



Chess Interschool

National Finals

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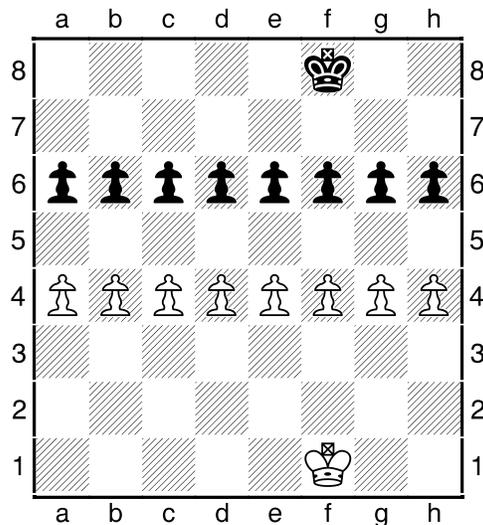


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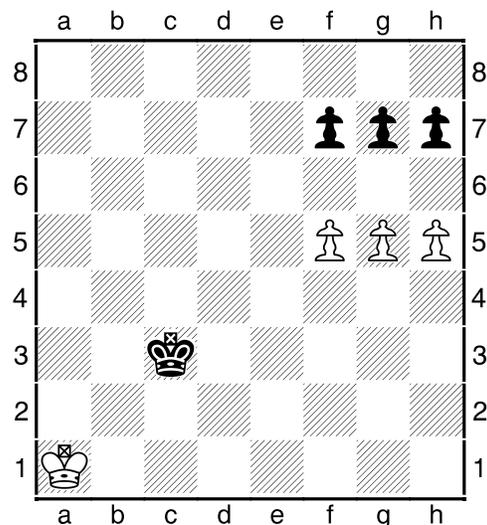
Promoting a Pawn

by Carl Gorka

One of the key elements in endgame play is trying to promote pawns. Often this can be done tactically by means of what is called a breakthrough.



Unbelievably, there is only one move that white can play which guarantees him a win here. But to work this out, it is necessary to know about some easier positions.



This is the most basic position from which white can create a breakthrough.

1.g6 whichever pawn black takes with will leave a clear run for a white pawn 1...hxg6 now the white h-pawn has nothing in it's way. If only black's g7 pawn weren't there, then nothing could stop it. [1...fxg6 2.h6 gxh6 3.f6] 2.f6! decoying the g7 pawn away from the defence. 2...gxf6 3.h6 and 2 moves later this will become a queen.

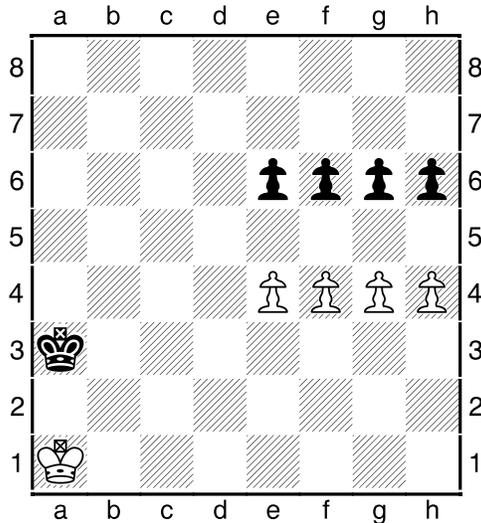


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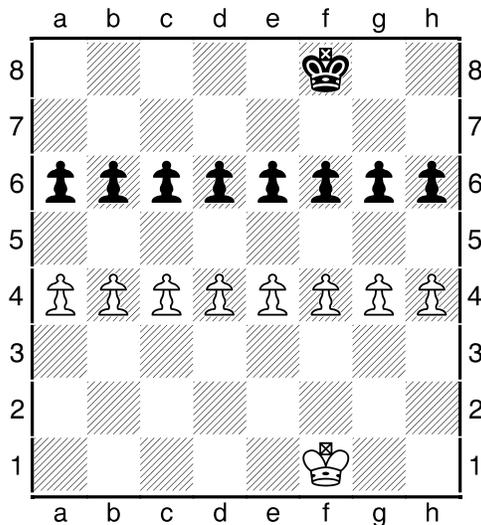
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Now, on to something a little harder. This time you will probably already have an idea how to create a breakthrough, but here it is important to know which pawn white needs to promote.



It is important that white promotes the f-pawn because it will be check. Otherwise, black promotes half a move later with checkmate 1.h5 [1.g5 hxg5 2.f5 gxf5 3.h5 g4 4.h6 g3 5.h7 g2 6.h8♙ Promoting first, but... 6...g1♙#] 1...gxh5 Now how to make the f-pawn promote? 2.e5! fxe5 3.f5 exf5 4.gxf5 e4 5.f6 e3 6.f7 e2 A move from checkmate, but... 7.f8♙+ ♔b3 8.♙f2 and the queen will mop up black's pawns or checkmate.

Back to the first position:



White has to create a breakthrough, but don't forget that Black's king can help defend, unless white's breakthrough is a long way from black's king.

I'll leave some things not analysed so that you can work on them yourselves, but the winning move, the only winning move, is 1.d5 which will allow white to create a passed b-pawn which black's king will have to defend against promoting. But the b-pawn will just promote forcing black's king to the back rank, when a typical breakthrough on the other side of the board will result in promotion with check. The mainline runs as follows:

1.d5 exd5 2.exd5 cxd5 3.a5 bxa5 4.b5 axb5 5.cxb5 ♔e7 6.b6 ♔d7 7.b7 ♔c7 8.b8♙+ ♔xb8 9.g5 hxg5 10.f5 gxf5 11.h5 a4 12.h6 a3 13.h7 a2 14.h8♙+ ♔b7 15.♙xf6

But there are loads of lines to look at, and working out why they don't work can teach you lots about the endgame.

Remember:

- Breakthrough
- Promote with check
- Square of the pawn

If you don't fully understand any of these concepts, then perhaps you should try to find out!