

The power of two bishops

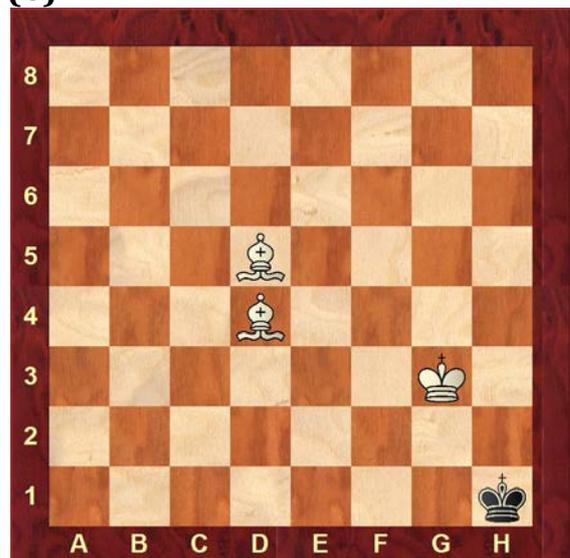
Many chess players believe that having both bishops on the board (versus an opponent's bishop + knight or 2 knights) is an advantage. This is usually true in 'open' position where the longer range attack from bishops can be useful. In addition King + 2 bishops can mate a lone King (while King + 2 knights versus a lone King is a draw).

Checkmate positions with K + 2B versus K are shown in figures (a) and (b). Please remember that the K must also help the two bishops, all three pieces combine to deliver the mate.

a.



(b)



So in the endgame converting to a position with 2 Bishops against a lone King should enable you to win.

Look at position (c) and work out

(c)

how White can win the black knight (N) leaving 2 bishops to mate the black K.

Please note there are 2 answers here depending on how Black responds to the correct first move by White



(d)



(d) Same again, how can White capture the black N and remain with K + 2B against the black K

(e)

(e) Sometimes it is not necessary to capture the opponents piece in order to deliver checkmate with the 2 bishops (plus K). See if you can solve this puzzle and

give checkmate. Please note there are 3 answers depending on what moves Black plays to White's first move.



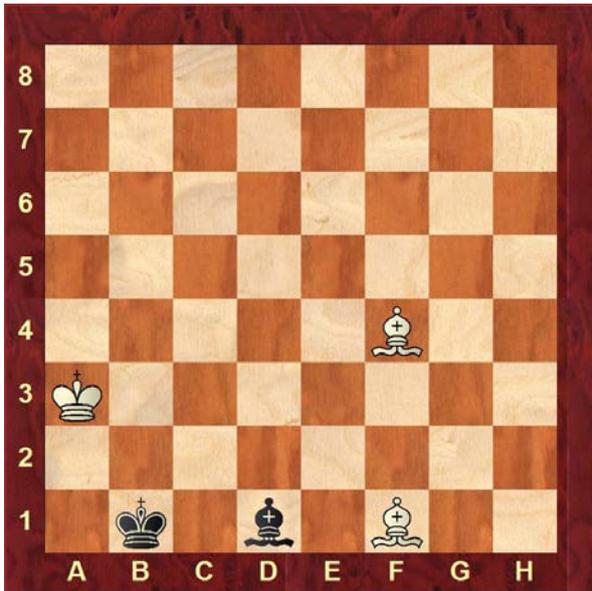
Answers to problems (c) to (e) are given [HERE](#)

Now try Novice and Intermediate problems below and use what you have learned here to answer the questions. Remember the theme is all about the power of 2 bishops. (several of these exercises come from part of the excellent series by Bruce Pandolfini).

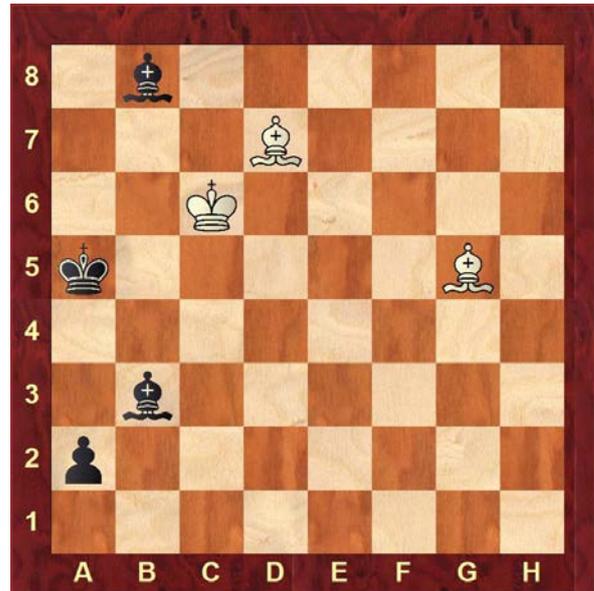
This month's problems - Novice

Problem N59

Problem N60



N59. White to play and force checkmate. There are 4 options for Black to respond to the correct first move by White so you need to find 4 answers!



N60. Again White to play and force checkmate. This time there are 3 options for Black to respond to the correct first move by White so you need to find 3 solutions.

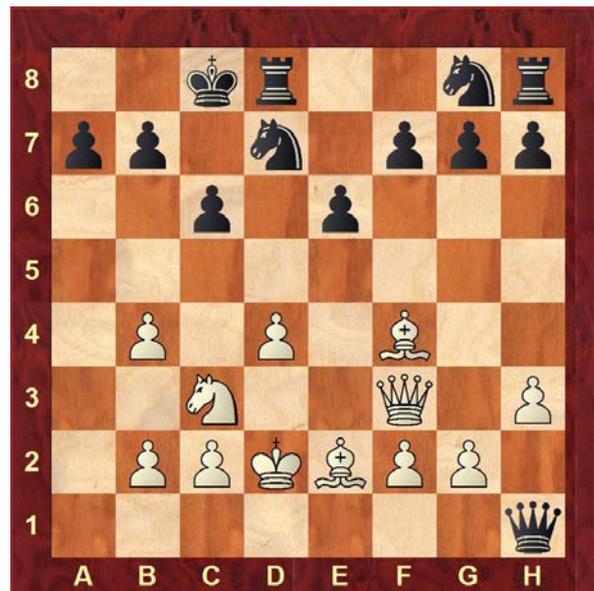
This month's problems - Intermediate

Problem 159



159. White to play, what is the best forcing line to convert the strong positional advantage into a mate attack?

Problem 160

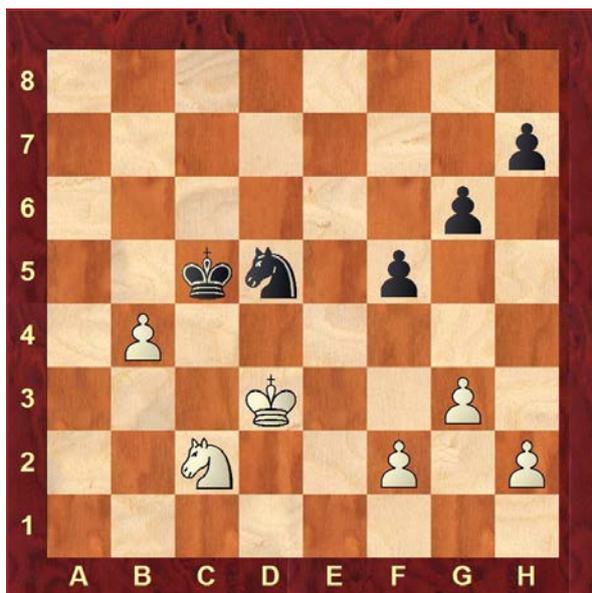


**160. Black has been greedy and taken first the white R on a1 and check the K (which was on e1 and has moved to d2) and then removed the R on h1.
(a) He was shocked when White won from here - but how?**

(b) If it was Black's move in this position what would you play?

Last month's problems - Novice

Problem N57



N57. White has just checked the Black King with the pawn on b4. If Black plays 1. Nxb4 how does White win?

White realises that if he exchanges the two Knights then his King can reach the base of the Black's pawn chain before Black can reach his. So

1. Nxb4
2. Nxb4 Kxb4
3. Kd4 (this moves the White K towards the Black pawns and keeps Black from approaching the white pawns)
3. Kb3
4. f5 This moves the base of White's pawn chain from f2 to h2 and it will take Black 6 moves to reach h2. In the meantime White will reach the pawn on h7 with his King in 4 more moves

Problem N58



N58. White to play and create a winning position in 2 moves

White has the King much closer to the Black pawn chain so again he just needs to swap off the Bishops and then gobble up the Black pawns and then queen one of his own. So,

1. Be5 Bxe5 (else White will take the black B)
2. Kxe5 Kxb6
3. Kf6 Kc6
4. Kxf7 followed by taking the pawns on g5 and h5 and that will leave White with passed pawns that can queen.

and take the g6 and f5 pawns in 2 more. Then White can play to queen the f pawn and win.

Last month's problems - Intermediate

Problem 155



155. Black to play and win

1. Qxd3!
- 2 Rxd3 e2 and either the pawn queens or White must give up the Queen

Problem 156



156. (a) Black to play what is the likely result?

(b) If White to play what is the probable result?

(a) This one is tricky. The key is that the black Knight and King can stop the white K supporting his pawns.

1. Ke5
2. e7 Ke6
3. Ke4 Kxe7
4. Ke5 Ke8 (to start a triangulation to move into control squares)
5. Kd5 Kd7
6. Ke5 Ke7
7. Kf4 Ke6 (so black K watches any white pawn push)
8. Kg3 Nf5+
9. Kh3 Ke5
10. Kh2 Kf4
- 11 Kh3 Ng7
12. Kg2 Kg4 and just picks off the white pawns and then queens the black h pawn.

b) White play needs to deflect the

black N. So,
1. e7 Kd5
2. e8(Q) Nxe8
3. Kf5 Kd6
4. g7 Nxg7
5. Kg6 Ne6
6. Kxh5 Ke7 and the result will
be a draw (with best play)

Answers to this month' s Beginners questions (above).

Return to positions above [HERE](#)

So here are the answers

Position (c)

The correct move by White is

1. Ba3

If Black plays

1. Nc6 then

2 Bg2+ wins the N.

And if Black tries instead

1. Ng8

2. Kg6 Ke5

3. Kg7 Nf6

4. Bb2+ again wins the N

These are examples of a 'SKEWER'
where a stronger piece (here the K)
is in front of a weaker piece (the N).

Position (d)

White plays

1. Bf4 to which Black replies

1. Kd6

2 Bb3+ wins the N as the black K
must move away from defending the
N.

This time winning the piece
involved a 'PIN' where a weaker
piece (the N) is in front of a stronger
piece (the K).

Position (e)

Here White plays

1. Be2 and play might play either

1. Nb7 when

2. Bg4# is checkmate

OR Black tries

1. Nc6

2. Ba6# mate again

OR Black tries

1. d6 and then White plays

2. Bg4+ Ne6 when

3. Bxe6# finishes the game