



# Identifying the Goal

## Do we struggle to defend, manoeuvre or convert advantages? Amatzia Avni ponders

Experienced players usually know, just from looking at a position, what their goal should be, whether it is an attack on the enemy king, exchanging an inferior piece, putting pressure on a weak pawn, concentrating on defence, and so forth.

### Y.Kraidman-Y.Bernstein Israel Championship 1967



White is losing material and his chances clearly lie in attacking the black king, along the a1-h8 and a2-g8 diagonals.

**27 ♖d4 e5 28 ♗g4 ♕e8?**

Correct is 28...♗d8!, with advantage to Black.

**29 d6! ♗xd6**

White also wins after 29...♗xd6 30 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 31 ♗d2.

**30 ♗f3 ♗xd1 31 ♗xf7 ♗xf7**

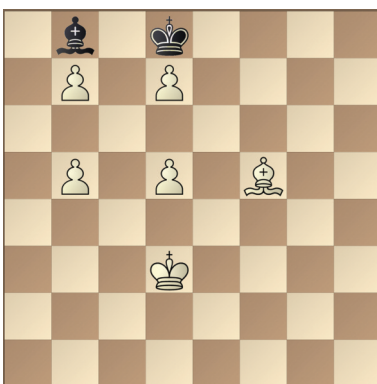


Black is expecting 32 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 33 ♗xd1, but: **32 ♗d7! 1-0**

A killer.



### Ma.Tseitlin-A.Caspi Israeli Championship 2000



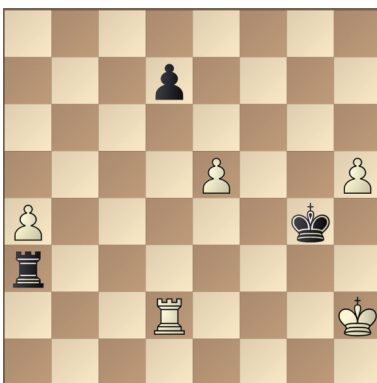
White's position seems absolutely winning, but due to stalemate possibilities, the task is not as easy as it looks. The goal is clear: White has to invade with the king; but as in the previous game, it needs the hand of a strong player to decipher the tactics.

**58 ♖c4 ♖c7 59 b6+ ♖d8 60 ♖b5 ♖e7 61 ♖a6 ♖d8 62 d6 ♗a7! 63 b8♖+! ♗xb8 64 ♖b7 ♗xd6** Or if 64...♗a7 65 ♗e4. **65 ♖a8 1-0**

In the first two examples, White's strategy was obvious, and the players only had to perform the task of calculating the details. However, the answer to the question 'what should be done?' is not always evident. The next episodes are definitely more complex.

### J. Poláček

*Ceskoslovensky Sach, 2001*



White to play and win

What should White's goal be? The natural inclination would be to increase his material

advantage, or to push a flank pawn.

**1 e6!**

Black is able to draw after 1 ♗xd7? ♗a2+! 2 ♖g1 ♗xa4 3 h6 ♖f5 4 h7 ♗h4 5 ♗e7 ♖g6 6 e6 ♖f6 or 1 h6? ♗h3+ 2 ♖g2 ♗xh6 3 ♗xd7 ♗a6.

**1...dxe6 2 h6! ♗h3+**

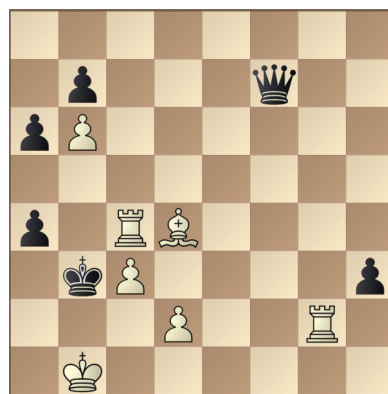
2...♗xa4 3 h7 ♗a8 4 ♗g2+ ♖f4 5 ♗g8 is winning too.

**3 ♖g1! ♗xh6 4 ♗h2! ♗f6 5 ♗g2+ ♖h3 6 ♗f2 ♗g6+ 7 ♖h1!**

Liquidation by exchanging the rooks is imminent. In retrospect, White's non-routine goal was to reach a pawn ending, as his a-pawn then promotes without hindrance.

### A. Avni & M. Minski

2<sup>nd</sup> HM, *Shakmatnaya Kompositzia, 2019*



White to play and win

**1 ♗b4+**

It seems, from an initial impression, that it's the black king that White is chasing.

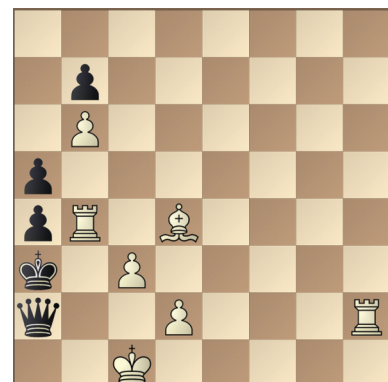
**1...♖a3 2 ♗f2 ♗a2+**

2...h2 3 ♗xf7 h1♖+ 4 ♖c2 a5 5 ♗b5 wins.

**3 ♖c1 h2!**

Playing for stalemate.

**4 ♗xh2 a5**



**5 c4!!**

This stunning move is the only way to win. Instead, 5 ♖b1? ♗b2+! 6 ♖xb2 is stalemate, while another faulty path is 5 ♖h3!? ♗a1+! (but not 5...♗b2+ ?! 6 ♖d1!! axb4 7 cxb4+, with a discovered attack) 6 ♖c2 ♗a2+ 7 ♖c1 ♗a1+ 8 ♖b1 ♗b2+ 9 ♖xb2 with only a draw.

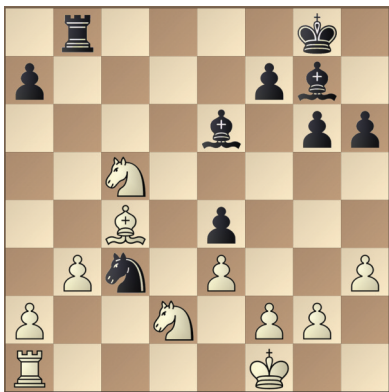
**5...♖xb4** And not 5...axb4? 6 ♖h3+ b3 7 ♖c5#.  
**6 ♖c5+!** ♖b3

6...♖xc5 7 d4+ would be a second deadly discovered attack, and 6...♖xc4 7 d3+ a third deadly discovered attack.

**7 ♖h3+ ♖xc4 8 ♖a3**

Domination. The black king has escaped, but it transpires that the target all along has been the black queen.

**M.Carlsen-A.Onischuk**  
Biel 2007



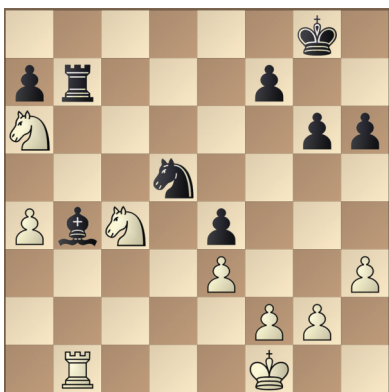
**26...♖xc4+?**

26...♖a4 27 ♖xe6 ♖xa1 was correct.

**27 ♖xc4 ♖b5 28 ♖a6! ♖f8 29 b4! ♖xb4**

Otherwise, with 30 a4 or 30 a3 White consolidates his advantage.

**30 a4 ♖b7 31 ♖c1 ♖d5 32 ♖b1**



It was difficult to see in advance that Black now falls under a nasty pin, which he will be unable to escape from. The game is decided, though it takes some more moves to realise it.

**32...f5**

White wins too after 32...♖e7 33 ♖xb4 (33 ♖d6 is a good alternative) 33...♖b7 34 ♖xd5 ♖xb1+ 35 ♖e2 ♖c1 36 ♖d6 f5 37 g4.

**33 a5**

Taking away the b6-square from Black,

freeing the knight and finally sealing Black's fate.

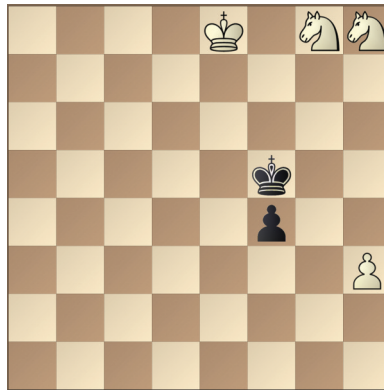
**33...♖g7**

Or if 33...♖e7 34 ♖xb4 ♖b7 35 ♖b6!

**34 ♖e5 f4 35 exf4 e3 36 fxe3 ♖xe3+ 37 ♖g1 ♖d5 38 ♖h1 1-0**

**L. Mitrofanov**

1st prize, North Caucasian ty,  
*Vecherni Leningrad, 1969*



White to play and win

White's cavalry is far away from the black f-pawn. It appears as if the best he might do is to sacrifice a knight for the pawn and draw. In fact, White succeeds in taking care of the f-pawn while preserving his own remaining h-pawn.

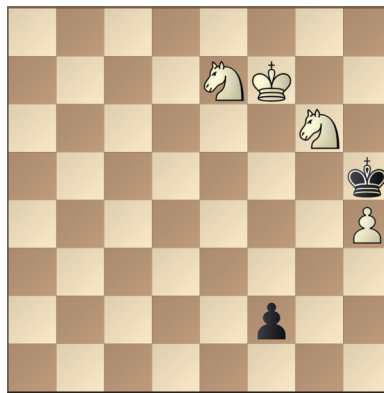
**1 ♖e7+**

1 ♖f7? f3 2 ♖gh6+ ♖f4 3 ♖g4 ♖g3 4 ♖g5 ♖h4! is only a draw.

**1...♖g5 2 ♖hg6! f3 3 h4+ ♖h5**

And not 3...♖g4? 4 ♖d5.

**4 ♖f7! f2**



**5 ♖d5!**

A very surprising solution. White permits a birth of a black queen.

**5...f1♖+ 6 ♖g7! ♖a1+**

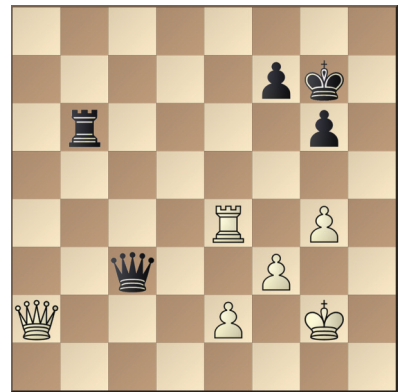
Black also loses after 6...♖g4 7 ♖e3+ ♖h5 8 ♖xf1.

**7 ♖f6+** Winning the black queen.

Goals may constantly change. Spotting the timing of such a change is difficult, and even great players sometimes miss it.



**U.Andersson-C.Van Oosterom**  
Haarlem 2012



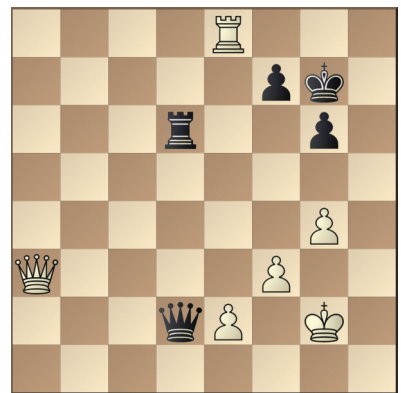
The pawn advantage in itself is insufficient for White to win; additional pressure is required. Andersson identifies two possible plans: targeting the f7-pawn and amassing his heavy pieces along the eighth rank.

**46 ♖d5 ♖b2 47 ♖e7 ♖f6**

47...♖f6? 48 ♖e8 ♖b6 49 ♖c5 wins.

**48 ♖e8 ♖d6 49 ♖c5 ♖d4 50 ♖a3 ♖d2?**

50...g5! was mandatory.



**51 ♖a8?**

Both sides missed a third plan, which would secure the win for White: 51 ♖a1+! ♖f6 (or 51...♖d4 52 ♖h1!) 52 ♖h1! ♖h6 53 ♖g8+.

**51...♖f4? 52 ♖e4? ♖f6**

The golden opportunity has passed.

**53 ♖a2 ♖a6 54 ♖d2 ♖d6 55 ♖e3 ♖d1**

**56 g5 ♖a1 57 ♖c5 ♖c1 58 ♖e3 ♖h1**

**59 ♖f2 ♖d1 60 ♖e3 ♖h1 61 ♖f2 ♖d1**

**62 ♖c4 ♖e5 63 ♖c5 ♖e7 ½-½**

One method of leaving our rival guessing what our real intentions are is by evoking an error on their part, with sly, protracted manoeuvring. Here is a past master in action.

**F.Gygli-A.Nimzowitsch**  
Swiss Ch., Winterthur 1931  
*Nimzo-Indian Defence*

**1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 ♖b4 4 ♖b3 ♖e7**

**5 ♖f3 b6 6 g3 ♖b7 7 ♖g2 ♖xc3+ 8 bxc3**

**♖c6 9 ♖a3 d6 10 ♖a4 ♖d7 11 ♖d2 0-0**

**12 e4 e5 13 0-0 ♖fe8 14 ♖b2 ♖a5 15**

**♖c2 c5 16 f4 ♖ac8 17 fxe5 dxe5 18 d5**



18...♖e7

Protecting against a potential 19 ♜xf6 gxf6 20 ♜f3-h4.

19 ♜d3 ♙a6 20 ♜ae1 ♜cd8 21 ♜e3 ♜f8 22 ♜fe1 ♜e8 23 ♙f1 ♜d6

With an eventual ...♖e7-d7-a4 looming, White's situation seems precarious.

24 ♜c2 ♜d7

Strangely, Black avoids capturing c4. Perhaps he was worried that it wouldn't be enough to win, or he was after bigger things.

25 ♙c1 f6 26 ♜f3 ♜f7 27 ♜f2 ♜df8 28 ♜d1 ♙c8 29 ♙d3 ♜g4 30 ♙e2 ♜d7 31 ♙d3 ♜e8 32 ♙e2 ♙d7 33 ♙d3 ♜c8 34 ♙f1 ♙g4 35 ♜c2 ♙h3 36 ♙d3 ♜d7



The white player, as well as the reader, is bewildered: what does Black want? Why doesn't he try to do something active?

Nimzowitsch is leaving the opponent in a fog, regarding his real intentions. It is true that he used to take the concept of manoeuvring to such lengths that Dr. Euwe once wondered if what Nimzowitsch does is really manoeuvring or just marking time. Is it chess or psychological warfare? Whatever it is, it frequently worked.

37 ♜d1 ♙g4 38 ♜c2 h5 39 ♜f1? ♜axc4

If White was thinking that Black was determined to never capture on c4, he was mistaken.

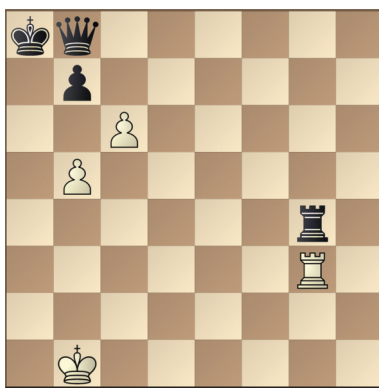
40 ♙xc4 ♜xc4 41 ♜b3 ♜d6 42 c4 f5 43 ♜d2 ♜xe4 0-1

44 ♜xe4 fxe4 45 ♜xf7 ♜xf7 is hopeless.



**M. Matous**

2<sup>nd</sup> HM, *Ceskoslovensky Sach*, 2001



White to play and draw

1 ♜a3+ ♜a7 2 c7! ♜c4

White draws too after 2...♜g1+ 3 ♙b2 ♜g2+ 4 ♙b1 ♜xa3 (or 4...♜g8 5 b6 ♜xa3 6 c8♜+ ♜xc8) 5 c8♜+ ♙a7 6 b6+ ♙xb6 7 ♜xb7+ ♙xb7, which is stalemate.

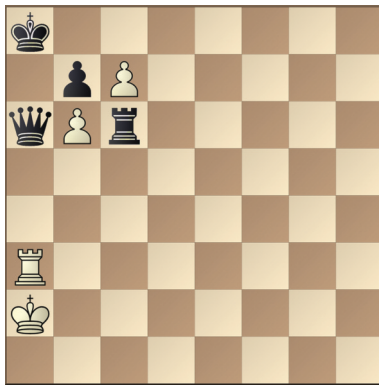
3 b6!

Ostensibly, the idea is to achieve stalemate, following 3...♜xa3 4 c8♜+ ♜xc8.

3...♜a6 But what do you do now?

4 ♙b2! And not 4 ♙a2? ♜c6!

4...♜c6 5 ♙a2



Astounding. A queen short, White just stands and waits. The ending after 5...♜xa3+ 6 ♙xa3 ♜c4 7 ♙b3 is a draw, as the black king is locked out of play.

5...♜c3 6 ♙b1! ♜c5 7 ♙b2!

Avoiding 7 ♜a2? ♜c6!.

7...♜c6 8 ♙a2 ½-½

**L. Comas Fabrego-**

**I. Morovic Fernandez**

Capablanca Memorial, Havana 1999



19...f6!

If deciding what we are after is not easy, the difficulty is doubled when we try to fathom what our enemy wishes to do.

What is the purpose of the last move? Surely it is devised only for defensive measures...

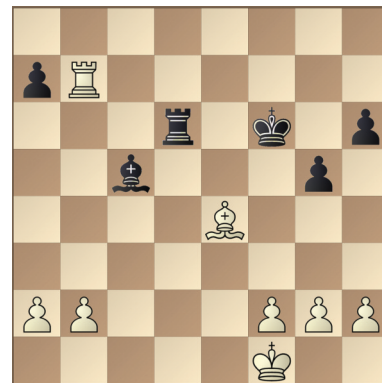
20 ♜f2? ♜e8! 21 ♜g4 ♜g8! 0-1

...But now Black's real intention is revealed – 22...g5 is in the offing and White loses material.

Finally, it can happen during a game that both sides miss their opponent's intentions.

**M. Euwe-P.S. Milner-Barry**

Hastings 1938/39



With a two-pawn advantage, White maintains fair winning chances, although the opposite-coloured bishops will not make it easy.

35 b4?

35 ♜c7 ♙b6 36 ♜c2 maintains White's superiority.

35...♙b6 36 a4 Expecting 36...♜d4 37 a5!, but missing Black's intermediate move.

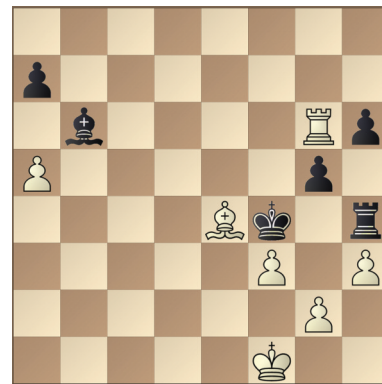
36...♜d1+! 37 ♙e2 ♜d4

White is losing one of his pawns, as after 38 a5 his bishop on e4 is captured with check. The game now becomes drawish.

38 ♙c2 ♜xb4 39 ♜h7 ♜h4 40 h3 ♙e5 41 f3 ♙f4 42 ♙e4 ♜g3 43 ♙f1 ♙h2 44 ♜g7 ♜g3

Black was doing well and his king was perfectly fine where it was. Still, the text doesn't spoil anything.

45 ♜g6 ♙f4 46 a5!



46...♙xa5?

46...♙d4 keeps the balance, but Black misses White's plot.

47 ♙f2 ♙e5 There is no way back, in view of 47...♙b6+ 48 ♜xb6.

48 g3! ♜xh3 49 ♜g2 ♜h5 50 ♜a6 ♙b6 51 ♙g6 1-0

