

Chess Evolution 2

Beyond the Basics

By

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- ✓ Evaluation of exchanges
- ✓ Unbalanced positions
- ✓ Some guidelines for exchanging

Diagram 2-1

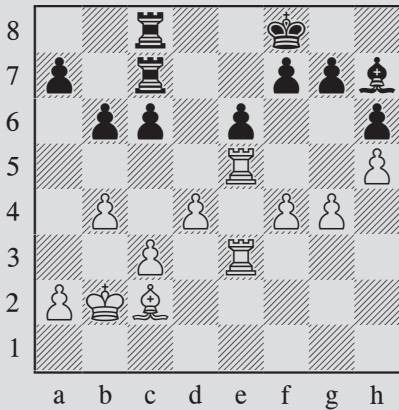


Diagram 2-1

M. Tal – M. Botvinnik

World Ch (15), Moscow 1960

33...♙g8!

Botvinnik here demonstrates a very deep positional understanding of the situation. For Black the most important task in this position is to activate his rooks. But after 33...♙xc2 34.♔xc2 c5 35.bxc5 bxc5 36.d5±, White would have the more active rooks in the rook ending – and therefore a great advantage! Black prepares the move ...f6, which will force the white rook away, thereby facilitating the future breakthrough ...c5. Black's light-squared bishop has an important job to do!

34.g5 f6 35.♞5e4

After 35.gxf6 gxf6 36.♞5e4, Black would be able to use the open g-file.

35...c5

Black secures counterplay.

36.♙b3

Here White could play 36.dxc5 bxc5 37.b5, so as to retain some options on the queenside.

36...cxb4 37.cxb4 hxg5 38.fxg5 fxg5 39.♞g3 ♞f7

Black has opened lines for his passive rooks by exchanging pawns.

40.♞xg5 ♞f2† 41.♔a3 ♞c7

Black has activated his forces and can now maintain the balance.

½–½

Some exchanging operations lead to unbalanced positions (for example, rook plus one or two pawns against two minor pieces). Such situations are particularly difficult to evaluate, as the positional factors play a very important role and can fully compensate for a slight material deficit.

M. Tal – M. Botvinnik

World Ch (9), Moscow 1960

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♕f5 5.♗g3 ♕g6 6.♗1e2

6.h4 is the main continuation nowadays.

6...♗f6 7.h4 h6 8.♗f4 ♕h7 9.♕c4 e6 10.0-0 ♕d6

Diagram 2-2

Tal had prepared an interesting sacrifice for this game. But Botvinnik too had been counting on the said sacrifice!

11.♗xe6!? fxe6 12.♕xe6 ♖c7

12...♗bd7 13.♖e1 and only then 13...♖c7 would have been somewhat more precise.

13.♖e1

13.♗h5!? is an interesting possibility here.

13...♗bd7 14.♕g8†

Diagram 2-3

Why does Tal exchange pieces while attacking? He wishes to swap off a good defensive piece so as to obtain the f5-square for his knight.

14...♗f8 15.♕xh7 ♖xh7

15...♕xg3? 16.♕g6 is too dangerous, as the light-squared bishop would be very strong.

16.♗f5

White has a dangerous initiative in return for a piece. Tal would like to continue to strengthen his position quietly with h4-h5, ♖f3 and ♕d2, followed by doubling on the e-file. It is difficult for Black to coordinate his pieces. Botvinnik returns a pawn in order to simplify the position.

16...g6!?

It was later discovered that it was better to put in the bishop check first: 16...♕h2† 17.♗h1 g6†

17.♕xh6† ♗g8 18.♗xd6 ♖xd6

Materially, the position is balanced, but positional nuances play a very important role here. For example, the two knights and the queen form an excellent,

Diagram 2-2

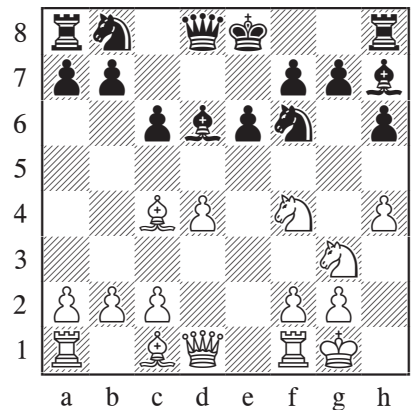


Diagram 2-3

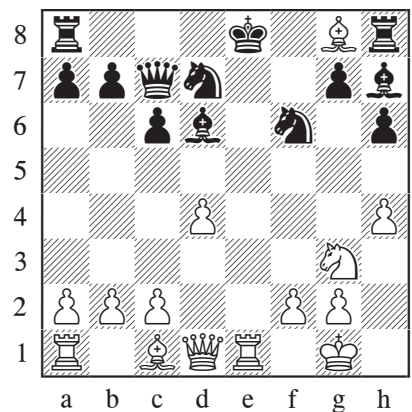


Diagram 2-4

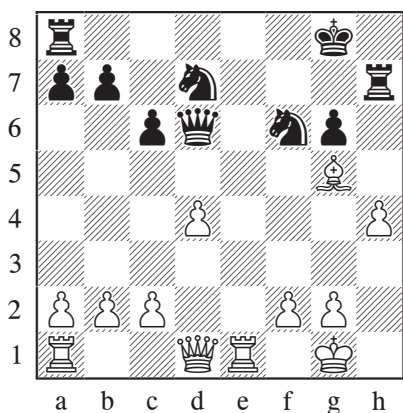
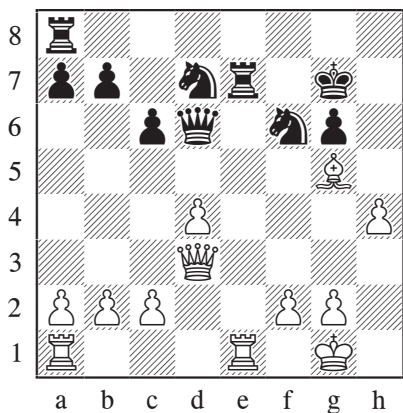


Diagram 2-5



coordinated attacking force. In addition, in the middlegame it will be very difficult for White to advance his pawns.

Instead, 18...♖xh6 19.♞e6 ♖xh4 20.g3! (Kasparov) would have given White good attacking chances.

19.♙g5

Diagram 2-4

In his book on the match, Tal reports on his conversation with Botvinnik after the game. Tal showed his opponent a lot of variations he had calculated at this point. Botvinnik's reply was somewhat startling: he said that he too had preferred the white position at first, but then he had realized that it would be better to exchange the rooks but retain the queens! Botvinnik had understood the essence of the position, which was more important than all the variations that one can calculate here!

19...♞e7!

Black is fighting to get the open file for his major pieces.

20.♖d3 ♘g7

Diagram 2-5

21.♖g3?

Tal wants to exchange queens to break up the dangerous combination of queen and two knights, but he seriously damages his pawn structure and thereafter has hardly any chances to save the game. But his position was not yet bad, and he could have maintained equality.

Tal suggested 21.f4!?, intending 21...♞ae8 22.♞e5! with counterplay.

21.♞xe7† ♞xe7 22.♞b3= (Kasparov) seems even simpler, keeping the opponent occupied on the queenside.

21...♞xe1† 22.♞xe1 ♞xg3 23.fxg3 ♞f8!†

A strong move, preventing a march into the centre by the white king.

24.c4?!

This plan brings no relief to White. But passive defence was not to the taste of the young Tal: 24.♞e7† ♞f7 25.♞xf7† ♞xf7 26.♞f2 ♞e6 27.♞f3 ♞f5†

24...♞g4

The consequence of 21.♖g3? – the black knight profits immensely from the opponent's damaged pawn structure.

25.d5 cxd5 26.cxd5 ♖df6 27.d6 ♜f7 28.♞c1 ♞d7
29.♞c7 ♜f7

Diagram 2-6

30.♞xf6

White must exchange his bishop in order to break the blockade and set in motion his kingside pawns.

30...♜xf6 31.♜f2 ♜e6 32.♞xd7 ♜xd7 33.♜f3 ♜xd6

After the wholesale exchanges and the capture of the d-pawn, Black only has some final technical difficulties to overcome.

Diagram 2-7

34.♜f4 ♜e6 35.g4 ♜d5† 36.♜e4

If 36.♜g5 ♜f7 37.h5, then 37...♜g7!-+ keeps Black in control.

36...♜f6† 37.♜f4 ♜d5† 38.♜e4 ♜b4 39.a3?!

Slightly better is 39.a4.

39...♜c6 40.h5

40.g5 ♜a5-+

40...g5 41.h6 ♜f6! 42.♜d5

42.h7 is met by 42...♜g7 43.♜f5 ♜a5! 44.♜xg5 ♜c4-+.

42...♜g6 43.♜e6

43.♜d6 loses to 43...♜a5 44.♜c7 b5; after the exchange of all the queenside pawns, the g5-pawn will win the game.

43...♜a5 44.a4 ♜b3 45.♜d6 a5 46.♜d5

Or 46.♜c7 ♜c5 47.♜b6 ♜xa4†-+.

46...♜xh6 47.♜c4 ♜c1 48.♜b5 ♜d3 49.b3

♜c1 50.♜xa5 ♜xb3† 51.♜b4 ♜c1 52.♜c3 ♜g6

53.♜c2 ♜e2 54.♜d3 ♜c1† 55.♜c2 ♜e2 56.♜d3

♜f4† 57.♜c4 ♜f6 58.g3 ♜e2

59.♜b5 would be followed by: 59...♜xg3 60.♜b6 ♜e4 61.a5 (61.♜xb7 ♜c5†-+) 61...♜d6-+

0-1

Here are a few more guidelines for exchanging:

1) **Swap off your opponent's active pieces** (or those that are potentially active) and try to retain your own active pieces.

2) Avoid exchanging a bishop for a knight without good reason.

3) **When attacking you should try to avoid unnecessary exchanges**, though one may swap off good defensive pieces to increase the advantage

Diagram 2-6

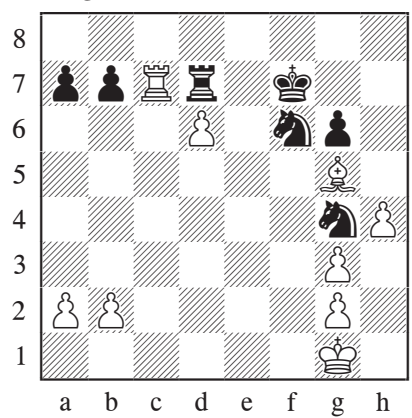
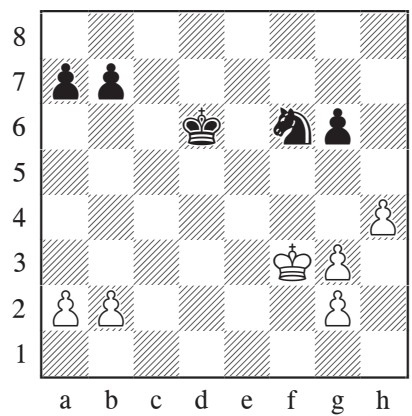


Diagram 2-7



of the attacking side. (There is a rule in ice hockey about attacking – 4 against 3 is less dangerous than 3 against 2.)

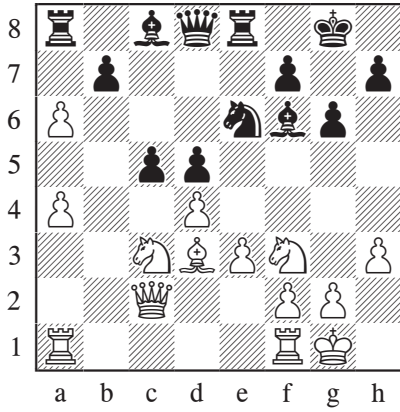
4) By intelligent simplification of the position the defending side can weaken the force of the opponent's attack. An exchange of queens can be especially important.

5) Sometimes a piece is actively placed but is getting in the way of its fellow pieces. In this case an exchange may clear the way for these other pieces.

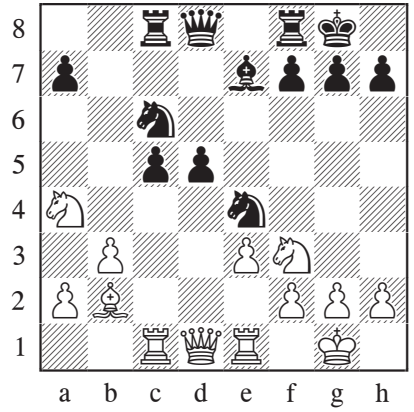
6) You should try to swap off weak (or potentially weak) pawns.

Exercises

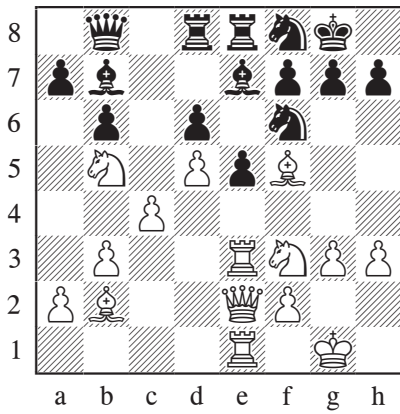
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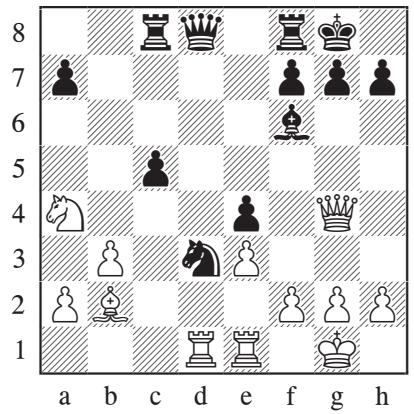
Ex. 2-4 ★ ▲



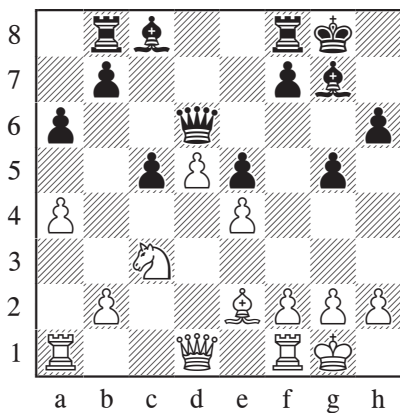
Ex. 2-2 ★★ ▲



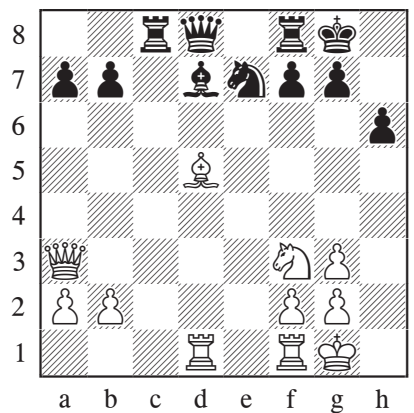
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Ex. 2-3 ★ ▲

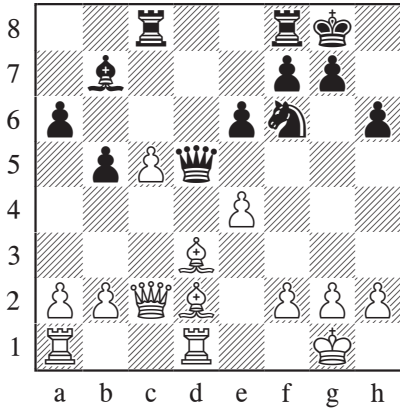


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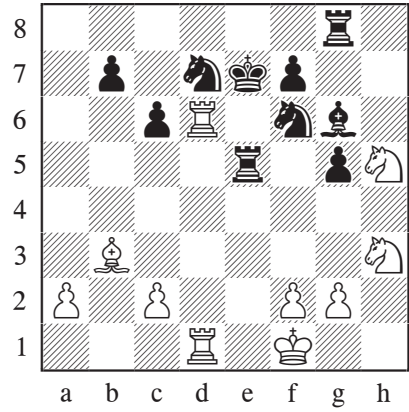


Exercises

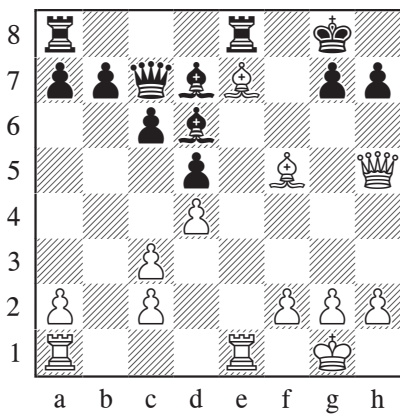
► Ex. 2-7 ◀ ★★★ ▼



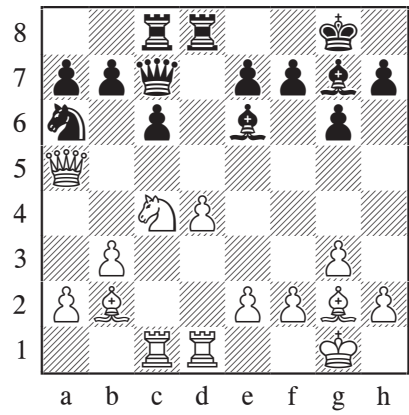
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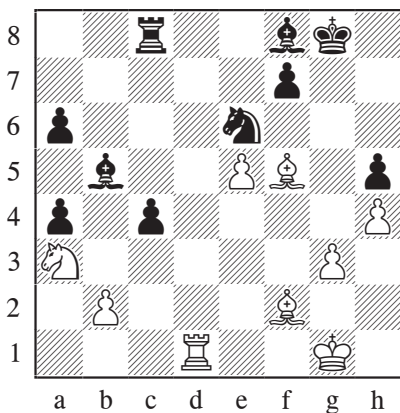
► Ex. 2-8 ◀ ★★ ▼



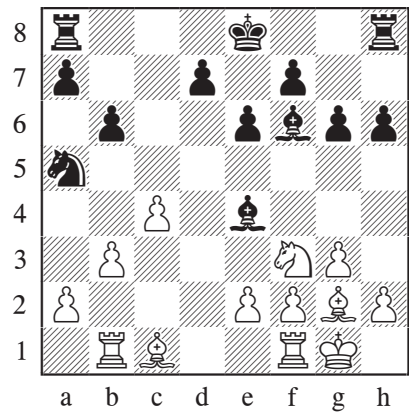
► Ex. 2-11 ◀ ★★ △



► Ex. 2-9 ◀ ★★ ▼



► Ex. 2-12 ◀ ★ △



Solutions

Ex. 2-1

K. Volke – A. Yusupov

Basle (rapid) 2005

1...cxd4!

(1 point)

White overlooked this simple intermediate move. Black opens diagonals for his bishop pair.

2.axb7 ♗xb7 3.exd4 ♘xd4 4.♘xd4 ♗xd4
5.♖ab1 ♖e7 6.♘b5 ♗b6 7.♖fe1 ♖xe1†
8.♖xe1 ♖f6 9.♖e2 ♖f4!†

But not 9...♖a1† 10.♘h2 ♖xa4? on account of 11.♖e8† ♘g7 12.♖xa4 ♖xa4 13.♖b8±.

Ex. 2-2

A. Yusupov – G. Milosevic

Basle (rapid) 2005

1.♘xe5!

(1 point)

The concentration of the white major pieces on the e-file should suggest to us that this file might be opened by force.

1...dxe5 2.♗xe5 ♗d6

(1 point for spotting this defensive idea)

2...♖a8 loses to both 3.♗xf6 and 3.♘c7.

3.♗xd6 ♖xe3 4.♖xe3 ♖xd6 5.♘xd6 ♖xd6
6.♖e7

White has a clear advantage.

6...♖b8 7.h4 h5 8.a4 a6 9.♖e3 b5 10.axb5
axb5 11.♖c5 g6 12.♗h3 bxc4 13.bxc4 ♖a8
14.♖d4 ♘8h7 15.♖e7 ♖a6 16.♖b2 ♗a8
17.♖b8† ♘f8 18.♖a7 ♖xc4 19.♖xa8 ♘6h7
20.d6 ♖c1† 21.♘h2 ♖c5 22.d7

1–0

Ex. 2-3

A. Yusupov – G. Terreux

Switzerland 2004

1.♗g4!

(1 point)

A standard operation. White swaps off his opponent's good light-squared bishop, leaving

him with the bad bishop and at the same time making the f5-square even weaker.

1.a5!? (also 1 point) is a good alternative, fixing the black pawns on the queenside and intending to follow up with ♗e2-g4.

1...b5 2.axb5 axb5 3.♗xc8 ♖fxc8 4.♘e2±

The knight heads for g3 and f5.

4...f5 5.♘g3 fxe4 6.♘xe4 ♖g6 7.♖e1 c4
8.d6 ♘h8 9.♖d5 b4 10.♖ac1 c3 11.bxc3
bxc3 12.d7 ♖d8 13.♖xc3 ♖b4

13...♖xd7 14.♖xd7 ♖xe4 15.♖c8† ♘h7
16.♖xe4+–

14.♖c8 ♖b8 15.♖xb8

1–0

Ex. 2-4

A. Yusupov – A. Horvath

Basle (rapid) 2005

1.♘d2!

(1 point)

After White has exchanged off his opponent's most active piece, Black will have difficulties defending his hanging pawns.

1...♘b4 2.♘xe4 dxe4 3.♖g4! ♗f6 4.♖cd1
♘d3±

See Ex. 2-5.

Ex. 2-5

A. Yusupov – A. Horvath

Basle (rapid) 2005

1.♖xe4!

(1 point)

A natural series of exchanges leads to a clear advantage.

1...♘xe1 2.♖xd8 ♖fxd8 3.♗xf6 gxf6

White's small material advantage is not as important as the larger positional advantage resulting from Black's weakened king position and badly placed knight.

If 3...♖d1, then 4.♘f1 gxf6 5.♖g4†+–.

4.♘b2!

Keeping the e1-knight cut off.

4...♖c7 5.♘f1 c4

Solutions

- 5...♖d2 6.♗c4+–
 6.♕xe1 c3 7.♗c4+– ♖d2!? 8.♗f4
 8.♗xd2? c2=
 8...♖c6
 8...♖xa2 9.♗xc7 ♖a1† 10.♕e2 c2
 11.♗d6+–
 9.♗f3! ♖xa2 10.♗xc6 ♖a1† 11.♕e2 c2
 12.♗e5!

Black resigned, in view of 12...c1♗ 13.♗e8†
 ♕g7 14.♗xf7† ♕h6 15.♗xf6† ♕h5 16.g4#.
 1–0

Ex. 2-6

M.Cebalo – A.Yusupov

Bastia (rapid) 2004

- 1...♗xd5

(1 point)

Of course the strong bishop must be exchanged!

- 2.♖xd5 ♗c7! 3.♗xa7 ♖a8

3...♗c6 is less precise, on account of 4.♖a5.

- 4.♗d4 ♗c6 5.♖c5 ♖xa2

(another 1 point)

- 6.♗e5 ♗b6 7.b4 ♖e2 8.b5?

White should play 8.♗xc6 with equality.

- 8...♖d8! 9.♗c4 ♗e8†

For the conclusion of the game, see *Boost Your Chess 1*, Ex. 22-3.

Ex. 2-7

Y.Pelletier – A.Yusupov

Basle (rapid) 2005

- 1...♗xe4

(1 point)

1...♗xc5? is bad: 2.♗xc5 ♖xc5 3.♗b4+–

- 2.♗e3!

This causes Black some worries.

On the other hand, 2.♗xe4 is not dangerous:

- 2...♗xe4 3.♗xe4 ♗xe4=

2.♗b4? is answered by: 2...♗d2! 3.f3 (3.♗f1

- ♗f3† 4.♕h1 ♗h5+–) 3...♗xf3† 4.gxf3
 ♗d4†+–

- 2...♗c6!

(another 2 points)

Black is playing for safety.

He must certainly avoid 2...♗xc5?!

- 3.♗h7†+–.

However, there is another strong (and much more interesting) possibility: 2...♗d2! (also 2 points) 3.f3 ♗xf3† 4.gxf3 ♗xf3 5.♗e2 ♗h1† 6.♕f2 ♗xh2† 7.♕e1∞

- 3.♗xe4 ♗xe4 4.♗xe4 ♗xe4 5.♖d6 ♗c6

White has only a minimal initiative, and the opposite-coloured bishops make a draw inevitable.

Ex. 2-8

C.Balogh – A.Yusupov

Bastia (rapid) 2004

- 1...♗xh2†!

(2 points)

1...♖xe7? gives White a decisive attack after

- 2.♗xh7†.

1...♗xf5?! 2.♗xd6 ♗f7 (1 consolation point) is only good enough for equality.

- 2.♗xh2 ♗xh2† 3.♕xh2 ♗xf5 4.♖ac1 ♕f7

- 5.♗c5 b6 6.♗d6 ♖xe1 7.♖xe1 ♖e8†

Black will go a pawn up in the ending, but White has no problems holding the draw – opposite-coloured bishops again!

Ex. 2-9

S.Docx – A.Yusupov

Netherlands 2005

- 1...c3!

(2 points)

Immediately setting in motion the queenside pawns.

1 consolation point for 1...♖e8.

- 2.♗xb5 cxb2!

This is even more energetic than 2...axb5+–.

- 3.♗d6 ♖c1 4.♖f1 a3

If 4.♗b1, then ♖xb1 5.♖xb1 a2+–.

- 0–1

Solutions

Ex. 2-10

M. Tal – M. Botvinnik

World Ch (7), Moscow 1960

1. ♖xd7†!

(2 points)

A courageous decision. After other moves, White would only have been fighting for a draw.

1... ♗xd7 2. ♖xd7† ♗xd7 3. ♗f6† ♗d6 4. ♗xg8

The badly placed knights offer Black compensation for his small material deficit.

4... ♖c5 5. ♗h6 f6 6. ♗g4 ♖xc2 7. ♗xf6 ♖xb3?!

7... ♗f5 would have kept the chances balanced.

8. axb3 ♖b5 9. ♗xg5±

White went on to win this sharp ending.

Ex. 2-11

M. Tal – M. Botvinnik

World Ch (11), Moscow 1960

1. ♖e1!

(2 points)

White has an advantage in space, and so retreating with the queen to avoid an exchange

is correct. The moves 1. ♖d2 and 1. ♖a3 (intending ♖c3) are equally good, and also earn 2 points.

An exchange of queens would only make things easier for the defence: 1. ♖xc7?! ♖xc7 2. ♗a5 ♗b4=

Nor does 1. e4 ♖xc4 2. ♖xc7 ♖xc7 3. ♖xc4 c5 promise White anything.

1... ♖b8 2. e4 ♖xc4 3. ♖xc4 ♗c7 4. ♖h3

It may be more accurate to play 4. ♖c1! ♗b5 5. ♖h3 e6 6. ♖f4 ♖a8 7. d5± (Tal).

4... e6 5. ♖c1 ♖a8! 6. ♖g5 ♖e8 7. ♖d2 f5!

Although White is still slightly better, Black has reasonable counterplay.

Ex. 2-12

M. Tal – M. Botvinnik

World Ch (13), Moscow 1960

1. ♖b2!

(1 point)

By offering this exchange, White neutralizes the pressure on his position.

1... ♖xb2

1... ♖xb1? 2. ♖xf6+–

2. ♖xb2

½–½

Scoring

Maximum number of points is 20

17 points and above → **Excellent**

14 points and above → **Good**

10 points → **Pass mark**

If you scored less than 10 points, we recommend that you read the chapter again and repeat the exercises which you got wrong.