

A Draw IF You Can Keep It

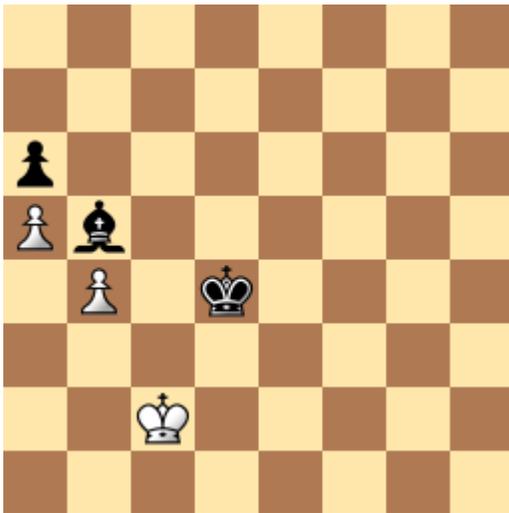
by RileyD, nwJ

At the website Quality Chess Blog (<http://www.qualitychess.co.uk/blog/?p=2698>) I ran across Endgame #1 which reminded me of fifth game of the 1978 World Chess Championship with Korchnoi vs Karpov which became the longest World Chess Championship ever played at 124 moves.

More on that later, let us look at a more recent game first between GM Zhou and GM Rudd, London 2012. It could have been a drawn game, but White could not keep it.

ENDGAME #1

All notes and analysis from the website above.



White could have drawn with: 62. Kd2! Bd3 63. Kd1 Kc3 64. Ke1!, where the white king both avoids being forced into zugzwang and stays close enough to rush for a1 when Black takes on a5. Black can take the pawn on b4 and prevent the white king from making it to a1, but in that case the stalemate of the king will actually be stalemate and not force White to play b4-b5.

In the game White did not know about this idea it seems:

62. Kb2? Kd3 63. Kb3 Bc4+ 64. Kb2 Kd2 65. Kb1 Kc3 66. Kc1

66...Be2!

66... Bd3 67. Kd1!

67. Kb1 Bd3+ 68. Ka2

68. Kc1 Bc2!

68... Bc2 69. Ka1

69. Ka3 Bb3 70. b5 axb5 71. a6 b4#

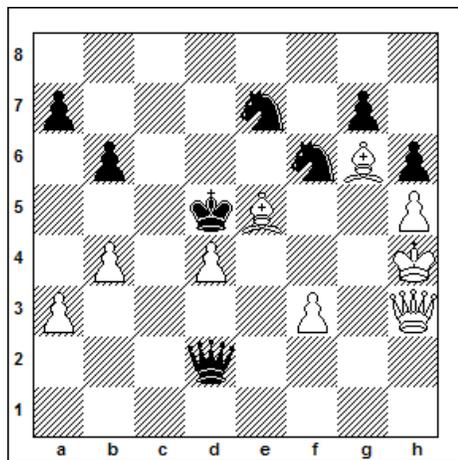
69... Kb3 70. b5 axb5 71. a6 Be4 72. a7 b4

0-1

ENDGAME #2

Game 5 World Chess Championship 1978 Korchnoi vs. Karpov

After 54. ... Kd5 the following position was reached where White clearly has the advantage.



This was already the longest game of the match with the first four games going 18, 29, 30, and 19 moves respectively (total 98 moves, average 24.5 moves/game).

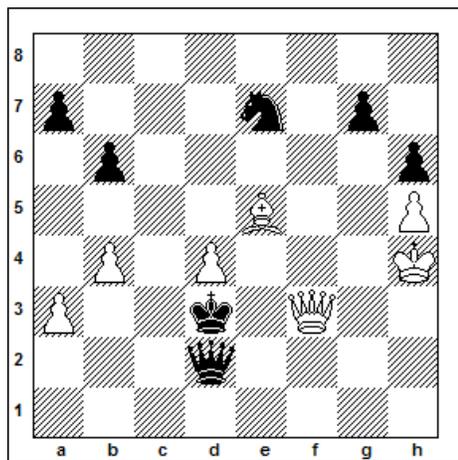
This game would become the longest World Chess Championship game on record when it ended in a draw after 124 moves. We will look at a few more positions as we head to the final 'crucial' position from this game after White's 99. Bf4.

Looking at the position on the left we see Black is threatening a mate in 1 with 55. ... Qg5 mate.

There's a problem though – it is White's move. And White has Black in a real pickle. If White had played 55. Bf7+ Kc6 56. Qe6+ Kb7 57. Qxe7+ is clearly winning.

What if play had gone 55. Bf7+ Kc6 56. Qe6+ Kb5? Then White mates with 57. Qc4+ Ka4 58. Qa6#.

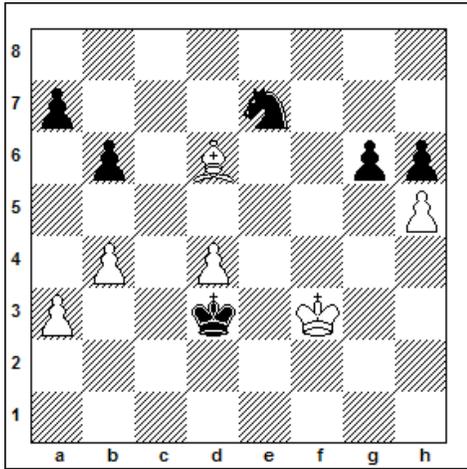
Instead at this point in the game Korchnoi played 55. Be4+?? Why a double question mark? Not because it loses, but because it throws away the immediate win shown above. Now Black will be able to almost equalize. Almost.



After 55. ... Nxe4 56. fxe4 Kxe4 57. Qg4+ Kd3 58. Qf3+ we reach the position on the left where Black can draw with 58. ... Kc4! 59. Qf7+ Kd3 60. Qe7 Qe1+ when White cannot stop the perpetual check

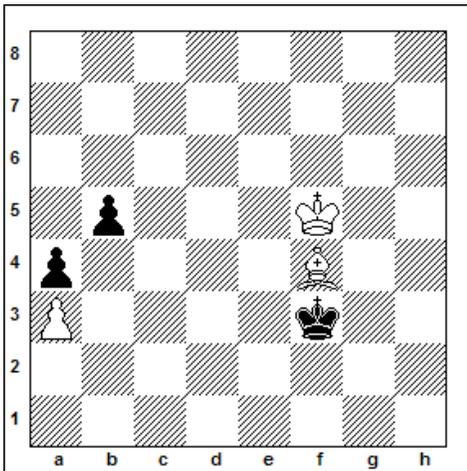
Instead Black played 58. ... Qe3 59. Kg4 Qf3 60. Kf3 g6 61. Bd6 and we reach the next critical position when Black missed again missed a forced draw.

Karpov missed the draw in the position below when he played 61. ... Nf5?! Do not misunderstand here, Black still has drawing chances, but he missed the opportunity to draw by force.



The move he missed??

61. ... gxh5! 62. Bxe7 Kxd4 the position is drawn by force ...
White only has the two pawns left (on a3 and b4), both juicy targets for Black's King.



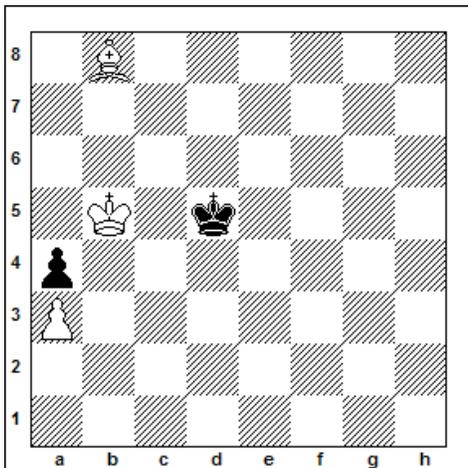
Still it is hard to believe after 61. ... Nf5 he doesn't have a draw in hand. Instead of showing all the moves we will go directly to the position 38 moves later after White has played 99. Bf4!

Why the exclamation mark?

Look at the position. White has been playing to try to force Black to play pawn to b4 so he could recapture with his a3 pawn. In doing so he has walked Black's King almost all the way around the board.

Of course the position is drawn if all White has is his Bishop and a Rook pawn if Black can get his King in front of the pawn.

Now something new arises – if Black makes an error here White will be able win both of Black's pawns while keeping the Black King out of a8!



Karpov found the correct move and played 99. ... Kg2!! Two exclamation marks for keeping the draw in this position.

Now let's look at what could have been the losing move and show one sequence demonstrating the loss as in ENDGAME #1 above.

99. ... Kf2?? 100. Ke4 Ke2 101. Bb8 Kf2 102. Kd5 Kf3 103. Kc5 Ke4 104. Kb5 Kd5

And now anyone can see Black has his draw ... or does he.

Watch what happens now.

105. Bh2! Ke6 106. Ka4 Kd7 107. Kb5 Kc8 then 108. Kc6 or Kb6 winning.

END.