

Some More Rook Endings That You Thought You Knew Vancura And Fellas

YOU MIGHT THINK THAT ENDINGS WITH ONLY A FEW PIECES ON THE BOARD ARE EXTREMELY SIMPLE. THEN, WHY DO EVEN WORLD CHAMPIONS AND STRONG GRANDMASTERS STUMBLE WHEN SUCH POSITIONS ARISE IN THEIR GAMES? AS GM FISHBEIN POINTS OUT "IF YOU DON'T USE THE SKILL, YOU LOSE IT!"

■ By GM Alex Fishbein

My coach during my formative years, GM Dmitry Gurevich, was also a second to Viktor Korchnoi. Dmitry recently told me a story of how Korchnoi and he were looking an ending with just a rook and pawn vs. rook on the board, and Viktor Lvovich said "I don't know this position."

Dmitry was flabbergasted. Korchnoi was a God-like figure, especially in rook endings. How could he not know such a position? And what does it say about the rest of us, if he didn't know it?

Well, Viktor Korchnoi knew a Socratic truth that others learned only decades later, when computer engines started putting us to shame. He knew that he knew nothing.

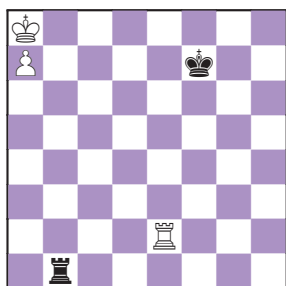
THEORY AND PRACTICE

In this article, I will focus on positions where one side has a rook and a rook pawn, and the other side just a rook. I will begin with two "theoretical" (although by no means simple) positions and then go into some real-life examples.

The two theoretical positions shown below have been well anthologized (I will largely stick to the *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual's* presentation for them). But in the practical examples, I think almost all readers will find something new for them.

While I probably learned something by working on this article, I am far from claiming that I have retained this knowledge. Most likely, this stuff requires constant practice. I hope that the analysis below will at least give you some idea of what to practice.

King is cut off by four files



1.♖c2 The diagrammed position would



be a simple win if the pawn were on any other file than a rook file. But rook pawns offer great resources to the defending side:

- 1) the king can be locked in the corner (as here),
- 2) the pawn cannot shield the king from side checks, and
- 3) many pawn endings with a rook pawn are drawn even if the attacking king is in front of it.

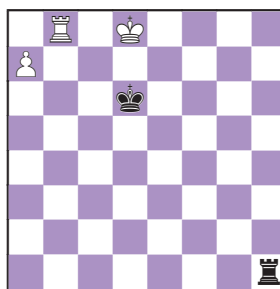
Here, the black king is separated from the pawn by a full four files. That is what it takes for White to win, and the win is hard to find if you haven't seen it before.

1...♙e7 2.♖c8 The white rook needs to get to b8 to free its king. If the black king were only cut off on the e-file, it would be able to get to c7 here, with a draw.

2...♙d6! The best try. If 2...♙d7 3.♖b8 ♖a1 4.♙b7 ♖b1+ 5.♙a6 ♖a1+ 6.♙b6 ♖b1+ 7.♙c5 and the pawn queens.

3.♖b8 ♖a1 4.♙b7 ♖b1+ 5.♙c8! But now after 5.♙a6 ♖a1+ 6.♙b6 ♖b1+ the black king takes away the c5 square.

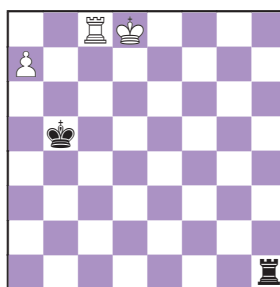
5...♖c1+ 6.♙d8 ♖h1



The mate threat is Black's chance. But White can give an intermediate check: 7.♖b6+! ♙c5 8.♖c6+! If you are defending this position, try to have the rook on the third rank (g3 in particular) by the time you get here. Then White would not be able to immediately win the rook after queening and would have to demonstrate a win with the queen versus rook. Now the black king has to move, which will give the white king room to get away from the checks.

8...♙b5 If 8...♙d5, then 9.♖a6! ♖h8+ 10.♙c7 ♖h7+ 11.♙b6+-.

9.♖c8!



We have noted already that the defending rook's main device is side checks. Here, the white rook uses horizontal interference against it.

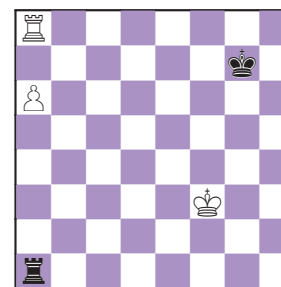
9...♖h8+ 10.♙c7 ♖h7+ 11.♙b8+-



Born in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1968, Alex Fishbein relocated to the United States in 1979. Mentored by Vladimir Zak, who previously coached Boris Spassky and Viktor Korchnoi, Fishbein swiftly built a strong chess foundation. By 14, he was a master, and he climbed the ranks to become an IM in 1988 and a GM in 1992 after an international victory in Norway. In 1985, Fishbein championed the first Denker Tournament of High School Champions, setting off a string of achievements at home and abroad. Even while pursuing a career in finance, he remained an active competitor into the 2000s, appearing in four U.S. Championships.

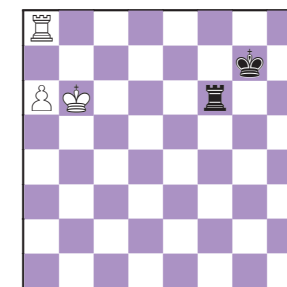
VANCURA POSITION

The second theoretical position I want to show is the Vancura position, named after Josef Vancura, a Czech endgame composer who died in 1921 at the age of 23. His most famous discovery was published posthumously in 1924, and it revolutionized rook endgame theory.



For a long time, this position was considered winning. Indeed, let's say the black king moves toward the white pawn. Once the black king reaches e7, White will play a6-a7! threatening ♖h8, winning the rook by a skewer on the seventh rank. The only safe squares for the black king are g7 and h7. But if the king waits there, the white king will approach a7 and White will win in a manner similar to what we observed in the previous theoretical position.

But with 1...♖f1+! 2.♙e4 ♖f6! Black changes the defensive scheme. The rook now attacks the pawn from the side, preparing for side checks to the white king as it tries to approach: 3.♙d5 ♖f5+ 4.♙c6 ♖f6+! 5.♙b5 ♖f5+! 6.♙b6 ♖f6+



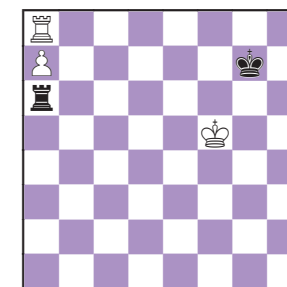
7.♙a7 ♖f7+ (the king cannot hide on the other side of the pawn because it's a rook pawn)

8.♙b8 ♖f8+ 9.♙b7 ♖f7+ and so on. The white rook is trapped ahead of its pawn and also cannot escape, for example:

10.♙c6 ♖f6+ 11.♙d5 ♖f5+ 12.♙e4 ♖f6 13.♖a7+ ♙g8 (13...♙g6 also draws)

14.♙e5 ♖g6 15.♙f5 ♖b6, etc. And if White pushes the pawn to a7, then the defensive mechanism changes again:

16.♖a8+ ♙g7 17.a7 ♖a6!



With the rook now behind the pawn, the white pawn all the way on the seventh rank, and the black king on its safe squares, this is now a basic draw: 18.♙e5 ♖a1 19.♙d6 ♖a2 20.♙c7 ♖a1 21.♙b7 ♖b1+ 22.♙a6 ♖a1+ 23.♙b6 ♖b1+ 24.♙c7 ♖a1=

I have only shown you the main idea of the Vancura defense. Soon after this groundbreaking discovery, many related positions were found. For example, if you add an h-pawn for White, the position remains drawn. And if you slightly change the position of some of the pieces, new subtleties arise. At some point I will write an article on some

of the deeper secrets of the Vancura defensive idea, but I think I need to try to learn the material myself first!

AN UNEASY TASK EVEN FOR WORLD CHAMPIONS!

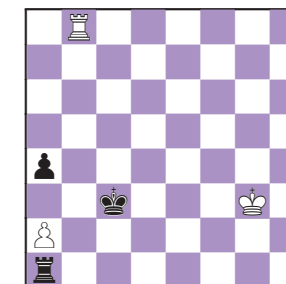
But here I would like to turn to some other patterns in the rook and rook pawn vs. rook ending, which are not covered nearly as well in the literature, but which also occur in practice. I will include examples from history as well as from recent games.

As you look at these endings, try to pay attention to the main defensive motif we have mentioned, the rook side checks, as well as the technique that the side with pawn often uses, horizontal interference.

Max Euwe

Alexander Alekhine

Game 16, World Championship Match, Netherlands 1935



56.♙f3? The Vancura position was not yet well known at this time. In fact, many strong players didn't know it even 50 years after it was discovered. Max Euwe needed to apply that method here: 56.♖f8! ♖xa2 57.♖f3+ ♙d4 (57...♙b2 58.♖f2+ ♙b3 59.♖f3+ ♙c4 60.♖f4+) 58.♖f4+ ♙e5 59.♖b4=.

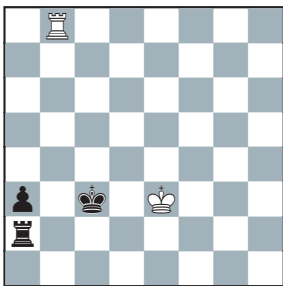
56...♖xa2 57.♙e3 The white king has arrived in No Man's Land. If the black pawn gets to a2, it will be bad news for White, coming in the form of either a skewer check on the second rank or a winning check from the first rank. So Black is now winning, but it is still complicated.

57...♖h2? Alexander Alekhine returns the favor. I don't know what the time control in this match was or whether the game was adjourned. Most likely, the players were in the second session here, but I am not sure that extra thinking time

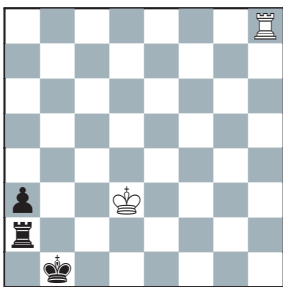


would have helped them very much. A year later, Nikolay Grigoriev published a deep analysis of this ending, and future generations (slowly) learned from it.

After 57...a3! White has two tries.

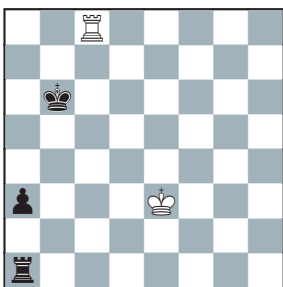


A) 58.♖c8+ ♜b2 59.♙d3 (Upon 59.♙d4 ♜b1! 60.♖a8 ♖d2+ 61.♙e3 ♖h2!—+ the unlucky white king prevents the white rook from capturing the pawn.) 59...♙b1! 60.♖h8



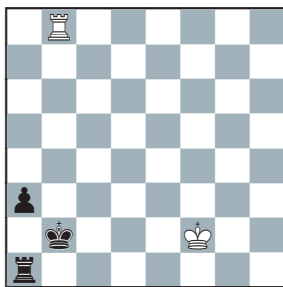
and now Black uses interference along the final rank: 60...♖c2! with the decisive threat of ...a3-a2, because the rook interposes on c1.

B) 58.♖a8 ♖a1
B1) Now if 59.♖c8+ ♜b4 60.♖b8+ ♜c5 61.♖c8+ ♜b6

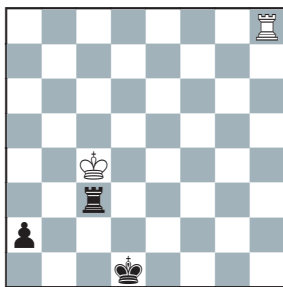


and the only way to temporarily stop the pawn from queening is 62.♖c2 (62.♖a8 a2 63.♙d2 ♖h1! as we already know.) 62...a2 63.♖e2!? but now 63...♙b5 64.♙e4 ♙c4 65.♙e5 ♙d3 wins.

B2) If the king tries to avoid the attack by the rook from a1 with 59.♙f2 ♜b2 60.♖b8+

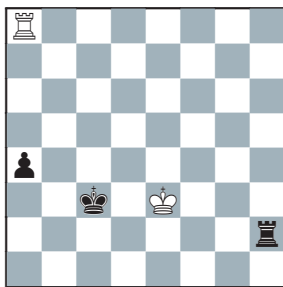


then it is four ranks away and Black wins using the method we have seen: 60...♙a2 61.♙e2 ♖b1 62.♖c8 ♜b2 63.♖b8+ ♜a1 64.♖c8 a2 65.♙d3 ♜b2 66.♖b8+ ♜c1 67.♖c8+ ♜d1 68.♖h8 ♖b3+ 69.♙c4 ♖c3+!



70.♙b4 ♖c1—+.

58.♖c8+? Neither is Euwe one to be stingy with gifts. With Black having dilly-dallied on the previous move, the draw was actually not too difficult after 58.♖a8!



A) 58...♖a2 59.♖c8+ ♜b2 60.♙d2 ♜b1+ 61.♙d1 ♖b2 (61...a3 62.♖c1+ ♜b2 63.♖c2+ ♜b3 64.♖xa2 ♙xa2 65.♙c2=) 62.♖c4 a3 63.♖c3.

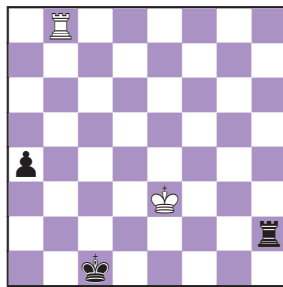
B) 58...♖h4 59.♖c8+ ♖c4 60.♖xc4+ ♙xc4 61.♙d2 is another example of where the pawn ending is drawn because it's a rook pawn.

C) 58...♙b3 59.♙d3! a3 60.♖b8+ ♜a2 61.♙c3=

This game was played in the 1935 World Championship match. Now imagine if such an ending occurred in the

World Championship today. Everyone would see the evaluation bar on the phone disappear after White's 56th move, reappear after Black's 57th, and disappear again after White's 58th. There would be three gasps, "HE BLUNDERED!!!", audible across the entire planet, let out by people (probably such as me) with no idea of what the correct moves would have been.

58...♙b2 59.♖b8+ ♜c1!



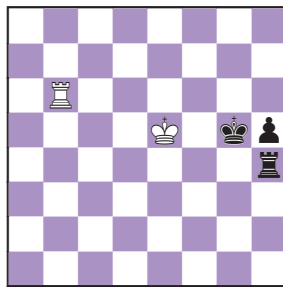
60.♖c8+ White's position is beyond repair now. 60.♖a8 a3! is similar to a line we have seen.

60...♙b1 61.♖b8+ ♖b2 62.♖a8 ♖b3+ 63.♙d4 a3 64.♙c4 ♜b2 65.♖h8 ♖c3+ White resigned

The white king ended up getting cut off on its fourth rank. Cutting off the enemy king along a rank is a strong weapon, as our next example illustrates.

Magnus Carlsen	2864
Fabiano Caruana	2774

Tal Memorial, Moscow 2013



I think this ending should become a classic, but I don't recall any contemporaneous commentary on it and I haven't seen it in any endgame books or videos.

I have mentioned in this column that I often use "Solitaire Chess" as a training method. It's when you try to guess the moves of a strong player, move by

move. I recently asked my son Mitch, a National Master, to select endings for training (and what moves to start with) from a random list of wins by Fabiano Caruana. That's how this ending showed up on my radar.

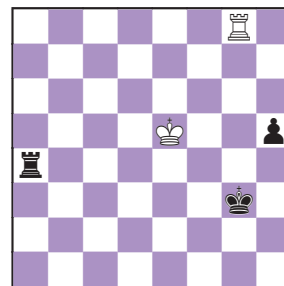
52...♖a4 The first move was simple enough, and the position seemed to me to be an easy win. The white king is in desperate straits, cut off on the upper half of the board. How can White possibly stop the pawn? But the fact that Mitch had selected this position meant that it wouldn't be simple. Of course, that is a strong hint, but not a bad hint to always use when you play a rook ending!

53.♖b8 ♙g4! The only move. If instead 53...h4?, then 54.♖g8+ ♙h5 55.♙f5! pins the black king to the side of the board, and it's a draw.

54.♖g8+ ♙f3! 54...♙h3? was tempting, after which the pawn can move next, with the white king still offside. But here 55.♙f5 draws because the black king needs the g4 square to escape the side checks after 55...h4 56.♖b8!=.

55.♖f8+ Now on 55.♖b8 h4 56.♖b3+ ♙g4 Black is moving forward.

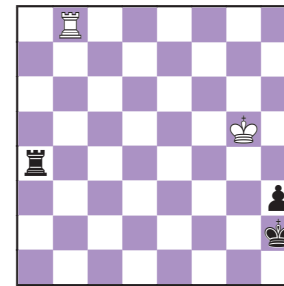
55...♙g3 56.♖g8+



56...♙h2! The only winning idea. The move 56...♖g4? seems automatic, but it's a grave error: with a rook pawn, you have to be careful when you take away squares from your king. After 57.♖a8 h4 58.♖a3+ the black rook is in the way of the king, and 58...♙h2 59.♙f5 ♖g2 60.♙f4 is a draw, as the black king is hemmed in. For example: 60...h3 61.♖b3 ♖g8 (61...♖a2 62.♙g4) 62.♖b2+ ♙g1 63.♖b1+ ♙h2 64.♖b2+ ♙h1 65.♖b1+ ♖g1 66.♖b2 h2 67.♙f3=.

57.♙f5 h4 58.♖b8 h3 59.♙g5! The last chance! White takes away the h4 square which the black king would use to escape the side checks in the line 59.♖b2+ ♙g3 60.♖b3+ ♙h4! 61.♖b2

♖a1 62.♙f4 ♖f1+ 63.♙e3 ♙g3 64.♖b8 ♖f3+ 65.♙e2 ♙g2—+.

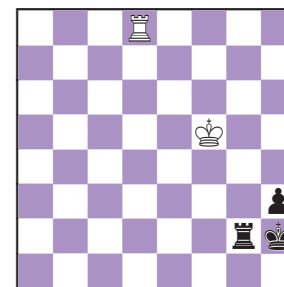


59...♖e4! Again the only way to win. Black uses horizontal interference, with the help of a bridge.

60.♙f5 60.♖b2+ ♙g3 61.♖b3+ ♙g2 62.♖b2+ ♙f3 63.♖b3+ ♖e3 is Black's idea.

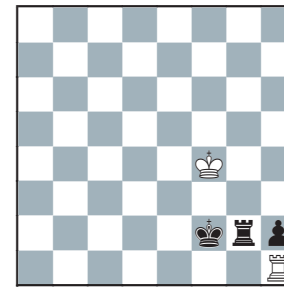
60...♖e2 61.♖g8 ♖g2! Only now, when the black pawn is far advanced and the white king far behind it, can Black use the g-file for his rook. In fact, he must do it, because otherwise the white king would have time to approach.

62.♖d8



62...♖f2+ White resigned here.

It was still not too late to make a mistake at the end. On 62...♙g1? 63.♙f4 h2 64.♖d1+ ♙f2 it looks like White has run out of checks (it was sneaky to go to d8 on his last move!), as after 65.♖d2+ ♙e1 Black wins, but 65.♖h1! is zugzwang.



If 65...♙e2 66.♖a1 ♖g1 67.♖a2+=

So, did I find all of Fabi's moves? Well,



BROADEN YOUR HORIZONS!

THE BLOG OF
GRANDMASTER ALEX COLOVIC

Ranked among the "Best Chess Blogs on the Planet" since 2016, Grandmaster Alex Colovic, President of Association of Chess Professionals (ACP) from 2019-2023, writes in style about all aspects of chess. From openings to endgames, psychology and practical advice, he provides deep insight into the secrets of our beloved game.

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Alex writes on Substack, subscribe at substack.com/@gmalexcolovic. He also shares his views on current news in video format at www.youtube.com/@gmalexcolovic.

GM Colovic is the author of *The Sinquefeld Chess Generation*, a book that analyzes and explores in great depth the styles and preferences of America's top young talent.

I felt good after doing this game because I did find them all. But I spent almost an hour finding them! I had not set any time limit for myself for this exercise. In an actual tournament setting, I would probably have 10 minutes or less at that point. I think it is highly unlikely that I would have found all this, with no mistakes, in an actual game with little time to think.

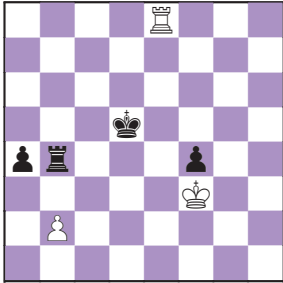
After playing through the Carlsen-Caruana game with Solitaire Chess, I became curious and started looking through the literature, trying to find similar positions. Indeed, it became clear that some of the motifs in that ending are not well understood. From here, we follow along the exceptionally deep and



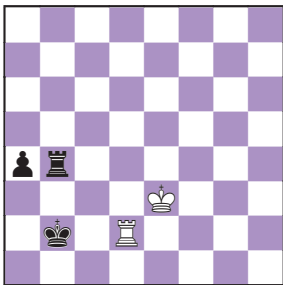
excellent analysis by Lev Polugayevsky, who was Black in this game.

Albin Planinc
Lev Polugaevsky

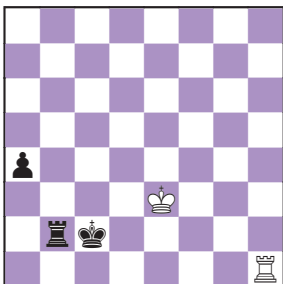
Mar del Plata International 1971



57.♔d8+! The actual game continuation was 57.♔c8?, and White lost quickly: 57...♙xb2 58.♙xf4 a3 59.♙e3 a2 60.♔d8+ ♙c4 61.♙a8 ♙c3 and White resigned. **57...♙c5 58.♙c8+ ♙d4 59.♔d8+!** It seems counterintuitive to guide the black king to the destination (the b2 pawn), but it is the only chance to discoordinate the black forces. The alternative is bad for White: 59.♙xf4 ♙d3+ 60.♙f3 ♙xb2-+. **59...♙c4 60.♙xf4 ♙b3+ 61.♙e3 ♙xb2 62.♔d2+!**



62...♙c1! Polu also considers 62...♙b3 63.♔d3+ ♙a2 64.♔d2+ ♙b2 65.♔d8 a3 and shows that White draws with 66.♙d3! ♙b1 67.♙c3! ♙c2+ 68.♙b3. **63.♙h2 ♙b2!** If 63...a3, then 64.♙d3! ♙b3+ 65.♙c4 ♙g3 66.♙h1+=. **64.♙h1+ ♙c2**

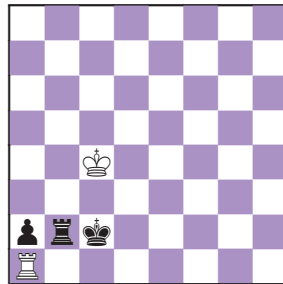


The great Soviet chess analyst and thinker concluded that this position is winning. But knowledge of the defensive attempts employed by Carlsen in our previous game (especially the trap at the end) would make it easier to find the problem-like draw here for White.

65.♙d4!! Where is the king going? It will oppose its counterpart from behind and take away squares the black king can flee to, when facing the side checks. Polugayevsky considered 65.♙h2+ ♙c3! 66.♙h8 ♙b5! (66...a3? 67.♙c8+ ♙b3 68.♙d3! a2 69.♙b8+=) 67.♙c8+ ♙b2 68.♙d2 ♔d5+ 69.♙e3 a3 70.♙b8+ ♙c3 71.♙c8+ ♙b4 72.♙b8+ ♙b5 and Black has built a bridge.

65...a3 A last attempt to escape with 65...♙b3 is not dangerous: 66.♙d3 a3 67.♙h8! a2 68.♙b8+ ♙a4 69.♙a8+ ♙b5 70.♙c3=.

66.♙c4! a2 67.♙a1

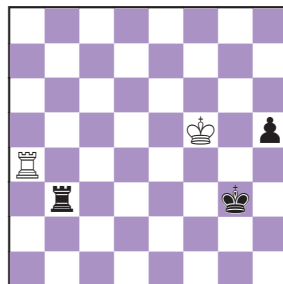


We have the draw by zugzwang that Caruana avoided in the previous game. In this case, White could have also played 67.♙h2+ ♙c1 68.♙h1+ ♙d2 69.♙g1=.

Let's now look at a couple recent endings. One is a "negative example," where the defending side does not find the correct idea, and one is a case where the winning side executes the right plan.

Dommaraju Gukesh 2725
Francisco Vallejo 2716

Gashimov Memorial (Rapid), Baku 2022



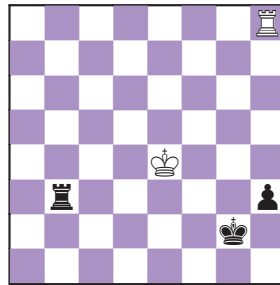
64.♙a8? I am usually loath to include rapid games in my articles. Near the end, the moves become more or less random, and nothing can really be expected of the players. But this position is too instructive to pass up.

White should play 64.♙g5! ♙b5+ 65.♙g6. Although the white king is cut off horizontally, this is not dangerous if the stronger side has no refuge from side checks, as we saw in the variations of the Carlsen – Caruana game. After 65...h4 66.♙a3+ the draw is evident.

Even staying in place with 64.♙c4 does not lose: 64...h4 65.♙g4+! ♙h3 66.♙a4 and the black king is stuck.

64...h4 65.♙e4 After 65.♙g8+ the black king hides behind its counterpart with 65...♙f3 66.♙h8 ♙b5+ 67.♙f6 ♙b4 68.♙g5 ♙g3! which wins, e.g., 69.♙c8 ♙b5+ 70.♙g6 ♙b3! interference along the third rank 71.♙f5 h3 72.♙g8+ ♙f2 73.♙f4 h2 74.♙h8 ♙b4+ 75.♙f5 ♙g3 76.♙g8+ ♙h3 77.♙h8+ ♙h4.

65...h3 66.♙g8+ ♙f2 67.♙h8 ♙g2



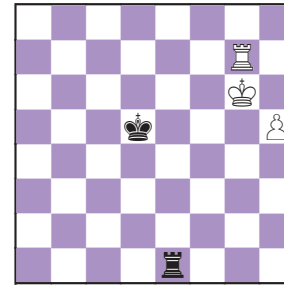
68.♙f4 ♙b4+ 69.♙e3 h2 70.♙g8+ ♙h3 **White resigned**

Two years after this game, the 18-year-old Gukesh Dommaraju is the World Champion. He obviously works hard on his endings, as evidenced even by the press conference after the final game with Ding Liren, in which he explained how he had posed serious problems for his opponent.

Observers on social media, armed with an evaluation bar that registered -0.1, dismissed that ending as something that an amateur should hold against a grandmaster. Well, chess endgames are very difficult, and it is normal to miss something "obvious" when solving a complicated problem.

End of sermon. Now let's look at a nice finish by Sam Shankland.

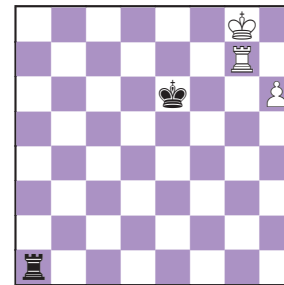
Samuel Shankland 2698
Aryan Tari 2619
FIDE Grand Swiss, Douglas 2023



53.♙f7! Passed pawns must not always be pushed! White resists the temptation to play 53.h6? ♙e6! 54.♙g8 ♙g1+ 55.♙h7 ♙a1 56.♙g7 ♙g1+! 57.♙f8 ♙f1+! 58.♙e8 ♙a1 and he is a tempo behind the winning line we saw in the beginning of the article when the pawn was already on the seventh rank. Here, 59.♙g6+ ♙f5 60.♙b6 ♙a8+ is a simple draw.

53...♙f1+ If 53...♙h1 54.♙g5+! ♙e4 (54...♙d6 55.♙g7 ♙e7 56.h6 ♙f1 57.h7+-) 55.♙g7 ♙f4 and now we are in the territory of the previous game. This would be a draw if the black rook were on a1, with side checks, but here White wins: 56.♙g6 (56.♙a5 also works) 56...♙a1 57.h6 ♙a6+ 58.♙h5 ♙a1 59.♙g4+ ♙f5 60.h7.

54.♙g8 ♙e6 55.h6 ♙a1



White to play and win!

56.♙f7! We saw this interference pattern in one of the variations of the Euwe-Alekhine game.

56...♙g1+ 56...♙a8+ 57.♙f8. 57.♙f8 ♙a1 58.h7 ♙a2 59.♙e7+ ♙d6 60.h8♙

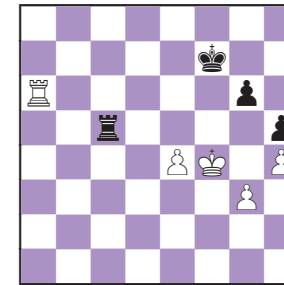
Black resigned White wins by interference again, this time on e8.

I would like to end with a game that doesn't fit the patterns described above but has a funny tactic at the end. It's an

old game by my friend and coach.

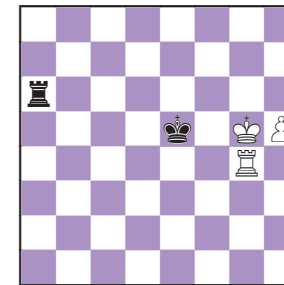
Dmitry Gurevich 2490
Ilya Gurevich 2510

U.S. Championship, Durango 1992



Chess was a different game in 1992 than it is now. Somewhere around here, this game was adjourned. White is a pawn up but this should be a draw. I was at this tournament and confess that I was trying to help Dima a little. Somehow, after going through available literature (and possibly a computer database), Dmitry came up with a devilish trap, 15 moves deep!

65.e5 ♙c3 66.♙a4 ♙b3 67.g4 hxg4 68.♙xg4 ♙e3 69.♙f4 ♙e1 70.♙e4! ♙f1+ 71.♙g4! ♙e6 71...♙g1+ is an easier way to draw. With the game continuation, Black heads for the rook and rook pawn vs rook ending. As we know, surprises can await there. **72.♙g5 ♙g1+ 73.♙g4 ♙a1 74.♙xg6 ♙xe5 75.h5 ♙a6+ 76.♙g5**

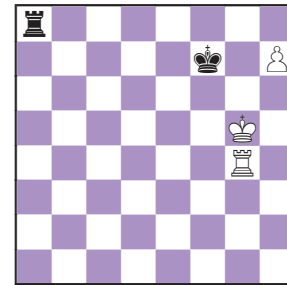


76...♙a8? The losing move! The only defense is 76...♙e6! and if 77.♙g6 (or 77.♙f4 ♙a1 78.h6 ♙g1+ 79.♙h5 ♙h1+) 77...♙e5+! 78.♙g7 ♙f5=.

77.h6! ♙e6 77...♙g8+ 78.♙h5 ♙xg4 loses to 79.h7, and the pawn queens with check.

78.h7 78.♙f4! would not require a queen versus rook ending. For example, 78...♙h8 (78...♙a1 79.h7 ♙g1+ 80.♙h5) 79.♙a4 ♙g8+ 80.♙h5 ♙c8 81.h7 ♙f7

82.♙a7+. **78...♙f7**



79.♙a4! The time control was not sudden-death, and Dmitry was confident he would win with the queen versus the rook.

79...♙xa4 80.h8♙ ♙a5+ 81.♙f4 ♙d5 82.♙e4 ♙g5 83.♙h7+ ♙f6 84.♙h6+ ♙g6 85.♙f8+ ♙g5 86.♙f4+ ♙h5 87.♙h2+ ♙g4 88.♙g2+ ♙h5 89.♙h3+ ♙g5 90.♙e5 ♙a6 91.♙e3+ ♙h4 92.♙e1+ ♙g5 93.♙d2+ ♙h4 94.♙f5

Black resigned Perhaps the most amazing fact is that this whole sequence (up to White promoting the pawn) occurred almost exactly the same way in the game Zinn – Bronstein, Berlin 1968, with colors reversed.

We have covered here more than a drop, but perhaps just a small cove in a vast ocean of rook endings. I have tried to illustrate some ideas that are perhaps not very well known. But as I discussed in the beginning, how much is really "well-known"? With the explosion of information in general, our brains are filled with so much data (useful and otherwise) that we are bound to forget some details of rook endings. If you don't use the skill, you lose it.

We focused on interference in this article as a winning method, and on side checks as a drawing technique. We saw these ideas in their most native form, but they extend to positions with more material on the board. That is another reason to keep returning to these endings.

We also saw in these examples a major exception to the "Tarrasch rule": that the rook should be behind a passed pawn (whether your own or your opponent's). That fundamental rule of rook endings works most of the time, and I plan to discuss it (as well as its exceptions) in a future article.