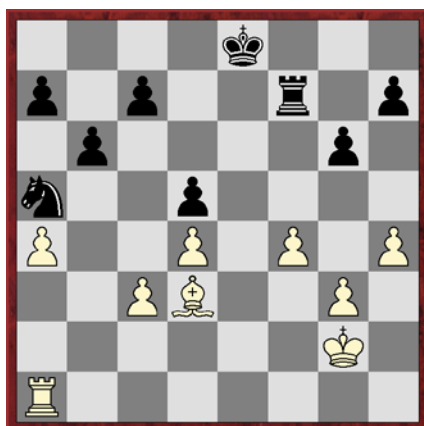


Capablanca - Tartakover, New York, 1924

1.d4 f5 2.Nf3 e6 3.c4 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.Nc3 0-0 6.e3 b6 7.Bd3 Bb7 8.0-0 Qe8 9.Qe2 Ne4 10.Bxe7 Nxc3 11.bxc3 Qxe7 12.a4 Bxf3 13.Qxf3 Nc6 14.Rfb1 Rae8 15.Qh3 Rf6 16.f4 Na5 17.Qf3 d6 18.Re1 Qd7 19.e4 fxe4 20.Qxe4 g6 21.g3 Kf8 22.Kg2 Rf7 23.h4 d5 24.cxd5 exd5 25.Qxe8+ Qxe8 26.Rxe8+ Kxe8

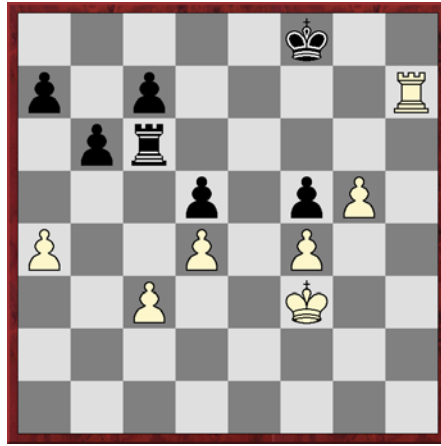


Capablanca has just exchanged the queens and a pair of rooks. He has done this because he has seen an opportunity to bring his rook to a more active position than the black rook. Rooks belong on open or semi-open files, not blocked by their own pawns. So on which file does Capablanca now want his rook? Clearly it has no real future on b1, as the b6 pawn is strongly defended. Many players might automatically play Re1, grabbing the only fully open file with check. But black can then contest the file with Re7, and the game is pretty even. Capablanca finds a much better move, creating a new half-open file.

27	h5!	Rf6	if gxh5; 28.Rxh5 and the h-pawn can't be saved, while the d-pawn is also vulnerable.
28	hxg6	hxg6	
29	Rh1		White's rook now has a file that cannot be contested by the Black rook. Moreover, there is no danger on the e-file, as, if necessary, the White king can move to f2, and the king and bishop control all possible entry points for the Black rook on the e-file.
29		Kf8	
30	Rh7	Rc6	An active rook belongs exactly where the White rook stands: on the 7 th rank, attacking as many pawns as possible, and restricting any activity for the enemy king. The black rook has moved defensively to c6, but the position is not easy for white, because from c6 the rook also threatens to enter the white position at some point by capturing on c3.
31	g4	Nc4	Rxc3 is not good at the moment, as 32.Bxg6 would give White a big advantage with the 2 connected passed pawns. Black brings his knight into the game instead.
32	g5	Ne3+	
33	Kf3	Nf5	
34	Bxf5	gxf5	

By exchanging his knight for the dangerous White bishop, Black has played well, and his rook now appears very well placed, protecting the c7 pawn, and attacking the undefendable weak pawn on c3. Black may have thought that White has nothing better than 35.Rd7, Rxc3+; 36.Ke2, after which White's king doesn't have any more freedom than Black's, and either 36...c6 or 36...Rc4 should both be good enough to draw. This is the position, with White to play his 35th move.





Capablanca, in allowing the black rook to come to c6, had seen much more deeply into this position. He understood that King activity, especially combined with the rook on the 7th, can be more important than a couple of pawns. He is happy to give up 2 very valuable pawns, with check on each occasion, in order to avoid having his king driven back to the 2nd rank.

35	Kg3!!	Rxc3+	
36	Kh4	Rf3	
37	g6	Rxf4	
38	Kg5	Re4	A third pawn is on offer, but Rxd4 loses quickly. After 39.Kf6 the rook can't get back to defend the back rank. 39...Kg8; 40.Rd7, and mate next move, or 39...Ke8; 40.Rh8, Kd7; 41.g7 and the pawn promotes.
39	Kf6!		White doesn't want to capture the pawn on f5. This pawn will shield his king from checks, while the king and g6 pawn threaten a back row checkmate.
39		Kg8	
40	Rg7+	Kh8	
41	Rxc7	Re8	
42	Kxf5		In the end, extra pawns are the key to winning endgames. Capablanca has been patient, and now that the Black rook is confined to a defensive role, White is ready to pick off the pawns.
42		Re4	
43	Kf6	Rf4+	If Re8, to stop the King from crossing the e-file, White collects the rest of the pawns with 44.Rxa7 and then Rb7
44	Ke5	Rg4	
45	g7+	Kg8	45...Rxc7; 46.Rxc7, Kxc7; 47.Kxd5, Kf7; 48.Kd6, Ke8; 49.Kc7 and the d-pawn will become a queen.
46	Rxa7	Rg1	46...Rg5; 47.Kf6,Rg4; 48.Ra8+ and mate next move.
47	Kxd5		After allowing himself to go 2 pawns down, Capablanca is suddenly 2 pawns ahead! The rest is easy
47		Rc1	
48	Kd6	Rc2	
49	d5	Rc1	
50	Rc7	Ra1	
51	Kc6	Rxa4	
52	d6	Rd4	
53	d7	Rc4+	
54	Kb7	Rd4	
55	Rc8+	Kxc7	
56	d8 (Q)	Resigns	