

## GM Alex Fishbein on the Endings

### THE FAMOUS "DO NOT RUSH" RULE

# ON THE EDGE

## Between Apply and Abuse

Sharpening your senses for chess combat is not a straightforward process. Even experienced strong players occasionally fail to cope with over-the-board challenges despite their sound knowledge of principles and rules. This article is designed to help you train your senses and improve your technique by deepening your understanding of one of the most popular chess guidelines.

**In** his classic 1988 book *Endgame Strategy*, the Soviet master and trainer Mikhail Shereshevsky popularized the rule "Do Not Rush." He described the concept so succinctly, and with such vivid examples, that this rule became an almost automatic guide for players and trainers.

▲ Photo by Pavel Danilyuk



However, I always had many doubts about the universality of this rule. A few issues ago, I argued that Korchnoi was not a fan of it. And it seems to me that superior endgames are just as often spoiled by delay as by haste.

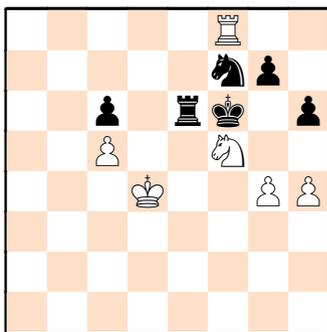
Shereshevsky himself qualified the rule: “This principle must on no account be abused. It’s necessary to be ready at the right moment to abruptly shift to active play, as otherwise the opponent can eliminate his sometimes temporary weaknesses. Feeling this sense of urgency and not missing the moment is a hard skill to acquire, and we shall see that even very strong players have erred here.”

But I never got a good lesson, from this or other books, on how to develop this sense. So, let us go through several examples of proper and improper application of the “Do Not Rush” rule and see if we can draw any conclusions. As always, we hope it will be a springboard to further work by the reader.

Vladas I. Mikenas

Boris Spassky

Soviet Championship Final, Moscow 1955



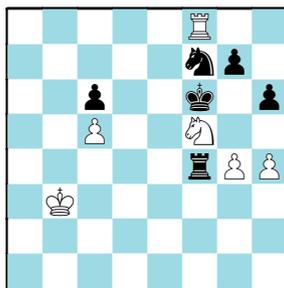
Shereshevsky writes: “The black pieces are so confined that they almost cannot move. In such a situation, the tactic “Do Not Rush” is usually optimal for the stronger side. White should calmly improve his position. He should only force the action if there is an immediate win.”

Fair enough, but here (as often in such cases), there isn’t a way to improve

the position without giving the opponent counterplay.

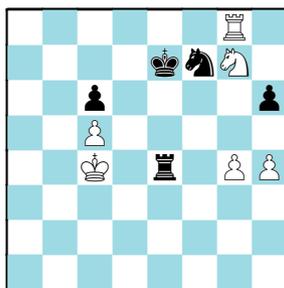
54.♖d6?! The author correctly labels this move as dubious, as the play now becomes forced and it’s relatively easy for the defender to equalize. The 18-year-old future world champion solved this problem.

But the suggested move 54.♙c4 also doesn’t achieve the goal after 54...♞e4+ 55.♙b3 ♞f4! (cutting the king off and threatening ...h6-h5; this is much more active than 55...♞e6? 56.♙b4!+-)



56.h5 ♞f1! 57.♙b4 ♞b1+ 58.♙a5 (58.♙c3 ♞c1+ 59.♙d4 ♞d1+) 58...♞b5+ 59.♙a6 ♞xc5 60.♖d6 ♙e7.

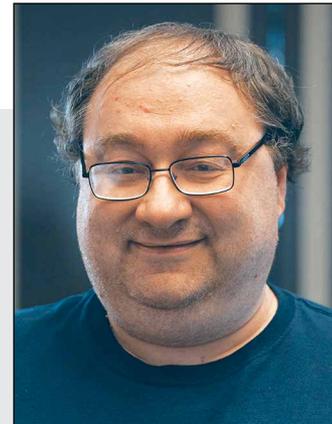
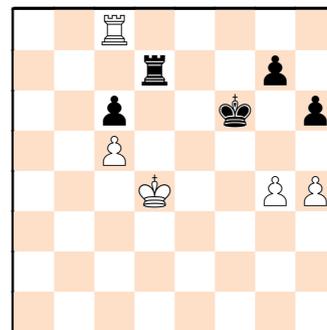
The best try is 54.♙c3! ♞e5! 55.♙b4 ♙e6! The only move, as here 55...♞e1 56.♖d6 ♞e7 57.♙a5 is of course hopeless. 56.♖xg7+ ♙e7 (56...♙f6 also does not lose.) 57.♞g8 ♞e4+ 58.♙b3 ♞e3+ 59.♙c4 ♞e4+



and Black’s activity is sufficient to hold despite the pawn minus. If 60.♙d3 ♞xg4! 61.♖f5+ ♙f6 62.♞xg4 ♖e5+ But finding this defense, or the defense against 54.♙c4, would be a harder task

than what Spassky had to demonstrate. So in this case, White really did “rush.”

54...♞e7 55.♖xf7 ♞xf7 56.♞c8 ♞d7+!



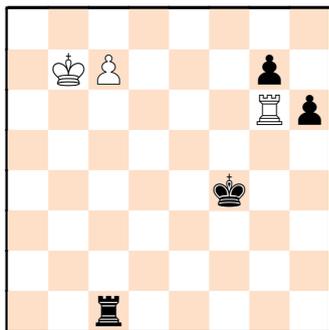
**Alex Fishbein** is an American grandmaster, residing in Tennessee. He was the winner of the inaugural Denker Tournament of High School Champions in 1985. He won several national and international tournaments in the 1990s, including in Denmark and Norway, and became a grandmaster in 1992. He then began a career in finance but continued to compete in his spare time, including four times in the U.S. Championship in the 2000s. He is known for his endgame knowledge, having won the Best Endgame Prize in the 2004 U.S. Championship, written a well-received book on pawn endings in 1993 and helped in revising Dvoretzky’s *Endgame Manual* in 2020.



Black's rook activity will hold the draw.

57.♔c4 57.♗c3 ♗e5 58.♖xc6 ♗d5!  
59.♖c8 ♖f7 60.♗b4 ♖b7+!

57...♗e5! 58.♖xc6 ♖d4+ 59.♗b5  
♖xg4 60.h5 ♖g5 61.♖g6 ♖xh5 62.c6  
♗f4+ 63.♗b6 ♖h1 64.c7 ♖b1+  
65.♗a6 ♖c1 66.♗b7



66...♖xc7+! 66...h5?? 67.♖c6

67.♗xc7 h5

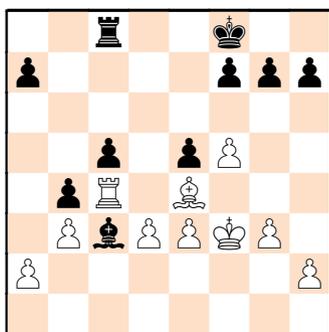
Draw

Shereshevsky's next example on this theme migrated to later literature and is quite famous.

Richard Reti

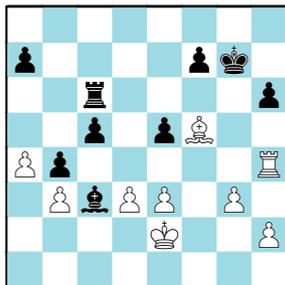
Peter Romanovsky

Moscow 1925



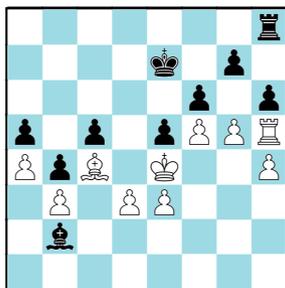
31.a4 Shereshevsky, and Dvoretzky after him, award this move an exclamation point. The reason: nothing is happening elsewhere on the board right now. White's plan of ♔d5, ♖h4-h5 and then h4, g4, g5 can wait, while he greatly improves the position of his a-pawn. That a-pawn will, by the way, decide the outcome of the game. But my computer says 31.a4 is a big mistake!

The right move is first 31.f6!, creating targets on the kingside. Only then can White's plan succeed against good defense. Now after 31...h6 (31...g6 32.g4! h6 33.h4 h5 34.g5 will suffocate Black; e.g. 34...♗b2 35.♗b7 ♖c7 36.♗a6 ♗a1 37.♗e4 ♗e8 38.♗b5+ ♗d8 39.♗d5 ♖c8 40.♗d6 ♗b2 41.♗c6) 32.fxg7+ ♗xg7 33.a4! Only now! 33...♗f6 34.♗e2 ♗g7 35.♗f5 ♖c6 36.♖h4



Black probably can't defend both sides of the board, for example: 36...♖f6 37.♖h5 ♖b6 38.♗f3 ♖d6 39.♗e4 ♖b6 40.g4 ♖d6 41.♖h3 ♖d8 42.♖f3 ♖d6 43.h4 ♖d8 44.♖f2 ♖d6 45.♖g2 ♖d8 46.♖g1 Preventing ...♗e1. 46...♖d6 47.g5 hxg5 48.hxg5 ♗d2 49.♖h1 ♗c3 50.♖h7+ ♗g8 51.♖h4! ♗g7 52.♗f3 ♗d2 53.♖c4 ♖c6 54.♗e4 ♖c7 The black rook has been displaced. 55.♖c2 ♗c3 56.♗d5! with decisive entry.

31...♗e7 32.♗d5 ♖c7 33.♖h4 h6 34.♗e4 ♗f6? Black needs to stop White's kingside schemes. 34...a5 35.♗c4 ♖d7! 36.♖h5 ♗b2 37.g4 f6 38.h4?! This doesn't work, but how else can White make progress? 38...♖d8!= 39.g5 ♖h8!



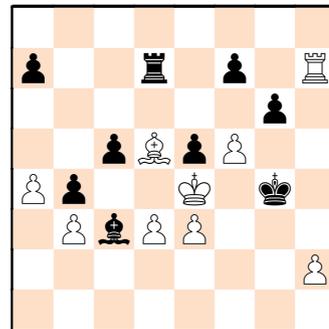
is a draw. If White gets active, only he can lose, with his rook out of play.

35.♖h5 ♖d7? Too late now! Black's last chance was 35...♗e7 36.g4 f6! the poor rook is late to the eighth rank 37.♗e6!

♖b7 38.♗d5 e4 39.♗xe4 ♗d6, and, a pawn down, he can still fight.

36.g4! g6 A desperate attempt, which Reti brilliantly refutes.

37.♖xh6 ♗g5 38.♖h7 ♗xg4



39.♗e6! Not the only way to win, but a move that does not win is 39.fxg6?? f5 mate!

39...fxe6 40.fxg6 ♖d8 41.♖xa7 And, indeed, the a-pawn made all the difference.

41...♗g5 42.g7 ♗h6 43.a5 ♗h7 44.a6 ♖d6 45.h4 ♗e1 46.h5 ♗h4 47.h6

Black resigned

So, while overall Reti conducted the ending splendidly, he missed a key opportunity for sharp play (with 31.f6!) and in that instance misused the rule "Do Not Rush."

Now I would like to show a couple examples from my own games. In one, I failed to apply the "Do Not Rush" rule, and in the other, I abused it.

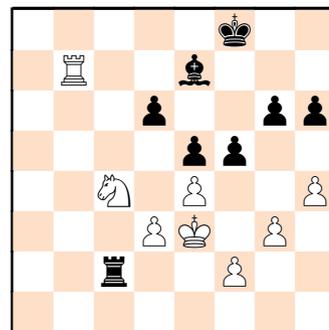
Alexander Fishbein

2405

Nicholas Bruha

2005

Indianapolis Open 2022

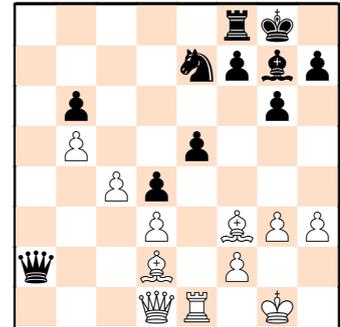




▲ Indianapolis, IN

Alexander Fishbein	2389
Tarini Goyal	2223

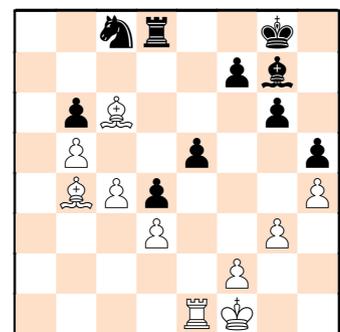
Spice Cup, Saint Louis 2022



A reversed Benoni structure went very bad for my opponent, and I am completely winning here. I devised a convincing plan: trade queens while keeping the rook on e1, so that the black bishop cannot get to the a3-f8 diagonal, and then c4-c5 should win quickly.

21. ♖b4! ♜e8 22. ♚a1! ♛b3 23. ♛a3 ♛xa3 24. ♙xa3 ♜c8 25. ♙c6 ♜d8 26. ♖b4 26...c5 is already possible, but since Black has no moves, why not wait and improve my position?

26...h5 27.h4 ♜a7 28. ♙g2 ♜c8 29. ♜f1 ♜e8 30. ♙c6 ♜d8

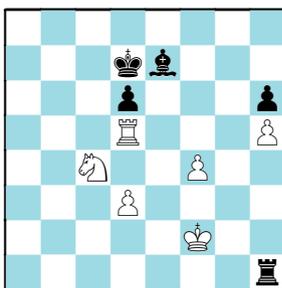


31. ♙g2 I still had plenty of time left on the clock and decided to look for some sort of Zugzwang, or at least further improve my king position, while the opponent can just sit and wait. But, as she pointed out after the game, it was time to take decisive action: 31.c5! ♙f8 32. ♜xe5 with an easy win, e.g. 32...♜g7 33. ♙g2 bxc5 34. ♙xc5 ♙xc5 35. ♜xc5 ♜b6

Here, I have an advantage, with a better knight vs. bishop and some pawn weaknesses for my opponent. But my position is not yet winning. It's important to properly evaluate the position. I felt that the time for decisive action had not yet come. But, perhaps affected by a missed win in a pawn ending the previous evening, I lost objectivity and decided to force matters.

33.h5? There were two reasonable ways to continue.

33...exf5! gxf5 34.f4 would be difficult to react to. The best defense is 34...♜e8! 35. ♖b5 (35.fxe5 dxe5 36. ♜xe5 ♙d6 37. ♖b5 ♜c1 38.d4 ♜e7) 35...exf4+ 36. ♜xf4 ♜f2+ 37. ♜e3 ♜f1 38. ♜e2 ♜g1 39. ♜f2 ♜d1 40. ♜d5 f4 41.gxf4 ♜h1! 42.h5 ♜d7



and Black is able to defend, a pawn down.

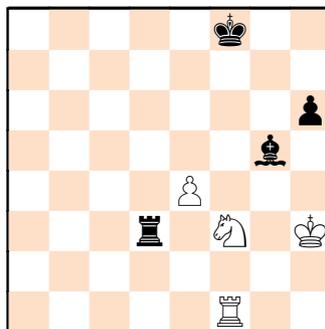
33. ♜b6!?, trying to get my knight to

d5, also keeps the tension in the position, as 33...d5? loses to 34. ♜d7+! ♜g8 35.exd5.

33...f4+ Instead, a bunch of pawns come off the board, and I don't even gain a pawn advantage.

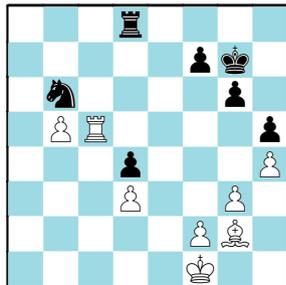
34. ♜f3 gxh5! This pawn will be a source of counterplay.

35. ♖b5 h4 36.gxf4 h3 37. ♖b1 ♙h4 38.fxe5 dxe5 39. ♜xe5 ♜xf2+ 40. ♜g4 ♙f6 41. ♜f3 ♜e2 42. ♜f4 ♙g5+ 43. ♜g3 ♜e3 44. ♖f1 ♜xd3 45. ♜xh3



And the game was soon drawn.

This almost looks like a rookie mistake: I went for a combinational solution (in mutual time trouble) instead of trying to build my advantage.



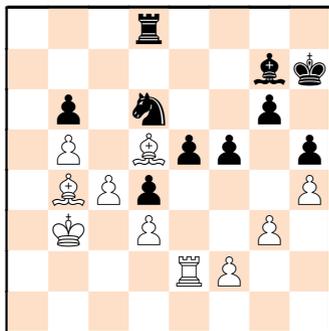
I was somehow worried that my pawn would be blockaded, but it just takes a little focus to see this through: 36.♖c7 ♖b8 37.♙c6 (37.♖b7 also wins without much trouble.) 37...♗f6 38.♗g2 ♘a4 39.♗d7 ♘c3 40.♗xd4 ♘xb5 41.♖b4.

31...♗e8 32.♗e2 ♗d8 33.♗e1 ♗e8 34.♗d1 ♗d8 35.♗c2 This was still a great moment for 35.c5.

35...f5! Black, running low on time, now goes for desperate counterplay – the right decision, as my time is getting low as well, and besides I am not in the mood to calculate variations.

36.♙d5+ ♗h7 37.♗b3? 37.f4! was very strong: 37...exf4 38.gxf4 ♙h6 39.♙d2 and Black cannot defend all of her weaknesses.

37...♗d6!



An excellent response. The outcome is now less clear. My clock was running down to 10-15 minutes left (versus 1-2 minutes for my opponent), plus increment. **With that kind of time remaining, a blunder is possible, so an element of chance, so to speak, has been introduced.**

38.♙c6? 38.♙xd6! ♗xd6 39.f3! still wins convincingly, but that's a hard

decision to make without some thought.

38...e4! Starting here, I was able to find solid moves. But it was close!

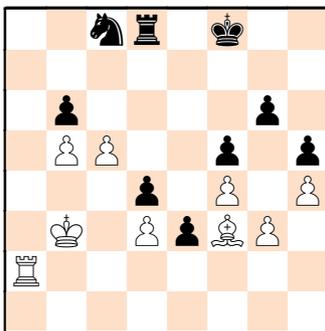
39.♗d2! e3?! 39...exd3 is a better try, but probably falls short after 40.♗xd3 (but not my intended reply 40.f3? f4! 41.gxf4 ♙f6) 40...♗e4 41.f3 ♘xg3 42.♙e7.

39...♙e5 is also a tougher defense.

40.♗e2! 40.fxe3? dxe3 41.♗e2 f4! 42.gxf4 ♗f5=

40...♙h6 41.f4 41.c5 immediately is better: 41...bxc5 42.♙xc5 f4 43.gxf4 ♗f5 44.♙b6 ♖c8 45.fxe3 dxe3 46.♙xe3.

41...♙f8 42.♗a2 ♗c8?! 43.♙f3 ♗g7 44.♙xf8+ ♗xf8 45.c5!



Finally!

45...bxc5 46.♗c4 ♗e7 47.♗xc5 ♗f6 48.b6 ♗xb6 49.♗xb6 and White won.

But I made life much harder for myself than it needed to be. When your position is clearly winning, “Do Not Rush” is good advice for paying attention to opponent’s resources, but at some point you have to find a breakthrough. Delaying it can lead to counterplay.

A dynamic that has changed since the publication of that Soviet book is that we now play with shorter time controls. If you are winning, you don’t want to leave the game to chance, which can happen if you start running out of time (along with your opponent), and you are not able to calculate precisely. “Do Not Rush” in winning positions makes more sense today in the middlegame than the endgame.

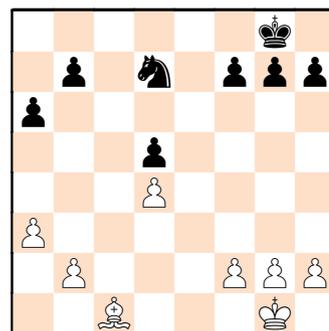
We can propose a few guidelines for using the Do Not Rush rule in the endgame:

1. The Do Not Rush rule best applies to positions where you have an advantage which is insufficient to win, and you have no quick way to worsen your opponent’s position.
2. If you have a winning advantage, apply the Do Not Rush rule only to prevent counterplay, but do not just drag out the game. Find the decisive winning method.
3. There is nothing wrong with trying to run your opponent low on time, but be aware that if you also run low, you can lose control of the situation.

With this in mind, let’s look at some examples of how world champions think about this rule. We will look at a game by Bobby Fischer and three games by Magnus Carlsen.

Anthony Saïdy  
Robert Fischer

U.S. Championship, New York 1964

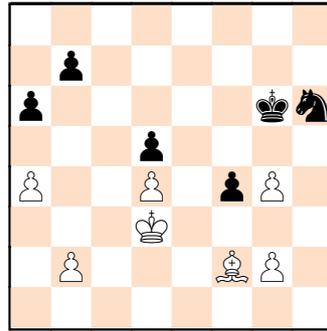


Shereshevsky was exceptionally insightful when he included the famous Saïdy - Fischer endgame as an example of “Do Not Rush.” Fischer, in fact, often just held the position, hoping for his opponent to collapse. He brought the physical aspect to the sport. Against him, you had to be ready to play till exhaustion.

Here Bobby has an advantage because the white central pawn is blocked on the color of the bishop. But that should not be enough to win.



24.♔f1 ♖f8 25.♙e2 ♗e6 26.♙d3 h5  
27.♙e3 ♗h7 28.f3 ♙g6 29.a4 ♙f5  
30.♙e2 g5 31.♙f2 Having made some progress but realizing that he can't win without his opponent's help, Bobby Fischer slows down the tempo of the game. He goes into a chess version of the Four Corners Offense (in college basketball, before they introduced the shot clock in the 1980s). In classical chess, you can't just run out the clock; you have to win on the board. But if the opponent has little time or energy to make the right decisions when it counts, then it's almost like running out the clock.



I think this game was adjourned at some point, but I don't know when. If Saidy had to be given a move to seal, this would have been the perfect time.

is a variation given by Kasparov. With only one or two weaknesses to defend, White can manage.

44...♗xg4 45.♙d2 ♙f5 46.♙e1 ♖f6!  
47.♙h4 ♗e4 48.♙e1 ♙g4 49.♙e2  
Loses quickly, but White cannot guard the entire board even after the tougher defense 49.a5 ♗g3 50.♙f2 ♗f5 51.♙e2 ♗d6!  
52.b3 (52.♙d3 ♗c4 53.b4 ♗d6 54.♙e2 ♗f5 with Zugzwang. Once the black king breaks through to f3 and e4, it's over.) 52...♗e4 53.♙e1 ♗g3+ 54.♙f2 ♗f5 55.♙c3 ♗d6 56.♙b2 ♗e4+--.

49...♗g3+ 50.♙d3 ♗f5!

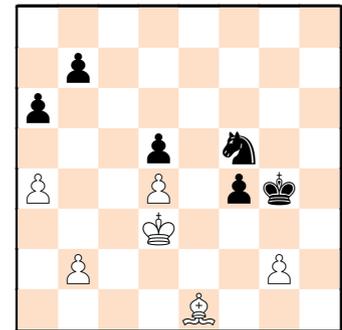
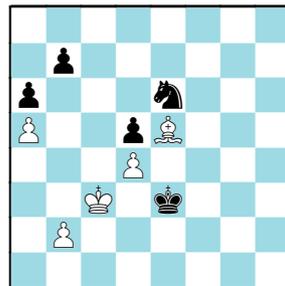
**When you don't have a win (yet) on the board, extending the game is often the best technique.**

31...♗d8 32.♙d2 ♙g6 33.♙e3 ♗e6  
34.♙d3 ♙f5 35.♙e3 Both the black knight and king have just gone back and forth. Now he starts advancing the f-pawn, but very slowly.

35...f6 36.♙e2 ♙g6 37.♙d3 f5!  
Fischer begins asking his opponent serious questions only near the time control. The easiest way for White to hold is now 38.g3!, but it's tough to put a pawn on the square of its bishop.

38.♙e2?! f4! 39.♙f2 ♗g7 40.h3 ♗f5  
41.♙d3 g4! 42.hxg4 hxg4 43.fxg4 ♗h6

44.♙e1? The bishop could only defend from g1! White had to play 44.♙e2! ♗xg4 45.♙g1! ♙f5 46.♙f3 ♗f6 47.♙h2! ♗h5 and now 48.a5 ♙g5 49.g4! fxg3 50.♙xg3 is a draw, although still not an easy one (and Fischer would have played for a long time): 50...♗f6 51.♙e5 ♗e4 52.♙e3 ♙g4 53.♙d3 ♙f3 54.♙c2 ♙e3 55.♙b3 ♗g5 56.♙b4 ♗e6 57.♙c3!



The bishop has been outmaneuvered. The king cannot come back to help the g-pawn.

51.♙f2 ♗h4 52.a5 52.♙xh4 ♙xh4  
53.♙e2 ♙g3 54.♙f1 f3 is, of course, hopeless.

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 Prizes U2000: \$600-400-200-150-75; U1600 \$400-200-150-100-50; U1200 \$100-50-40-35-25.  
 U2000/U1600 Registration \$40 by 4/15. After 4/15 and day of (until 8:30 AM) \$50.  
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One ½ point bye available. Byes for rounds 4&5 must be requested before the end of round 3.

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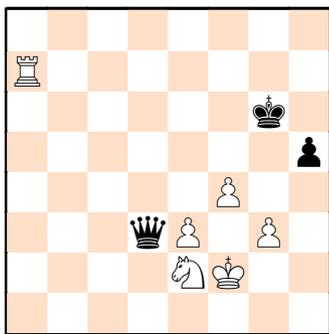


52...♖xg2 53.♔c3 ♕f3 54.♙g1 ♕e2  
55.♙h2 f3 56.♙g3 ♖e3

**White resigned**

Magnus Carlsen	2855
Ian Nepomniachtchi	2782

Game 6, World Championship, Dubai 2021



If Bobby Fischer introduced the concept of “tempo of the game” to chess, then Magnus Carlsen took it to a new level. Whether it’s fast break, a half-court offense, pick and roll, or even four corners, he can do it all.

We pick up the marathon game 6 of his match with Nepo at the point when they had just traded down to this ♖+♖ vs. ♔ ending. During the press conference, Magnus said that he believed the most likely result was a draw, and that he wanted to make the game as long as possible so that both players are as tired as possible. As we have mentioned (guideline #1), this strategy only makes sense when the position is drawn. When you’re winning, you don’t want to jeopardize the win by getting tired. Positions such as we have here are actually much more tiring for the defender. There are no direct winning threats, so the defender has many moves at his disposal. Choosing among them takes much more energy than finding the only moves.

Magnus Carlsen not only knows how to evaluate positions, he also has a feeling for which positions are hard and easy to defend.

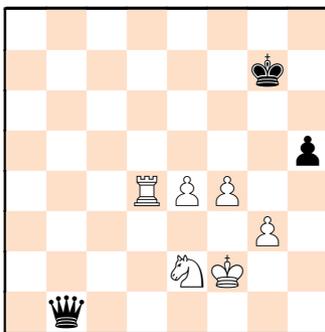
82...♔d5 83.♙a6+ ♕h7 84.♙a1 ♕g6 85.♖d4 ♔b7 86.♙a2 ♔h1 87.♙a6+ ♕f7 88.♖f3 ♔b1 89.♙d6 Nothing has happened so far. We are at move 89, but have almost 40 moves yet to go – an entire game!

89...♕g7 90.♙d5 ♔a2+ 91.♙d2 ♔b1 92.♙e2 ♔b6 93.♙c2 The stronger side

is often tempted to repeat moves in situations like this. With an increment, you literally gain time by repeating moves once. But I have noticed that the greatest players rarely use this technique in better (or winning) positions.

93...♔b1 94.♖d4 ♔h1 95.♙c7+ ♕f6 96.♙c6+ ♕f7 97.♖f3! Note that Black has not yet had an opportunity to trade off the h-pawn (or think about whether it’s a good idea).

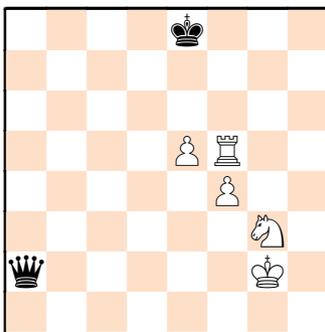
97...♔b1 98.♖g5+ ♕g7 99.♖e6+ ♕f7 100.♖d4 ♔h1 101.♙c7+ ♕f6 102.♖f3 ♔b1 103.♙d7 ♔b2+ 104.♙d2 ♔b1 105.♖g1 ♔b4 106.♙d1 ♔b3 107.♙d6+ ♕g7 108.♙d4 ♔b2+ 109.♖e2 ♔b1 110.e4



Many people play e4 on move 1, Carlsen is playing it on move 110!

110...♔h1 111.♙d7+ ♕g8 112.♙d4 ♔h2+ 113.♕e3 h4! Trading into a tablebase draw.

114.gxh4 ♔h3+ 115.♔d2 ♔xh4 116.♙d3 ♕f8 117.♙f3 ♔d8+ 118.♕e3 ♔a5 119.♕f2 ♔a7+ 120.♙e3 ♔d7 121.♖g3 ♔d2+ 122.♕f3 ♔d1+ 123.♙e2 ♔b3+ 124.♕g2 ♔b7 125.♙d2 ♔b3 126.♙d5 ♕e7 127.♙e5+ ♕f7 128.♙f5+ ♕e8 129.e5 ♔a2+



Now White has made considerable progress, and Black has to start finding necessary moves.

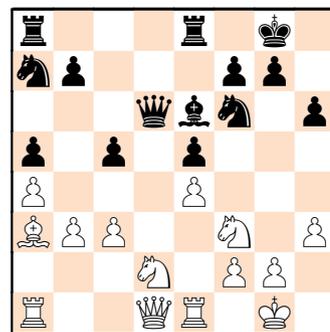
130.♕h3 ♔e6? And that’s all it took to lose the game! He needed to prevent the white king from advancing by keeping the queen in the rear: 130...♔c2! (or 130...♔b1) 131.♕g4 ♔d1+ 132.♕g5 ♔g1!.

131.♕h4 ♔h6+ 132.♖h5 ♔h7 133.e6! ♔g6 134.♙f7 ♕d8 135.f5 ♔g1 136.♖g7 **Black resigned** as the white king can just hide on g8 and it’s over.

This game was so psychologically draining for Ian that he didn’t recover from it and lost the match without a fight. But Carlsen also knows when NOT to apply the “Do Not Rush” rule and, instead, to force the issue, as the following memorable game from 2019 shows:

Magnus Carlsen	2882
Wesley So	2776

Sinquefield Cup, Saint Louis 2019



17.♖c4!? A remarkable idea, creating pawns that look terribly weak, but gaining control of some squares.

17...♔xd1 18.♙axd1 ♕xc4 19.bxc4 Black has to solve some unusual problems. His b-pawn is backward on the file, and the white knight can at some point come to d5.

19...b6 Unusual problems ask for unusual solutions! Although the game move is by no means a mistake and 19...♙ac8-c7 followed by ...♖a7-c8-b6 was a reasonable plan, I think the most convincing reply is the countersacrifice 19...♖c8!? 20.♕xc5 ♙a6!



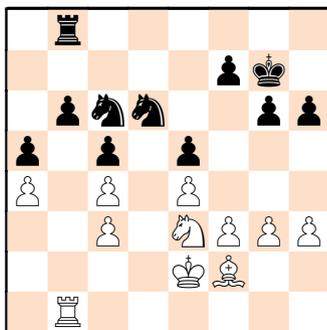
▲ Magnus Carlsen, Grand Chess Tour 2022.  
Photo by Lennart Ootes



White had sacrificed his pawn structure, and Black has sacrificed a pawn to exploit it. 21.♖d2 ♖c6 22.♗e3 ♖d6 23.f3 ♖xc4 and White has no advantage.

20.♖h4 ♖ad8 21.f3 g6 22.g3 ♖h5 23.♗f2 ♖c6?! Black misses another chance for counterplay with 23...♖c8 24.♖g2 ♖d6 25.♖e3 f5.

24.♗c1 ♗g7 25.♗e3 ♖xd1 26.♖xd1 ♖d8 27.♖b1! ♖b8 28.♖g2 ♖f6 29.♗e2 ♖e8 30.♗f2 ♖d6 31.♖e3



31...♖e7? It was already not easy to defend (the machine only gives two sound moves, 31...♖b7 and 31...♖d8, neither of them obvious). Wesley So allows a conversion into an ending where he falls into Zugzwang. Carlsen is able to see these ideas many moves in advance.

32.♖d5!! No dilly-dallying here!

32...♖xd5 33.cxd5 ♖b7 Defending the pawn on c5 from capture. How can White break through?

34.♗d3 f5 35.c4 ♖xe4+ The intended defense 35...♗f6 36.g4 f4 37.♗e1 g5 38.♗c3! leads to a picturesque position.



Where is White's breakthrough? There isn't one, but he does not need it! Black is in Zugzwang and must lose a pawn on the next move. Neither the knight or rook can move without allowing the capture on b6 or ♗xa5.

36.♖xe4 ♖f7 37.♖xb6 ♖xf2 38.♖xd6 ♖f3+ 39.♗e2 White is making the win a bit more difficult than it needs to be. 39.♗d2 was better.

39...♖c3 40.♖e6 ♖xc4 41.♖xe5 ♖xa4 42.♖e7+ 42.♗e3 also wins.

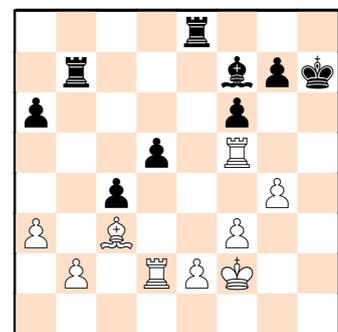
42...♗f6? 42...♗f8! would force White to find some only moves: 43.♖e6! (43.d6? ♖d4 44.e5 a4=) 43...♖b4 44.♗f3! a4 45.♖xg6 a3 46.♖a6 ♖b3+ 47.♗g4! Important to step here, as we shall see. 47...c4 48.d6 c3 49.♖a8+ ♗f7 50.d7 c2 51.d8♖+- In this variation and a couple others, I have made use of GM Peter Heine Nielsen's comments on this game in ChessBase.

**43.d6 Black resigned**

Our last example is a long game, but the "Do Not Rush" principle does not really apply.

Magnus Carlsen	2842
Sergey Karjakin	2773

Sinquefeld Cup, Saint Louis 2018



Against his previous challenger, Magnus Carlsen is working with an advantage in an OCB ending with rooks. As we discussed here some time ago, these endings benefit the player with attacking chances, and here the black king is obviously in more danger. His bishop is also less active, hitting against his own pawns. Therefore, the computer engine wants to apply a "Do Not Rush" technique with 37.♖d1!? ♖be7 38.♖e1 and Black, in a slight Zugzwang, is not able to keep both rooks on the e-file without allowing something nasty on the kingside.



The world champion, sensing that his position is not winning in any event, nevertheless decides to change the structure completely.

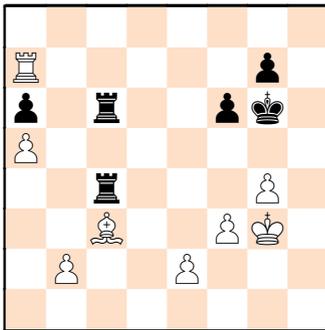
**37.♖fxd5!? ♜xd5 38.♞xd5 ♜g6** After the exchange sacrifice, White has the advantage. He has an eternal bishop on c3 which both attacks and defends, and Black has to worry about his queenside pawns. Karjakin decides to immediately give up the c-pawn, rather than getting tied down to its defense while giving White freedom to advance on the kingside.

**39.♞c5 ♞h8 40.♜g3!** “Do Not Rush” here means “watch out for opponent’s counterplay.” Not **40.♞xc4? ♞h2+ 41.♜e1 ♞e7 42.e4 ♞d7** and only Black can be better.

**40...♞b6** The nonhuman player wants **40...♞e8 41.e4 ♜f7 42.♞xc4 g5**.

**41.♞xc4 ♞h1 42.♞c7 ♞c1 43.♞d7 ♞c6 44.a4!** Improving the queenside before initiating play on the kingside.

**44...♞g1+ 45.♜f2 ♞a1 46.a5 ♞a4 47.♜g3 ♞ac4 48.♞a7!**

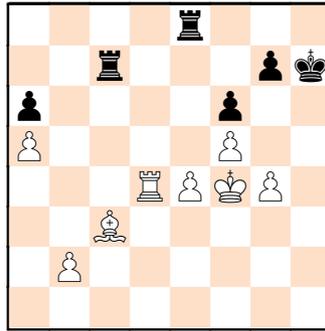


Every white move serves a purpose. Here, Carlsen avoids **...♞c7** with repeated harassment of his rook.

**48...♞e6 49.e4 ♞c8 50.♞d7!** Reclaiming the open file.

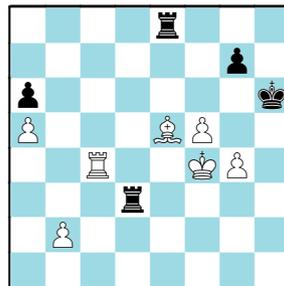
**50...♞ec6 51.f4!** The black rook has let its guard down a little, and White can get begin the advance. However, Black is still well within the scope of a draw.

**51...♞8c7 52.f5+ ♜h7 53.♞d8 ♞c8 54.♞d3 ♞e8 55.♞d4 ♞c7 56.♜f4**



Things are starting to get real. White now has a clear plan of advancing either with e4-e5 or g4-g5, while also trying to attack the pawn on a6. Black’s only defense here is **56...♞ec8!** threatening to harass the rook with **...♞c4** and force it back to its territory.

**56...♞ce7? 57.♞c4! ♜h6 58.♜f3 ♞d7 59.♞d4?** Unaware that he is winning now (guideline #2), Magnus doesn’t catch the decisive moment! With **59.e5! ♞d3+ (59...fxe5 60.♞c6+! ♜h7 61.♞xa6+-) 60.♜f4 fxe5+ 61.♞xe5**



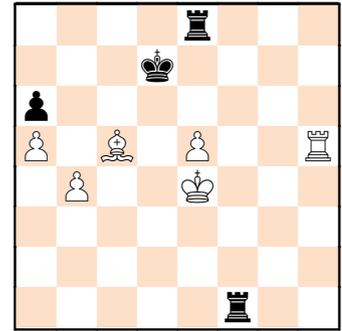
**61...g5+ 62.fxg6 ♜xg6 63.♞c6+ ♜f7 64.♞f6+ ♜e7 65.♞xa6+-** he could have crowned his beautiful play against two weaknesses (the a6 pawn and the black kingside) in this ending.

**59...♜h7? 59...♞ed8** would hold.

**60.b4?** White can go back to the right plan with **60.♞c3!**

**60...♞d6!** We are back in the neutral zone.

**61.♜e3 ♜h6 62.♞c1 ♜h7 63.♞b6 ♞d7 64.♞c5 ♞ed8 65.♞h1+ ♜g8 66.♜f4 ♞e8 67.♞e1 g5+! 68.fxg6 ♜g7 69.g5 ♜xg6 70.gxf6 ♜xf6 71.♞h1 ♞f7! 72.♜e3 ♜e6 73.♞h4 ♞f6 74.♞h7 ♞f7 75.♞h5 ♜d7 76.e5 ♞f1 77.♜e4**



**77...♜c6?** Black throws the game away when the goal is already visible. **77...♞e1+ 78.♜d5 ♞d1+ 79.♞d4 ♞d8** leaves White with little to play for.

**78.♞h6+ ♜b5 78...♜d7 79.♞d6+! ♜c7 (79...♜c8 80.e6+-) 80.♞xa6 ♞e1+ 81.♜d3 ♞1xe5 82.♞d6+ ♜b7 83.♞b6+-.**

**79.♞b6+ ♜c4 80.e6!** The black king got sent to Never-Never Land, and the e-pawn is decisive.

**80...♞e1+ 81.♜f5 ♞f1+ 82.♜e5 ♞e1+ 83.♜f6 ♞f1+ 84.♜g7 ♞a8 85.e7 ♞e1 86.♜f7 ♞e4 87.♞d6 ♞h8 88.♞xa6**  
**Black resigned**

Indeed, there are often mutual mistakes even at the top level when there is no time to think (guideline #3).

We have explored here the “Do Not Rush” rule in the ending. I hope I have at least asked the right questions about how to apply the rule in the modern world. We have seen a few examples where patience was a virtue, but also cases where you need to find the breakthrough quickly. Many real-life situations don’t have unique solutions. Sometimes, it’s a matter of style (or style of your opponent).

Chess is a sport. Like in any other sport, the side that controls the tempo of the game has the edge. I hope you can learn how to choose your ideal pace for the particular situation you find yourself in. ■