

Ending up

NOTWITHSTANDING my persistent sighing about the regrettable trends of chess literature, 1981 has actually become an exceptional year for high-quality books. Latest in the line of original and new works is John Nunn's *Tactical Chess Endgames*, published by George Allen & Unwin. Here the author has explored the intricacies of endgames.

Studies naturally form a portion of the work, but the majority of the 134 positions are drawn from actual play. In many of the cases it is clear that an unexpected tactic can quite befuddle one or both of the contestants. In one pawn endgame the half point is handed from Black to White and back again when White resigns in a drawn position — all in the space of two moves.

Like all of grandmaster Nunn's work *Tactical Chess Endgames* is entertaining, instructive and well laid out. Its subject matter makes it an ideal gift for an enthusiast of any strength. Lest anyone should think the whole topic sounds rather serious, let me assure you that Nunn, an Oxford mathematics lecturer, seems to delight in giving scandalous positions.

Here, with kind permission of the author, are some examples from the book:

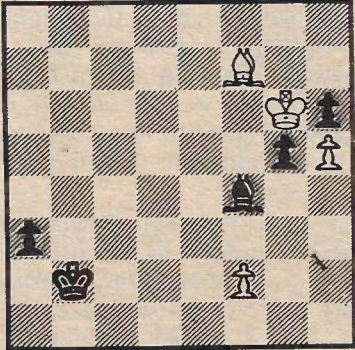


Black to play

A. Petrosian v Hazai, Belgium 1970. Black's position is very bad. White has the straightforward plan of an assault on the weak a-pawn by Qd2, Kb3, Nc3, Ka4 and Na2-c1-b3 and Qxh5, when White should have little trouble winning. Black has no real counter-chances, so he plays a remarkably cheeky move.

- 1. ... **Qb6!**
This move has no function apart from offering White the chance to take the queen. White should just play Qd2, Kb3 and so on, but the sight of a whole queen en prise must have gone to his head.
- 2. **Nxb6 ch?** **cxb6**
- 3. **h4**
The only chance, otherwise Black seals the whole board by ...h4.
- 3. ... **g×h4**
- 4. **Qd2** **h3!**
Whether White takes the pawn or allows ...h2 the result is the same — a complete blockade.
- 5. **g×h3** **h4**
And a draw was agreed.

* * *



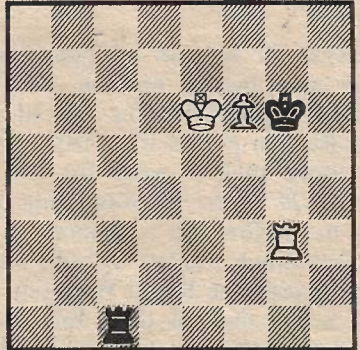
Black to play

Hindle v Mohring, Tel Aviv Olympiad 1964. The obvious 1...a2 2.Bxa2 Kxa2 3.Kxh6 leads to a draw, while the attempt to defend the h-pawn by 1...g4 fails to 2.Kf5. Knowing that a win exists enables one to find the right move by a process of elimination, but it would not be difficult to overlook it in a game.

- 1. ... **Be3!**
Threatening 2...Bxf2, and 2.f3 a2 3.Bxa2 Kxa2 4.Kxh6 loses to 4...g4 ch and 5...gxf3.
- 2. **Kxh6** **g4 ch**
- 3. **fxe3**
Also after 3.Kg6 Bxf2 and two passed pawns would be too much for White's bishop.
- 3. ... **g3**
And the game concluded 4.Kh7 g2 5.h6 g1=Q 6.Kh8 a2 7.Bxa2 Kxa2 8.h7 (White loses due to the e-pawn) Qg6 9.e4 Qf7 and White resigned.

* * *

This next position features an almost criminal demonstration of the "positional draw!"



Black to play

Sax v Tsheshkovsky, Rovinj-Zagreb 1975. Black (an international Grandmaster) surprisingly resigned in this position, although the draw is not at all difficult.

- 1. ... **Kh7!**
Not 1...Kh6? 2.f7 Rc8 3.Rg8.
- 2. **f7**
The only dangerous move. After 2.Rg7 ch Black can draw with 2...Kh8 or 2...Kh6.
- 2. ... **Rc8!**
The only move. 2...Rc6 ch 3.Kd7 Rf6 4.Ke7 and 2...Rel ch 3.Kd7 Rf1 4.Ke7 Rel ch 5.Kf8 Rf1 (5...Rh1 6.Re3 and 7.Ke7 wins) 6.Rh3 ch Kg6 7.Kg8 Rxf7 8.Rg3 ch both win for White.
- 3. **Kd7**
Or 3.Ke7 Rc7 ch 4.Ke8 Rc8 ch and White can make no progress.
- 3. ... **Ra8**
And next move Black starts checking from the side, which guarantees the draw.

MURRAY CHANDLER