CHESS TODAY

Happy New Year!

The Chess Today team wishes A Happy New Year to all our readers! Let year 2004 be peaceful, enjoyable and successful for you and your families!

T oday we offer some light reading – a very unusual game and endgame positions. I suggest that you first look at them in our CBV file. This will allow you to test yourself against the clock and see how well you score. We will be back with chess news tomorrow!

Chess Quiz

Alexey Troitzky − Endgame study, 1910

White to play and draw

Letters to the Editor

I was very pleased to receive the following message two days ago:

"Dear Alexander, For more than a year my day starts with the same ritual – reading of *Chess Today*. Gradually, it became a habit, which I don't want to abandon. It is great to be able to receive fresh chess news every morning, often with qualified comments. I wish the whole *Chess Today* team every success in 2004. And to all of us chess fans – better and more memorable year than the passing one!
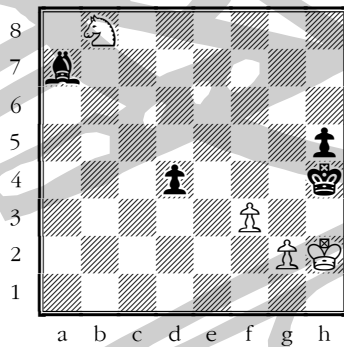*With warm regards, Genna Sosonko"*

Annotated Game

This game was played when both players were aged just 13. Though making some mistakes, they produced a truly unusual game – a kind of chess fairytale! In chess we are taught to bring pieces out. So, for White moves like ♘b1−c3, ♗f1−b5 and ♗c1−g5 are very common. Not so common and often not recommended is to move pieces back to their original squares. But in the following game White did just that – with three of his already developed pieces! Moreover, all those moves were objectively best!
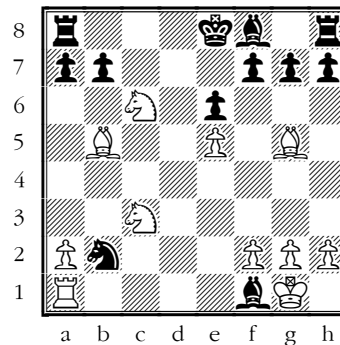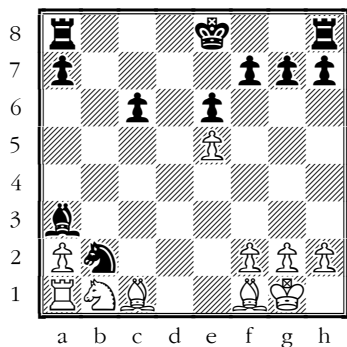
☐ **Dzindzichashvili**
■ **Zakharov**
Sicilian Defence; B22
USSR Junior Ch, 1957
Notes by GM Alex Baburin

1.e4 c5 2.c3 ♘f6 3.e5 ♘d5 4.d4 cxd4 5.cxd4 d6 6.♘f3 ♘c6 *(D)*
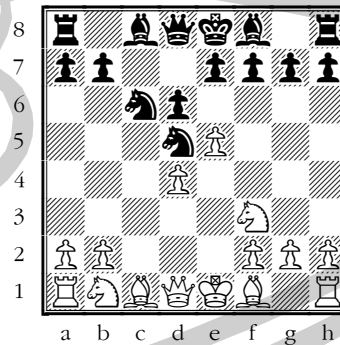
7.♗e2 ♗f5 8.0−0 dxe5 9.dxe5 e6 10.♗d2 ♘db4 11.♘c3 ♘d3 12.♗g5 ♘xb2 13.♕xd8+ ♘xd8 14.♗b5+ ♘c6 15.♘d4 ♗d3 16.♘xc6 ♗xf1 *(D)*

17.♗xf1! The backward moving begins! 17.♖xf1? a6

17...bxc6 18.♗c1! ♗a3
Better was 18...♖b8! 19.♖b1 ♗a3 20.♘d1 0–0. Then after 21.♗xb2? ♖fd8! 22.♗c4 ♖xd1+ 23.♖xd1 ♗xb2 Black is better. I guess that then White would have played 21.♖xb2! 21...♗xb2 22.♘xb2, when another crazy position arises!

19.♘b1! (D)

Black eventually lost, but I don't know how the game continued. **1–0**
After 19...♗c5 20.♗xb2 ♖b8 21.♗c3 ♔e7 it would not be easy for White to win still.

Roman Dzindzichashvili later became a Grandmaster. He now lives in the USA and is one of the best known blitz players in the world.

Endgame Laboratory

A couple of weeks ago I received the following e-mail:

"Dear Alex,

Here are a couple of practical endgames from the games of my students that your readers may find of interest. One of them I suspect, might even be challenging for your impressive GM audience.
As always, great job!
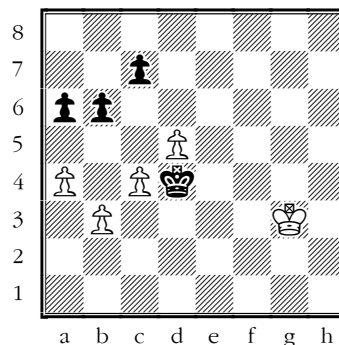*IM Igor Khmelnitsky, Philadelphia.*
http://www.IamCoach.com"

Igor sent two positions and some analysis in a Word file, which I have edited and expanded. Enjoy! Try solving them in our Chess Base database first.

Extra pawn vs. better king

Johnson (1870) – Lynch (1680)
Notes by IM Igor Khmelnitsky

Well, it is Black who has a much better placed King and is ready to go for an "all-you-can-eat buffet". Yet, this is what happened in the game: **1...♔c3?? 2.a5!+–** and, even though the game continued for another 6–8 moves, Black could effectively resign right there. Indeed, there is no way Black can stop White's pawns, and the Black pawns are too far away to get to the finish line in time to compete. **1–0**

Black missed an easy win: 1...a5 2.♔f4 ♔c3 3.♔e5 ♔xb3 4.d6 cxd6+ 5.♔xd6 ♔xc4 6.♔c6 ♔b4 7.♔xb6 ♔xa4 8.♔c5 ♔b3–+.

The moral is simple – it is usually better to have a superior king than an extra pawn, but make sure your opponent doesn't have a protected passed pawn that your king has to watch constantly or, even worse, he can't create a passed pawn that your king can't catch.

Curious Rook Endgame

Gibson (2047) – Fischer (2109)
Notes by IM Igor Khmelnitsky
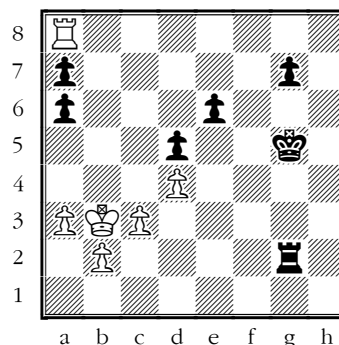
Evaluate this position. What would you play for Black? Take a few minutes before proceeding.

If you did this one correctly, you are in the minority! Despite having an extra pawn, and passed pawn on g7 ready to roll, and active king and rook, Black is actually worse here and has to worry about defending. The reason is that White will be able to get two passed pawns on the a- and b- files versus Black's single passed g-pawn.

White has a standard plan multi-step plan:
1) win the pawns on a7 and a6,
2) position his rook behind the passed g-pawn
3) start advancing the a- and b- pawns, supported by White's king.
4) when necessary, give up his rook for the g-pawn.

Once we have identified White's plan, selecting the best move may not be as difficult.
Can Black defend pawns on the a-file? No!
Can Black prevent the advance of the white pawns? Not really!
But Black can prevent the white rook from getting into the best defensive position – behind Black's g-pawn!

After the surprising, yet appropriate **1...♚f6! 2.♖xa7 g5 3.♖xa6 ♖e2 4.♖a8 ♚g7! 5.♖a7+ ♚g6 6.♖a8 ♚g7 = (D)**
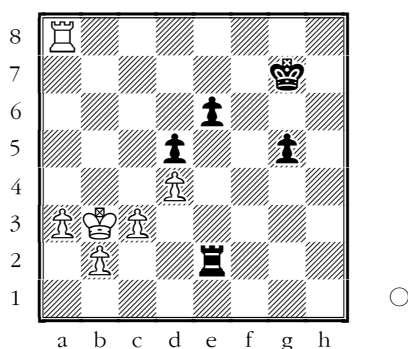

White has to settle for a draw.

My assessment is pretty much based on general concepts and some short variations. I am not of the type who spends the night analyzing with Fritz,

but I'd love to hear comments from the endgame experts. No matter if you do or don't utilize the silicon friend, I am much more interested in uncovering the truth. Also, depending on the outcome I may need to revise my evaluation test, although this is just one of 100 positions that comprise the test. Feel free to take a look, but you will have to take it seriously to get meaningful results.

Alex Baburin: While I managed to join the selected few (I saw the idea of ...♚g5-f6-g7!), also I did some analysis of 1...♚f5 and 1...♚f4. I don't claim that my analysis is comprehensive, since I spent only about 40 minutes on it – just to give you some ideas. Here goes:
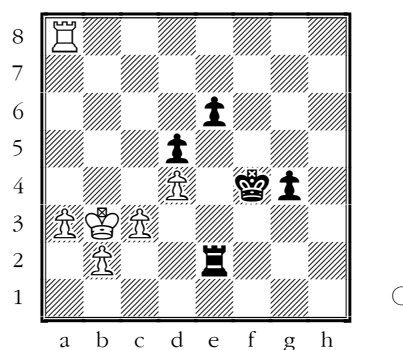
1) **1...♚f5?** Protecting the e6-pawn in advance, but here the king isn't supporting the g-pawn well enough. **2.♖xa7 g5 3.♖xa6 g4 4.♖a8 g3 5.♖g8 ♚f4 6.a4 ♖g1 (D)**
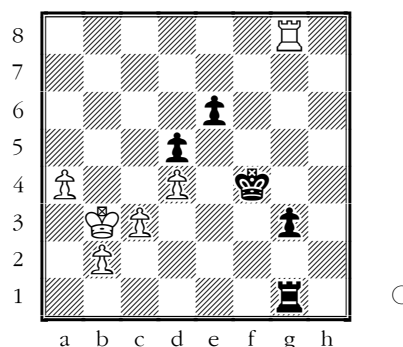
Or 6...♖h2 7.a5 ♖h5 8.a6 ♖g5 9.♖xg5 ♚xg5 10.a7 g2 11.a8♕ g1♕ 12.♕g8++.
7.♚a2! White also wins after 7.a5 ♖a1! 8.♚b4 ♚f3 9.♚b5, but not that easily – see the CBV file. **7...g2 8.a5 ♚f3 9.a6** and White wins.
2) **1...♚f4 2.♖xa7 g5 3.♖xa6 ♖e2! 4.♖a8 g4 (D)**

Black also loses after 4...e5 5.♖f8+! ♔g4 (5...♔g3 6.♖f5!) 6.dxe5 ♖xe5 7.a4 ♔h3 8.♖h8+ ♔g3 9.♔b4.

5.♖f8+!

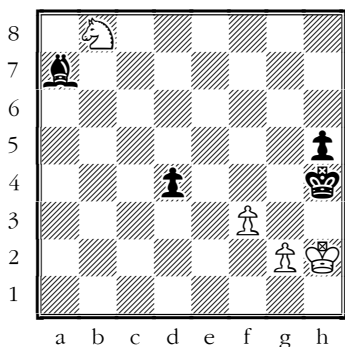Inferior is 5.♖g8 g3 6.a4 e5! 7.dxe5 ♖xe5.
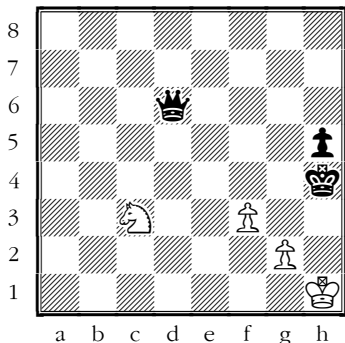
5...♔e3 6.♖g8 ♔f3 7.a4 e5

7...g3 8.a5

8.a5 exd4 9.cxd4 and White should win.
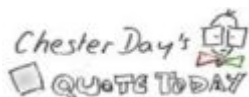
Solutions to our quiz:

Alexey Troitzky
Endgame study, 1910

1.♘c6! d3 2.♘xa7! d2 3.♘b5 d1♕ 4.♘c3 ♕d6+ 5.♔h1 (D)

Here Black cannot prevent ♘c3–e4, after which the black king is locked up – positional draw!

"Well, well. IM (and GMC) Douglas Bryson once told me that he almost never plays a game that flows smmothly from start to finish; there is always a "moment" of sorts where someone misses a big defensove opportunity or the nature of the position changes more than one might reasonably expect. This was such a 'moment'."

Jonathan Rowson