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# starting out: minor piece endgames

JOHN EMMS



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**EVERYMAN CHESS**

# starting out: minor piece endgames

Endgames with kings, bishops, knights and pawns are generally considered amongst the most complex and can seem quite bewildering to the improving player. This is hardly surprising given that even Grandmasters have been known to struggle in some areas of these endgames, with some examples resulting in embarrassing failure to deliver elementary checkmates! In this user-friendly book, Grandmaster and notable endgames authority John Emms begins with the absolute fundamentals of minor piece endings and slowly but surely arms the reader with the essential knowledge and confidence to move onto slightly trickier positions. Using examples from practical play, Emms highlights the correct procedures as well as the typical mistakes made by both attacker and defender. As is normal with the famed *Starting Out* series, there are an abundance of notes, tips and warnings throughout the book to help the improving player. *Starting Out: Minor Piece Endgames* is perfect for those who have previously honed their chess skills with the earlier books *Starting Out in Chess*, *Tips for Young Players* and *Improve Your Endgame Play*.

- Covers all crucial minor piece endings
- Easy step-by-step guide to better endgame play
- Ideal for the improving player
- Innovative layout to help readers absorb the key ideas

**John Emms** is one of Britain's strongest Grandmasters and has represented England as player and captain in numerous team tournaments. He has carved out a reputation as a popular and industrious chess author and now has many works to his name, including *Attacking with 1 e4* and *Play the Najdorf: Scheveningen Style*. He is also a co-author of the very popular openings encyclopaedia *Nunn's Chess Openings*.



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# Contents

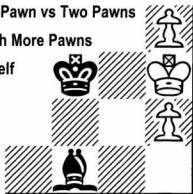
	Bibliography	4
	Introduction	5
1	Bishop (and Pawns) versus Pawns	7
2	Bishops of Same Colour	53
3	Bishops of Opposite Colour	89
4	Knight (and Pawns) versus Pawns	118
5	Knight Endings	153
6	Bishop versus Knight Endings	174
7	Solutions to Exercises	199

## Chapter One

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# Bishop (and Pawns) versus Pawns

- The Lone Bishop vs Pawns
- King, Bishop and Pawn vs King
- Bishop and Pawn vs Pawn
- Rook's Pawn and 'wrong' Bishop
- Fortresses
- Bishop and Pawn vs Two Pawns
- Endings with More Pawns
- Try it Yourself



## The Lone Bishop versus Pawns

We'll begin by looking at bishop endings (I certainly believe that they are less complex than knight endings) and, in particular, the lone bishop against pawns.

### Bishop versus pawn

It goes without saying that 99% of the time a lone bishop against a lone pawn ends in a draw. The side with the bishop simply either wins the pawn or gives up his bishop for it, at which point the game is immediately declared drawn.

**NOTE:** When no checkmating position can occur by any possible series of legal moves, even with most unskilled moves, a game is immediately declared drawn. Three examples of this are king against king, king and bishop against king, and king and knight against king. In these situations, there's actually no need to offer or claim a draw – the game has actually already finished.

#### Example 1

The only bishop versus pawn positions of interest are those where the bishop has trouble preventing the pawn from queening.



Diagram 1 (W)

White's pawn promotes



Diagram 2 (W)

The bishop prevails

(Diagram 1) Black's bishop is unfortunately placed and, even though the pawn is three squares from queening. Black cannot do anything to prevent this happening.

1 a6 Ba2

Intending ...Bd5.

2 Kd4!

and there is no way to prevent the pawn from promoting.

In Diagram 2 the seemingly minor improvement in the bishop's placing makes all the difference.

1 a6 Ba4!

1...Bd1! does a similar job.

2 Kd5

Or 2 Kc5 Bd1! and White has no way to prevent ...Bf3.

2...Bd1!

It should be pointed out that here 2...Bd7 3 a7 Bh3! also draws, although this wouldn't work if Black's king were on, say, the g8-square: a8Q would then come with check.



**WARNING: Promotion with check is a typical idea in endgames but is also very easy to overlook!**

3 Ke4

The only way to prevent ...Bf3, but now...

3...Ba4! 4 Kd5 Bd1!

and the bishop cannot be contained.

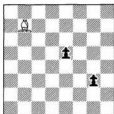
## Bishop versus two split pawns

With a second pawn entering the equation, the winning chances of the player with the pawns obviously increases a great deal (on my database the win ratio is 37%). We'll begin by looking at cases where the pawns are split.

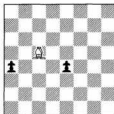
## Containing pawns on one diagonal

If we forget about king placing for the moment and concentrate solely on the bishop and two pawns, we can understand more easily which positions are favourable for the bishop and which are not.

### Example 2



**Diagram 3**  
Patrolling on one diagonal



**Diagram 4**  
The bishop is stretched

Diagram 3 perfectly illustrates an ideal situation for the bishop, which is able to contain both black pawns on the one diagonal (h1-a8). It's easy to see that the pawns cannot make any further progress without being captured.

## Containing pawns on two diagonals

The task of the bishop becomes more difficult if the pawns cannot be contained on one diagonal. The bishop's resources are stretched as it becomes overloaded with burdens. One obvious technique for the side with pawns is to deflect the bishop by advancing (usually sacrificing) one pawn in order for the other pawn to progress.

### Example 3

In Diagram 4 the white bishop covers both the a3- and the e3-squares. However, Black can ensure that one pawn can make progress by sacrificing the other: 1...e3 2 Bxe3 and now the a-pawn can safely advance with 2...a3. The question in these cases is whether one of the pawns can advance all the way to the queening square. In this example White's bishop can rush back to the d4-square to prevent the a-pawn from queening (or, more strictly speaking, not physically preventing the pawn from queening but being in a position to capture when it happens!).

## The 'last stop'

What happens if the pawns are further advanced?

### Example 4



Diagram 5  
the 'last stop'



Diagram 6 (B)  
An invader will land!

In Diagram 5 Black's a-pawn is further advanced (in fact it's only one square away from queening) and this makes all the difference. It's true that the bishop on d4 prevents Black from doing this, but the mere possibility of promotion renders the bishop useless in its functions on other diagonals. More specifically, the pawn on e4 can merrily advance to e3 (and, for that matter, all the way to e1) in the knowledge that it can't be touched by the bishop without allowing the a2-pawn to promote. So, one way or the other, Black will be able to promote a pawn.

This theme of the bishop being so committed to preventing one pawn from queening that it loses all power on other diagonals was referred to by Karsten



Müller and Frank Lamprecht in *Fundamental Chess Endings* as the 'last stop', which I think sums up the situation rather well.

### Example 5

Toth-Adla, Internet 2000

Diagram 6 illustrates this decisive deflection theme from real play.

67...g3! 68 Bf1 e3!

and White resigned as there is no defence against the sequence ...e2, Bxe2, ...g2 and ...g1Q.

## Harassing the bishop

Unfortunately, things are usually not quite as simple as the examples we've seen so far. The presence of kings complicate matters and introduces further themes. One of these is the harassment of the defending bishop.

### Example 6

Maki Uuro-Grischuk, New York 2000



Diagram 7 (B)  
Harassing the bishop



Diagram 8 (W)  
A trickier example

In Diagram 7 the black h-pawn can reach the 'last stop' by moving to h2. Without the presence of kings the pawns would prevail. Here, though, White's king is ready to snaffle the pawn on b4. Thus after 53...h2? 54 Kxb4 the game is drawn. Also, the deflecting 53...b3? doesn't work yet due to 54 Bxb3 Ke5 55 Ba4! Kd5 56 Bd1! Ke4 57 Ba4! etc.

Instead Grischuk utilised his own king with 53...Ke5!, which forced an immediate resignation. The bishop has to move from its ideal post and this is enough for Black to force a pawn home. For example, 54 Be6 b3 55 Ka4 b2.

## Shouldering off the opposing king

The next example illustrates a more complicated case that includes the theme of one king shouldering off the other as well as harassing the defending bishop.

## Example 7

Ye Jiangchuan-Wang Rui, HoiBei 2001

(Diagram 8) 65 a4!

As is usual in difficult endgame positions, move order is crucial.

**TIP:** In endgame play, if you find that one particular variation doesn't work, try switching move orders. This often leads to the correct solution.

65 d5? allows Black to draw after 65...Kf8!, when Black's king is in the promotion 'square' of White's a-pawn, whilst the bishop can deal with the d-pawn: 66 a4 Ke7! 67 a5 Kd7! (or 67...Bxd5!) 68 a6 Kc8 69 d6 Be6 70 Kb6 Kb8 with a draw.

**NOTE:** If a king can enter the 'square' of an enemy pawn, then it is able to prevent the pawn from promoting (or at least capture it on promotion). The 'square' for a pawn on a4 is simply the square a4-a8-e8-e4-a4.

65...Bh5

Trying to contain the pawns from either f3 or e2. 65...Be6 loses after 66 d5 Be8 67 d6 Kf7 68 Kc6 Ke6 69 Ke7 Bd7 70 a5 Bh5 71 a6, when the d-pawn has reached the 'last stop' and the a-pawn acts as a deflector.

66 Kd6!

White's king acts both to support the pawn's path and to 'shoulder off' the opposing king, leaving it on the sidelines of the battle. It's even worth temporarily blocking the path of the d-pawn to achieve this.

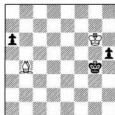
**NOTE:** Shouldering off an opponent's king is an important theme in endgame play.

Instead the more direct 66 a5 Bf3 67 d5 Kf6 68 a6? (68 Kd6! still wins) allows Black's king to influence events and permits a draw after 68...Ke5! 69 d6 Ke6! 70 a7 Be8.

66...Kf8 67 a5 Be2 68 d5!

Now White plans Kc7 and d5-d6, reaching the 'last stop', so Black's reply is forced.

68...Be4 (Diagram 9)

Diagram 9 (W)  
What now?Diagram 10 (B)  
e5 is the intersection square

## Knight and Pawn versus Knight

As I've mentioned before, knight endings tend to be less structured than bishop endings. There is certainly no rule for knight and pawn versus pawns that is equivalent to Centurini's rule for bishop endings. On the other hand, there are still guidelines that you can apply. For example, it's fairly obvious that the further advanced the pawn, the greater the winning chances.

The first thing to note is that a pawn on the seventh rank that is supported by the king and not blocked by the enemy king nearly always guarantees victory.

### Example 148



**Diagram 1 (B)**  
White wins



**Diagram 2 (B)**  
No defence to Ne6

(Diagram 1) Despite having the move and the poor initial position of White's knight, there is nothing that Black can do to avoid defeat. White will simply improve the position of his knight, finally using it to deflect Black's knight away from the defence of the promoting square (e8). Let's see how this is achieved.

**1...Ne8**

Or 1...Kc6 2 Nb3 (planning Nd4-e6) 2...Kd5 (preventing Nd4) 3 Nd2 (planning Nf3-g5-e6) 3...Kc5 4 Ne3+ Kf4 (preventing Ng5) 5 Nd4! and there is no good defence to Ne6 or Nb5.

**2 Nb3 Nd6+ 3 Kf8 Kc6**

3...Ne8 loses immediately to 4 Nc5+, while after 3...Kc6 White wins with 4 Nd4+ and Nb5.

**4 Nd4+ Kd7 5 Nf5! Ne8**

The only move.

**6 Kf7! Nc7**

Again the only move.

**7 Ng7! (Diagram 2)**

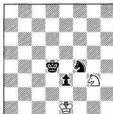
Now there is no defence to the threat of Ne6.

**7...Kc6 8 Ne6**

and White forces the pawn through (but not 8 Ne8?? Nd5!).

Drawing chances increase significantly if the pawn is only on the sixth rank.

### Example 149



**Diagram 3 (B)**  
Draw



**Diagram 4 (W)**  
As good as it gets

(Diagram 3)

Here White's king is very well placed and this is enough to secure a draw.

70...Kd3 71 Kd1

White must keep his knight controlling the e2-square. The hasty 71 Nf5?? would lead to a disaster for White after 71...Ng2+! 72 Kf1 e2+ and ...e1Q.

71...Ng2

The best try. Black prevents White's king from going back to e1.

72 Ne2

Oscillating with Kc1-d1 also works because the knight is so well placed on g3: 72 Kc1 Nh4 (of course 72...Kd4 is answered by 73 Nf5+! and Nxe3) 73 Kd1 Nf3 74 Kc1 Nd4 75 Kd1 and Black is making no progress.

**NOTE:** With the pawn on the sixth rank, knight deflections are less likely to work as the pawn is two squares away from promotion.

72...Ke4

Black sensibly re-routes his king to the f2-square, where it supports the pawn's progress and prevents White's king from reaching e1.

73 Nc3+ Kf3 74 Ne2 Kf2 75 Nd4

75 Nc3 is also good enough.

75...Nf4 (Diagram 4)

Black has seemingly made some progress from the initial position. White's king is no longer blocking the pawn and now White's knight is denied access to the key e2-square. However, this is as good as it gets for Black – he cannot successfully budge the white knight from d4.

6 Kc2!

An 'only move', but a fairly obvious choice. 76 Kc1?? would lose to the simple



76...Nc2+! (or even 76...Ne6! 77 Nxe6 e2 when 78 Nc5 doesn't work as 78...e1Q comes with check).

**76...Ne6**

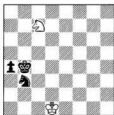
This typical deflection try fails tactically, but Black cannot improve his position in any case. For example, 76...Kf1 77 Nf5! e2 78 Ng3+ and Nxe2, or 76...Ke1 77 Nf5! e2 78 Ng3! and again Nxe2.

**77 Nxe6! e2 78 Nf4! e1Q 79 Nd3+**

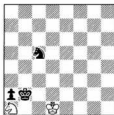
and Nxe1 with a draw.

### Example 150

Miroshnichenko-J.Polgar, Ohrid 2001



**Diagram 5 (B)**  
Black wins



**Diagram 6 (B)**  
A little more care needed

(Diagram 5) In this example Black wins with careful play.

**80...a3!**

Obvious and good.

**81 Nd5+ Kc4!**

Black mustn't allow the knight onto the crucial c3-square, preventing ...a2.

**82 Ne3+ Kc3 83 Nd5+**

The best chance. 83 Nc2 a2! is a typical winning position for the rook's pawn that we'll come across more than once: it's easy to see that White is in zugzwang and the pawn will promote.

**83...Kb2 84 Nb4**

White has prevented ...a2 for the moment but unfortunately for him his king is out of play and the knight on b4 lacks support.

**84...Nc5!**

Taking the d3-square away from White's knight, which she now plans to harass with ...Kb3 thus securing the way for ...a2.

**85 Kd2 Kb3! 86 Nc2 a2**

Finally the pawn reaches its 'last step'. The final part of the winning procedure is to place White in zugzwang.

87 Na1+

Or 87 Kc1 Kc3 88 Kd1 (88 Na1 Nb3+?) 88...Nb3! with the typical winning zugzwang that we've discussed before.

87...Kb2 88 Kd1! (Diagram 6)

88 Nc2 loses to 88...Nb3+ 89 Kd3 (or 89 Kd1 Kc3) 89...Nd4! when either the king or knight is fatally deflected. With 88 Kd1 White sets one final trap.

88...Nb3! 0-1

It's that typical zugzwang again following 89 Nc2 Kc3. In contrast, 88...Kxa1?? would be a blunder, allowing White to draw with 89 Kc1! (see Example 128).

Sometimes a knight deflection works even when the pawn still has a few squares to reach promotion, as in the following example.

### Example 151

Eingorn-Beliavsky, Kiev 1986



Diagram 7 (W)  
White wins in style

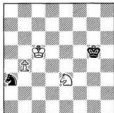


Diagram 8 (W)  
Trapping the knight

(Diagram 7) In truth White has many moves that win here because Black's king is far away from the action (he must only be careful not to play 69 h5?? Nf4+!). The one chose by Eingorn, however, is by far the most elegant.

69 Nd4+!

This deflection is decisive.

69...Nxd4 2 Kf6

What makes this example so striking is the fact that White follows up the knight sacrifice with a 'quiet' king move, just when you think he should be motoring ahead with the pawn. As Dvoretsky mentions in his endgame manual, the king is ideally placed two squares diagonally from the enemy knight. In a way the king dominates the knight and, despite being 'geographically' so close, it actually now takes the knight three consecutive moves before it can check the king.

2 h5? allows Black's knight back into the action. Following 2...Ne6 3 h6 Nf8+ Black draws as in Example 114.

2...Nc2

The knight has to move away before it can come back.

**3 h5 Ne3 4 Kg5!**

Once again the king moves diagonally two squares from the knight and again the knight is dominated. Of course 4 h6?? would allow a draw after 4...Ng4+.

**4...Nc4 5 h6 1-0**

Black resigned due to 5 h6 Ne5 6 h7 Nf7+ 7 Kf6 Nh8 8 Kg7.

### Example 152

Gligoric-Petrosian, Bled/Zagreb/Belgrade 1959

(Diagram 8) In this example the attacker uses another technique: trapping the enemy knight.

**56 Nc4! Nb1**

Or 56...Nc2 (here the knight is dominated by the king and knight team) 57 b5 Ne1 58 b6 Nd3+ 59 Kb5! (again two squares diagonally from the knight) and the pawn promotes.

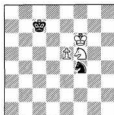
**57 Kd4! 1-0**

Black resigned because the knight is trapped and there is nothing useful that can be done about the simple idea of Kd3-c2. For example, 57...Kf5 58 Kd3 Ke6 59 Kc2 Kd5 60 Ne3+! Kc6 (or 60...Kd4 61 Kxb1 Kxe3 62 b5) 61 Kxb1 Kb5 62 Nc2 and White wins.

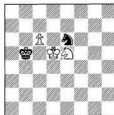
Note that 57 b5?? allows Black to draw with 57...Nc3! 58 b6 Na4+!

### Example 153

Lautier-Karpov, Ubeda 1994



**Diagram 9 (B)**  
Black uses the fork



**Diagram 10 (B)**  
Should be drawn

(Diagram 9) In this example Black immediately draws by repeatedly attacking the pawn until a fork arises – a common defensive resource.

**58...Nd3!**

and a draw was agreed on account of 59 e6 Nf4! 60 e7 Nd5+! followed by ...Nxe7.

### Example 154

Antonio-Zaw Win Lay, Kuala Lumpur 2001

(Diagram 10) This final example of knight and pawn versus knight illustrates how tough these endings are to play in practice, even for experienced grand-masters.

72...Nc7+ 73 Kd6 Na6?

This very plausible move is in fact losing because White can use his knight as a deflector. Instead Black can draw with 73...Ne8+! 74 Ke7 (or 74 Kd7 Nf6+ 75 Ke6 Ne8) 74...Nc7 75 Kd7 Nd5 76 Kd6 Nf6!, when 77 c7 is met by 77...Ne8+! 74 Nd7!

Now there are ideas of Nc5...

74...Kb4 75 Nb8!

...and this! Black's knight is fatally deflected. 75 Nc5! also wins after 75...Nxc5 76 c7 Ne4+ 77 Ke6.

75...Nc5

Or 75...Nxb8 76 c7 and the pawn promotes.

76 c7 Nb7+ 1-0

After 77 Kd5 Black cannot prevent promotion.

## Knight and Two Pawns versus Knight

This scenario is generally winning for the attacker unless there is something unusual about the position (there's an 81% win ratio on my database). If all the pieces are in play then the win is a virtual certainty.

### Example 155

Enns-Webster, Scarborough 1999



Diagram 11 (B)  
Black wins



Diagram 12 (B)  
Patience!

(Diagram 11) Here Black only has to be careful not to push the pawns too recklessly and allow White to sacrifice his knight for them.



63...Ne5+ 64 Ke3 Nc4+ 65 Kf3 e5 66 Ng3+ Ke6 67 Ne4 f5 68 Ng3 Nd6!

Of course not 68...e4?? 69 Nxe4!

69 Nh5 (Diagram 12) 69...Ne4!

An instructive moment, with Black correctly choosing to improve the position of his knight rather than to advance a pawn. In fact, either pawn advance only draws:

a) 69...f4?? allows an obvious draw after 70 Nxf4+!

b) Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, 69...e4+? also allows White to draw: 70 Kf4! (now White's king is a real pain for Black) 70...Kd5 (or 70...Kf7 71 Ng3! Kg6 72 Nxf5! Nxf5 73 Kxe4) 71 Ng3 Kd4 72 Nf1! (planning Ne3) 72...Kd3 73 Ne3 Ke2 (what else?) 74 Nxf5! Nxf5 75 Kxe4.

70 Ng7+ Kf6 71 Ne8+ Kf7 72 Nc7 Ng5+ 73 Kg3 Ne6 74 Nd5 e4!

Finally a pawn advance, but only because the knight on e6 now prevents White from blockading with Kf4.

75 Kf2 Ne5!

Again patience is required. 75...f4?? would spoil all the previous good work and allow 76 Nxf4! Nxf4 77 Ke3 winning the final pawn.

76 Ke3 Ke6 77 Nf4+ Ke5 78 Ng6+ Kf6 79 Nf4 Ne6! 80 Nd5+ Ke5

Finally forcing through ...f4 under the most favourable circumstances. White's position now deteriorates very quickly.

81 Ne3 f4+ 82 Ke2 Nd4+ 83 Kf2 e3+ 84 Ke1 f3 85 Nd1 Ne2+ 0-1

The following case is very much the exception that proves the rule.

### Example 156

Movsesian-Hracek, Slovakia 2000



Diagram 13 (B)  
Black can draw

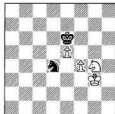


Diagram 14 (W)  
White cannot progress

(Diagram 13) Here Black's king is extremely well placed blocking White's pawns and this allows him to draw.

61...Nf7!

Threatening ...Ne5. White doesn't have time to consolidate with Kf3 and Ne3+.

62 Ne3+ Ke4!

Black has to stay active.

#### 63 Ng4

Following 63 e6 White's pawn becomes isolated from the rest of the army: 63...Nd6! 64 f5!? (the best try; 64 Ng4 Kd5 picks up the e-pawn after 65 e7 Nf5+) 64...Kxe3 65 Kg4 (or 65 f6 Ne4+) 65...Ne4 66 e7 Kd4! 67 Kh5 (67 e8Q allows 67...Nf6+) 67...Nf6+ 68 Kg5 Ke5 69 Kg6 Ne8 70 Kf7 Nf6 and Black draws. 63...Nd8!

Now ...Ne6 is a threat.

#### 64 Nf5+

Or 64 Nh6 Ne6 65 f5 Kxe5!

#### 64...Kf5 65 Ne8

65 Kf3 allows an immediate draw with 65...Ne6 66 Nd5 Nxf4! 67 Nxf4 Kxe5.

#### 65...Ne6

Threatening ...Nxe5.

#### 66 Nd6+ Ke6 67 Nc4 Kd5!

Black continues this perpetual harassment and White can never quite consolidate.

#### 68 Ne3+ Ke6!

68...Ke4? is met by 69 e6!, when 69...Kxe3 70 f5 Ke4 71 f6 forces promotion.

#### 69 Ng4 Nd4

69...Kf5! is also good: 70 Kf3 Nd4+ 71 Ke3 Nc6 72 Nh6+ Kg6 73 Ng8 Kf5 transposes to text after White's 75th move.

#### 70 Ne3 Nc6 71 Ng4 Nd4 (Diagram 14) 72 Kf2

The final try, but Black has enough resources.

#### 72...Kf5 73 Ke3 Nc6 74 Nh6+

Any other knight move is answered by ...Nxe5.

#### 74...Kg6 75 Ng8 Kf5 76 e6

The only way to avoid losing one pawn was with 76 Ng4+, but this simply repeats the position.

76...Kxe6 77 Ke4 Kf7 78 Nh6+ Kg6 79 Ng4 Ne7 80 Ke5 Kf7 81 Nh6+ Kg7 82 Ke6 Ng6 83 Nf5+ Kf8 1/4-1/4

## Knight and Pawn versus Knight and Pawn

This scenario is generally drawn (there's only a 21% win ratio on my database). However, chances of a decisive result increase if both pawns are passed and are involved in a race to promotion.

### Example 157

Tyomkin-Belozerov, Tallinn 1997

(Diagram 15) Here Black's pawn on f4 gives him counterplay but he is still losing due to the poor placing of his king, which is too far away from the action.

#### 48 Nf3!

A good start. White knight blocks the f4-pawn and is prepared to enter the action via e5.

48...Kg7

It's too late to try to run to the queenside: 48...Kf8 49 Ne5! Ke8 50 Kc7! Na6+ 51 Kb6 Nb8 52 Ka7 f3 53 Nxf3 Nc6+ 54 Ka8 and White will win with the deflecting Ne5 or Nd4.



Diagram 15 (W)  
White wins



Diagram 16 (W)  
Black draws

49 Kc7 Na6+ 50 Kb6 Nb8 51 Ne5!

Preparing Ka7.

51...f3

Giving up this pawn is the equivalent of resignation, but there was no good defence to Ka7; for example, 51...Kf6 52 Ka7 f3 53 Kxb8 Kxe5 54 Ka7 f2 55 b8Q+ Ke4 56 Qb5 and White wins.

52 Nxf3 Kf6 53 Kc7! Na6+ 54 Kd6 Kf7 55 Ne5+ Ke8 56 Nc6 1-0

Black resigned on account of 56...Kf7 57 Nb4 Nb8 58 Kc7.

## Knight and Two Pawns versus Knight and Pawn

Now we take a look at a few different examples of this endgame. Overall, the win:draw:loss ratio here was 47%:52%:1%.

### No passed pawns

When there are no passed pawns the defender has excellent chances of drawing (a 72% draw ratio on my database). To create a passed pawn the attacker will normally have to exchange a pair of pawns, and this only leaves him with one pawn.

#### Example 158

Gleizerov-Degerman, Stockholm 1996

(Diagram 16) Here Black draws despite the far-advanced position of White's king.

45 g4 Kh8 46 h4?!

White should prefer 46 Ng3, hoping for 46...Nag3?? 47 hxxg3 with a winning

pawn ending. Instead Black should play 46...Nf2! 47 Kh5 Kg7.

46...Kg8??

Both players missed that Black could draw immediately with the very cheeky 46...Nf2!

47 g5 Nd6 48 Ng3

Or 48 Nf6+ Kh8 49 Nxh7 Nf5+.

48...Nf7+ 49 Kh5 Ne5!

Preventing White from improving the position of his king. Now there is no way to make progress.

50 Nf5 Kh8 51 Nd6 Kg7 52 Ne8+ Kg8 ½-½

## One pawn passed; two blocked

The appearance of a passed pawn considerably increases the attacker's chances in the two versus one ending (the win ratio here goes up to over 50%).

### Example 159

B.Lalic-Emms, Southend 2001



Diagram 17 (B)  
A complex ending



Diagram 18 (B)  
Black is too far away

(Diagram 17) In this complicated ending I failed to find the narrow path to a draw.

43...h5?

Black had two checks at his disposal, one of them leading to a draw:

a) 43...Nd3+? 44 Kf6! Kxd4 45 a6 Nf4 46 a7 Nd5+ 47 Kg7 Nb6 48 Kxh7 Ke5 49 Kg6! Kd6 50 h4 Ke7 51 Kg7! and the h-pawn promotes.

b) 43...Nd7+! 44 Kd6 (or 44 Kf5 Kxd4 45 a6 Kd5 46 a7 Nb6 47 Kf6 Kd6 48 Kg7 Ke7 49 Kxh7 Kf7 50 h4 Na8 and White cannot make progress as his king is imprisoned) 44...Ne5! (I missed this retreat) 45 Ne6 (Black also draws after 45 Nf5 Nb7+ 46 Ke6 Nxa5 47 Kf7 Kd5 48 Ng3 Ke5 49 Kg7 Kf4 50 Ne2+ Kg5 51 Kxh7 Kh4) 45...Kb5! 46 Na7+ Kb4! 47 Kd5 (or 47 Kc6 Nb3 48 a6 Ne5 49 Kb6 Na4+! 50 Ke7 Ka5) 47...Nd3 48 Ne6+ Kb5 49 h4 h5 50 Ke4 Ne1! 51 Nd4+ Kxa5 and Black will follow up with ...Ng2xb4, eliminating White's final pawn.

**44 Ne6 Nd3+**

44...Na6 loses to 45 h4 Kb5 46 Nf4 Kxa5 47 Nxb5 and Black cannot get back in time: 47...Nb4 48 Nf4 Nc2 49 Nd5! Ne1 50 h5 Nf3+ 51 Kf6 Nb2 52 Ne3! Nf3 53 h6 etc.

**45 Ke4 Nb4 46 Nf4 Kb5 47 Nxb5 Kxa5 48 h4 (Diagram 18)**

Now Black's pieces are too far away from White's h-pawn, and White wins in a similar fashion to Example 150.

48...Kb6 49 Nf6 Kc7 50 h5! Nc6 51 h6 Nd8 52 h7 Nf7 53 Kf5 Kd6 54 Kg6 Ke6 55 Kg7 Ke7 56 Ng4 Ke8 57 Ne5 Nb8 58 Ng6 Nf7 59 Kf6 1-0

## All pawns are passed

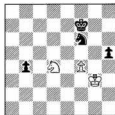
The defender's chances improve slightly when he has a lone passed pawn against two connected pawns. He has good drawing chances if the lone passed pawn can act as a far away deflector.

### Example 160

**Golod-Comp Junior, Givatayim 1998**



**Diagram 19 (B)**  
The a-pawn saves the day



**Diagram 20 (B)**  
Black wins

(Diagram 19) Here White's a-pawn is far enough away from the action on the kingside to act as an effective deflector.

50...Ke6 51 Ne4 g4 52 a6 Ke7 53 Ne5 Kb6 54 Ng6

With Black's king distracted by the a-pawn, White begins threats to sacrifice his knight for two pawns on the other side.

54...Ka7

I'm not sure why the computer didn't capture on a6 here, although White will still draw in a similar way to the game after 54...Kxa6 55 Nf4.

55 Nf4 h4 56 Nd3!

With this White plans Ne5. The move 56 Ng6! also draws after 56...h3+ 57 Kh2 (threatening Ne5) 57...Nd2 58 Ne5 Nf1+ 59 Kg1 h2+ (or 59...Ne3 60 Kh2 Nf1+ 61 Kg1) 60 Kh1 g3 61 Ne3 Kxa6 62 Nxb2! gxb2 (Golod) and we have a position very similar to the one discussed in Example 126: White draws despite the ma-

terial deficit.

**56...Nd2 57 Nf2 g3  $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$**

White draws after 58 Nd3 Kxa6 59 Nf4 Nc4 60 Ng6 Ne3+ 61 Kh3 g2 62 Kh2 h3 63 Nf4 Ng4+ 64 Kg1 and Nxb3.

### Example 161

**Dinstuhl-Van den Doel, Bundesliga 2003**

(Diagram 20) Here Black's two passed pawns are split by a large distance and, as we have seen before, this severely stretches White's defensive capabilities.

**51...Nd5 52 Kf3**

Or:

a) 52 Kh4 Nxf4 53 Kg5 Ne6+, exchanging knights and winning.

b) 52 f5 Kf6 53 Kh4 Nf4 54 Kg3 Kg5 (Huzman) 55 f6 h4+ 56 Kf3 Ng6! 57 f7 Ne5+ and ...Nxf7.

**52...Kf6 53 Nb3 Ne7! 54 Ke4 h4 55 Nd4**

Or 55 Kf3 Nf5 56 Kg4 Ke6 57 Nd2 Kd5! 58 Nb3 (58 Kxf5 h3 59 Nf3 b3) 58...Kc4 59 Na5+ Kc3 and Black wins.

**55...h3 56 Nf3**

If 56 Kf3 Black wins with 56...Nd5 57 Kg3 (or 57 f5 Ne3!) 57...Nxf4! (Huzman).

**56...h3 0-1**

White resigned on account of 57 Kd3 Kf5 58 Kc3 Kxf4 59 Nh2 Nf5 60 Kxb3 Kg3 61 Nf1+ Kg2 etc.

## Ending with More Pawns

In the final part of this chapter we'll be looking at positions that contain more pawns and where one side has either a material or a positional advantage.

### Pawns on one side

We saw earlier that knight and two pawns versus knight and pawn on the same side of the board is often drawn. However, as the number of pawns increase, so do the winning chances. Knight and four pawns versus knight and three (with no passed pawns) gave as high as a 58% win ratio on my database. This is a better ratio than for a rook or bishop ending, but still lower than a pure pawn ending.

### Example 162

**V.Milov-Grischuk, Biel 1999**

(Diagram 21) Here's a fairly typical example of a player exploiting an extra pawn on one side. White's pawn structure and active king give him excellent winning chance here.

**53 Kc4 Nd6+ 54 Kd5 Ne8 55 f4 Ke7 56 Nf5+**

The immediate 56 e5 also looks strong.

**56...Kd7 57 e5 Ne7+ 58 Ke4 g6 59 Nd4 Ke7**

Trying to keep the status quo is Black's best chance.

a) After 59...f5+ White shouldn't hesitate to sacrifice the knight with 60 Nxf5!

gxf5+ 61 Kxf5 and White should win; for example, 61...Ke7 62 g4! hxg4 63 Kxg4 Ke6 64 h5 Kf7 65 f5 Nd5 66 h6 etc.

b) 59...fxf5 60 Kxe5 Ke7 61 f5! transposes to note 'a' of the next move, while 60 fxf5, creating a passed pawn and planning Kf4-g5, also looks strong.



Diagram 21 (W)  
Good winning chances



Diagram 22 (B)  
A strong passed pawn on e6

60 f5 Kf7

Again Black is loath to release the tension, which tends to leave him with a very weak h5-pawn; for example:

a) 60...fxf5 61 Kxe5 Kf7 (or 61...gxf5 62 Kxf5 – Milov – followed by Kg5) 62 Ne6! Ne8 63 Nf4 gxf5 64 Nxb5 Kg6 65 Nf4+ Kf7 66 Kxf5.

b) 60...gxf5+ 61 Kxf5 fxf5 62 Kxe5 Ne8 63 Kf5 Kf7 64 Kg5 Nf6 65 Nf5! Ke6 66 Ng7+ and Nxb5.

61 e6+! (Diagram 22)

Black has to allow White a very strong passed pawn on e6.

61...Kg7 62 Ne2!

Planning Nf4.

62...gxf5+

After this move Black's two remaining pawns are weak, but there was little choice. Unsurprisingly Black loses after 62...g5 63 hxg5 fxg5 64 Ke5; for example, 64...Ne8 65 Nc3 h4 (65...Nf6 66 Ne4) 66 gxf4 gxf4 67 Ne4 h3 68 f6+ Kf8 69 e7+ Kg8 70 Ng5 and f7+.

63 Kxf5 Nb5 64 Ke4!

There is still time to go horribly wrong: 64 Nf4?? walks into a one-move checkmate after 64...Nd6!



**WARNING: Beware of snap checkmates in knight endings!**

64...Kf8

Or 64...Ne7 65 Nf4 Kh6 66 Kf5 and Black's position falls apart.

65 Nf4 Ke7 66 Kf5 Nd6+ 67 Kg6 f5 68 Nxb5!

The simplest – the h-pawn will prove decisive.

68...Kxe6 69 Ng7+ Ke5 70 h5 f4 71 gxf4+ Kxf4 72 h6 Ne4 73 Ne6+ 1-0

## Pawns on both sides

As with same-coloured bishop endings, the attacker has very good chances to exploit an extra outside passed pawn. Of course, the more distant the pawn, the more chance that the defence will not be able to cope.

### Example 163

Ivkov-Filip, Vrsac 1971



**Diagram 23 (W)**  
The extra outside pawn



**Diagram 24 (W)**  
White has a pleasing win

(Diagram 23) Here White wins in a typical fashion. The extra outside passed pawn is used as a deflector, and while Black is dealing with it White makes decisive inroads into the kingside pawn mass.

**47 Ne3 Kd6**

Black's best chance is to head immediately for the b-pawn.

**48 Ke4 Kc5 49 f5! Kxb5**

If Black tries to keep things closed with 49...g5 then White wins with a similar sacrifice to the one played in the game: 50 Ng4! Nd7 51 Nxf6!! Nxf6+ 52 Ke5 and Black has no defence; for example, 52...Nd5 53 f6 Nf4 54 f7 Ng6+ 55 Kf6 Kxb5 56 Kg7 Nf4 57 Kxh7 Ne6 58 Kg8 Ke4 59 f8Q Nxf8 60 Kxf8 Kd4 61 Kf7 Ke4 62 Kg6 Kf4 63 g4 etc.

**50 Ng4 Nd7 (Diagram 24) 51 Nxf6!**

**NOTE:** Piece sacrifices are more common in knight endings than in any other type of ending.

White sacrifices a knight so that his king can run riot on the kingside. However, it also appears that White can win in a more mundane manner: 51 fxg6 hxg6 52 Kd5! (threatening Ke6) 52...Nc5 (or 52...f5 53 Ne5 Nf8 54 h4 and Kd6-e7) 53 Nxf6 Nd3 54 g3, when it's difficult to believe that Black can hold this.

**51...Nxf6+ 52 Ke5 Nd7+ 53 Kd6 Nf6**

53...Nc5 54 f6 Ne4+ 55 Ke7 Nxf6 56 Kxf6 and the pawn ending is hopeless.

**54 Ke6 Nh5 55 f6 Nf4+ 56 Kd7**

Also winning is 56 Ke5 g5 57 Kf5!; for example, 57...Ng6 58 Kxg5 Nf8 59 Kh6





Kc5 60 Kg7 Ne6+ 61 Kxh7 Kd6 62 f7 Ke7 63 Kg8 and White follows up by showing the h-pawn down the board.

56...g5 57 f7 Ng6 58 g4

After 58 Ke8 Black has the extra possibility of 58...g4?, but then White can still win with 59 h4! h5 60 f8Q Nxf8 61 Kxd8 Kc5 62 Kf7 Kd4 63 Kg6 etc.

58...Kc5 59 Ke8 1-0

Black resigned on account of 59...Kd4 60 f8Q Nxf8 61 Kxf8 Ke4 62 Kg7 Kf3 63 Kxh7 Kg3 64 Kh6 Kxh3 65 Kxg5.

Positional advantages are just as important in knight endings as elsewhere.

### Example 164

Baklan-Vouldis, Plovdiv 2003



Diagram 25 (W)  
A winning advantage

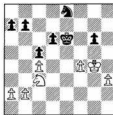


Diagram 26 (B)  
A surprising decision

(Diagram 25) Here material is level but White has a massive positional advantage. White can create a passed pawn with his pawn majority on the kingside but Black cannot do the same on the queenside because his 'extra' pawn (the d-pawn) is backward and cannot advance. Added to this, it is vulnerable to attack and White also has the option of using a useful outpost on d5. Together all these plusses promise White a decisive positional advantage.

24 Kf2 h5 25 Kf3 Ke6 26 h3 g6 27 g4 hxg4+ 28 Kxg4! (Diagram 26)

It seems strange for White to deliberately 'ruin' his pawn structure on the kingside but there is definite method to this 'madness'. With 28 Kxg4 White will find it easier to attack Black's g6-pawn (with Kg5). Black will be forced into extreme passivity with ...Kf7, after which White will always have the option of continuing with f5, leaving him with a passed rook's pawn – a major headache for the defending knight.

28...a6 29 Kg5 Kf7 30 Ne4! b5 31 b3 bxc4

Or 31...b4 32 Kh6 a5 33 h4 (Hecht) and as in the game Black is in zugzwang.

32 bxc4 a5 33 a4 Kg7 34 h4 Kf7

After 34...Kh7 White can transpose into a winning pawn ending with 35 Nf6! Nxf6 36 Kxf6 Kh6 37 f5 gxf5 38 Kxf5 Kh5 39 Ke6 etc.

**35 Kh6!**

As it happens White doesn't need to exchange pawns with f5. Instead a pawn (or indeed two) is captured for free as Black is in zugzwang.

**35...Nf6 36 Nxd6+ Ke6 37 Kxg6 1-0**

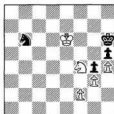
Pawns that are well advanced but are not passed can often prove to be weaknesses in knight endings, as the following case demonstrates.

**Example 165**

Zhang Pengxiang-Datu, Beijing 2001



**Diagram 27 (W)**  
Black's pawns are weak



**Diagram 28 (W)**  
White needs to use the king

(Diagram 27) Replace the knights with bishops and Black would have no problems drawing this ending, but here Black loses because of the advanced weaknesses on h5 and g4.

**63 Ne6 Nf5**

Of course Black cannot allow a pure pawn ending, but now Black's king will be stuck defending the h5-pawn.

**64 Nf4+ Kh6 65 Ke5 Ne7 66 Kf6 Ne8 67 Ke6!**

Preventing ...Nd6.

**67...Nb6 (Diagram 28) 68 Nd3!**

White's idea is to gain access for his king to the g5-square with Kf6 and Ne5-f7+. Black's only chance is to attack f2 with his knight. However, as we see, even winning this pawn doesn't signal the end of Black's problems.

**68...Nc4**

Slightly more tricky is 68...Na4!? but White still wins: 69 Ne5 Nc3 70 Kf5 Nd1 71 Nf7+ Kg7 72 Nd6 Kh6 (or 72...Nxf2 73 Kg5 and White wins both pawns after 73...Kf8 74 Kxh5 Ke7 75 Nf5+ Kf6 76 Ne3) 73 Kf6! Nxf2 74 Nf5+ Kh7 75 Kg5 and both pawns will drop off after 75...Nd3 76 Kxh5 Nf2 77 Ne3 Kg7 78 Kg5! (but not 78 Nxc4? Ne4!) 78...Kh7 79 Nxc4.

**69 Ne5 Nb2**

Or 69...Nd2 70 Kf5! Nb1 71 Kf6 Nc3 72 Nf7+ Kh7 73 Kg5 Ne4+ 74 Kxh5 Nxf2 75 Ne5 (Hecht).

70 Kf6 Nd1 71 Nf7+ Kh7 72 Ng5+

72 Kg5! Nxf2 73 Kxh5 Kg7 74 Ne5 wins immediately.

72...Kh6 73 Ne4 Nb2 74 Nd6 Nd3 75 Nf5+ Kh7 76 Kg5! Nxf2 77 Kxh5 Kh8  
78 Kg5 Kh7 79 Ne3 1-0

## Knight sacrifices

We've already seen that these crop up surprisingly frequently in knight endings. Here are three more cases.

### Example 166

Portisch-Adorjan, Amsterdam 1971



Diagram 29 (B)  
Black wins



Diagram 30 (W)  
White wins

(Diagram 29) Black probably has many ways to win this position, but the one chosen by Adorjan is undoubtedly the quickest.

58...Nxb3! 59 axb3 c4!

and White resigned, as one of Black's pawns on the queenside will promote.

### Example 167

Ionov-Shaposhnikov, St Petersburg 2003

(Diagram 30) This example is more complex. At first it looks like White will have trouble breaking through, but a knight sacrifice comes to his aid.

1 Nb7! Kg6

Or 1...Ke7 2 Kf5 Kd7 (2...Na7 3 Nxa5! bxa5 4 b6) 3 Kxg5 Na7 (Black lines up a sacrifice of his own with ...Nxb3, releasing the a-pawn) 4 Kh6 Nxb5 5 axb5 a4 6 g5 a3 7 g6 a2 8 g7 a1Q 9 g8Q (Ionov) and White wins; for example, 9...Qh1+ 10 Kg7 Qg2+ 11 Kf8 Qxg8+ 12 Kxg8 Kc7 13 Kf7 Kxb7 14 Ke7 Kc7 15 Ke6.

2 Nxd6!

A typical sacrifice so that the king can infiltrate.

2...Nxd6+ 3 Ke5 Nxb5!

Again this counter-sacrifice to release the a-pawn. Other moves lose quickly:

a) 3...Nf7+ 4 Ke6 Kg7 5 Ke7 followed by the march of the d-pawn.

b) 3...Ne8 4 d6 Nf6 5 Ke6 (Ionov) and White wins.

c) 3...Nb7 4 Ke6 Kg7 5 Ke7 and d6-d7-d8Q.

4 axb5 a4

4...Kf7 5 Kd6 a4 6 Kc6 a3 7 d6 a2 8 d7 a1Q 9 d8Q is a winning queen ending.

5 Ke6! a3 6 d6 a2 7 d7 a1Q 8 d8Q and White won the queen ending.

Usually it's the attacker who employs the knight sacrifice, but this is not always the case, as the following example shows.

### Example 168

Emms-B.Lalic, London (rapid) 1995



**Diagram 31 (W)**  
White sacrifices a knight



**Diagram 32 (B)**  
White plans f4-f5

(Diagram 31) Black has an active king and more space, and after something like 41 Ne2 e5 White faces an uphill struggle to draw. Instead I saw an effective way to sacrifice my knight.

41 b5! f4+ 42 gxf4 gxf4+ 43 Kxf4 e5+

Stronger than 43...Kxd4 44 bxa6 as Black obtains a passed pawn.

44 Kf3 Ng5+ 45 Ke2 exd4 46 bxa6 Kc6

The other option is to use the knight to contain the outside passed pawn, but following 46...Ne6 47 a7 Nc7 48 Kd3 b5 49 h4 Ke5 50 a4! (to prevent ...Nb5+ after Kxd4) 50...Na8 51 f4+! it's clear that White is not losing.

47 h4 Ne6 48 Kd3 Kb6 49 Ke4 (Diagram 32)

White plans f4-f5 to dislodge the knight from e6, thus winning the d4-pawn.

49...Kxa6 50 f4 Nxf4

Transposing into a drawn pawn ending. Other moves are no better: 50...Kb5 51 f5 Ng7 52 f6 Ne8 53 Kxd4 Nxf6 54 Ke5 Nd7+ 55 Kf5 Nf8 56 Kg4 and Kh5, or 50...Ng7 51 Kxd4 Nf5+ 52 Ke4 Nxb4 53 f5 Kb6 54 f6 Ng6 55 Kf5 Nf8 56 Kg4 and again Kh5.

51 Kxf4 Kb5 52 Kf3 Ke4 53 Ke2 Kc3 54 Kd1 b5 55 a4 Kb4 56 Kd2 Kxa4 57 Kd3 ½-½

57...Kb4 58 Kxd4 Kb5 59 Ke5 Kc5 60 Kf5 Kd5 61 Kg5 Ke5 62 Kxh5 Kf5 is drawn.

## Trapping the knight

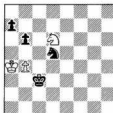
In Example 152 we saw how trapping the knight helped to win in a knight and pawn v. knight ending. This idea also crops up in endings with more pawns.

### Example 169

Emms-Sedgwick, Isle of Man 1996



**Diagram 33 (W)**  
White wins quickly



**Diagram 34 (W)**  
Mind the mate!

(Diagram 33) The quickest way to exploit the extra pawn is to force a pure pawn ending by trapping Black's knight.

43 Nxb6 Nxb2 44 Ke2!

Suddenly Black's knight has nowhere to go and White plans Kd2-c2. The only chance for Black is to use his own king to harass White's knight.

44...Ke7 45 Kd2 Kd6 46 Kc2 Kc6 47 Kxb2!

Most pawn endings a pawn ahead are winning and this one is no exception.

47...Kxb6 48 Kb3 Kb5 49 f4 h5 50 g4 hxg4 51 hxg4 Kc5 52 Ka4 1-0

### Mind the mate!

To finish this chapter, another little warning about knight checkmates, which apparently are the easiest mates to overlook.

### Example 170

Diehm-Schlamp, Griesheim 2000

(Diagram 34) Despite being a pawn down, White can draw comfortably enough with 61 Kb5 Nxb4 62 Nc8, threatening both Nxa7 and Nxb6, or even the immediate 61 Nc8. Instead there came the very plausible

61 Nb5+??

which Black answered with

61...Kb2!

Suddenly White is in a strange zugzwang: any legal move allows mate in one!

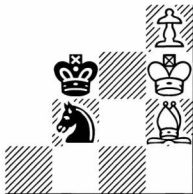
62 Nxa7 Nc3 mate (0-1)

## Chapter Six

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# Bishop versus Knight Endings

- Basic Endings
- Exploiting Material Advantages
- Exploiting Positional Advantages
- Try it Yourself



The battle between bishop against knight has provoked endless arguments in the history of chess, and even whole books have been devoted to this debate. In this book we've already seen how the bishop and knight battle against their own kind; now we'll take a look at how they fear against each other.

## Basic Endings

We'll begin once again by looking at the most fundamental positions and then we'll move onto ones with more pawns.

### Bishop and pawn versus knight

Of course there are always many different characteristics to consider (piece positions, how far the pawn is advanced etc.), but more often than not this ending is a draw (my database revealed a 71% draw ratio). If the defending king can block the pawn on different colour of square to the bishop, then a draw is more or less certain. Here's a straightforward case.

#### Example 171



**Diagram 1 (W)**  
An easy draw



**Diagram 2 (W)**  
Corralling

(Diagram 1) This is a typical drawing position. Black's king is on an ideal square, where it blocks the progress of White's pawn and also where the enemy bishop can never attack it. Black can simply keep playing waiting moves with his knight and White cannot make any progress.

**1 Kh5 Ne4**

Black has to be just a little bit careful: 1...Nf7?? is a blunder that allows White to make a favourable exchange into a pawn ending: 2 Bxf7! Kxf7 3 Kh6 Kg8 4 Kg6 Kh8 5 Kf7 Kh7 6 g6+ Kh8 7 g7+ and White wins.

**2 g6 Nf6+ 3 Kg5 Ne4+**

There's also nothing wrong with 3...Nd7 4 Kf5 Nf8! followed by eliminating the final pawn with ...Nxe6.

**4 Kf5 Nf6 5 Bf7**

White is trying to cover many squares with his bishop and king, but it's impossi-

ble to cover all the possible knight moves.

5...Nd7 6 Kg5 Nf6

and it's clear that White's not getting anywhere.

### Example 172

(Diagram 2) This is very much an exceptional case where the attacker wins despite the defending king blocking the pawn on a different colour of square to the bishop. Black loses due to the very unfortunate placing of his knight.

1 Bd5!

Completely dominating the knight, which cannot move without being captured. Now Black will only be able to move his king and he will soon be forced into zugzwang.

**NOTE: The theme introduced with 1 Bd5 is known as 'corralling the knight'.**

1...Kg6

Or 1...Kf8 (trying to harass the bishop with ...Ke7-d6 but this is doomed to fail)  
2 Kf5 Ke7 3 g6! Kd6 4 g7 and the pawn promotes.

2 Kf4 Kg7 3 Kf5

Black is in zugzwang and his king has to give way. A big bonus for White is that, not only does the bishop corral the knight, it also helps by controlling the promotion square (g8).

3...Kf8 4 Kf6 Ke8 5 g6 Kf8 6 g7+ Ke8 7 g8Q+ and White wins.

If the pawn is on the seventh rank and the attacking king controls the promotion square, then the attacker has very good winning chances. Often the defender can be quickly forced into zugzwang.

### Example 173



Diagram 3 (W)  
White wins via zugzwang

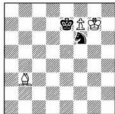


Diagram 4 (B)  
Black draws

(Diagram 3) White wins here, whoever moves first.

1 Bd3!

A semi-waiting move that also introduces the idea of attacking the knight with Bb5 as well as Bf5.



1...Nf8

Alternatives lose quickly:

a) 1...Kd6 (now the king no longer controls f8) 2 Bf5! followed by Bxd7.

b) 1...Ke6 2 Bb5! is similar.

2 Bf5!

Placing Black in zugzwang. Any knight move allows the bishop to capture it, while king moves leave the knight en prise on f8. Note 2 Bf5 is again an example of corralling the knight.

With Black to move it makes no difference: 1...Nf8 loses immediately to 2 Bf5!, while 1...Ke6 2 Be2 (waiting) 2...Ke7 3 Bd3 directly transposes to 1 Bd3 above.

On occasions the defender is saved by a perpetual check motif.

### Example 174

(Diagram 4) 1...Ne8+!

**NOTE:** Moving the knight to where it can be captured by the pawn but is defended by the king is a common resource in this type of position.

Black can also draw with the alternative knight check 1...Nh5+!; for example, 2 Kg6 (or 2 Kg8 Nf6+ 3 Kg7 Nh5+) 2...Nf4+ 3 Kg7 Nh5+ 4 Kh6 Nf6 (threatening to block with ...Kf8) 5 Kg7 Nh5+! etc.

2 Kg8 Nf6+ 3 Kg7

After 3 Kh8 Black simplest way to draw is to block the pawn with 3...Kf8!

3...Ne8+ 4 Kg6

But now the king doesn't cover f8, so...

4...Nd6!

and Black will follow up with ...Nxf7.

Let's look at one or two examples from practice. The first is an easy win for White due to the far-away placing of Black's king.

### Example 175

Akopian-Krush, Seattle 2003



Diagram 5 (W)  
White wins

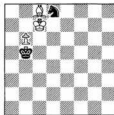


Diagram 6 (W)  
White wins

(Diagram 5) 65 Kd6!

Immediately harassing the knight.

65...Nf8 66 Bh6

And again!

66...Nh7

Or 66...Ng6 67 Ke6 Kb7 68 Kf6 and White wins.

67 Ke6

All logical stuff. The last piece in the jigsaw is to attack the knight once more with the king.

67...Kb7 68 Kf6

and Black resigned as there is no good defence against the impending Kg6.

### Example 176

Reshevsky-Ivkov, Palma de Mallorca 1970

(Diagram 6) Black's knight, which prevents White from playing b7, is attacked by White's king. However, for the moment it's invulnerable because a capture would allow ...Kxb6. White can win, however, by using zugzwang.

83 Bh3

Here Ivkov resigned. Let's just see how the game could have finished.

83...Ka5

The most resilient move. Naturally Black's king must stay attacking the b6-pawn, but 83...Kc5 would walk into an immediate zugzwang after 84 Bd7!, taking away the b5-square from the king.

84 Bf5! Kb5 85 Bd3+! Kc5

Now White has a very clever move...

86 Be4! (Diagram 7)



Diagram 7 (B)  
Zugzwang!



Diagram 8 (B)  
Black draws

The only winning move. Now we have a strange position, where all the pieces apart from the kings are under attack! It's easy to see that any king move (including 86...Kxc4) loses to 87 Kxd8, so Black must move the knight. However,

this only delays things for one further move.

**86...Nc6 87 b7!**

Now Black is in zugzwang again.

**87...Kxc4 88 Kxc6**

and White wins.

Naturally the defender's chances of a draw increase when the pawn is only on the sixth rank. I like the following example, which illustrates very resourceful defending on Black's part.

### **Example 177**

---

**Chernin-Sax, Subotica 1987**

**(Diagram 8) 60...Nc6**

The only move, as White was threatening a6-a7.

**61 Bh2**

Already things look difficult for Black, but there is a resource...

**61...Ne7!**

Another 'only move'. Now Black hangs on because 62 a7 can be met by 62...Nc8+! and ...Nxa7.

**62 Kb7**

Once more a game ending early, the players calling a truce in this position. However, Black still has to find a couple of very accurate moves.

**62...Nc6!**

62...Nc8? loses after 63 Bg3 Kd8 64 Bf2! Kd7 (or 64...Nd6+ 65 Ke6 Nc8 66 Bc5! Ke8 67 Kc7) 65 Be5! (corralling) 65...Kd8 66 Ke6 Ke8 67 Kc7 etc.

**63 Be7!**

Cutting out both ...Nd8+ and ...Na5+. This move demands a very clever defence. Following 63 Bg3 Black draws in a more mundane manner with 63...Na5+! 64 Kb6 Nc6, reaching the initial position.

**63...Na7!!**

A wonderful resource – the knight is invulnerable because of the counterattack on c7. However, White isn't quite finished yet.

**64 Ba5 Nc6 65 Bh6**

Now the bishop covers a7, as well as d8 and a5, but on c7 it was covering another vital square: d6!

**65...Kd6!**

and White cannot make any further progress.

## **Knight and pawn versus bishop**

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This ending has even more drawing tendencies than the one with bishop and pawn versus knight (as high as a 77% draw ratio). The only way to win is to block the bishop's diagonal to the square in front of the passed pawn (the stopping diagonal) with the knight supported by the king, but this is a cumbersome procedure which is difficult to arrange. Sometimes the defender can draw even without the help of his king, as in the following case.

## Example 178

## Variation on Averbakh



**Diagram 9 (W)**  
Black draws



**Diagram 10 (B)**  
A little care needed

(Diagram 9) Black can draw this position even if he keeps his king far away from the action. The two diagonals that the bishop must be on (either a4-e8 or h3-c8) are too long for White to have any hope.

**1 Ke6**

White's king is going to the c7-square.

**1...Kg1**

Black just sits and waits.

**2 Ke7 Kh1 3 Kd8 Kg1 4 Kc7 Bb5 5 Nd3**

The only logical continuation. Now White plans Ne5-c6, blocking the path of the bishop.

**5...Kh1 6 Ne5 Be8!**

Finally Black has to take action. This is the only move, but a relatively easy one to find.

**7 Nd7**

Now White will try his luck with the bishop on the other diagonal.

**7...Kg1 8 Kd8 (Diagram 10)**

Now Black must be a bit careful. One out of the three bishop moves along e8-h5 loses.

**8...Bg6!**

8...Bf7 was also okay, but 8...Bh5? loses after 9 Ne5! (crucially covering g4 and thus threatening the immediate d6-d7) 9...Bd1 (trying to get back onto the a4-e8 diagonal but it's too late) 10 Kc7 Bx4 11 Ne6! and White wins.

**9 Ne5 Bf5 10 Kc7 Kh1 11 Nd3**

A new plan emerges (Ne5-e6) but Black has it under control.

**11...Kg1 12 Nc5 Be8! 13 Nd7 Kh1 14 Kd8 Ba6 15 Kc7 Bb5 16 Ne5 Be8!**

and we have reached the same position as the one after move six.



**NOTE:** The defender draws without the help of his king if both of the stopping diagonals are at least five squares long.

In the previous example the shorter diagonal (a4-e8) consists of five squares, so Black didn't need his king.

### Example 179



**Diagram 11 (W)**  
White wins



**Diagram 12 (W)**  
Where does the king go?

(Diagram 11) Here the shorter diagonal (a5-d8) consists of only four squares, so Black needs his king to participate. Unfortunately for him, it is just too far away on a1.

**1 Ke7 Kb2 2 Nd4!**

White still has to be very accurate. Before moving the king further he prevents ...Bd8 with Nd4-e6. Here the plausible 2 Kd6? (planning Nd4-e6-e7) only draws after 2...Kc3! 3 Ne7 Kc4 4 Nd5 Bd8! (White shouldn't have allowed this) 5 Ne4 Kb5 6 Ne6 Bb4 7 Nd4+ Kb6 8 Nf5 Bd8! and White hasn't made any progress while Black's king is right back in the thick of things.

**2...Ba5!?**

Racing back with the king is too slow: 2...Kc3 3 Ne6 Kc4 4 Kd6! Ba5 5 Ne7 Bb4+ 6 Ke6 and the pawn promotes.

**3 Ne6 Bb4+**

A slightly awkward check. 3...Kc3 loses after 4 Kd6! Bb4+ 5 Ne5! Ba5 6 Nb7! Bb6 7 Kc6 and Black's bishop has run out of squares on the diagonal (the king covers two while the knight covers the other two). One further square on this diagonal was all the bishop needed.

**4 Kf6! Ba5 5 Ke5!**

Again threatening Kd6.

**5...Bc3+ (Diagram 12)**

The best chance. Other moves lose in typical fashion:

a) 5...Kb3 6 Kd6! Bb4+ 7 Nc5+.

b) 5...Ka3 6 Kd6 Bb4+ 7 Nc5 Ba5 8 Nb7 Bb6 9 Kc6 wins as before.

**6 Kf5!**

It seems like the king is taking a very long route to the queenside, but 6 Kd5!! Bf6 ruins White's previous work.

6...Ba5 7 Ke4!

Now there is no defence to Kd5-e6.

7...Kc3 8 Kd5 Kb4 9 Kc6 Kc4 10 Nc7

and d8Q.

### Example 180

Rak-Sapis, Correspondence 1992



Diagram 13 (B)  
Black wins

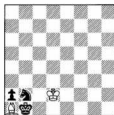


Diagram 14 (W)  
A reciprocal zugzwang

(Diagram 13) In this game Black demonstrates the so-called 'Horwitz win' with the rook's pawn. With the bishop only having one stopping diagonal, the position looks quite simple, but nothing could be further from the truth!

58...Na4

The first move is obvious, as is White's reply.

59 Ba1

But now it gets complicated...

59...Kc1!

White actually resigned in this position. Being a correspondence game, this is not such a surprising decision, but over the board it would certainly be worthwhile making Black 'prove' the win.

The first question that must be asked is what wrong with the logical-looking 59...Kb1? Obviously any bishop move loses to ...Nb2, but White can draw with 60 Kd1! Nb2+ (60...Kxa1 61 Kc2! draws) 61 Kd2! (Diagram 14)

and we have another reciprocal zugzwang. Black to play, draws; White to play, loses: 61...Na4 (or 61...Kxa1 62 Kc1! 62 Kd1 Nc5 63 Be5 Nd3 64 Ba1 Nb2+ 65 Kd2 – as we've seen before, the knight is not able to lose a move.

59...Nb2 must also be considered, but then White continues with 60 Ke1! Kb1? (60...Kc1! 61 Kd2!, again reaching the reciprocal zugzwang position.

So finally we have 59...Kc1, a clever waiting move, seeing where White commits his king before acting further.

**60 Ke1**

After 60 Ke3 Black can now continue with 60...Kb1! as Kd1 is no longer an option for White: 61 Kd2 Nb2! reaches the position after move 63 in the main text.

**60...Nc5!**

Black goes backwards before going forwards. After 60...Nb2 61 Ke2! Kb1? 62 Kd2! it's Black who's in zugzwang.

**61 Ke2**

After 61 Bf6 we see a problem with White's king being on e1: Black gains a crucial tempo and wins after 61...Nd3+! 62 Ke2 Nb2!.

**61...Kb1 62 Kd1**

After 62 Kd2 we see another point of 60...Nc5: Black plays 62...Nb3+! (not 62...Kxa1?? 63 Kc1!) 63 Kd1 Nxa1!. Meanwhile, 62 Bf6 is met by 62...Na4! and White's king cannot get back in time.

**62...Na4! 63 Kd2 Nb2!**

Now we have the same position as in Diagram 14, but with White to move so Black wins. Somehow Black has managed to 'lose a move'!

**64 Kc3 Kxa1 65 Ke2 Nd3! 66 Kxd3 Kb2**

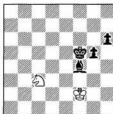
and finally Black wins. A deceptively difficult, but instructive, example.

## Bishop and two pawns versus knight

If the pawns are connected the attacker normally wins (there was a 74% win ratio on my database).

### Example 181

Reeh-Goetz, Bundesliga 1997



**Diagram 15 (B)**  
Black should win



**Diagram 16 (W)**  
White to play and draw!

(Diagram 15) Here Black should win, but his task is complicated somewhat because he has a rook's pawn with a wrong-coloured bishop. He has to be careful not to allow White to sacrifice his knight for the g-pawn.

**62...g4 63 Kg2 h5 64 Nd1 Be5 65 Nf2 Bd4**

Threatening simply to exchange minor pieces. 65...h4? 66 Nxd4! is an illustra-

tion of the care that Black needs to take.

**66 Nh3??**

Of course the knight is invulnerable here. Another possible continuation is 66 Nd3 h4 67 Nc1 h3+ 68 Kh1 Ke4 (not 68...g3?? 69 Ne2! Bf2 – 69...g2+ 70 Kh2 – 70 Nxc3+) 69 Ne2 Bf2 70 Kh2 Kf3 71 Nc1 g3+ 72 Kxh3 g2 and the pawn promotes.

**66...Be3!**

Another example of the bishop corralling the knight.

**67 Kg3 Ke4 68 Kg2**

Or 68 Kh4 Kf3!

**68...h4! 69 Kh1 Kf3 70 Kh2 Bf4+?!**

Black is still winning after this move, but it's a step in the wrong direction. The easiest route to victory is 70...g3+ 71 Kh1 g2+ 72 Kh2 and now something like 72...Bh6! (White will run out of moves) 73 Kg1 Bc1 74 Kh2 Be3 (zugzwang) 75 Ng1+ Bxg1+ 76 Kxg1 h3 77 Kh2 Kf2.

**71 Kh1 Kg3?? (Diagram 16)**

Of course 71...gxh3?? still only draws, but after the text White also has an unlikely escape.

Black can still win by moving his bishop; for example, 71...Bh6 72 Ng1+ Kf2 73 Nh3+ Kf1 74 Nf4! g3! (74...Bxf4?? is stalemate!) 75 Nh3 g2+ 76 Kh2 Bf4+ 77 Nxf4 g1Q+ 78 Kh3 Qg3 mate.

**72 Nf2!!**

An incredible defence. Now the threat is Nxc4!, so...

**72...Kxf2 stalemate (½-½)**

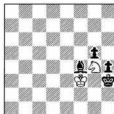
The main drawing chance for the defender is if he can set up a blockade on the different colour complex to the bishop.

### Example 182

C.Graf-Koenig, Bad Wiessee 1997



**Diagram 17 (W)**  
None shall pass!



**Diagram 18 (W)**  
Black wins

(Diagram 17) Here White has managed to blockade the pawns on the light



squares and Black cannot make any progress. White simply keeps his king on g2 and oscillates his knight between f3 and any dark square available where it protects f3. Black would be able to win if he could control all these dark squares, but this is not quite possible.

**68 Ng5 Bd6 69 Nf3 Be7 70 Ng1 Bf5 71 Nf3**

and a draw was agreed. The bishop prevents the knight going to d4, e5, g5 and h4 and with 71...Ke2 the e1-square is covered, but this still leaves the g1-square available to the knight: 72 Ng1+! Ke3 73 Nf3 etc.

### Example 183

**Mestel-Beliavsky, Lucerne 1985**

(Diagram 18) Here White has a kind of blockade, but Black wins with a pleasing piece sacrifice.

**77 Nf2+ Kh2 78 Ng4+ Kg1! 79 Nf2 Be3!!**

The only way to make progress!

**80 Kxe3**

Refusing the sacrifice doesn't help: 80 Ng4 Bb6 (now the knight no longer has access to f2) 81 Ke4 h3 82 Kf5 Bd8 followed by ...h2; or 80 Nh3+ Kh2 81 Kg4 Kg2 and White is in zugzwang.

**80...Kg2! 81 Ng4 Kg3! 0-1**

White resigned on account of 82 Nf2 h3! (but not 82...g4 83 Nsg4! Kxg4 84 Kf2) 83 Ke2 Kg2 84 Ke3 h2 85 Ke2 g4 86 Ke3 g3. Note that 81...h3? only draws after 82 Ke4! h2 83 Nxb2 Kxb2 84 Kf5.

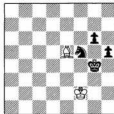
There's even greater winning chances if the pawns are split (an 83% winning ratio on my database). Once more, the greater the gap between the two pawns, the more difficult the defence is for the knight.

### Example 184

**Mikhaletz-Voitsekhovsky, Barlinck 2001**



**Diagram 19 (B)**  
Black should win



**Diagram 20 (B)**  
Black wins easily

(Diagram 19) The only reason White has any drawing chances here is because of the presence of the rook's pawn and the wrong-coloured bishop. However,

with accurate play Black can prevent White from sacrificing his knight for the g-pawn.

**52...Bd7?**

But not like this! Hecht suggests 52...Bc6, which seems to do the business; for example, 53 Ne6 a4! 54 Kd4 g4 55 Nf4 g3 56 Kc4 Ka5 57 Kc3 Be4 58 Ne2 (otherwise White's king has to give way; the knight will have to move eventually) 58...g2 59 Ng1 Bf5! 60 Nf3 Bg4! 61 Ng1 (now the knight is corralled) 61...Kb5 62 Kb2 Kb4 63 Kc2 Kc4 64 Kd2 a3 (White's king is overloaded) 65 Kc2 Kd4 66 Kb3 Kc3 and ...Kf2.

**53 Kd3?**

Missing a big chance. White can draw with 53 Nf3! and now:

a) 53...g4 54 Ne5 Be8 (or 54...g3 55 Ne4+! Kb5 56 Nxa5! Kxa5 57 Kf3) 55 Nxc4! Bxc4 56 Kd3 Kb5 57 Kc3 Ka4 58 Kb2.

b) 53...a4 54 Kd2! (but not 54 Nxc4? a3! and the a-pawn promotes) 54...g4 55 Ne5 a3 56 Kc3! (56 Nxd7+? loses to 56...Kc7 57 Nc5 a2 58 Nb3 g3 59 Ke2 Kb6 60 Kf3 Kb5 61 Kxg3 Kb4 62 Na1 Kc3 – Hecht) 56...g3 57 Nxd7+ Kb5 58 Ne5 g2 59 Nf3 Ka4 60 Ng1 with a draw.

**53...g4**

Now everything is under control again.

**54 Kc3 g3 55 Nf3 g2 0-1**

Following 56 Kd2 Bg4 57 Ng1 a4 58 Kc3 Kc5 Black wins in a similar way to the note to his 52nd move.

## Knight and two pawns versus bishop

When the pawns are connected the defender only draws in really exceptional circumstances (there was an 87% win ratio on my database). The following example is typical of how the attacker gradually improves his position. Note that with the knight there is no need to worry about being left with a rook's pawn.

### Example 185

Sutovsky-Ilescas Cordoba, Pamplona 2003

(Diagram 20) 70...Ne7 71 Bd6 Nd5 72 Ba3 Nf4 73 Be7 g5 74 Bf6 h4 75 Be7 Kf5 76 Bd8 Ng6!

Defending the h4-pawn so that Black can play ...g4 and keep the pawns abreast. There's no need to give White any undeserved counterplay with 76...h3 77 Kg3.

**77 Be7 g4 78 Bd6 Ke4 79 Be7**

Or 79 Bh2 Nf4 and White is in zugzwang and must allow ...g3.

**79...Nf4!**

Blocking the bishop's path in preparation of ...g3+. The rest is easy.

**80 Bb6 g3+ 81 Kg1 Kf3 82 Kh1 h3 83 Ba5 Nd3 0-1**

Black's next move is ...Nf2+.

The drawing chances increase if the pawns are split, but only very slightly. Again the knight and pawns should win unless there are exceptional circumstances.

**Example 186**

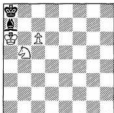
Ljubojevic-Spassky, Thessaloniki 1968

(Diagram 21) 80 c4 Bh2 81 c5 Bg3 82 Ne3

The knight is re-routing to the d6-square, after which the a-pawn will run up the board. The more direct 82 c6+ also wins: 82...Kb8 83 a5 Bh2 84 a6 Bg3 85 Nb6! (heading for c5) 85...Bf4 86 Nd7+ Ka7 87 Nc5 Kb8 88 Ne6! Bh2 89 Kb6 Bg1+ 90 Nc5 etc.



**Diagram 21 (W)**  
White wins



**Diagram 22 (B)**  
No need to be flashy

82...Bf4 83 Nc4 Bg3 84 Nd6+ Kc7 85 a5 Bh4 86 a6 Kb8 87 Kc6 Bf2

Or 87...Ka7 88 Kd7! Bf2 89 c6 Bb6 90 Nc8+!

88 Nb5 Bh4 89 a7+

White is not restricted to one winning line. 89 Kd7 Bg3 90 c6 Ka8 91 c7 Bxc7 92 Nxc7+ is another way to victory.

89...Ka8 90 Kb6

Threatening mate with Nc7.

90...Bd8+ 91 Ka6 Bb6!?

It's worth a try!

92 c6 1-0

After 92...Bxa7 (Diagram 22) White wins with 93 Nxa7, but not the flashy 93 c7??, which is met by the even more flashy 93...Bb8!! and Black draws!

## Exploiting Material Advantages

For the second part of this chapter we're moving on to endgames containing more pawns. We'll begin with the bishop having the extra pawn and with all the pawns on one side of the board. As you would expect, the greater the number of pawns, the greater the winning chances (i.e. 4v3 gives greater prospects than 3v2 and 2v1). We've seen before that the knight is especially effective when play is restricted to a limited front and that fact is reflected here. The winning ratio for pawns that are connected but without a passed pawn is only 41%. Compare this to 57% winning ratio for knight and four pawns versus

bishop and three on one side and it's easy to see that the knight prefers all the action on one side of the board.

The following well-known example is often shown as an exemplary way of defending with the knight and three pawns.

### Example 187

Korchnoi-Averbakh, Moscow 1955



Diagram 23 (W)  
White holds



Diagram 24 (W)  
White sacrifices

(Diagram 23) 48 h3!

Note White's typical anti-bishop strategy of putting all pawns on light squares.

48...Kf7 49 Kf2 e5 50 Ke3 Ke6 51 Ke2 f5

Black can wait around for a while longer, but at some point he has to play this move, the only way to make progress. However, now White can exchange one of the pawns.

52 gxf5+ gxf5 53 Kf2 Kf6

More testing is 53...Kd5, but White should still hold relatively comfortably.

Averbakh gives the following possible continuation: 54 Ke3 Bc5+ 55 Ke2 (but not 55 Nxc5?? Kxc5 – remember, most pawn endings a pawn up are winning) 55...Kd4 56 Ne1 e4 57 Ng2 Ke5 58 fxe4 fxe4 (now White only needs to eliminate the e-pawn as it's a rook's pawn with a wrong-coloured bishop; 58...Kxe4 59 Nh4 – threatening Nxf5! – 59...f4 60 Nf3 with a secure light-squared blockade on f3) 59 Kd2 Bc7 60 Ke2 Bg5 61 Kf2 Kd4 62 Ke2 and Black is not making any progress (...e3 will be met by Nxe3).

54 Kg2 Kg5 (Diagram 24) 55 f4+!

Simplifying the situation by giving Black doubled f-pawns. Play moves onto an even smaller area and White blockades successfully with Nf3.

55...exf4 56 Ne1! Bc7 57 Nf3+ Kf6 58 Nh2 Ke5 59 Nf3+ Ke4 60 Ng5+ Ke3 61 Nf3 h6 62 Ng1

Black cannot cover all the knight moves from f3 and so White can simply keep oscillating with his knight. A draw was agreed just a few moves later.

However, as you could imagine, it's not always so easy for the defence as the following case demonstrates

## Example 188

Mestel-Beliavsky, Lucerne 1985



Diagram 25 (B)  
Good winning chances



Diagram 26 (W)  
White can draw

(Diagram 25) In many ways this is similar to the previous example, but there are two major differences. The first is that White's pawn is still on g2 whilst Black has already achieved ...f5. Now when Black creates a passed with the inevitable ...e4 and an exchange on this square, Black will still be left with three pawns rather than the two in the notes of the previous example. The second difference is that White's knight is restricted (the pawn on h4 does a good job) and is in danger of running out of useful squares.

**48...Kd5 49 Nf1 Bb6 50 Nd2 Bd8 51 Nb3**

51 Nf1 Bg5 (threatening a corralling with ...Bf4) 52 g3 hxg3 53 Nxc3 in order to exchange a pawn, is a possibility, but it's understandable that White didn't wish to weaken his own pawn structure.

**51...Bg5!**

The knight is running out of places to go.

**52 Na5 Kc5 53 Nb7+?**

I believe White's only chance is 53 Nb3+ Kb4 54 Na1!. Now Beliavsky gives 54...e4+ 55 fxe4 fxe4+ 56 Kxe4 Kc3 as winning for Black, but is this really the case? 57 Kf3! Kb2 (or 57...Bd2 58 Ke2 Bf4 59 Kd1! and Nc2) 58 g3! Kxa1 59 Kg4! (59 gxf4? Bxf4 60 Kg4 g5 and White cannot exchange Black's final pawn) 59...hxg3 60 Kxg3 Kb2 61 h4! Bh6 (or 61...Bf6 62 h5!) 62 Kf3! (62 h5? loses to 62...g5 63 Kg4 Kc3 64 Kf5 Kd3 65 Kg6 g4 66 Kxb6 g3 67 Kg7 g2 68 h6 g1Q+ etc.) 62...Kc3 63 Ke4 Bg7 64 Kf4! Bf6 65 h5! (offering Black a rook's pawn with a wrong-coloured bishop) 65...g5+ 66 Kf5 Be7 67 h6 and White draws.

**53...Kd5?**

Black misses a big chance: 53...Kb4! 54 Nd6 Bf6 55 Ne8 Be7 56 Nc7 Kc5 (Mestel) and slowly but surely the knight is being trapped. One continuation is 57 Kc3 Kc6 58 Na6 Kb7 59 Nb4 Bxb4+ 60 Kxb4 Kb6 61 Kc4 Kc6 62 Kd3 Kd5 63 Ke3 e4 with a winning pawn ending for Black.

**54 Na5 Be7 55 Nb3 Bb4 56 Na1 e4+**

Finally Black goes for the most obvious winning try.

57 fxe4+ fxe4 58 Ke2 Ke5 59 Nb3 Bc3 60 Ke3 Kd5 61 Ne1 Bg7 62 Nb3 Bf8 63 Ke2 Bb4 64 Na1 Ke5 65 Nb3 Kf4

The idea now is to move the king to g3 and then use the e-pawn as a deflector.  
66 Nd4!

Against 66 Kf2 Beliavsky gives the following winning line for Black: 66...Bd2! 67 Ke2 Bc3 68 Ne5 Bb2! 69 Nb3 Kg3 70 Kf1 e3 71 Ne5 e2+ 72 Kxe2 Kxg2 73 Nd3! Kxh3! 74 Nxb2 Kg2 and the pawns run home.

66...Ba5 (Diagram 26) 67 Nb3?

A losing mistake. White can draw with 67 Ne6+ Kg3 68 Nf8 g5 69 Ne6 g4 70 hxxg4 Kxg2 and now:

a) 71 Ke3? (Beliavsky gives this as drawing) 71...Bb6+! 72 Kxe4 (or 72 Ke2 h3 73 Nf4+ Kg3 74 Nxb3 Kxb3 75 g5 Kg4 76 g6 Bd4) 72...Kg3! 73 Nf4 Kxg4 74 Nd5 h3 and White cannot prevent the pawn from promoting.

b) 71 g5! (this does draw) 71...Bc3 72 g6 h3 73 Nf4+ Kg3 74 Nxb3! Kxb3 75 Ke3 and Kxe4.

67...Bc3 68 Ne5 Bb2 69 Nd7 Kg3 70 Nf8 g5 71 Kf1

Or 71 Nh7 g4 72 hxxg4 Kxg2 73 Ng5 Bc1! (Beliavsky) and Black wins after 74 Nxe4 h3 75 Nf2 h2 76 Ke1 Bc3.

71...e3 72 Nh7 Bc1! 73 Nf6

73 Nxxg5 loses to 73...e2+!

73...e2+!

The final piece of the jigsaw.

74 Kxe2 Kxg2 75 Ng4 Kxb3 76 Kf3 Bf4

and Black is winning (see Example 183 for the rest of the game).

When the attacker has an extra outside passed pawn there are excellent winning chances, especially if the outside pawn is far away from the main action. The king and knight can often find it difficult to cover both sides of the board.

### Example 189

Ward-Arkell, Swansea 1995



Diagram 27 (W)  
White wins



Diagram 28 (B)  
Weak on the light squares

(Diagram 27) Here is a typical exploitation of the extra outside passed pawn.

**34 f4**

A good start. White opens the way for his king to enter the game and takes control of some dark squares with this pawn. As usual, White sticks to the ideal of putting his pawns on different coloured squares to the bishop.

**34...Kf6 35 Kf2 Ke6 36 Ke3 h6 37 Kd4 Kd6 38 Bd5 f6**

The most resilient defence, keeping the pawns on dark squares so they cannot be attacked by the bishop. Alternatives lose more quickly:

a) 38...f5 39 h4! (preventing ...g5 and preparing Bf7) 39...Nf8 40 b6 (the deflector) 40...Nd7 41 b7 Kc7 42 Bf7 Kxb7 (or 42...Nf8 43 Ke5) 43 Bxg6 Nf6 44 Ke5 Ne4 45 g4 and White wins.

b) 38...Ke7 39 Bc6! Nb6 40 Kc5 Na4+ 41 Kb4 Nb6 42 Ka5 Nc4+ 43 Ka6 and b5-b6 etc.

**39 Bf7 g5 40 Ke4! (Diagram 28)**

Even though the pawns cannot be attacked by the bishop, the light-squared weaknesses enable White's king to infiltrate.

**40...Ke7 41 Ba2 Kd6**

Given that Black cannot prevent the white king from penetrating, he decides that he may as well go after the b-pawn.

**42 Kf5 Ke5 43 Bf7 gxf4 44 gxf4 Nb6**

44...Kxb5 loses to 45 Be8! (the point of Bf7) 45...Ke6 46 Ke6.

**45 Be8 Nd5 46 Bc6 Nc3+ 47 Kg6 Ng4 48 h3 Nf2 49 h4 1-0**

A crucial kingside pawn drops off following 49...Ng4 50 h5 Kb6 51 Kf5.

As I mentioned earlier, the ending with knight and four pawns versus bishop and three (all on the same side of the board) in general gives the attacker good chances of winning because the knight is such an effective piece when play is on a limited front.

### Example 190

**Ftacnik-Kovalev, Hamburg 1905**



**Diagram 29 (W)**  
Winning for White



**Diagram 30 (B)**  
White plans 14-f5

(Diagram 29) In this example White has the added advantage that he can fix Black's pawns on the same colour as the bishop. This means that White's king can penetrate on the dark squares.

**34 Ng4 Kf8**

Or 34...Kg7 35 e5! and Nf6.

**35 Nf6 h5 36 Kg2 Bc6 37 Kf3 Ke7 38 Nd5+!**

White uses the fact that Black cannot exchange off into a pawn-down pawn ending with 38...Bxd5 39 exd5 Kd6 40 Ke4.

**38...Ke6 39 Nb4 Bb7 40 Kf4 f6 41 h4!**

A crucial move, preventing ...g5 and fixing the black pawns on light squares.

**41...Ba8 42 Nd3 Bc6 43 e5!**

Exchanging a pair of pawns to give White's king access to the g5-square.

**43...fxe5+ 44 Nxe5 Be8 45 Nf3 Ba4**

Black can prevent Kg5 with 45...Kf6 but this is only temporary: 46 Nd2! Bc6 47 f3 Bd5 48 Ne4+ Ke6 49 Kg5 Kf7 50 Nd2 Bc6 51 f4 with a same winning plan as in the game.

**46 Kg5 Bd1 47 Ne1! (Diagram 30)**

Commencing the final stage of the plan. White plans to push with f4-f5, leaving Black with a decisive weakness on h5.

**47...Kf7 48 f4 Bg4**

Preventing f5 for the moment, but now White brings in the knight.

**49 Nc2 Bd1 50 Ne3 Bf3 51 f5! gxf5 52 Nxf5 Bd1 53 Nd6+ 1-0**

After 53...Ke6 54 Ne4! Bf3 55 Nf6 the h-pawn drops off.

When the team with the knight has an extra outside passed pawn, the success rate is still very high. I guess one reason it's so high (a 77% win ratio) is that in some instances the knight supports the passed pawn by itself and forces the bishop to sacrifice itself if the defending king cannot reach the action in time.

## Example 191

Tseshkovsky-Timoshenko, Sverdlovsk 1987



**Diagram 31 (W)**  
White should win



**Diagram 32 (B)**  
White plans Ne5



(Diagram 31) In this example Black's king is well placed to cover the advance of the a-pawn so White's winning plan again consists of the using the a-pawn as a deflector while trying to make inroads into the kingside.

43 Kf1 Ke6 44 Ke2 Kd5 45 Kd3 Be1 46 f3 h5 47 a5 Bb4 48 a6 Bc5 49 f4!

(Diagram 32)

An important move. With the pawn on f4 White supports the move Ne5, which in turn forces Black to make some kind of concession on the kingside.

49...g6

Or:

a) 49...f6 50 Ne3+ Ke6 51 f5! (now g7 and h5 are very weak) 51...Kb6 52 Nd5+ Kxa6 53 Nf4 (Tseshkovsky) and White wins after 53...h4 54 Ne6 Bd6 55 Nxg7 followed by moving the king to g4 etc.

b) 49...f5 50 Ne3+ Ke6 51 Nc2 Kd5 52 Nb4+! Kd6 53 Kc4 h4 (or 53...Be3 54 Nc2 and Nd4) 54 Nc2 g6 55 Nd4 Bb6 56 a7!.

50 Ne5 g5

Suddenly it's all over. After 50...Ke6 White wins with 51 Nc6 Kf5 52 g3 h4 53 Nd4+! (the simplest) 53...Kf6 54 g4 followed by Nc6 and a6-a7.

51 Nd7 Ba7 52 Nf6+ 1-0

White wins a second pawn.

## Exploiting Positional Advantages



We'll begin by looking at a couple of example that clearly favour the bishop: ones where the board is open with pawns on both sides of the board.

**NOTE:** The bishop can be very effective in positions where there are pawns on both the queenside and kingside because, being a long-range piece, it can influence both sides of the board at the same time.

### Example 192

Karpov- Su.Polgar, Madrid 1992



**Diagram 33 (W)**  
The bishop rules



**Diagram 34 (W)**  
Another corralling?

(Diagram 33) Black's problem is not so much that the pawn on e6 is weak (although of course that doesn't help) but the fact that the position is wide open and there are pawns on both sides of the board. In particular, the black pawns on the queenside may become targets as they do not have the protection of Black's king.

**37 Kf3 Kf7 38 Ke4 Ke7 39 a4!**

Stretching Black's defensive resources on the queenside. Now 39...bxa4 40 Bxa6 leaves the advanced pawn on a4 extremely vulnerable.

**39...Na7 40 axb5 axb5 41 f4 Kd6 42 Bd3**

42 f5! may be even stronger; for example, 42...e5!? (42...exf5+ reaches variations very similar to the main game) 43 g4 b4 44 h4 Nc8 45 g5 hxg5 46 hxg5 Nb6 47 Bb5 Nd5 48 Be4! Nb6 49 f6! gxf6 50 g6! (Karpov) and Black has to give up his knight.

**42...Kd7 43 Be2 Kd6 44 Bf1 Kd7 45 f5!**

Despite the fact that the e6-pawn is a weakness, White eliminates it because it prevents White's king from infiltrating to g6 via f5.

**45...Kd6 46 fxe6 Kxe6 47 Bh3+**

Now Black must let White's king in one way or the other.

**47...Kd6**

After 47...Ke7 48 Kd5! Kd8 49 Kc5 Kc7 50 Bf1 White wins a crucial pawn.

**48 Kf5 g5**

Giving up the h-pawn in the hope of imprisoning White's king on the side of the board. The alternative was 48...Ke7 49 Kg6 Kf8 50 Bf1 (zugzwang) 50...b4 51 Kf5 Nc6 52 Ke4 (Karpov) when the h-pawn is a goner: 52...Ke7 53 Kd5 Na5 54 Kc5 b3 55 Kb6?.

**49 Kg6 Ke7 50 Kxb6 Kf6 (Diagram 34)**

Now White comes up with a concept that we've seen before.

**51 Bd7!**

Once again a knight is corralled.

**51...Ke7**

Or 51...b4 52 h4 gxh4 53 gxh4 Ke7 54 h5! Kxd7 55 Kg7 and the h-pawn promotes.

**52 Bxb5! Nxb5 53 Kxg5**

The three pawns are too much for the king and knight.

**53...Kf7 54 Kh6! Nd4 55 g4 Nf3 56 h3 Kf6 57 b4 1-0**

One possible finish is 57...Ng5 58 b5! Nf7+ 59 Kh5 Nd6 60 b6 Kg7 61 g5 Kh7 62 Kg4 Kg7 63 h4 Kh7 64 h5 Kg7 65 h6+ Kg6 66 Kf3 Kh7 67 Ke2 Kg6 68 Kd3 Kh7 69 Kd4 Kg6 70 Kd5 etc.

## Example 193

Heyken-Buhr, Hamburg 1999

(Diagram 35) Black's problem in this position is the fact that his pawns can be attacked by White's bishop. The one on b7 is particularly vulnerable and this really restricts the knight. White eventually wins using zugzwang.

**43 Bf3 Ne6**

43...Nd5 allows White to exchange and then make a breakthrough on the

queenside: 44 Bxd5! cxd5 45 b5! axb5 46 c6 Kd6 (46...bxc6 47 a6 and the a-pawn promotes) 47 cxb7 Kc7 48 a6 b4 49 Kd4 Kb8 50 Kc5 b3 51 Kb6 and a7 mate.

**Diagram 35 (W)**

b7 is weak

**Diagram 36 (B)**

Getting round the back

**44 Ke4 f6**

Or 44...Kd7 45 Ke5 Ke7 46 Bg4! Nc7 (46...Nd8 47 Be8! and Black is in zugzwang) 47 Be8! Nd5 48 b5! axb5 49 Bxb7 Kd7 50 a6 Ke7 51 Ba8! Ne7 52 a7 b4 53 Kf6 Nc8 54 Bxc6 Nxa7 55 Bd5 followed by Kxf7 etc.

**45 gxf6+ Kxf6 46 Bg4 Ke7 47 Ke5 Nd8**

47...Nc7 48 Be8 wins in a similar way to the previous note.

**48 Be8 Nf7+ 49 Kf4 Nd8 50 Kg5 Kf7 51 Kh6 Kf6 52 Kh7! (Diagram 36)**

Black's position is beginning to creak, as White threatens Kg8-f8-e8 etc.

**52...Kf7 53 Bh3 Kf6 54 Bd7**

54 Kg8 (Tsesarsky) also wins after 54...Ne6 (or 54...Ke7 55 Kg7 and the g-pawn goes) 55 Bxe6! Kxe6 56 Kg7 Kf5 57 Kf7 Kg4 58 Kxg6 Kxh4 59 Kf5 Kg3 60 Ke5 Kf3 61 Kd6 Ke4 62 Kc7 Kd4 63 Kxb7.

**54...Ke7 55 Bg4 Kf7**

55...Kf6 56 Bh3! Kf7 57 Be8! reaches the same position.

**56 Be8**

Now Black really is in zugzwang and must allow Kg8.

**56...Kf6 57 Kg8 1-0**

White wins after 57...g5 58 hxg5+ Kxg5 59 Kg7! Kf4 60 Kf6 Ke3 61 Ke7.

## Good knights versus bad bishops

We've already seen some of examples of 'good bishops' versus 'bad bishops' (see Chapter 2). However, there have also been many games involving a 'good knight' versus a 'bad bishop'. The bishop is stuck defending its pawns while the knight can hop around, attacking pawns and using outposts. Also, the attacking king often has chances to infiltrate on the different colour complex to the bishop.

## Example 194

Dzindzichashvili-Radashkovich, Netanya 1977



Diagram 37 (W)  
It's goodnight for Black



Diagram 38 (W)  
A classic pawn sacrifice

(Diagram 37) The first step is to sink the white king into the e5-square.

42 Kf4 Kf5 43 Nf3 Bb5 44 g5+! Ke7 45 Ke5

Now e6 and g6 are real weaknesses.

45...Bd3 46 Ng1!

Preparing Nh3-f4.

46...Bf1 47 a3 b5 48 b4 Bd3 49 Nh3 Bc2 50 Nf4 Bf5 51 f3!

Putting Black in zugzwang and forcing him to play his pawn to a6, creating a further target for the knight.

51...a6 52 Ne2 Bd3 53 Ne1 Bc2

It's true that Black can corral the knight with 53...Bc4, but then 54 f4 puts Black in zugzwang: he must either let White's king infiltrate or let the knight into c5.

54 f4 Kd7

Now a very classy idea.

55 f5!! (Diagram 38)

Whichever way Black captures, White finds a way through. For example:

a) 55...exf5 (now g6 is incredibly weak) 56 Ne2 Ke7 57 Nf4 Kf7 58 Kxd5 Be4+ 59 Kd6 Bc3 60 d5 etc.

b) 55...gxf5 (now the g-pawn is a killer) 56 Ne2 Ke7 57 Nf4 Kf7 58 g6+ Kg7 59 Kxe6 Be4 60 Ke5.

55...Bxf5

Now the a6-pawn drops off.

56 Nb3 Ke7 57 Nc5 Bg4 58 Nxa6 Kd7 59 Nc5+ Ke7 60 a4!

The final stage: White creates a passed pawn.

60...bxa4 61 Nxa4 Kd7 62 Nc5+ Ke6 63 Nxe6 Bf3 64 Nf4 Be4 65 Nxd5! 1-0

White wins after 65...Bxd5 66 b5+!

**Example 195**

Khalifman-Barua, FIDE World Championship, Las Vegas 1999



**Diagram 39 (W)**  
Another sorry bishop



**Diagram 40 (W)**  
What now?

(Diagram 39) This example is very similar to the previous one and White wins in a very similar way!

**69 f5!!**

A brilliant pawn sacrifice to give the white king access to Black's dark squares.

**69...gxf5 70 Kf4 Kf6**

Forced, as White was threatening to penetrate via g5 or e5. But now White has a simple plan of relocating his knight to c5.

**71 Nc2 Bd7 72 Ne1 Bc8 73 Nd3 Be6 (Diagram 40)**

Now White performs a neat triangulation to put Black into zugzwang.

**74 Kf3! Ke7**

Or 74...Kg7 75 Kg3! Kf6 (75...Kf7 76 Nf4!) 76 Nc5 Bc8 77 Kf4 (Danev) reaching the game continuation.

**75 Kg3! Kf6 76 Nc5 Bc8 77 Kf4**

Now it's Black to move and something must give. Black sacrifices the f-pawn.

**77...Kg6 78 Ke5 f4 79 Kxf4 Kf6**

Now some neat footwork by the white king puts Black in trouble.

**80 Kg3! Kg7 81 Kf3 Kg6**

Or 81...Kf7 82 Nd3 Bg4+ 83 Kf2 Ke7 84 Nc5 Bc8 85 Ke3! (obtaining distant opposition to the black king) 85...Kf7 (85...Kf6 86 Kf4) 86 Nd3! Kf6 87 Nf4 Kf5 88 Nxb5 Kg4 89 Nf6+ Kxb4 90 Kf4 Bb7 91 Ke5 and White wins.

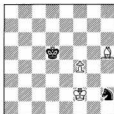
**82 Nd3! Bg4+ 83 Ke3**

Nf4+ is coming and Black must lose a pawn.

**83...Be6 84 Nf4+ Kf5 85 Nxb5 Kg4 86 Nf4 Bf7 87 Nd3! Be6 88 Nc5 Bc8 89 h5! 1-0**

The h-pawn is used as a deflector and the king gets in. After 89 h5 Kg5 90 h6! Kxb6 91 Kf4 Kg6 92 Ke5 Kf7 93 Kxd5 Ke7 94 Kc6 White continues d5-d6 etc.

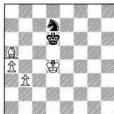
## Try it Yourself



**Exercise 1**

**Exercise 1 (White to play)**

How can White win?



**Exercise 2**

**Exercise 2 (White to play)**

Here White erred with 62 b4?. How can Black punish this mistake?



**Exercise 3**

**Exercise 3 (White to play)**

White has one move here which draws. Can you see it?



**Exercise 4**

**Exercise 4 (White to play)**

What's going on in this position?