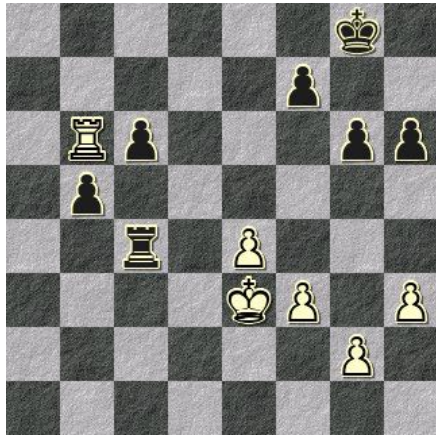


40.Ke3 Rc2?

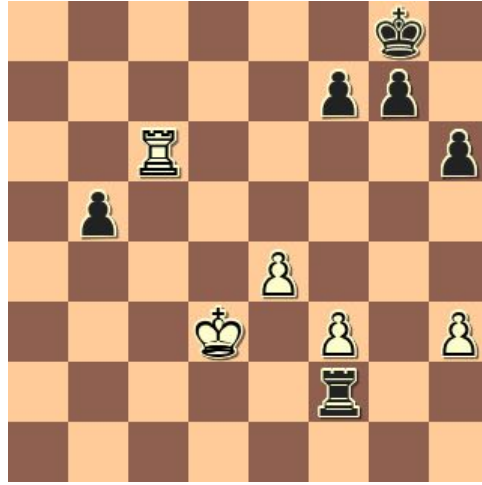


Black should not be looking to trade one of his strong passed pawns for White's weak g2-pawn.

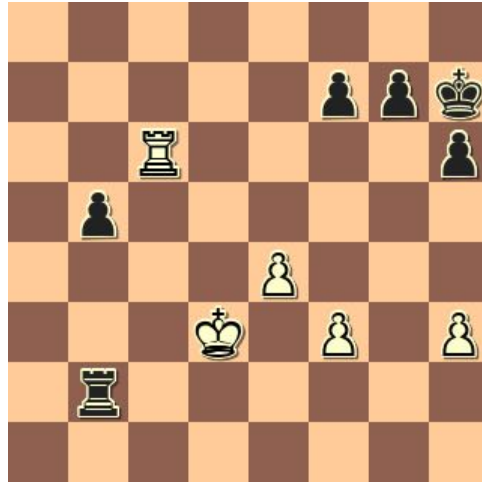
40...g6!? would retain good winning chances.



41.Kd3 Rxc2 42.Rxc6 Rf2



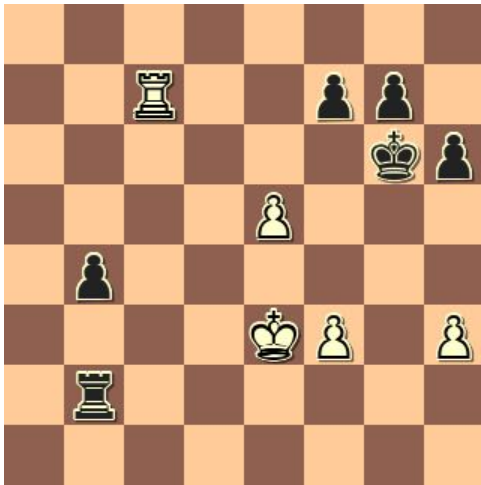
43.Ke3 Rb2 44.Kd3 Kh7



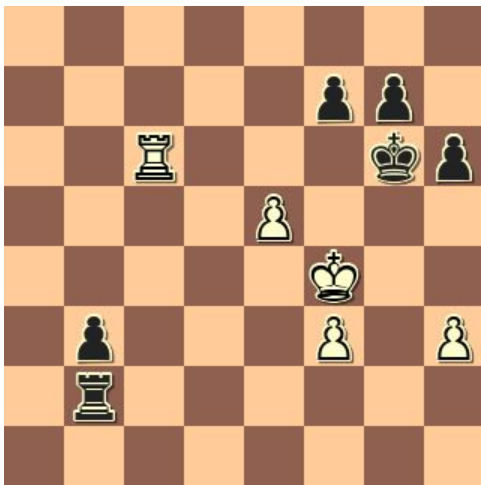
45.e5 Rb3+ 46.Ke2 Rb2+



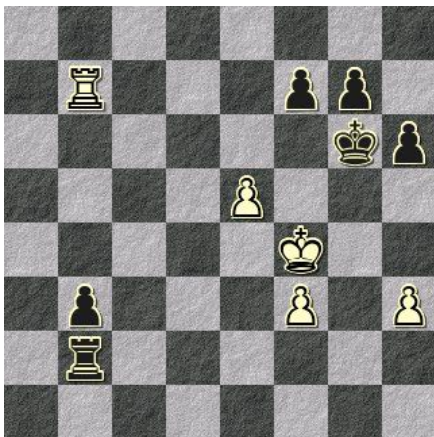
47.Ke3 b4 48.Rc7 Kg6



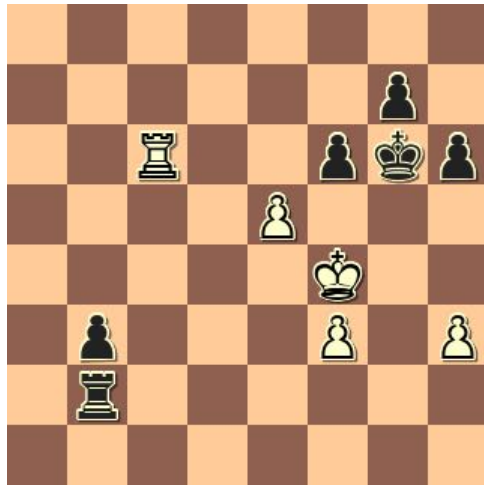
49.Kf4 b3 50.Rc6+?



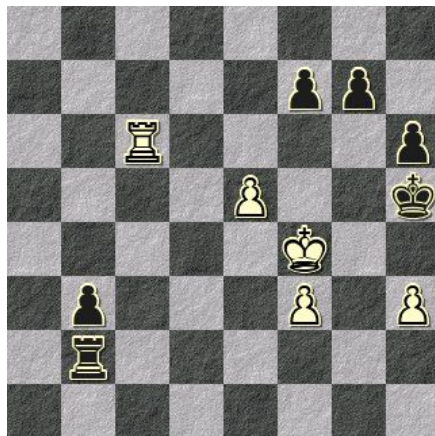
White's rook should remain on the seventh rank with 50.Rb7!?



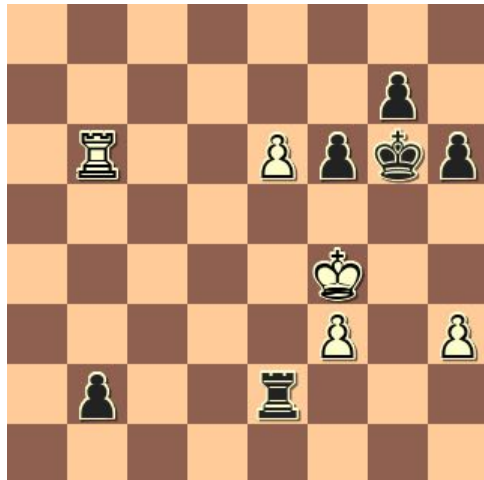
50...f6?



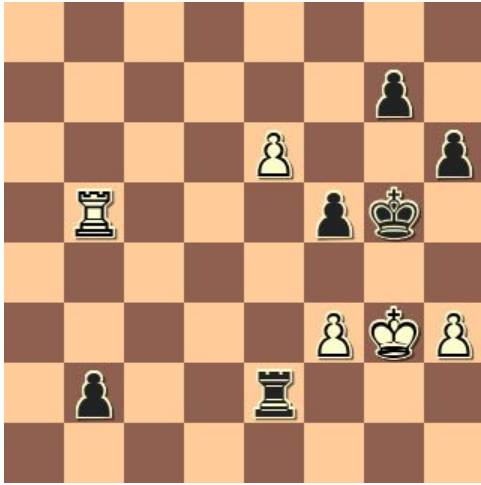
Correct was the aggressive 50...Kh5!



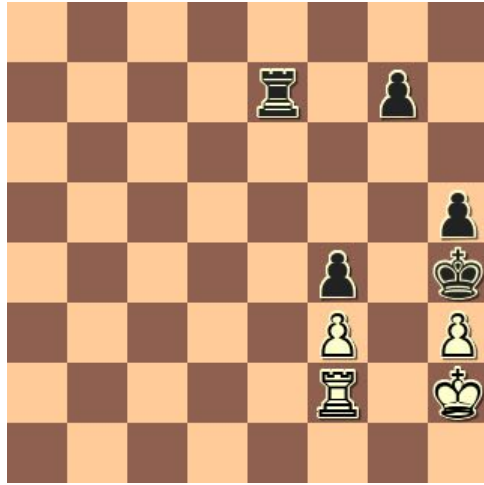
51.e6 Re2 52.Rb6 b2



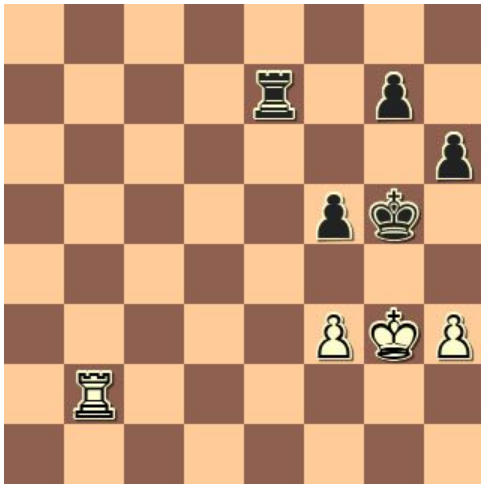
53.Kg3 Kg5 54.Rb5+ f5



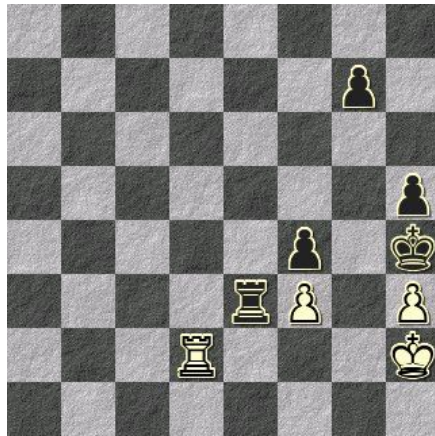
58.Rg2 h5 59.Rf2?



55.e7 Rxe7 56.Rxb2



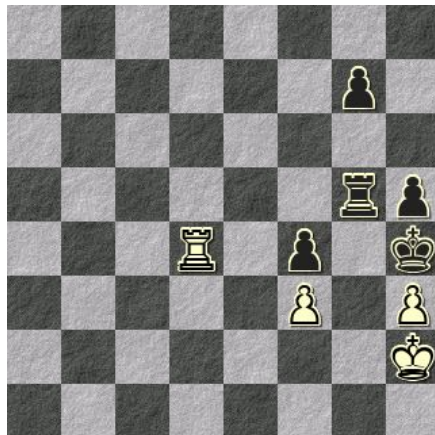
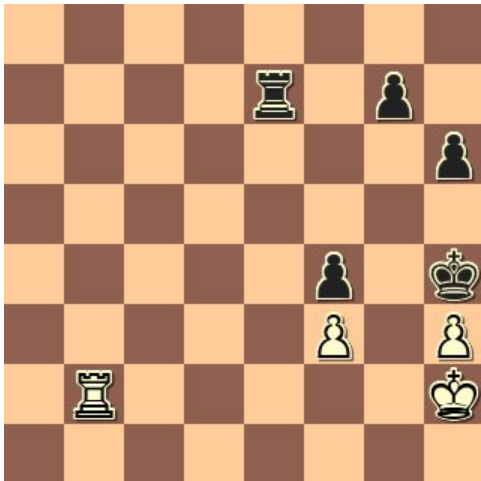
59.Rd2!? Re3



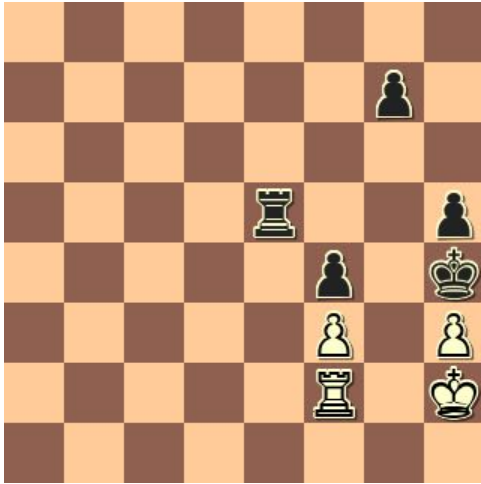
With both of Black's passed pawns traded off, White is within reach of a draw, but further winning chances for Black soon arise.

60.Kg2 would prepare to meet 60...Re5 61.Kh2 Rg5 with 62.Rd4! preventing ...Rg3.

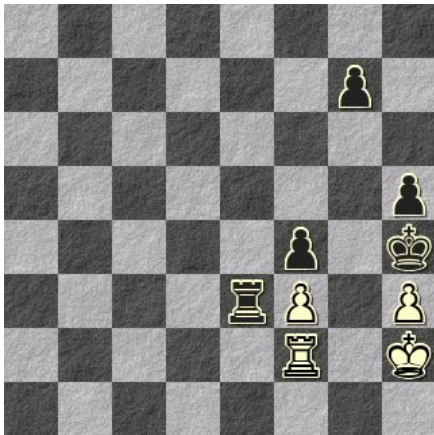
56...f4+ 57.Kh2 Kh4



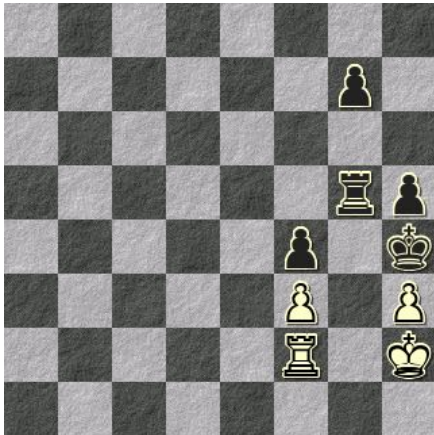
59...Re5?



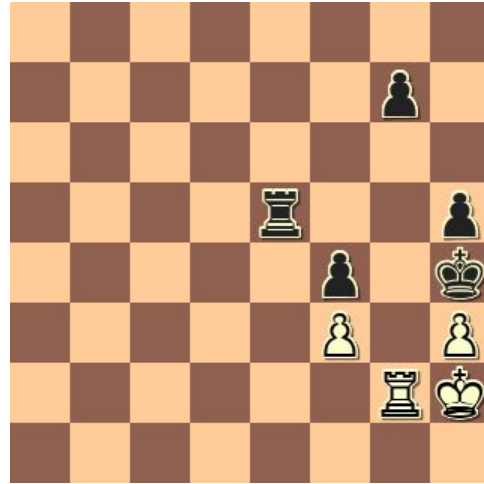
59...Re3! would put White in zugzwang.



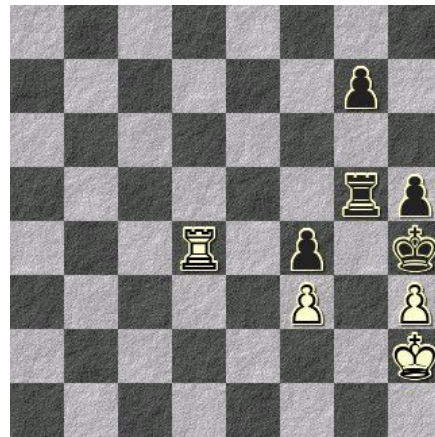
Since after 60.Kg2 Re5! 61.Kh2 Rg5 Black will continue with ...Rg3 winning a second pawn.



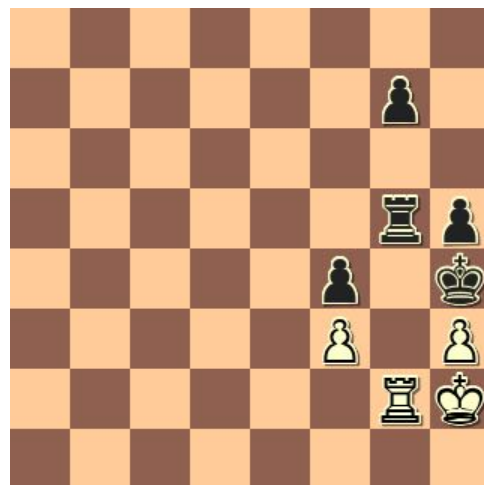
60.Rg2?



Again the right defense was 60.Rd2!? Rg5 61.Rd4! preventing ...Rg3 and holding a draw.

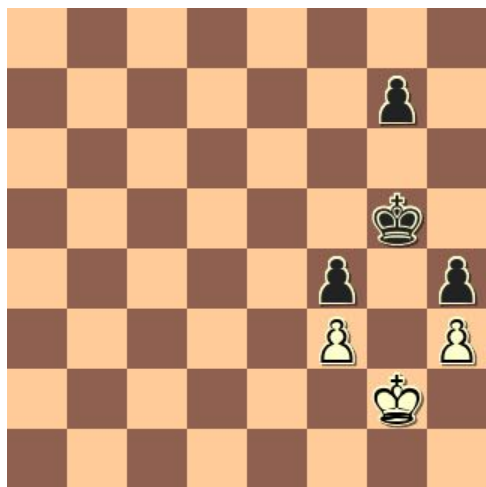


60...Rg5!



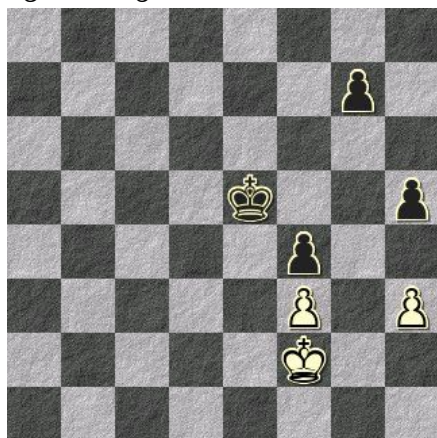
Now in order to prevent ...Rg3 Diego decided to trade rooks, but the pawn endgame is also losing for White.

61.Rxg5 Kxg5 62.Kg2 h4?

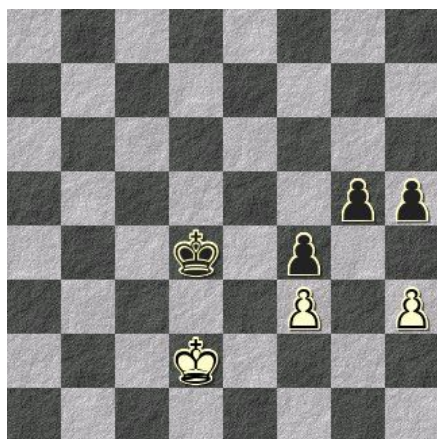


Spoiling the win by making it impossible for Black to create a passed pawn with ...g5-g4.

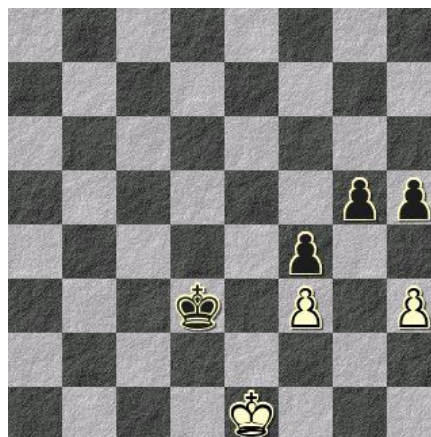
Black should activate his king first: 62...Kf5 63.Kf2 Ke5



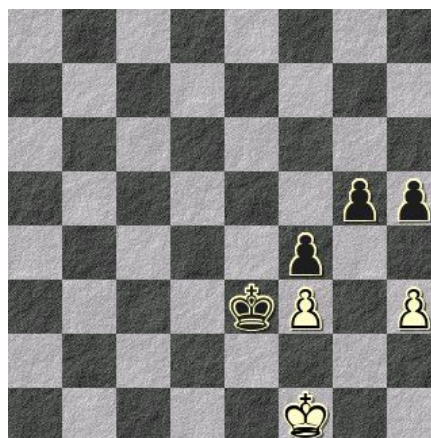
64.Ke2 Kd4 65.Kd2 g5



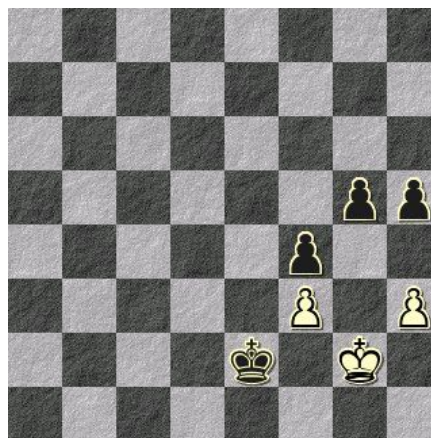
66.Ke2 Kc3 67.Ke1 Kd3



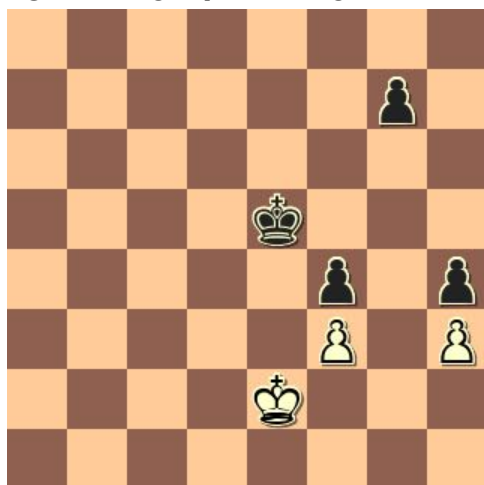
68.Kf2 Kd2 69.Kf1 Ke3



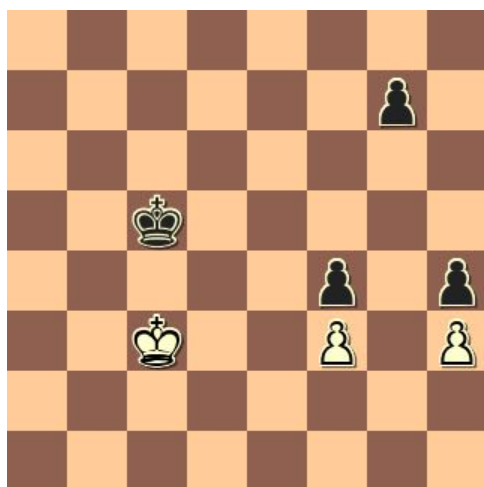
70.Kg2 Ke2 and White loses the f3-pawn.



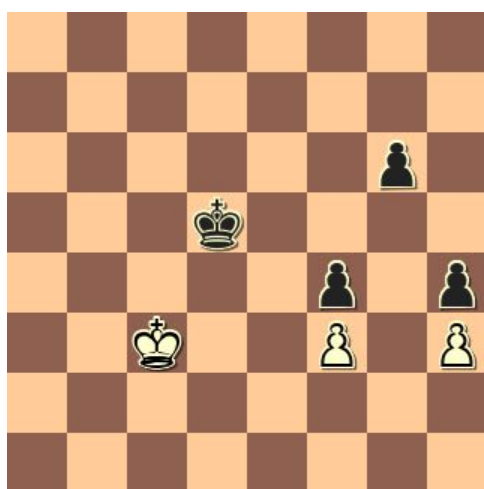
63.Kf2 Kf5 64.Ke2 Ke5



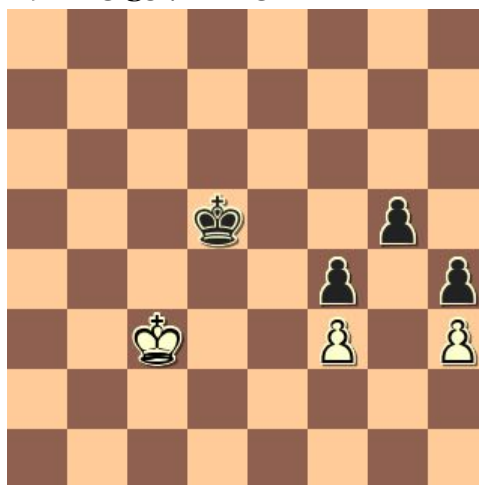
65.Kd3 Kd5 66.Kc3 Kc5



67.Kd3 Kd5 68.Kc3 g6

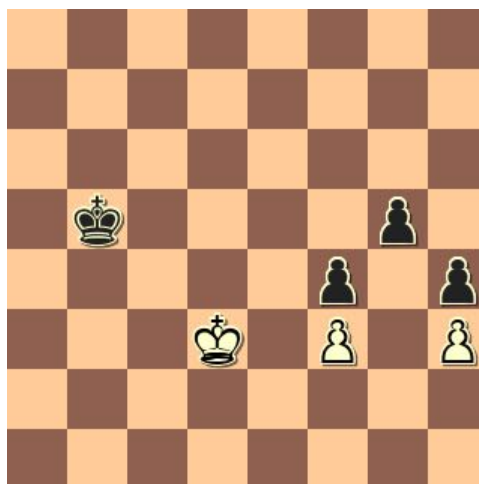


69.Kd3 g5 70.Kc3

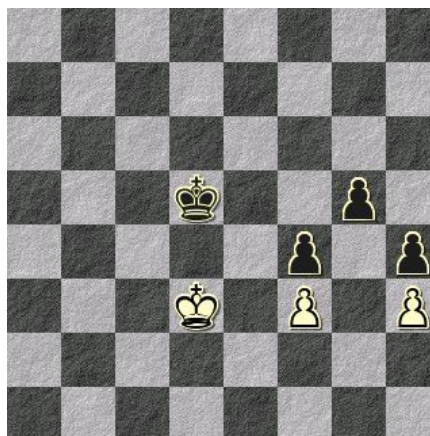


Black's reserve tempi ...g6 and ...g5 do not help him, since he is still unable to invade on the e4-square, which is controlled by White's pawn.

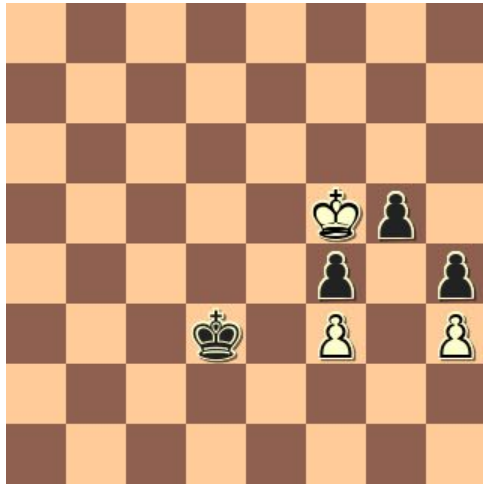
70...Kc5 71.Kd3 Kb5?



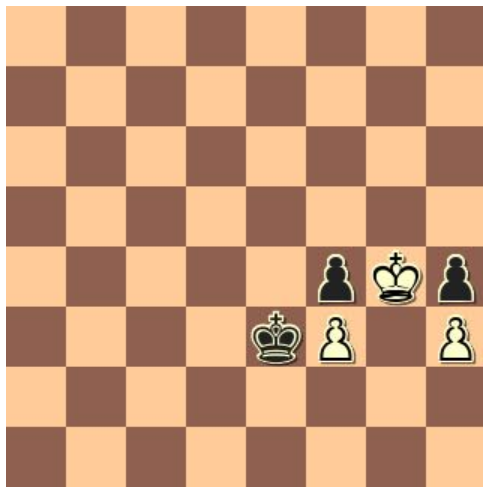
In time trouble, Black makes a fatal miscalculation. Instead he had to accept the draw with. 71...Kd5



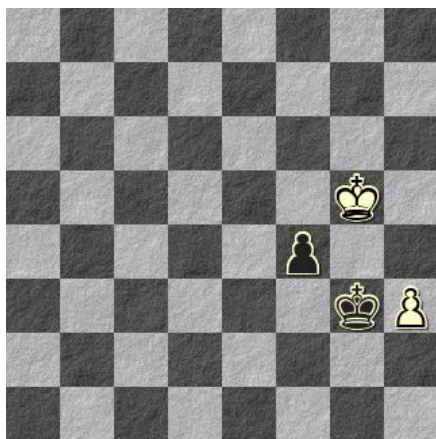
72.Ke4 Kc4 73.Kf5 Kd3



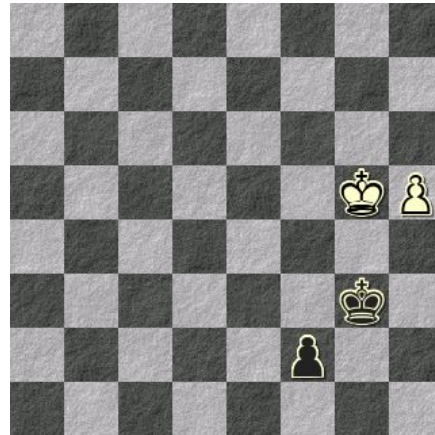
74.Kxg5 Ke3 75.Kg4! 1-0



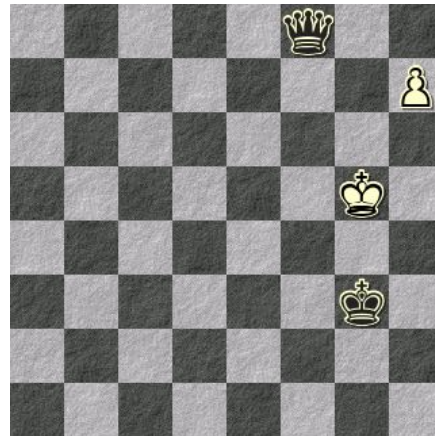
The move John Wesley missed in his calculations. He had only considered 75.Kxh4? Kxf3 76.Kg5 Kg3



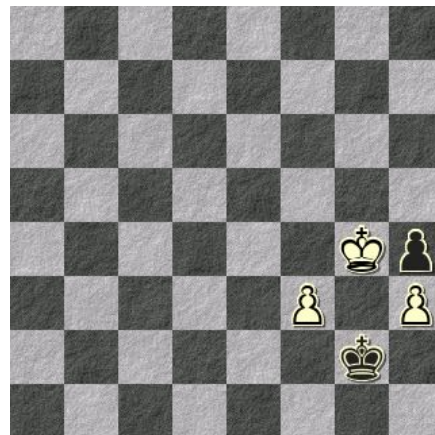
77.h4 f3 78.h5 f2



79.h6 f1=Q 80.h7 Qf8 and Black wins.



After the move in the game 75.Kg4! Black lost on time, but his position is losing anyway: 75...Kf2 76.Kxf4 Kg2 77.Kg4 and the f-pawn queens.



A rich and hard-fought game by both players. This brought Diego to a perfect 5.0/5 in the tournament! I wished him best of luck as he later represented Mississippi in the 12th Annual Dewain Barber National Tournament of Middle School State Champions from July 30-August 2, 2022 in Rancho Mirage, California.