

Arkadij Naiditsch
Csaba Balogh

Most instructive endgames of 2012–2015



Chess
Evolution

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First edition 2016 by Chess Evolution

Most instructive endgames of 2012–2015
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ISBN 978-83-944290-1-0

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website: www.chess-evolution.com

Printed in Poland

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KEY TO SYMBOLS

=	Equality or equal chances
±	White has a slight advantage
∓	Black has a slight advantage
±	White is better
∓	Black is better
+ -	White has a decisive advantage
- +	Black has a decisive advantage
∞	unclear
∞̄	with compensation
↔	with counterplay
↑	with initiative
→	with an attack
Δ	with the idea
□	only move
N	novelty
!	a good move
!!	an excellent move
?	a weak move
??	a blunder
!?	an interesting move
?!	a dubious move
+	check
#	mate

INTRODUCTION

Useful information for our valued readers.

- »» The book contains the 80 most instructive endgames from 2012 to 2015.
- »» The games were selected and analyzed by the authors GM Arkadij Naiditsch and GM Csaba Balogh.
- »» Most of the games are taken from the highest-level tournaments, such as Wijk aan Zee, FIDE Grand Prix series, Olympiads etc.
- »» Most of the games are played by top Grandmasters: Carlsen, Anand, Kramnik, Aronian, Caruana and many, many more of the world's best chess-players.
- »» The games are sorted in chronological order, from 2012 through to 2015.

EDITORIAL PREFACE

We are proud to present our third book in a series of 5 — “Most instructive endgames of 2012–2015”.

It was very interesting work trying to select and analyse the 80 most instructive endgames from the past 4 years: the choice was so wide! We were aiming to find the most exciting, spectacular and, of course, useful attacking ideas which might also occur in our own practical games.

The main idea behind this book stands out clearly: We try to reduce the importance of opening theory, and rather get inside the workings of the best chess-playing brains on the planet in an attempt to explain the most complex attacking ideas in a simple and understandable way to any chess lover.

Another very important point of the book which we are proud of is, we have not used much ‘engine’ assistance during our commentary on the games. We try to see the game the way we would do in a practical game, which makes the commentaries very special — which in practice puts the reader fully in the shoes of the world-class players; this is exactly the best way to improve our own chess level.

Sadly, nowadays, we have more-and-more computer analyses and we can hear chess amateurs judging the play even of Carlsen. Yes, you can find tactical mistakes with an engine at home — but the question is, can you do the same during your practical game over the board?! Chess is a game where everyone is making mistakes — and this is what it is all about in the current book!

We would advise all our readers to take out a real chessboard and enjoy these beautiful masterpieces. This is how we learned to play chess and this is why we still enjoy every wonderful game, even after almost 20 years of being professional chess players!

Yours,

Arkadij Naiditsch & Csaba Balogh

GAME 1

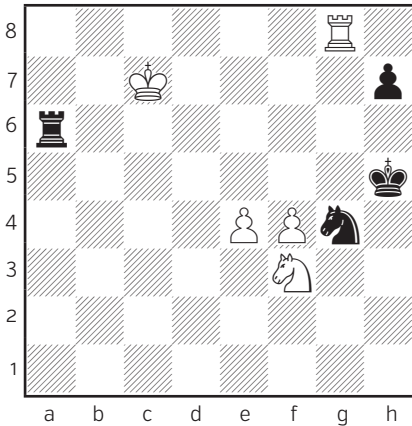
▷ V. Kramnik (2801)

▶ E. Tomashevsky (2738)

Tal Memorial

14.06.2012

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

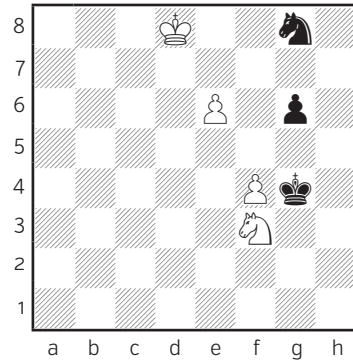


We are at move 60, when the players have just passed the 2nd time-control and received their extra 15 minutes. Despite the small amount of pieces, the position is full of beautiful ideas, and requires very deep play from both sides. It was practically impossible to continue the game flawlessly... the position is objectively drawn, but probably in a practical game White has better chances to win, than Black has to hold.

60...h6!

Tomashevsky finds the only move. He prevents the ♖g5 threat. Exchanging the rooks would win for White with very precise play 60...♖g6 61.♖xg6 hxg6 (61...♗xg6? 62.♗e5+- The pawn endgame is hopeless.) 62.e5

♗h6 63.e6 ♗g8! The critical move, where the knight is quite safe against attacks from his White counterpart. (63...♗f5 64.♗d7 ♗g4 65.♗d4! White easily promotes the pawn. 65...♗g7 66.e7 ♗xf4 67.♗e6+-) 64.♗d8! White must give up all his pieces to send away the g8-knight. 64...♗g4



65.♗e8!! ♗xf4 (65...♗xf3 66.♗f7 ♗h6+ 67.♗xg6 ♗g8 68.f5+- wins.) 66.♗f8 ♗f6 (On 66...♗f5 White can first protect the pawn, then take the knight. 67.♗d4+-) 67.e7! ♗xf3 68.♗f7 ♗e4 69.♗e6!+- The last exact move to prevent ...♗d6;

The double attack with 60...♗f6 loses after 61.♖g5+ ♗h6 62.♗d4!+- with a picturesque mate.

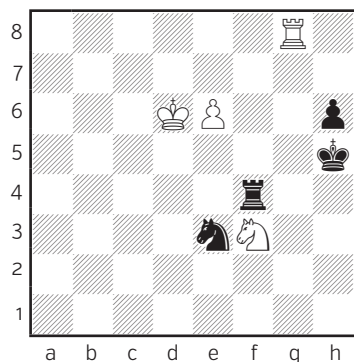
61.e5

Obviously, White should push his passers.

61...♗f6

After this move the position is still drawn, but it becomes much more difficult to hold... 61...♗e3! with the threat of ♗d5. 62.♗d7 (62.♖d8 This

allows the Black king to approach... 62...♔g4! 63.♗d4 ♕xf4 64.e6 ♖a7+! The only move. 65.♕d6 ♗c4+ 66.♕c5 ♗e5 and Black saves the game.) 62... ♖a7+ 63.♕d6 (63.♕e6 ♖a6+ and the White king has no shelter.) 63...♖f7! wins the f-pawn and at the same time the knight catches the e-pawn 64.e6 ♖xf4



65.e7 ♗f5+! 66.♕e5 ♗xe7!= and the rook on g8 hangs as well.

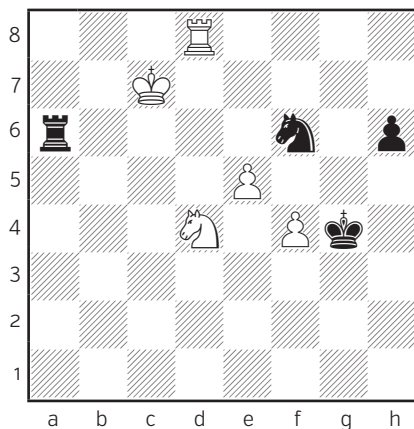
62. ♖d8

Kramnik uses his great imagination and sets up very difficult tricks for Black to solve. 62.exf6? did not come into consideration 62...♖xf6 White cannot defend the f4-pawn. 62.♖f8 ♗d5+ 63.♕d7

(63.♕b7 ♖b6+ 64.♕a7 ♖b3 65.♗d4 ♖b4 66.♗e6 ♕g4 =)

63...♕g4

62...♕g4 63.♗d4



63... ♖a7+!

Tomashevsky defends very well, but it takes all his time and energy to stay focused until the end of the game. The tempting 63...♕xf4 loses immediately 64.♕b7!+- and the rook has no square on the 6th rank from which to defend the knight.

64. ♕d6!

64.♕b6 is met with 64...♖d7! 65.♖xd7 ♗xd7+ 66.♕c7 ♕xf4 This was the point of the check on the 63rd move.

64... ♗e4+ 65. ♕d5 ♗c3+!

65...♕xf4 loses the knight by force... 66.♖f8+ ♕e3 67.♖f3+ ♕d2 68.♕xe4+-

66. ♕c4 ♕xf4!

Black chooses the right moment to take the pawn. 66...♖c7+? would walk into the e6 check. 67.♕d3+- 67... ♕xf4? 68.♗e6+

67.e6 ♖c7+ 68. ♕d3

Until this moment Tomashevsky has defended tenaciously, but now fails to find the last exact move to secure the draw. We must add that the players had already been fighting for 7 hours, were completely exhausted and surviving only on the 30 seconds increments.

68...♔e5?

White wins in a study-like way after this move. 68...♘a4 followed by ... ♘c5 was the way to draw.

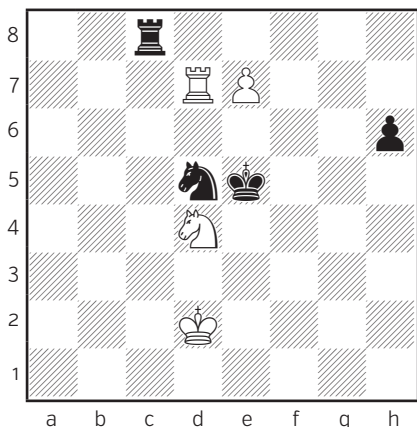
69.♖d7! ♘d5

69...♖c8 70.e7+- followed by ♖d8 wins.

70.e7!

After this great move, rather strangely Black is simple unable to stop the pawn.

70...♖c3+ 71.♔d2 ♖c8



72.♘c6+!!

Tomashevsky missed this motif on the 68th move. Of course, we cannot

blame him for this mistake, especially with only seconds on his clock. 72.♖d8? ♘xe7 was a draw.

72...♔e6 73.♖xd5!! ♖xc6

73...♔xd5 74.♘d8! was the whole point, and the pawn promotes.

74.e8♖+ ♔xd5

We have reached a winning endgame, but it still requires some accurate moves. Of course, such a technical task is not a huge challenge for a player like Kramnik.

75.♔d3 ♖e6 76.♖b5+ ♔d6 77.♔d4 ♔e7 78.♖f5!

The White king and queen co-operate well to squeeze the Black king to the 8th rank.

78...♖f6 79.♖h7+ ♔f8 80.♔e5 ♖a6 81.♖b7 ♖g6 82.♖h7 ♖a6 83.♖d3!

Black resigned because he must give up the 6th rank with his rook and will lose his h-pawn soon. 83.♖d3 ♖a7 84.♖d6+ ♔g7 85.♔e6! The shortest way to win. Black has serious problems with his rook in trying to avoid being checked by the queen. 85...♖f7 86.♖g3+ ♔f8 87.♖g6 ♖e7+ 88.♔d6+- White wins the h-pawn, and the game. A very interesting endgame with many study-like motifs.

1-0

■ GAME 2

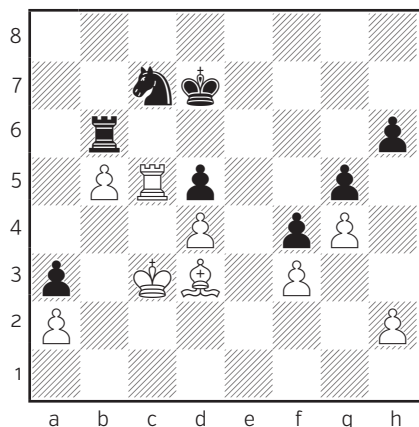
▷ M. Carlsen (2837)

▶ V. Bologan (2732)

World Rapid Championship

06.07.2012

Annotated by Csaba Balogh



Carlsen obviously has a completely winning position with an extra pawn, and the days of the a3-pawn are also numbered. However, while ‘converting’ the advantage, White allowed a miraculous escape for his opponent...

43. ♔f5+?

In my opinion, Carlsen had already seen the final position of the game. Everything seems to be quite forced, so the World’s Nr. 1 had to be confident with his calculations. 43. ♔b4! was probably the easiest way to victory. 43... ♖a6+ 44. ♔xa3 ♗xc5 45. dxc5 ♜b8 46. ♔b4+- and there is nothing that can stop the pawn avalanche on the queenside, supported by the bishop and the king.

43... ♔d6 44. ♔b4?

Continuing with the wrong plan. 44. ♕d3! Repeating the moves would have been objectively better.

44... ♗a6+ 45. ♔a5 ♗xc5 46. ♔xb6 ♗b3!

Bologan finds the only chance to stay in the game. Black collects the d4-pawn. I don’t think that Carlsen blundered this move, since after the coming moves it all seems to be over.

47. ♔a7?

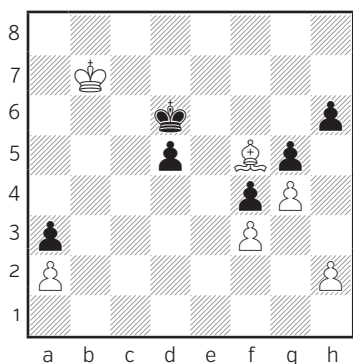
Still following the wrong path... 47. ♔a6 should have been played, even though after 47... ♗xd4 48. b6 ♗c6 49. ♕b1 ♗b4+ 50. ♔b5 ♗c6 I don’t see a winning plan for White.

47... ♗xd4 48. b6 ♗c6+ 49. ♔a8

This was Carlsen’s idea when he played 43. ♕f5. White promotes the b-pawn soon and the bishop covers the a2- and f3-pawns, which might give some counter-chances to Black. I’m sure that at this moment, both players accepted that White has won the struggle. But chess is a more difficult game...

49... d4?

49... ♗a5!! would have led to an amazing position... 50. b7 ♗xb7 51. ♔xb7



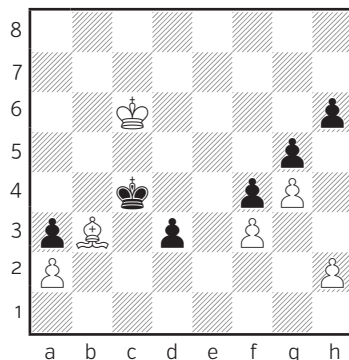
In my opinion, many players would just resign here after a short hesitation. Who would believe that Black is close to winning in this position!!! At first sight, I thought it was a mistake of the computer. Then, after checking a few logical lines, everything became clear... 51...♔c5! Let's summarize the main ideas: The White king has no access to the d-pawn, Black simply wants to promote the d-pawn with the help of the king. It seems like even if he manages to do it, White will sacrifice his bishop, capture the a3-pawn and his a-pawn will queen automatically. But in this case, Black is in time to collect the f3-pawn and promote his own f-pawn... 52.♔a6 trying to catch the pawn and approaching a3 seems to be the most logical attempt.

a) 52.♔c7 is a tricky option to rush to the e-file with the king. 52...d4 53.♙c2 ♕c4 54.♔c6

(54.♙d6 requires precise moves by Black. 54...d3 55.♙d1 ♔d4! in order to keep the king away from the e5-e4 path. Black wins an important tempo to push d2 on the next

move, and only then goes with the king. 56.h3 d2 57.♔e6 ♔e3)

54...d3 55.♙b3+



55...♔d4! Again, it is very important to prevent the ♔d5-e4 idea.

(55...♔c3? is a mistake because of 56.♔d5! d2 57.♔e4 ♔b2 58.♔d3 ♔c1 59.♔e2+- just in time.)

56.♔b5

(56.♔d6 d2)

56...♔c3 and again White has nothing better than transposing to the main line with 52.♔a6.

b) 52.h3 d4 53.♙c2 White needs to move into this tempo to control the promoting square on d1. 53...♔c4 54.♔b6 d3 55.♙b3+ ♔c3 This is a transposition to our main line. 52...♔b4! A necessary move. The idea is to block to king's route on the a-file and save an important tempo to push d4.

(52...d4? immediately is a mistake.
53. ♖a5 ♖c4 54. ♖a4 d3 55. ♖xa3
♖c3 56. ♙e6+-)

53.h3! White must already understand that “this ship is gone” and try to defend the inferior endgame, where the pawn must stay on h3.

(53. ♖b6 d4 White can achieve the same queen endgame, but with his pawn on h2. Everything is forced from now on... 54. ♖c6

(54. ♙c2 ♖c3 55. ♙b3 d3 56. ♖b5 d2)

54...♖c3 55. ♖c5 d3 56. ♙e6 d2
57. ♙b3 ♖b2 58. ♖b4 ♖c1 59. ♖xa3
d1 ♔ 60. ♙xd1 ♖xd1 61. ♖b4 ♖e2
62.a4 ♖xf3 63.a5 ♖xg4! That is
why the pawn should be on h3.
64.a6 f3 65.a7 f2 66.a8 ♔ f1 ♔ with
a winning endgame.)

53...d4 The next moves are ...♖c3
and ...d3. White can do nothing
against it... 54. ♙c2 ♖c3 55. ♙b3
d3 56. ♖b5 d2 57. ♖a4 ♖b2 58. ♖b4
♖c1 59. ♖xa3 d1 ♔ 60. ♙xd1 ♖xd1
61. ♖b4 ♖e2 62.a4 ♖xf3 63.a5 ♖g3
64.a6 f3 65.a7 f2 66.a8 ♔ f1 ♔ and in
the coming endgame Black’s win-
ning chances are better than White’s
drawing ones. Most probably, a Q+1
pawn against a Q endgame will
arise, which could continue for 100
moves. A shocking endgame which
shows excellently how difficult chess
is. 49...♗d8! is also fine, with the
same idea.

50.b7 ♖c7 51. ♙d3!

The bishop is heading to b5 and the knight cannot hold the b-pawn.

51...♗b8 52. ♙b5

Black is in zugzwang.

52...d3 53. ♙xd3 ♗d7 54. ♖a7!

Black resigned in view of 54...♗b8
55. ♙b5. Everything went as Carlsen
expected, but there could have been
a big surprise for him...

1-0

GAME 3

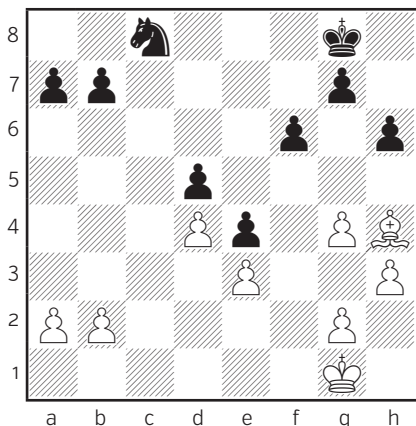
▷ J. Gustafsson (2629)

▶ R. Ponomariov (2726)

40th GM Dortmund GER (8)

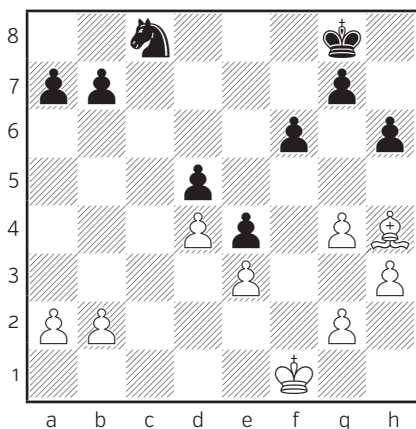
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Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

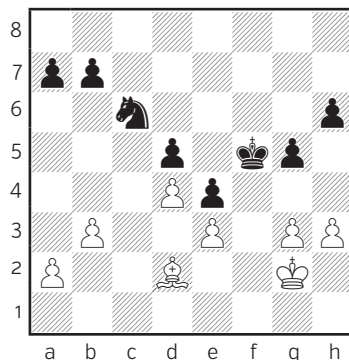


This endgame looks like an easy draw. But... it's much trickier than it looks. We will see how quickly Gustafsson manages to lose it...

30. ♔f1

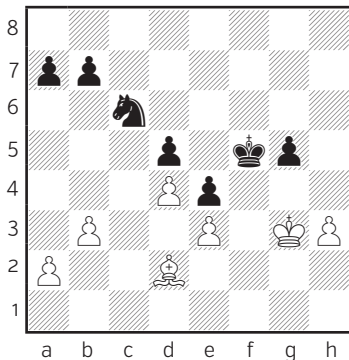


Gustafsson decides to put the king on e2. I'm not sure if this was a good idea. It's clear that Black will start his play on the kingside, so there's no real reason to move the king away to e2?! The White bishop has to control the knight — mainly the b4-square. The pawns on the queenside should stand on a2-b3 and, for example, the bishop on d2 or maybe on d6. Let's take a look at a few options. 30. ♔e1 ♖e7 31. ♔d2 ♜c6 32. b3 ♔f7 33. ♔f2 Now Black has 2 plans, to play with ...g5 or without it. Maybe another idea could be to play ...b5-a5-a4, but right now it wouldn't achieve anything at all. White would just keep on waiting... 33... ♔g6 (33...g5 34.g3 ♔g6 35. ♔g2 h5 seems to be the only way to break through... (35...f5 36.gxf5+ ♔xf5



37. ♔f2! (37.g4+?! White has to be careful until the end. This logical-looking move could land White in some trouble. 37... ♔g6 38. ♔f2 h5 39. ♔g2 hxg4 40.hxg4 ♔f7 The Black king is going to b5, and Black will try to play ... a5-a4, trying to create weaknesses in White's pawn structure. If the White king goes to b2, Black could react very

quickly with ... ♞e7 - ♝g8 - ♞f6 , winning the g4-pawn. Probably the position is still a draw, but it would get tricky...) 37...h5 38. ♞e2 By keeping the pawns on g3-h3, White is ready to react against Black's ...g4 with h4, and against Black's ...h4 with g4. 38...g4 39.h4 ♞e6 40. ♞d1 ♞e7 41. ♞e1 ♞f5 42. ♞f2 ♞d6 43. ♞c2 ♞c6 44. ♞b2 ♞b5 45. ♞c3 with a draw.) 36.gxh5+ ♞xh5 37.g4+! (37. ♞f2 ?! Now the waiting strategy could lead to a lost position. 37...f5 38. ♞c3 ♞g6 39. ♞e2 ♞d8 ! Black brings the knight to e6 before starting action with f4. 40. ♞f2 ♞e6 followed by f4 with good winning chances.) 37... ♞g6 38. ♞g3 ! White wants to play h4 trying to exchange both pawns on the kingside. 38...f5 39.gxf5+ ♞xf5

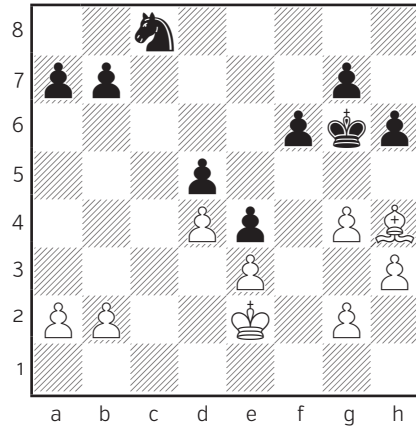


40.h4! g4 41.h5 with a draw.) 34.g3 h5 (34...f5 35.gxf5+ ♞xf5 36. ♞g2 and we already know that White makes a draw just by waiting and keeping the pawns on g3-h3.) 35.gxh5+ ♞xh5 36.g4+! allowing Black to play ...f5. 36... ♞g6 37. ♞g3 followed by h4, with an easy draw.

30... ♞f7 31. ♞e2

The White king goes in the wrong direction.

31... ♞g6



32. ♞g3 ?

White is playing completely without a plan. 32. ♞e1 followed by ♞f2 , with a draw.

32...h5 33.gxh5+ ♞xh5

and it's too late. g4 is no longer possible, so Black is in time to put the pawns on g5-f5.

34. ♞c7 ♞e7

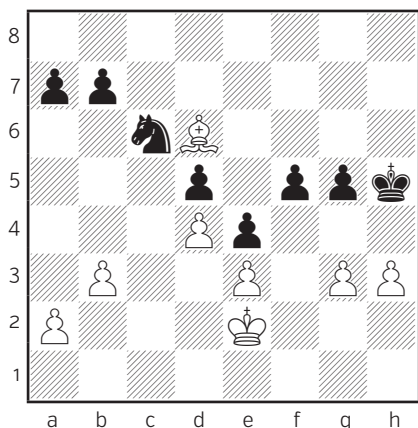
There is no hurry to play ...f5 because against White's g4, Black now has ... ♞h4 .

35. ♞d6 ♞c6 36.b3 g5?!

A logical move, but not the most precise. 36...f5 37. ♞f2 ♞d8 38. ♞e2 ♞e6 39. ♞f2 ♞g5 !? Black could try to keep the g5-option in mind. In case of White's g3, Black would have the winning maneuver ... ♞g5 - ♞f3 .

40. ♔e7+ ♚g6 41. ♙d6 ♚f7 The Black king is going to b5. In comparison to the game, the Black pawn stands very well on g7 or g6. White has no h4-push, which would give him a free passed h-pawn in case of Black's ...g5.

37.g3 f5



We can clearly see that it's not going to be easy to make a draw anymore...

38. ♚d2?

38. ♚f2 White should not let Black play ...f4. 38... ♖d8 39. ♚g2 ♘e6 40. ♚f2 ♚g6 41. ♚g2 It looks as though Black doesn't have the ...f4-move, and to find another idea seems to be a difficult task. Probably the position is a draw, but a very tricky one. If Black manages to find an idea, White could simply be lost.

38...f4!

Of course! A very typical move.

39.gxf4

39. exf4 g4! A very strong reaction! 40. hxg4+ ♚xg4 41. ♚e3 ♚xg3 42. f5+ ♚g4 43. f6 ♘d8 and Black is in time to stop the f-pawn. Now the Black king is going to e6, and White would lose the f-pawn. The position is lost for White.

39...gxf4 40. ♙xf4 ♚h4 41. ♙d6

41. ♚e2 ♖b4! doesn't work and White is probably lost.

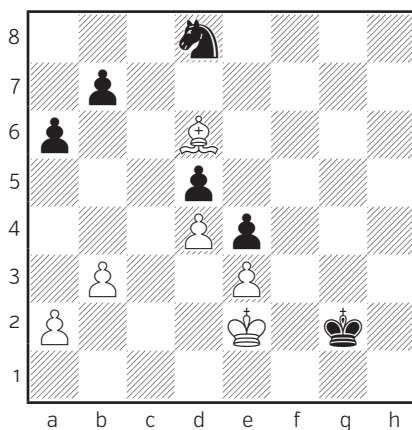
41...♚xh3 42. ♚e2 ♚g2!

We have a very interesting position. Black's winning idea is clear: to bring the knight to g3 or g1, then the White king would have to move, allowing Black to get to f2, netting the full point. Can White stop the Black knight from jumping to g3 or g1? Let's take a look.

43. ♙c5 a6 44. ♙d6

Gustafsson tries to use passive tactics because, of course, there's nothing else to do.

44...♖d8



The knight starts getting closer.

45. ♕e5!

A very good defensive move. White cuts the knight off with the bishop.

45... ♖f7

45... ♖e6 46. ♕f6 ♖g1 47. ♖e1 ♖g2 48. ♖e2 ♖g3 49. ♕e5+ ♖g2 50. ♕f6 would bring nothing for Black.

46. ♕f4

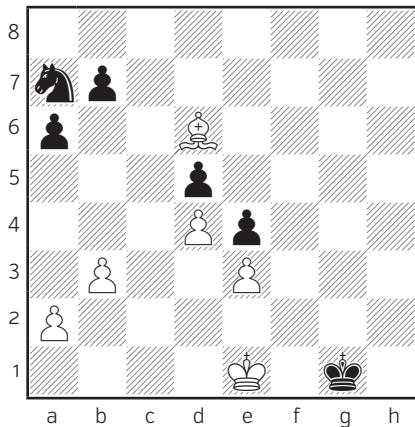
Again, the knight is cut off.

46... ♖d8 47. ♕e5 ♖g1 48. ♖e1 ♖c6

49. ♕d6

It looks like Gustafsson has managed to create a fortress...

49... ♖a7



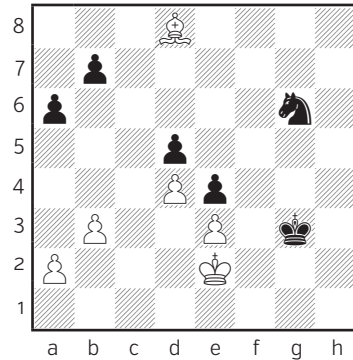
The last try for Black. As we saw before, ... ♖d8 didn't achieve anything.

50. a4?

What a terrible mistake... Why didn't White just continue with his

“standing” strategy? 50. ♕c5 ♖b5 51. ♕b4 b6

(51... ♖c7 If Black tries to go back, the position seems to be a draw. 52. ♕e7 ♖e6 53. ♕f6 ♖g2 54. ♖e2 ♖f8 The only attempt to do something new. 55. ♕e7 ♖g6 56. ♕d8 ♖g3



57. ♕c7+! kicking the Black king from its control of the f2-square. 57... ♖h3 58. ♖f2 ♖h4 59. ♕d6 ♖f3 60. ♕c7 Black has managed to put the knight of f3, but in exchange has had to give the f2-square. The position is still a draw. 60... ♖h2 61. ♕f4 ♖g4+ 62. ♖f1)

52. ♖e2 a5 53. ♕e1 ♖g2 54. a4! fixing the Black pawns on the squares b6-a5. 54... ♖d6 55. ♕h4 with an easy draw. Now the white bishop is no worse than the black knight, and the pawn on b6 is a nice target.

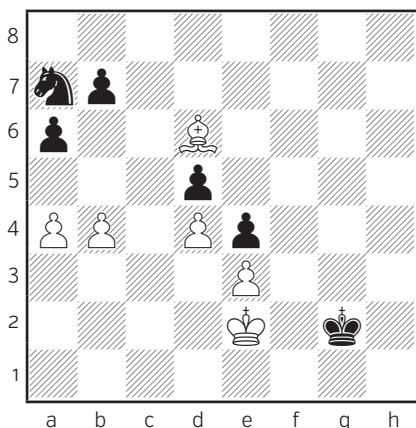
50... ♖c6!

Black provokes the White pawn into advancing...

51. b4

What else to do? Black wants to play ...♖a5, and against ♔c7 ...♖b4 would finish the game.

51...♔g2 52.♔e2 ♖a7!



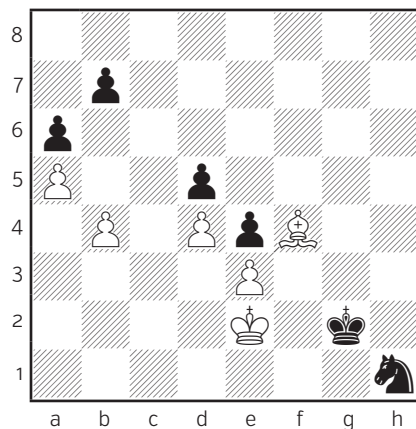
What a great move! Black wants to play ...♖c8 and the White bishop is hopeless. Black would have 2 threats, ...♖b6 and ...♖e7-♖f5-♖g3. The only way to avoid it is to keep the bishop on c5. In this case White is in zugzwang after Black's ♔g3. Probably the position is just lost!

53. ♔c5 ♖c8! 54.a5 ♔g3
And White is in zugzwang.

55. ♔f8
Nothing else to do...

55...♖a7 56. ♔d6+ ♔g2 57. ♔c5
Full attention to the Black knight.

57...♖b5 58. ♔f8 ♖a3 59. ♔e7 ♖c4
60. ♔c5 ♖b2 61. ♔e7 ♖d3 62. ♔d6
♖f2 63. ♔f4 ♖h1



and the final destination has been reached!

64. ♔d2 ♔f3 65.b5 axb5 66. ♔c3
♖f2 67. ♔g5 ♖d1+ 68. ♔b4 ♖xe3
69. ♔xb5 ♖c4 70. ♔c5 e3

What an endgame...

0-1

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Aronian vs Anand
16...  de5!!



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Caruana vs Gelfand

33... ♖e3!!



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Carlsen vs Li Chao

24.d5!!



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Carlsen vs Anand
25. ♘h3!!



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