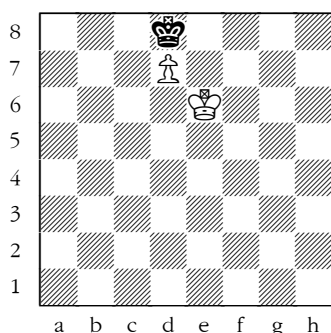


Pawn Endings (Part 1)

Compiled by Steven Craig Miller

Terminology: The term “seventh rank” refers to the seventh rank from either White’s or Black’s perspective (and so either the second or seventh rank). And the phrase “rook pawn” refers to a pawn on either the a- or h-file.

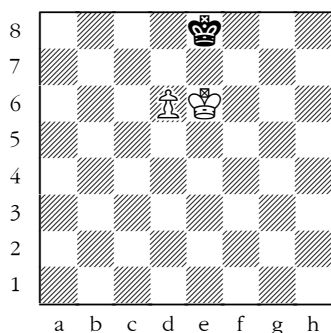
Pawn on the Seventh Rank (Excluding Rook Pawns)



The term *zugzwang* refers to a position where it is disadvantageous for one side to move. The term *reciprocal zugzwang* refers to a position where it is disadvantageous for either side to move first.

This position is reciprocal zugzwang. If it is White to move, then the position is drawn; and if it is Black to move, then White wins. In this position, both sides want it to be the other person’s turn to move.

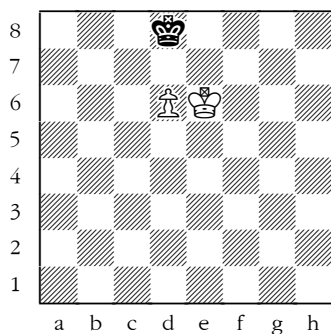
Pawn on the Sixth Rank (Excluding Rook Pawns)



This position is reciprocal zugzwang. White wins if it is Black’s turn to move, and Black draws if it is White’s turn to move.

1. d7+ ♖d8 2. ♖d6 stalemate.

1. ... ♖d8 2. d7 ♖c7 3. ♖e7 wins.



This position is the opposite of a reciprocal zugzwang. White to move wins, Black to move draws.

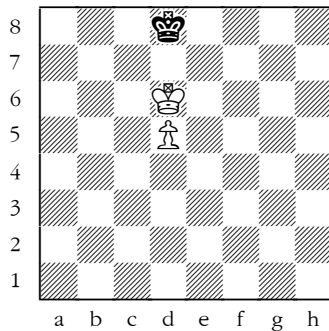
1. d7 ♖c7 2. ♖e7 wins.

1. ... ♖e8 2. d7+ ♖d8 3. ♖d6 stalemate.

Note that with the pawn on the 6th rank, and the pawn’s king not controlling the queening square, **the pawn needs to move to the 7th rank without giving check.**

Pawn on the Fifth Rank (Excluding Rook Pawns)

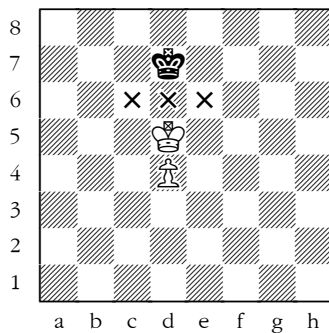
In the next two diagrams, White is winning regardless of whose turn it is to move. There are here two basic ways to escort the pawn to its queening square. If it is Black's turn to move, then the White king can step up to the 7th rank and control the queening square. Having control of the queening square the pawn marches in (with or without giving checks). If it is White's turn to move, the pawn marches to the 7th rank without giving check.



1. ♖e6 ♜e8 (1. ... ♚c7 2. ♜e7 controlling the queening square wins) 2. d6 ♜d8 3. d7 ♜c7 4. ♜e7 ♜c6 5. d8=♚ wins.

1. ... ♜e8 2. ♜c7 ♜e7 3. d6+ ♜e8 4. d7+ ♜e7 5. d8=♚+ wins.

Pawn on the Fourth Rank (Excluding Rook Pawns)

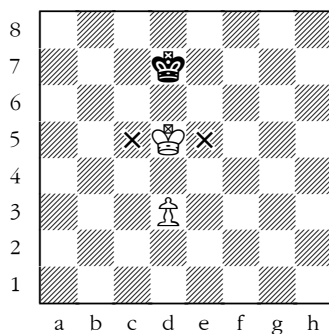


The three squares marked with an 'x' are key squares. If White can occupy one of these three key squares, White can win. If not, it is drawn. This position is another reciprocal zugzwang position.

1. ♜e5 ♜e7 2. ♜d5 ♜d7 is drawn.

1. ... ♜e7 2. ♜c6 (or 1. ... ♜c7 2. ♜e6) wins.

Pawn on the Third Rank (Excluding Rook Pawns)



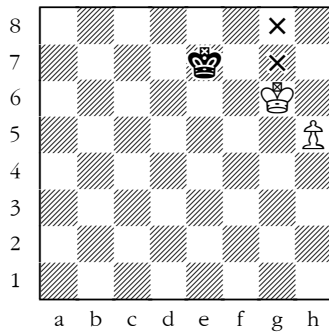
Here White already occupies one of the three key squares. And so the position is a win no matter whose turn it is to move.

1. d4 ♜c7 2. ♜e6 wins.

1. ... ♜e7 2. ♜c6 wins.

Rook Pawn

(a pawn on the a- or h-file)

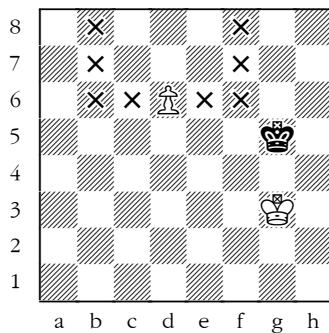


For rook pawns the key squares are located on the last two squares on the adjacent file. In this position the key squares are g7 & g8.

1. ♖g7 wins.

1. ... ♜f8 (2. ♖h7 ♜f7) draws.

The Rule of the Rectangle (aka “the Rule of the Square”)

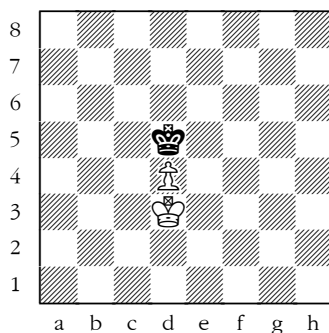


Mentally follow the diagonals between the pawn and the last rank (here it would be the d6-b8 & d6-f8 diagonals), use the files of those squares (here the b-file & f-file) and the row which the pawn is on (here the 6th row) to form an imaginary rectangle (here marked with a series of ‘x’s). If the defender’s king can move on or inside this rectangle, the king will catch the pawn.

1. d7 wins.

1. ... ♜f6 draws.

Drawing with King Behind Pawn

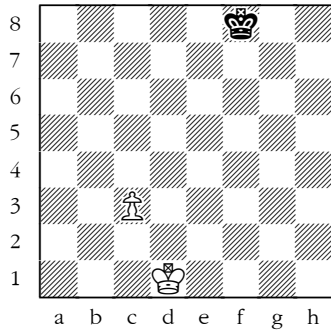


With correct technique, Black is able to hold this position to a draw.

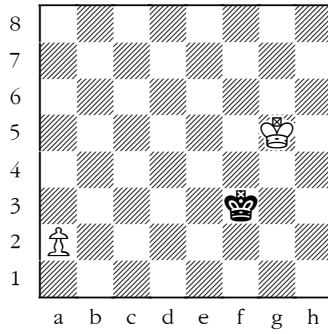
1. ♖e3 ♜d6 2. ♖e4 ♜e6 3. d5+ ♜d6 4. ♜d4 ♜d7 5. ♜c5 ♜c7 6. d6+ ♜d7 7. ♜d5 ♜d8 8. ♜e6 ♜e8 9. d7+ ♜d8 10. ♜d6 stalemate.

Problems For You To Solve

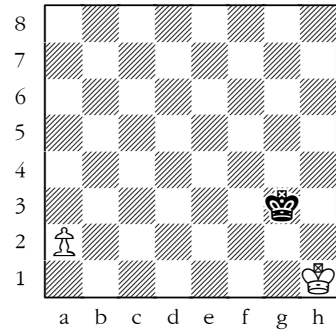
#1: Drtina (1908)
White to move



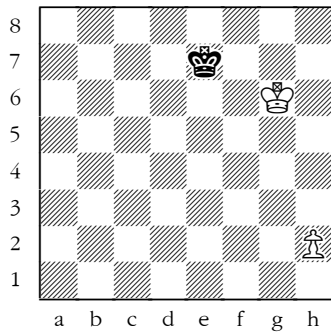
#2: Chernev (1960)
White to move



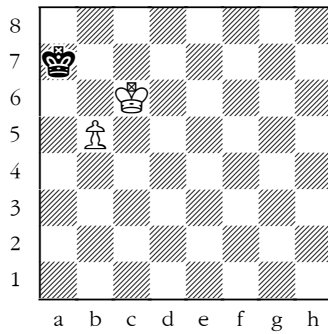
#3
White/Black to move



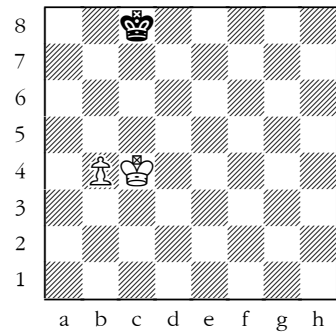
#4
White to move



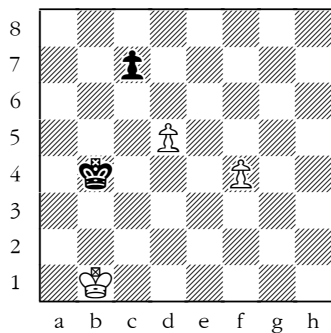
#5
White/Black to move



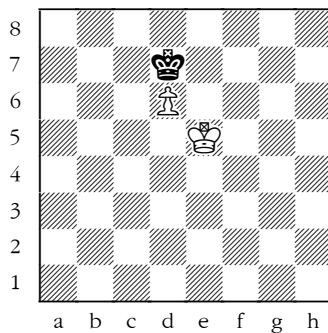
#6: Gligorić—Fischer (1959)
Black to move



#7
White to move



#8
Black to move



#9
White to move

