Rook and pawn endings

Rook and pawn endings Part 2

In problem page 27 we looked at rook and pawn endings, This time with just K+P versus K+R. The nearer the 8th rank (the promotion square) the more care has to be taken by the opponent with just the rook. Often stalemate options occur and so you need to think very carefully before moving a piece or performing a capture.

In position (a) with White to move (i) what is the best move to play?

(a)

Answer
1. g7 threatening to promote (queen) the pawn next move.

So Black is forced to reply

1. .... Rxg7 and it is stalemate! See diagram (c)
White can only move the King (his only piece) but any move would be into check (which he is not allowed to do). So the white K is not in check but with any move he would go into check. So that is stalemate and a draw (half a point to each player).
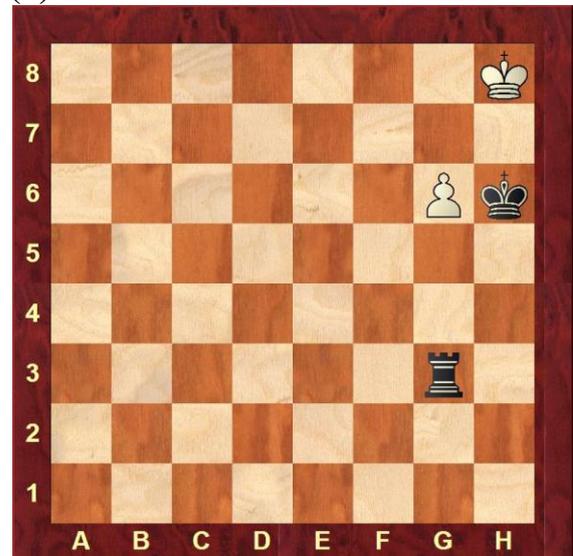
(b)

(c)

So back to position (a) what if it were Black's move what should he/she play to stop White from promoting the pawn? Warning one move is good and one move is bad - so be careful!

(d)

OK, taking the white pawn with the black rook is the bad move because as you can see in diagram (d) this is once again a stalemate position as White to play can only play and the 3 squares he can move to are all attacked and so would be a check.

(e)
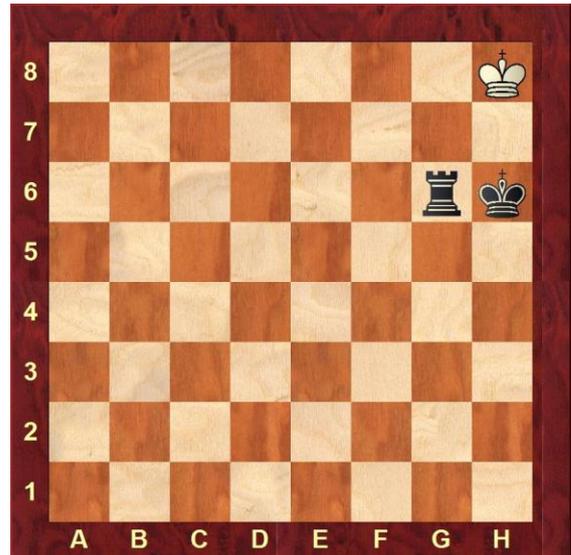
The correct move for Black is to play

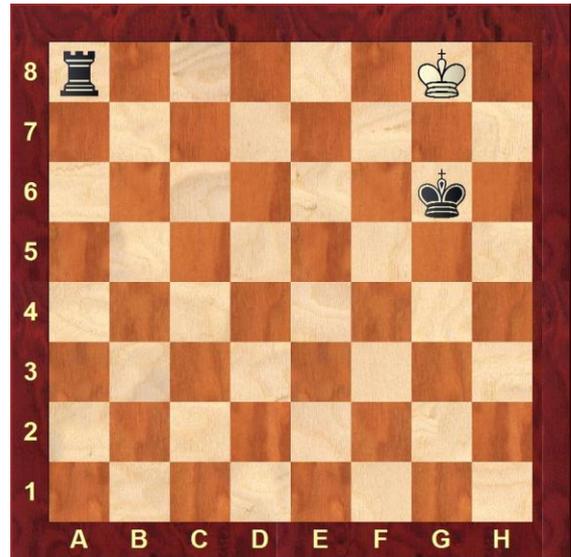**1. ....   Kxg6**
See position (e)
As the pawn is captured but now the White King can move (to g8) and it is not stalemate. Winning with K + R versus K is easy.

If you have forgotten how to mate with K and R versus K then see diagram (f) for the position you need to achieve - force your opponent's K to the edge of the board, line your K opposite and then deliver check with the rook).

(f)

Now try the Novice problems below. These are on the same theme of rook and pawn endgames. Stronger players can look at the Intermediate problems that deal with pawn endgames.
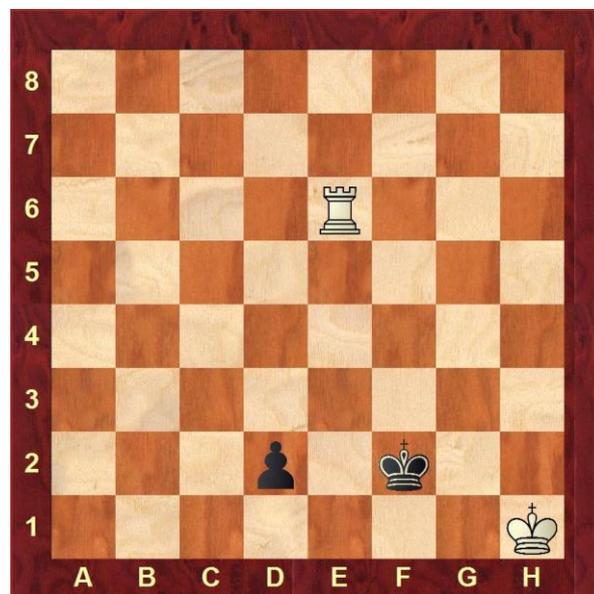
This month's problems - Novice

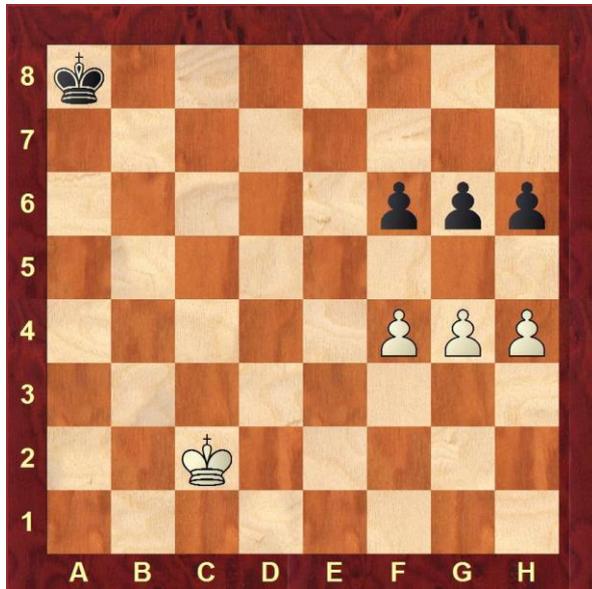### Problem N51

N51. White to play and mate in just 2 moves

Problem N52

N52. (i) Black to play and also mate in 2 moves

This month's problems - Intermediate

Problem I51

I51. (i) This is famous test example. How does White to play win?
(ii) If it were Black to play what is the best move?

Problem I52

I52. black has just played a5 and offered the draw which White accepts. Was this the correct decision by White - what would you have done?

Solution to last month's problems - Novice

Problem N49

Problem N50

N49. What is the correct move (and plan) for White?

White needs to keep the black K away from the pawn but also protect the pawn on e7 from the black R by transferring his/her own R to the e-file. So:

1. Rc5 (keeps the black K away from the pawn) and threatens to play Re5 next move and then 'queen'

So if

1. .... Rd1+
2. Ke6 Re1+
3. Re5! Rxe5+
4. Kxe5 Kc7
5. e8(Q) and White wins

N50. White to play and win (hint ends up with K+R versus K).

1. Rc8 (very clever as threatens a8(Q) next move so Black has to play

1. .... Rxh7

2. Kb6+ (this is discovered check by the white R when the white K moves to attack the black R)

2. .... K moves

3. Kxa7 and White should be able to checkmate the black K with his/her K and R working together.

Solution to last month's problems - Intermediate
Problem I49   *Problem I50*

I49. White to play and win

The key point is that the white R prevents the black K from coming to help attack the white pawn. So basically it is white K+P versus black R and White can force Black to give up the rook for the pawn and then win the K+R versus K ending.
So as a example
1. Ke6   Re8+
2. Kd6 (or Kf6)
2. .... Rd8+
3. Ke7   R moves
4. e6 and White repeats this sequence to promote the pawn

I50. Can White (to move) win from this position?
The trick here is NOT to play
1. b8(Q)   Ra1+
2. Kb4   Rb1+
3. K moves Rxb8 and draws

The CORRECT answer is
1. b8(N)+!   Kc5 (best)
2. Rc7+   Kd6 (best)
3. Rd7   K moves
4. Rxd1 and wins