

# 2020 Endgame maze



**Chess Informant**

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Authors

**Ivan Ivanišević, Miloš Perunović, Branko Tadić**

Editorial board

**Vitomir Božić, Ivan Ivanišević, Aleksandar Matanović, Miloš Perunović,  
Branko Tadić, Igor Žvegljić**

Cover design

**Miloš Majstorović**

Translator

**Igor Žvegljić**

Editing and Typesetting

**Katarina Tadić**

Proofreading

**Vitomir Božić**

Editor-in-chief

**Branko Tadić**

General Manager

**Vitomir Božić**

President

**Aleksandar Matanović**

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Izdavač

**Šahovski informator**

11001 Beograd, Francuska 31, Srbija

Phone: (381 11) 2630-109

E-mail: [sales@sahovski.com](mailto:sales@sahovski.com)

Internet: <https://www.sahovski.com>

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# SYSTEM OF SIGNS

±	white stands slightly better	↗	diagonal
∓	black stands slightly better	⊕	centre
±	white has the upper hand	»	king's side
∓	black has the upper hand	«	queen's side
+—	white has a decisive advantage	×	weak point
—+	black has a decisive advantage	⊥	ending
=	even	♖♗	pair of bishops
∞	unclear	♖♗	bishops of opposite color
∞	with compensation for the material	♖♗	bishops of the same color
⊙	development advantage	○○	united pawns
○	greater board room	○●○	separated pawns
→	with attack	♙♙	double pawns
↑	with initiative	♙	passed pawn
↔	with counter-play	>	advantage in number of pawns
⊙	zugzwang	⊕	time
♯	mate	<b>75/199</b> Chess Informant	
!	a very good move	E	12 Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings
!!	an excellent move	♚	3/b Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings
?	a mistake	N	a novelty
??	a blunder	(ch)	championship
!?	a move deserving attention	(izt)	interzonal tournament
?!	a dubious move	(ct)	candidates' tournament
△	with the idea	(m)	match
□	only move	(ol)	olympiad
△	better is	corr.	correspondence game
↔	file	RR	editorial comment
		R	various moves
		└	with
		┘	without
			etc
		—	see

## Foreword

Dear readers and Informant aficionados, this book is intended to be a companion volume to our 2020 PUZZLE QUEST. Our primary intention was to provide you with as much quality material for self-study as possible. So, it was quite natural to present to you a book with complete coverage of most instructive and entertaining endgames that were played in 2020. However, a simple endgame puzzle book did not satisfy our goal. Therefore, we tried to make our selection detailed, rich in motifs and theoretically comprehensive. Many of the endgames are explained in great depth, with numerous theoretical principles fleshed out, so this book could be used as instructive endgame manual as well.

All the endgame positions are extracted from games played during 2020, when most of the games were played online in shorter time controls. Quite naturally, most endgames were not played to perfection, but contained serious mistakes, wrong game plans, or terrible blunders. In such cases we provided very detailed explanations and guidelines so you can evaluate your own endgame technique and fill gaps in your endgame play.

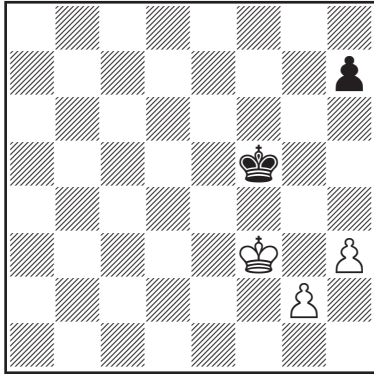
We are convinced that this book will prove to be more than an overview of the best endgames played in 2020, and that you will return to it very often seeking advice and refreshing your knowledge.

*Šahovska Akedamija Šampiona*  
*GM Ivan Ivanišević, GM Miloš Perunović, GM Branko Tadić*



**1. A. Grischuk 2777 -  
T. L. Petrosian 2601**

ProChessLeague (Internet-rapid) 2020

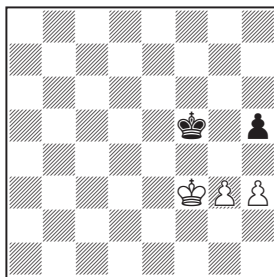


Black must carefully calculate all the available pawn moves. We already have established opposition on the board, but some other factors must be taken in consideration:

1. Save reserve pawn tempi.
2. Pawns cannot go back.

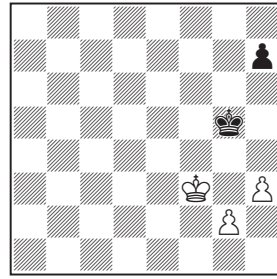
**1... h6**

Black advances his pawn two squares and loses a crucial tempo! 1... h5? 2. g3 White wisely keeps the pawn on h3 so he can timely force Black to abandon the opposition!

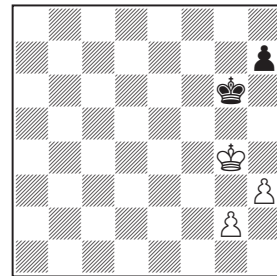


2... ♖e5 3. ♖e3 ♖f5 4. ♖d4 ♖e6 5. ♖e4 ♖f6 6. ♖f4 ♖g6 7. ♖e5 ♖g5 8. ♖e6 h4 (8... ♖g6 and reserve tempo would decide the matters! 9.h4+-) 9. g4+- A. Grischuk - T. L. Petrosian.

Also, White wins in case of 1... ♖g5?



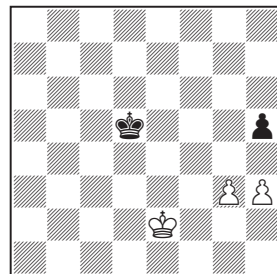
2. ♖e4! It is essential to push back the black king and save pawn moves! 2... ♖g6 3. ♖f4 ♖f6 4. ♖g4 ♖g6



5. h4! White has enough reserve tempi to force Black to abandon the opposition! 5... h6 6. ♖f4 ♖f6 (6... ♖h5 7. g3 ♖g6 8. ♖e5 ♖h5 9. ♖f6 ♖g4 10. ♖g6 ♖xg3 11. h5+-) 7. g4 ♖e6 8. ♖e4 ♖f6 9. ♖d5 ♖f7 10. ♖e5 ♖e7 11. ♖f5 ♖f7 12. h5+-

**2. g4+**

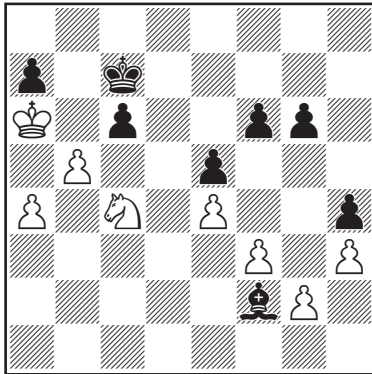
2. g3 h5! White has only one more tempo in reserve (h3-h4), and that is not quite enough to push the black king away from the centre. For example: 3. ♖e3 ♖e5 4. ♖d3 ♖d5 5. ♖e2





**19. Joel Benjamin 2506 - Pa. Wolff 2552**

USA (ch-Internet-rapid) 2020



White has the upper hand thanks to his active king and well placed knight. He is threatening to capture the a7-pawn, so Black must use some fairly unorthodox measures in the order to save the game. The only way to clinch a draw is by active defence!

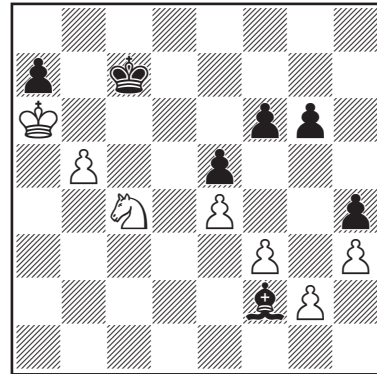
**1... cxb5!**

If Black plays too passively, the white knight will collect the a7-pawn. 1... ♔d4? 2. ♖a5 cxb5 (Black should not try to create a passer of his own. 2... c5? 3. ♗c4+- In this blocked position the white knight is a dominating piece, so White should not have much trouble converting his advantage on the queenside.) 3. axb5 ♖b8 (Black lost a precious tempo and is too late with the attempt at active play: 3... ♔d6 4. ♗c6 ♖c5 5. ♗xa7 ♖c4 6. ♗c6+-) 4. ♗c6+ ♖a8 5. ♗xa7! A beautiful final stroke! 5... ♔xa7 6. b6 f5 7. bxa7 1 : 0 Joel Benjamin - Pa. Wolff.

**2. axb5**

Generally, in endgames the pawns belong to the squares of the opposite colour to the bishop's colour. However, in forcing positions when each tempo is of great importance,

general rules often must be neglected! Here, Black is abandoning the queenside and is trying to reach the white pawns with his king. So, the bishop will be sacrificed for the white b-pawn. The next move is crucial, so the black pawns may show how quickly they can run!

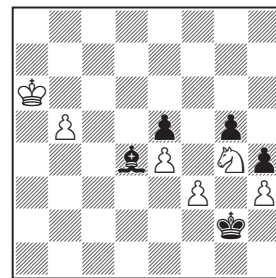


**2... g5! 3. ♗a5 ♖d6!**

The black king starts running towards the enemy pawns!

**4. ♗c6 ♖c5 5. ♗xa7 ♖c4 6. b6**

White cannot resist on the kingside without his king. For example: 6. ♗c6 ♖d3 7. ♗b8 ♖e2 8. ♗d7 ♖f1 9. ♗xf6 ♖xg2 10. ♗g4 ♔d4



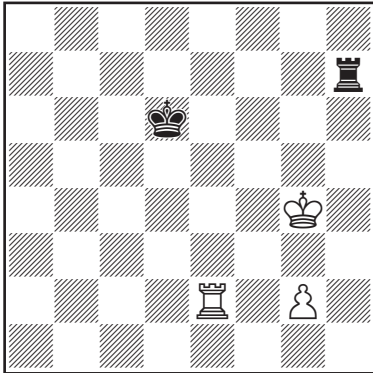
11. b6 ♔xb6 12. ♖xb6 ♖xh3 13. ♗xe5 ♖g3 14. ♗g4 ♖xf3 15. e5 ♖xg4 16. e6 h3 17. e7 h2 18. e8♖ h1♖ 19. ♖e6+= and a draw is inevitable because Black cannot hide from checks without losing the g-pawn.

**6... ♔xb6 7. ♖xb6 ♖d3**



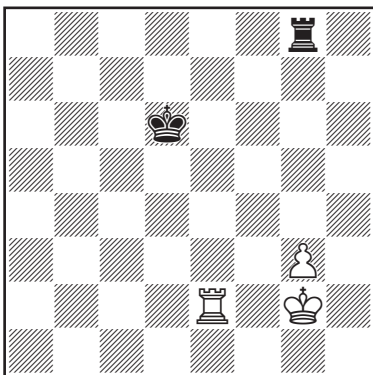
**56. Hi. Nakamura 2736 -  
A. Lenderman 2634**

USA (ch-Internet-rapid) 2020



The position on the board is an extremely instructive one, and the conclusions we will reach should stick with you for the rest of your chess career! In order to secure a draw Black must "extend" the influence of his rook and keep the king in the centre. It is of vital importance to prevent the white rook from defending the pawn along the 4<sup>th</sup> rank. Also, Black must make sure his king is not pushed away from the d-file, thus restricting the enemy king in his attempts to increase manoeuvring scope!

**1... ♖h8! 2. g3 ♖g8+ 3. ♔f3 ♖f8+ 4. ♔g2 ♖g8**

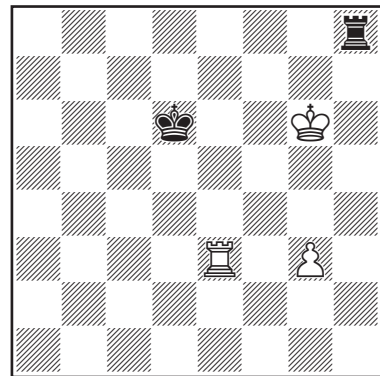


The black rook is not allowing White to advance the pawn. The procedure is the same with the pawn on g2 or g3.

**5. ♖e1 ♔d5 6. ♖e3 ♔d6**

6... ♔d4 is also correct (with the pawn on g4 and rook on e4 we utilise the same procedure). We must not allow the white king to advance! 7. ♖e7 ♔d5=

**7. ♔f3 ♖f8+ 8. ♔g4 ♖g8+ 9. ♔h5 ♖h8+ 10. ♔g6**

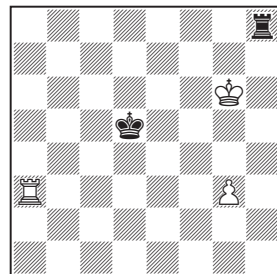


**10... ♔d5□**

Black must be very careful, because White takes control over the g-file after 10... ♖g8+? 11. ♔f7 ♖g4 12. ♖e6+ ♔d5 13. ♖g6+-

**11. ♔g7**

The black rook is extremely active and prevents his white counterpart from supporting the pawn. 11. ♖a3





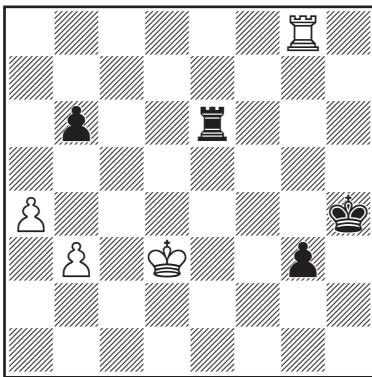
♙xf1 h1♚+ 13. ♖g1 ♗f3+= with perpetual check.

11. ♖h3 ♖xc6=



**72. A. Sarana 2654 -  
Y. Kuzubov 2643**

*lichess.org (Internet-blitz) 2020*



In this excellent example we will analyse the value of rook in endgames. The black rook executes some very subtle manoeuvres and restricts the white king, making it impossible for him to reach the queenside, or to return to the kingside. If Black does not play precisely, the white rook stops the promotion of the black pawn.

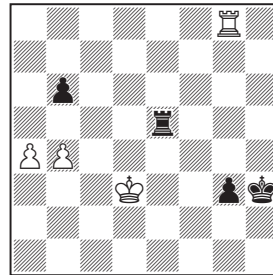
**1... ♖h3!**

In the game, Black proceeded with logical but incorrect 1... ♖e5? Black puts the rook on the 5<sup>th</sup> rank in order to protect his king from checks and control the white pawns at the same time. However, he abandoned the b6-pawn too early, thus allowing White to secure a draw. 2. b4

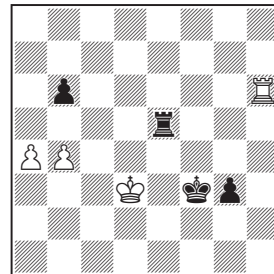
a) White hunts down the b-pawn, and sacrifices the rook for the g-pawn reaching a drawish position: 2... ♖h5 3. ♖g6 ♖h3 4. ♖xb6 g2 (4... ♖h4 5. ♖g6 ♖xb4 6. a5 ♖a4 7. a6=) 5. ♖g6 ♖h4 6. ♖xg2 ♖xg2 7. ♖c3 ♖f3

8. a5 ♖e4 9. ♖c4=;

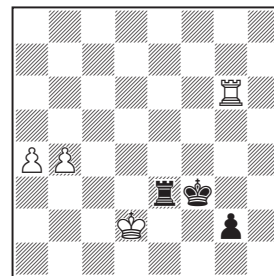
b) 2... ♖h3



3. ♖h8+! (White lost precious tempi after 3. ♖d4?? ♖h5 4. ♖c4 g2+ A. Sarana - Y. Kuzubov) ♖g2 4. ♖h6 ♖f3



b1) A straightforward capture on b6 leads to defeat: 5. ♖xb6? g2 6. ♖g6 ♖e3+ 7. ♖d2



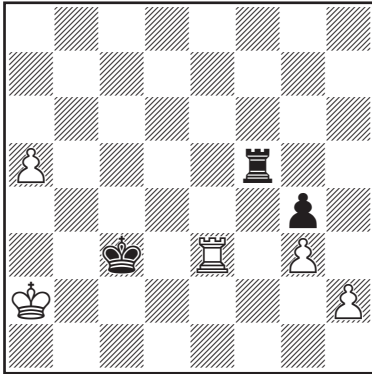
7... ♖b3! 8. b5 (8. a5 ♖xb4 9. a6 ♖a4+; 8. ♖f6+ ♖e4 9. ♖g6 ♖b1+) ♖b4 The threat is ♖g4. White's king remains cut off away from the pawn after 9. ♖xg2 ♖xg2 10. ♖c3 ♖xa4 11. ♖b3 ♖f4+)

b2) 5. ♖f6+! A very important check in order to disturb the black king. 5... ♖g4 6. ♖g6+ ♖f4 7. ♖f6+ ♖g5 8. ♖f8=;



**99. L. van Wely 2610 -  
J. Hector 2478**

Deutschland 2020



Black secures a draw being two pawns down proving that the activity of pieces is of paramount importance in rook endgames!

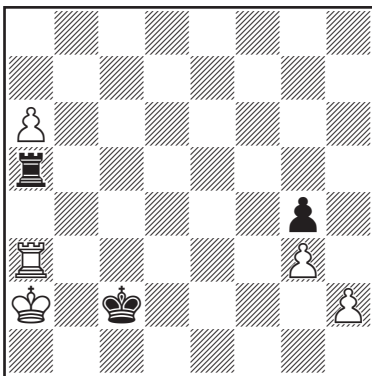
**1... ♖c2!**

1... ♖b4? 2. a6+- L. van Wely - J. Hector.

**2. a6**

2. ♖a3 ♖b5!=;  
2. ♖e2+ ♖c3!=

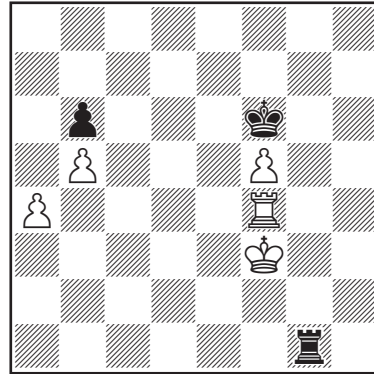
**2... ♖a5+ 3. ♖a3**



**3... ♖b5=**

**100. Man. Petrosyan 2607 -  
Anna M. Sargsyan 2405**

Jermuk 2020

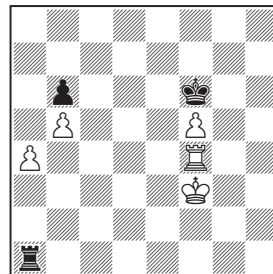


The activity of the pieces is of paramount importance in rook endgames! Black is two pawns down but can clinch a draw by attacking the white pawns on a4 and f5!

**1... ♖e1!**

An essential move. Black is cutting off the white king preventing him from going to the queenside and supporting the white pawns.

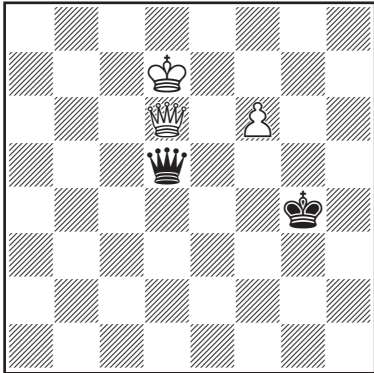
Black should not play 1... ♖a1? because he must not allow the white king to reach the queenside. If the white king reaches his foot-soldiers on the queenside, the white rook will be able to abandon defence of the f-pawn and focus on capturing the black b6-pawn. White should win with the passed pawn on the queenside being supported by king.





**119. Max. Lagarde 2651 - P. Cramling 2470**

Gibraltar 2020

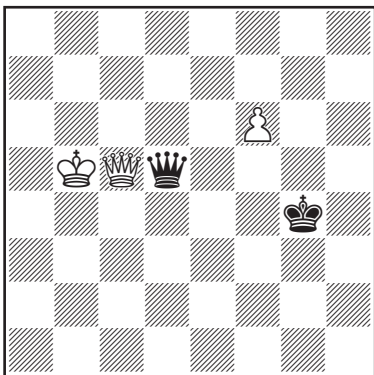


The queen endgames with the f-pawn is winning if the black king is too far away. In this example Black is able to clinch a draw because his king is close enough to the f-pawn.

**1... ♖f7+ 2. ♕e7 ♖d5+ 3. ♔c7**

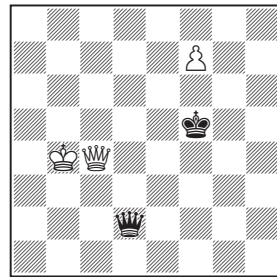
White cannot move his king to the kingside:  
 3. ♔e8 ♖g8+ 4. ♖f8 ♕e6+ 5. ♔d8 ♔f5 6. f7 ♔f6=

**3... ♖a5+ 4. ♔c6 ♖a6+ 5. ♔c5 ♖a5+ 6. ♔c4 ♖a6+ 7. ♔b3 ♖d3+ 8. ♔b4 ♖d4+ 9. ♔a5 ♖d5+ 10. ♔b6 ♖d4+ 11. ♔b5 ♖d5+ 12. ♖c5**



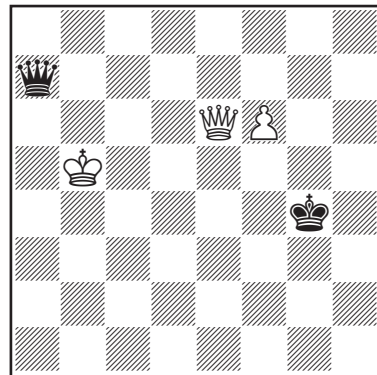
**12... ♖b7+**

Black was sure that her king was close enough to the pawn and overestimated practical chances: 12... ♖e6?? 13. ♖c4+ ♔f5 14. f7 White is winning thanks to the black king's position on f5! Black will not have useful checks because the white queen will protect her king along the 5th rank and b1-h7 diagonal! 14... ♖d7+ 15. ♔b4 ♖d2+



16. ♔b3! (White lost all winning chances after 16. ♔c5? ♖a5+ 17. ♔c6 ♖a8+ 18. ♔d7 ♔f6 19. ♖e6+ ♔g7 1/2 : 1/2 Max. Lagarde - P. Cramling) ♖e3+ (16... ♖d1+ 17. ♖c2+ +-) 17. ♔a4! ♖a7+ 18. ♔b4! Black has no checks so the f-pawn will promote!

**13. ♖b6 ♖d7+ 14. ♖c6 ♖a7 15. ♖e6+**



**15... ♔h5!**

15... ♔g5? With the king on g5 Black is unable to use his queen along the g-file! 16. f7 ♖a3 17. ♔c6 ♖a4+ 18. ♔d6 ♖b4+ 19. ♔d7 ♖b7+ 20. ♔d8 ♖b8+ 21. ♔e7 ♖b4+ 22. ♖d6 ♖e4+ 23. ♔f8 ♔h5 24. ♖f6+-

**16. f7**