

9. Pawn structures

Once Philidor stated, “pawns are the soul of chess.” Pawn structure means the positioning of the pawns. Some of the most common pawn structure is as follows

Passed pawn

A passed pawn is a pawn that cannot be stopped by the opponent’s pawn from advancing to the eighth rank. In this position, there is no opponent’s pawn either on the same file or on the adjacent file to stop the pawn from getting promoted. A passed pawn is a very big threat to the opponent because of its power to promote and create an advantage for the player.

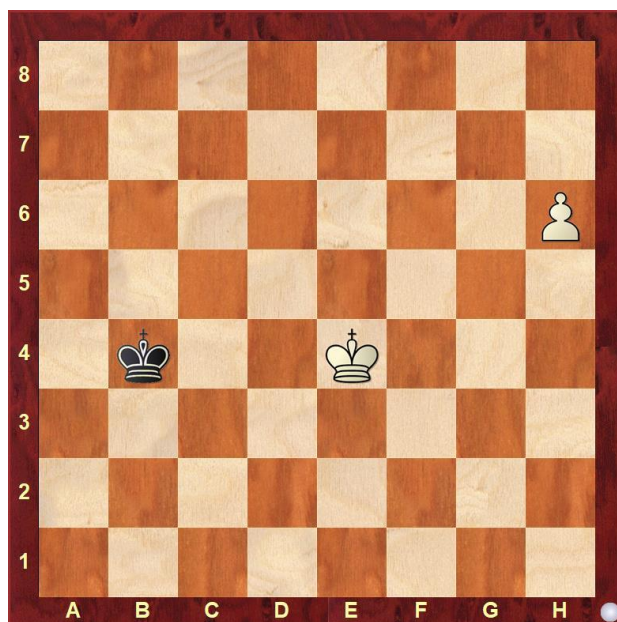


Diagram 9.1

In diagram 9.1 we can observe that the white is clearly winning the game since it has a passed pawn on h6.

9. Pawn structures

Pawn majority

A pawn majority is a position when one player has more Pawns than the other on one side of the chessboard (it can happen on both sides kingside as well as queenside). It is very important to have a pawn majority in the endgame because it often leads to exchanges of pawns and the creation of a passed pawn.

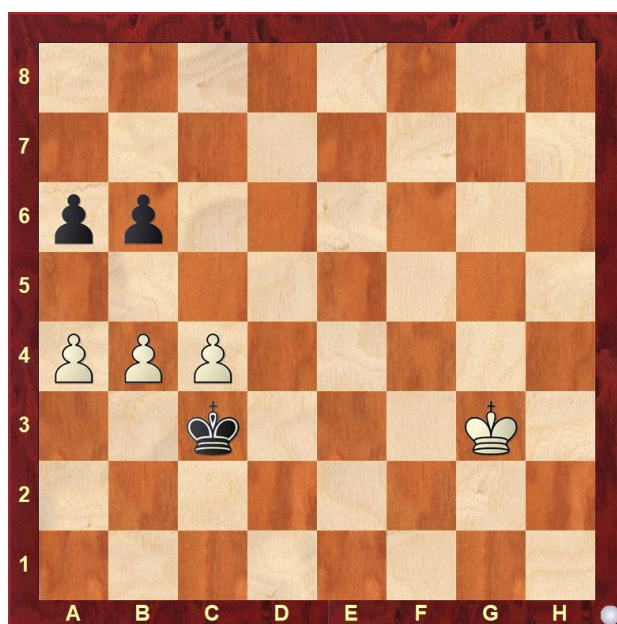


Diagram 9.2

In diagram 9.2 we can observe that the white is clearly winning the game since it has a pawn majority on the queenside of the board.

9. Pawn structures

Pawn chain

A pawn chain is a position when two or more pawns are diagonally linked. It has the advantage that all the pawns in the pawn chain are defended by the other pawns, except the last one in the chain. Nimzowitsch taught that a pawn chain should be attacked at its weakest point, that is the base of the pawn chain.

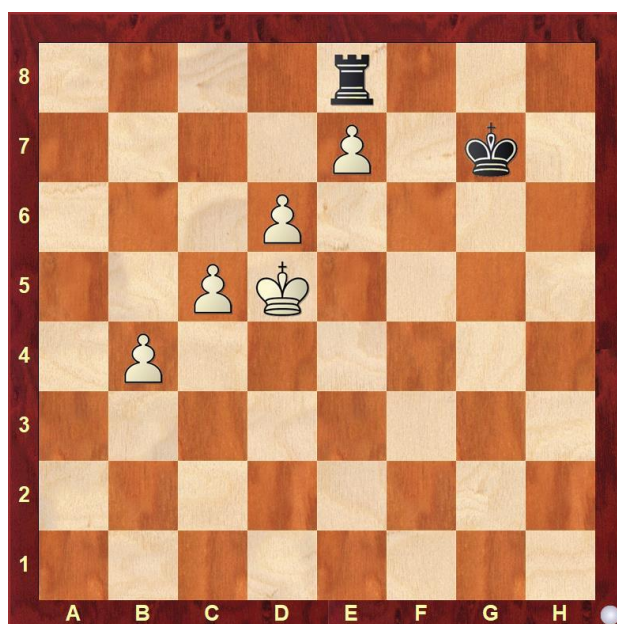


Diagram 9.3

In diagram 9.3 we can observe that the white is clearly winning the game since it has a pawn chain formed by b4-c5-d6-e7 pawns.

9. Pawn structures

Isolated pawn

An isolated pawn is a pawn that cannot be protected by any other friendly pawn. These pawns are usually a weakness because they are not connected to any other pawn.

They require constant protection from the other pieces, making them unavailable for more important tasks.

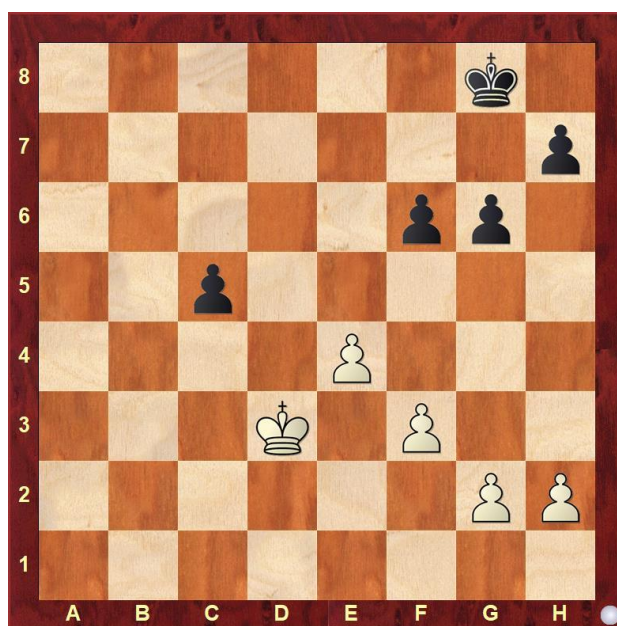


Diagram 9.4

In diagram 9.4 we can observe that the white is clearly winning the game since the black has formed a weak pawn structure (isolated pawn on c5)

9. Pawn structures

Doubled pawns

Doubled pawns are the two pawns of the same player, located on the same file.

these pawns are also a weakness because they cannot protect each other and they can be also blocked by the single pawn of the opponent. Pawns become doubled only when one pawn captures onto a file on which another friendly pawn resides.

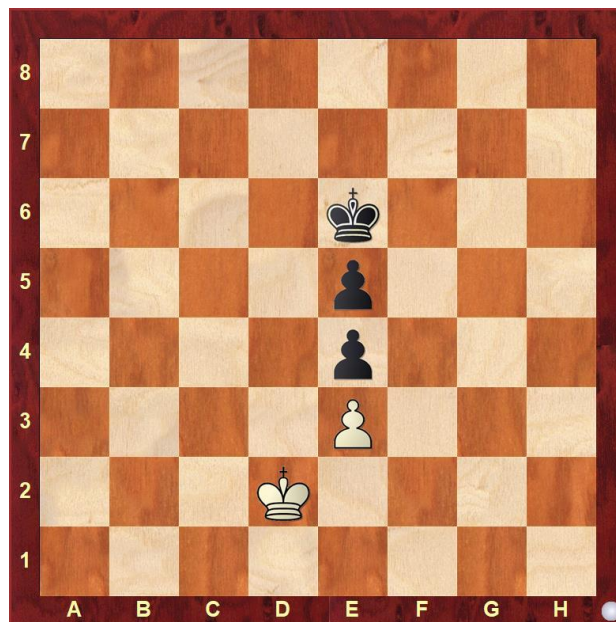


Diagram 9.5

In diagram 9.5 we observe that the black has one extra pawn still the position is drawn because the black has doubled pawn on e-file.

9. Pawn structures

Backward pawn

A backward pawn is a pawn that cannot move forward or else it will get captured by the opponent's pawn. It also creates a weakness in the position.

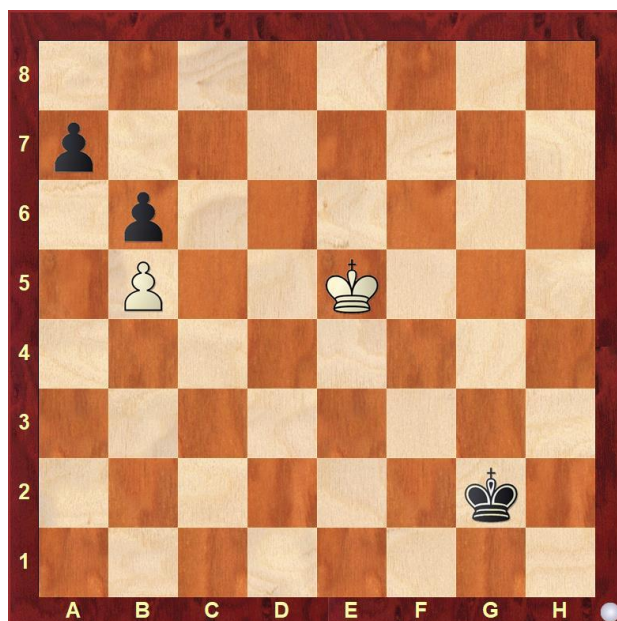
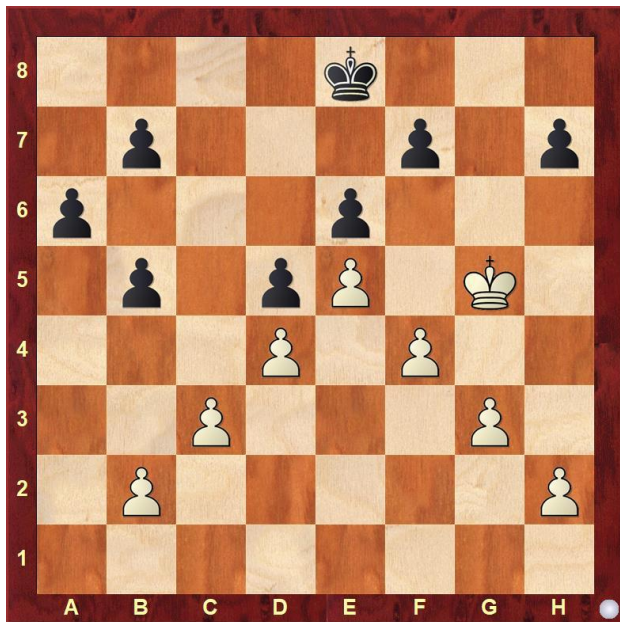


Diagram 9.6

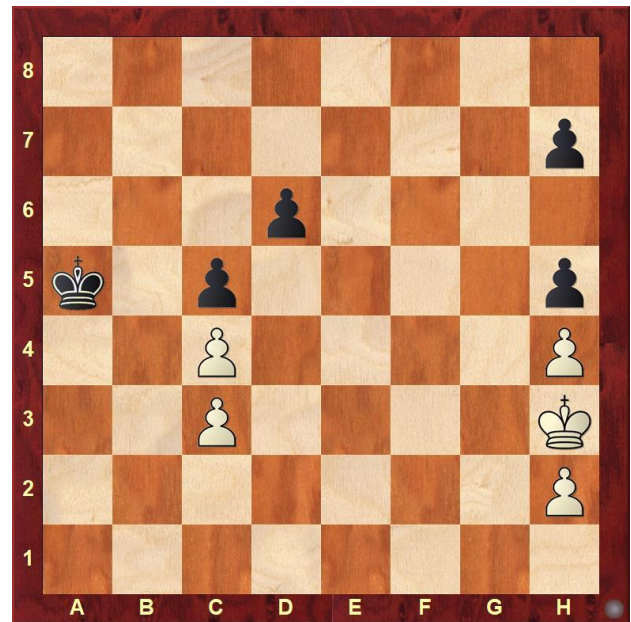
In diagram 9.6 we can observe that the black has one extra pawn still the white is winning the game since black has a weakness (backward pawn) on a7.

9. Pawn structures (Homework)

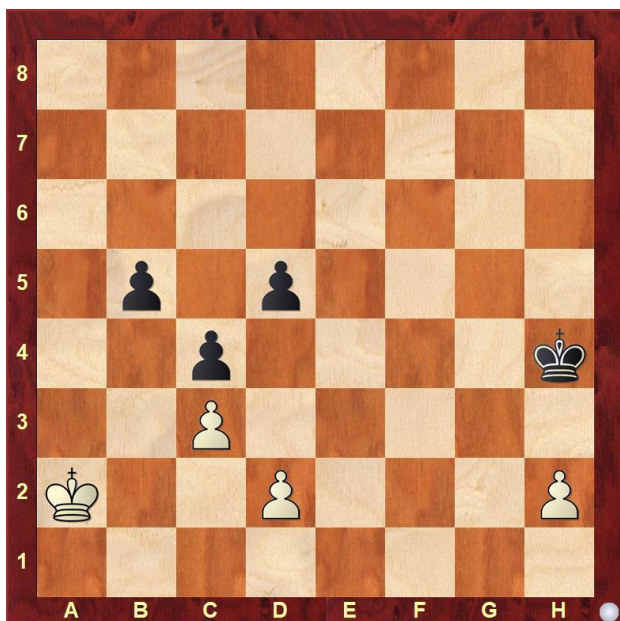
1. Who has superior pawn structure?



2. Black to play. What would be the result of this game?



3. White to play. What will be the result of this game?



4. Who has superior pawn structure?

