

Window to Chess Composition

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Today we are pleased to introduce a new *Chess Today* contributor. **Sergey Tkachenko** (Ukraine) is one of world's leading chess composers. He will write in *Chess Today* about various aspects of chess composition.

As an exception, we chose a topic for his first article, asking Sergey to write about himself and his favourite studies.

About Myself

by *Sergey Tkachenko*



I was born on 26th January 1963. I spent my early years in Bolgrad, a small town south of Odessa, where I live now. Until I was 15 years old, I concentrated on the practical side of chess and came close to the candidate master level.

In October 1978 I saw an issue of the *Shakhmaty v SSSR* magazine, with an announcement of a chess studies contest. It was organised in honour of the 50 year jubilee of John Roycroft, founder of the first chess composition magazine in the world. How naive I was! I sent Mr. Roycroft the finish of one of my practical games, believing that this *is* a chess study. Many thanks to the great John Roycroft, who gave some attention to my discovery and even awarded me with a special prize for the opening — my exciting journey in the Ocean of chess studies had begun!

I got a 'higher education' in chess composition at the traditional composers' festival in Odessa, attended by the leading composers from all over the Soviet Union: David Gurgenidze, Anatoly Kuznetsov, Oleg Pervakov and many others.

In the last 25 years I have composed approximately 130 studies and 32 of them were awarded highest prizes at competitions. I've won the Ukrainian chess composition championships in the studies section four times. I am a champion (5th WCCT) and the vice-champion (6th WCCT) of the world – as a member of the Ukrainian composer's team, where I also act as a coach. As it happens, for the moment I am the only composer in the Ukraine, who holds the title National Grandmaster in chess composition.

Now a few words about my credo as a chess composer. In my view, chess is a great art. Therefore the study for me is, first of all, a kind of spectacle, which should impress by miraculous acts and the originality of the idea. The spirit of chess, its energy and its magic should live in the chess study. In studies I prefer light, elegant play. When composing, I try to find natural starting positions. But a study's main point should radically change the banal development of events. I am definitely for a close link between chess composition and practical play. I live awaiting for my new meeting with a chess miracle!

By *GMC Sergey Tkachenko*; technical editor *Graham Brown*.

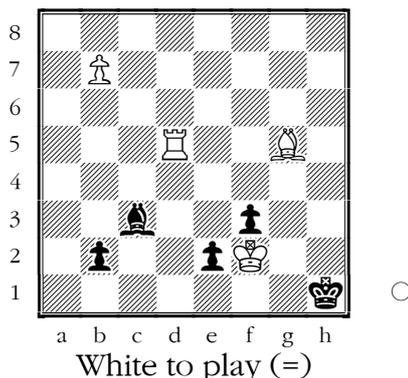
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Selected studies

S.N. Tkachenko

Shakhmaty v SSSR 1986, 4th Prize



In the beginning, White must find that after 1.b8♙? e1♙+ 2.♖xf3 b1♙ the Black king is safe. Therefore:

1. ♔d2! e1♙+

The threat was 2.♖h5 mate.

2. ♔xe1 ♔xe1+ 3. ♖f1! b1♙

Now 4.♖h5+ will be coldly parried by 4...♔h4 mate.

4. b8♙! ♔b4+

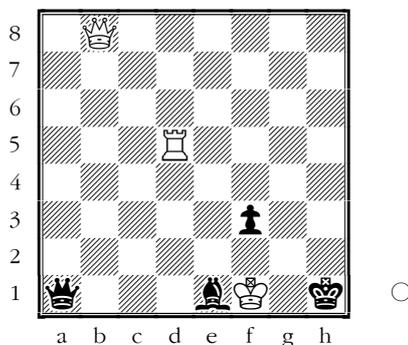
4...♙xb8 5.♖h5+ ♙h2 leads to the main line of the study. First we'll consider Black's other attempts.

5. ♖f2 ♔e1+

After 5...♔c5+ 6.♖xc5 ♙xb8 7.♖h5+ ♙h2+ 8.♖xh2+ ♖xh2 9.♖xf3 only two kings remain on the empty board.

[**editorial note:** 5...♙a2+ 6.♖e3 (or 6.♖xf3) 6...♙e2+ 7.♖d4 also ends in a draw.]

6. ♖f1 ♙a1! (D)



Now White faces a difficult choice. **7. ♙b2!**

Only this!

7. ♖d1? (hoping for the greedy 7...♙xd1 8.♙h2+! ♖xh2, stalemate) fails after 7...♙a6+! 8.♖xe1 ♙e2#.

7. ♖a5? ♙d1! 8.♙b3 ♙e2#;

7.♙a8? ♔a5+ 8.♖f2 ♔b6+!.

The attempt to close a first rank – **7. ♙b3?** also loses after 7...♔d2+ (not 7...♔h4+? 8.♖d1) 8.♖f2 ♙g1+ 9.♖xf3 ♙g2#!.

7...♙xb2 8. ♖h5+

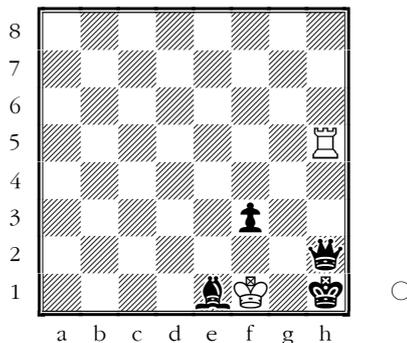
Finally, White's rook reached the desired h-file...

8...♙h2 (D)

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Now after 9.♖xh2+? ♕xh2 10.♗xe1 ♖g2 Black queens his pawn without problems. But the demonstration of spirit continues...

9.♗h4!! f2!

There are stalemates after 9...♕xh4,

9...♗xh4 or 9...♗g3 10.♖xh2+ ♕xh2 (if 10...♗xh2 11.♗f2=).

10.♗h5!!

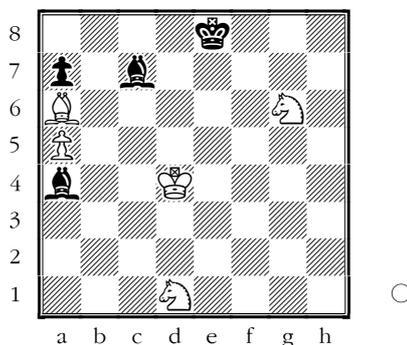
And the only way for Black to avoid losing his pawn is to play.

10...♕xh5, with stalemate.

This study was declared the best Ukrainian chess study for 1986–89, and later it was included in the Top Ten best studies of the *FIDE Album* 1986–88 – the most memorable study of my composing youth!

S.N. Tkachenko & A.G. Kuznetsov

L.Parenti–90, 1996, 1st Prize



White to play (+-)

It seems that draw is an inevitable result since it's not clear how White can preserve his pawn. The only road to win begins with **1.♗b2!**

A more natural 1.♗c3?! gives some hope, but no win: 1...♗d7! (1...♗c2? 2.♗b5+ ♖d8 3.♗e5! ♗xa5 4.♗c6+ ♖c7 5.♗xa5 ♖b6 6.♗c4+ and White wins) 2.♗b5! ♗xa5 3.♗d6+ ♖d8 4.♗b7+ ♖c7 5.♗xa5 ♖b6 6.♗b3! ♖xa6 7.♗c5+ ♖b5 8.♗xd7 a5!, and White is not able to prevent 9...a4 and 10...a3 with a theoretical draw, because Black's pawn crosses co-called Troitsky Line.

[**editorial note:** in the paradoxical 2♗ vs. ♗ endgames the weakest side's main goal is to get rid of his pawn or at least to push it quite far. But if the stronger side manages to block the pawn by knight at an early point, he can gradually win by liberating a knight only when opponent's king is fixed in the corner. While the pawn moves on, the knight helps to create a mating net.]

1...♗c2!

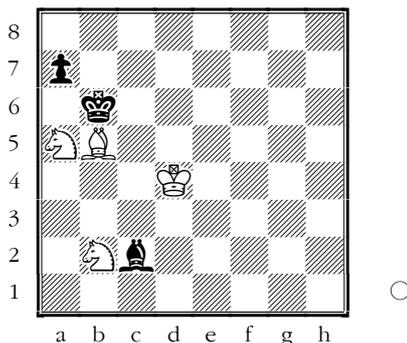
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Worse is 1...♙d7 2.♜c4 and White has defended all his weaknesses.

2.♙b5+ ♜d8! 3.♜e5! ♙xa5 4.♜c6+ ♜c7 5.♜xa5 ♜b6 (D)



In this critical position as a bolt from blue comes: **6.♙a4!!**

6.♜ac4+? ♜xb5 7.♜a3+ ♜b4 8.♜xc2+ ♜b3 is a draw.

6...♙xa4 7.♜ac4+ ♜b5 8.♜c3!

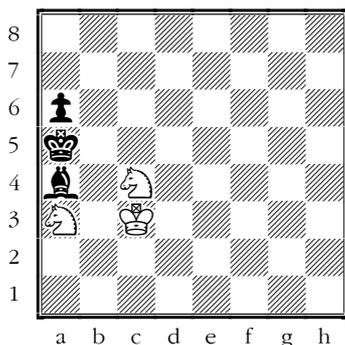
And, unexpectedly, an example of domination arose on the board.

This position is also a mutual zugzwang (White would not be able to win if it would be his turn to move). Now both Black's king and bishop have no useful moves.

8...a6

The only way to avoid losing the bishop. After 8...a5 9.♜a3+ and 10.♜xa4 White has an easy theoretical win, according to analysis by Troitsky.

Here after **9.♜a3+ ♜a5 10.♜bc4#!**

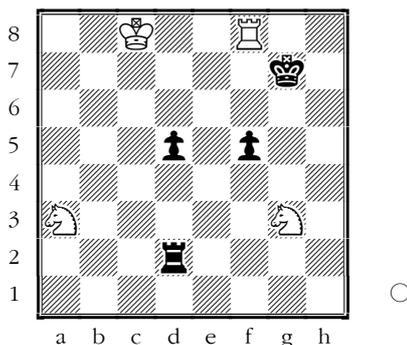


everything unexpectedly ends with a mate. This is an ideal mating construction – each square around black king is not available for him because for just one reason, and, also, all White's and Black's pieces are participating in this final picture.

This study was composed together with my co-author, great study composer and also a chess master, Anatoly Georgievich Kuznetsov.

Tkachenko S.N.

64 Shakh. Obozrenie 1996, 1st Prize



White to play (+-)

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1. ♖e8!!

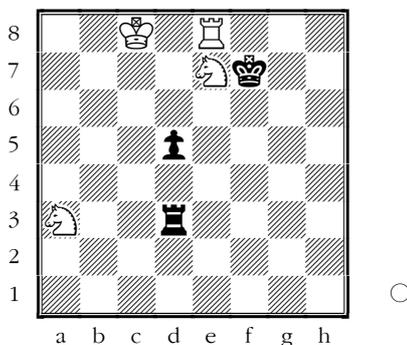
1. ♖xf5?! looks promising, but after 1... ♗d3 2. ♖h5+ ♖g6! 3. ♖f4+ ♖xf5 4. ♖xd3 ♖e4 Black is ready to push his pawn by ...d4, d3 with a draw, according to Troitsky (5. ♖c5+ leads to a clear draw after 5... ♖d4! 6. ♖a6 ♖d3).

Also false is **1. ♗d8?!** ♗d3 2. ♖xf5+ ♖g6 3. ♖e7+ ♖f7 and White loses one of his knights – draw.

1... ♗d3

After 1... ♖f7 2. ♖e3! f4 3. ♖f3! the pawn is pinned and White wins.

2. ♖xf5+ ♖g6! 3. ♖e7+ ♖f7 (D)



4. ♖b5!! Eureka!

4... ♖xe8 5. ♖g6!

The high point of the study – the threat is 6. ♖d6 mate, and Black loses his rook. But the fight is not yet over...

5... ♗c3+!

After 5... ♖f7 6. ♖e5+ and ♖xd3, White's task is easier.

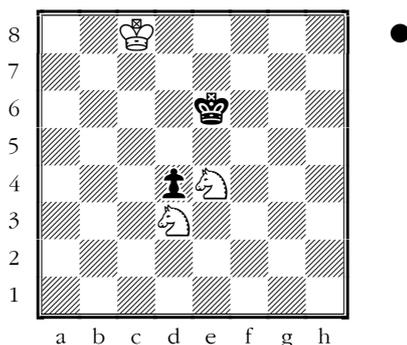
6. ♖xc3 d4

Now Black plans to continue 7...d3! with a theoretical draw.

7. ♖e4!

Again, the threat is 8. ♖d6 mate and there is no time for 7...d3. 7. ♖b5? has the same idea, but after 7... ♖f7 8. ♖e5+ ♖e6! 9. ♖d3 ♖d5! White is not able to stop the pawn: 10. ♖a3 ♖e4 followed by 11...d3, with a draw.

7... ♖f7 8. ♖e5+! ♖e6 9. ♖d3 (D)



The pawn is stopped and White has a theoretical win: 9... ♖d5 10. ♖ef2 (or 10. ♖ec5), etc.