

## Set 5. The End-game

‘The Pawn is the soul of chess’ – Philidor

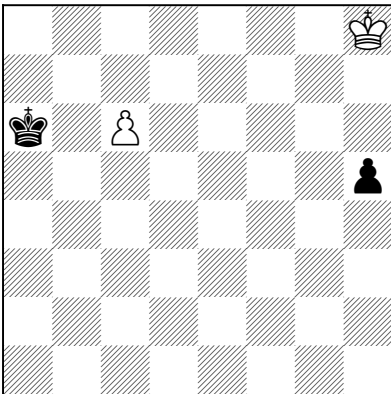
It is hard to define where the middle-game ends and the end-game begins, but there are two features which, though not unknown in the middle-game, are characteristic of the ending. The first is the struggle to queen a Pawn; the vast majority of end-games have this as their ultimate objective. The other is that the King is an active, not a passive piece; with a reduced opposing force, it is not usually – though there are exceptions – in danger of getting mated and can therefore work for its living. Its power in the ending is about equal to that of a minor piece.

The positions in this section all hinge on the attempt by one or both players to queen a Pawn. The first four positions are studies, not from actual play; on the whole, with very reduced forces one can bring out a point more elegantly and clearly through a composed study than through a game position. Positions 1 and 2 form a pair and I suggest that you tackle the second immediately after the first. Despite the very reduced material, this set of studies and game positions is not too easy. I rate 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7 as the easier positions and 3, 4, 8, 9 and 10 as the more difficult.

Don’t make the mistake that so many players do of regarding the end-game as dull. The positions in this set are well up to par in interest and difficulty – don’t skip them.

1

STUDY BY RICHARD RÉTI

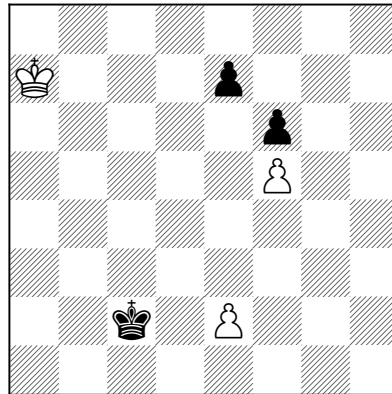


(Kagan’s Neueste Nachrichten, 1921)

Unbelievably, White (to play) can draw this ending. How?

3

STUDY BY O. DURAS

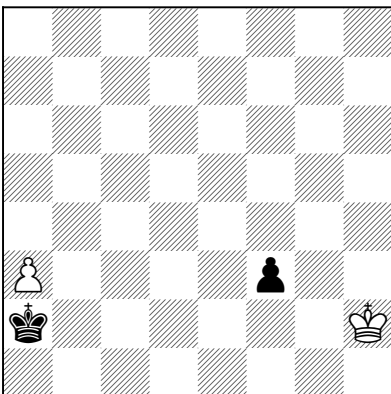


(Ceskoslovensky Sach, 1927)

This beautiful study illustrates a point of the greatest significance in the end-game especially in King and Pawn endings – the importance of exact timing. White to play and win

2

STUDY BY HENRI RINCK

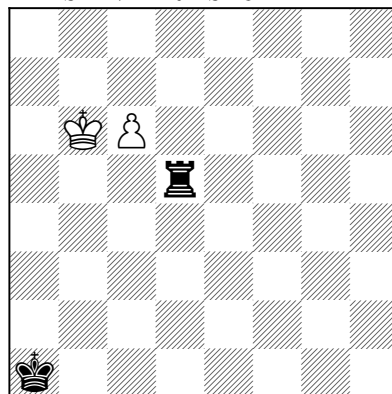


(Schweizerische Schachzeitung, 1922)

A rejoinder to Réti’s study by the famous composer Rinck. Now White (to play) wins. How, and why is the result different from that of Réti’s study?

4

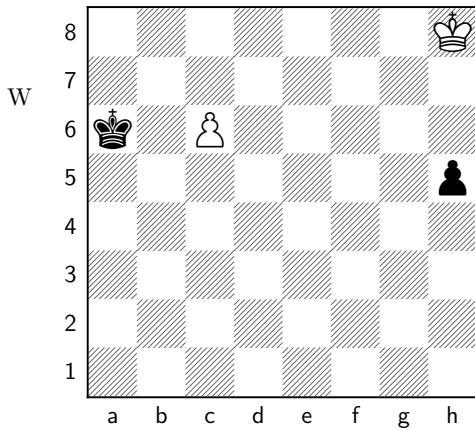
THE SAAVEDRA STUDY



There is a curious story behind this position. A position like it occurred in a game Fenton v. Potter, 1875, and was agreed drawn; Zukertort however pointed out how (with Black’s King on his KR6 White can win. G. E. Barbier in his *Glasgow Weekly Citizen* column gave the diagrammed position, saying that with Black’s King on QR8 (as shown) there is a neat draw. A reader, F. Saavedra, gained chess immortality by showing that, after all, White wins! Can you disentangle it? (You may assume that the ending with Q v. R is a win for the Q)

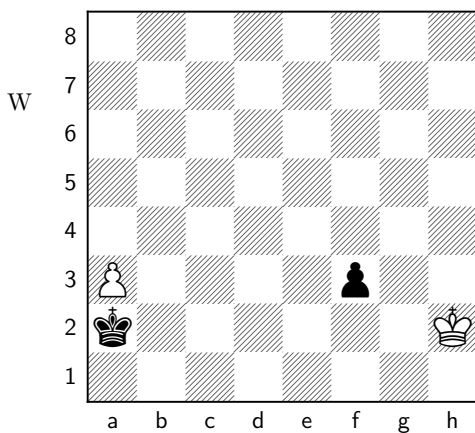
## Set 5. Hint

1



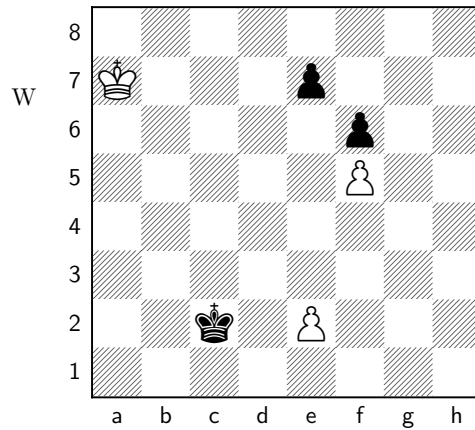
Clearly the White King cannot catch up with Black's Pawn in a straight race. The only way to gain the necessary time to do so is to combine chasing the Black Pawn with threats to queen your own. If in this way you can force Black to make two King moves, this will gain you enough time to catch the Black Pawn.

2



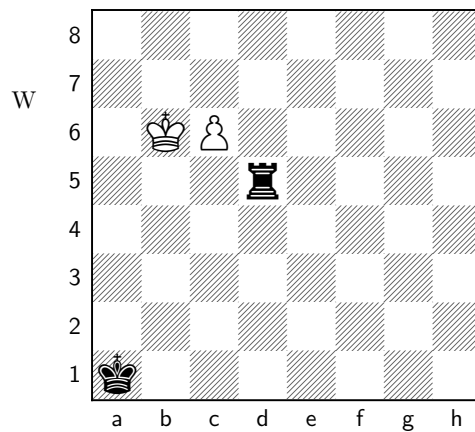
Two points to bear in mind : (i) in certain configurations even if both players successfully queen Pawns the game is not a draw – there can be a devastating first move after queening ; (ii) the White King is on R2, whereas in Position 1 the Black King was on R3 ; what extra possibility does this give White, and can he make use of it ? There are two main variations in the solution ; point (i) gets White home in one of them, point (ii) in the other.

3



First you should decide which of the White Pawns Black should try to capture – this will indicate his best line of defence. When you have determined this, put the two Kings in what you think are their best attainable positions; when you do this you will find that the vital question is ‘who has the move’. Then you must see how to manage matters so that White arrives there with the right player (from his viewpoint) to move.

4



White must promote his Pawn to win; Black will try to stop him by doing one of three things – (i) pinning the Pawn on the King, (ii) getting behind the Pawn, or (iii) continually checking the White King. (i) and (ii) make it hard for White to avoid (iii); there is however a critical position in which White can get out of check. After he has done this Black has an unexpected and ingenious resource, allowing White to queen his Pawn and drawing if he does. What is this resource – and how does White, equally ingeniously, undermine it?