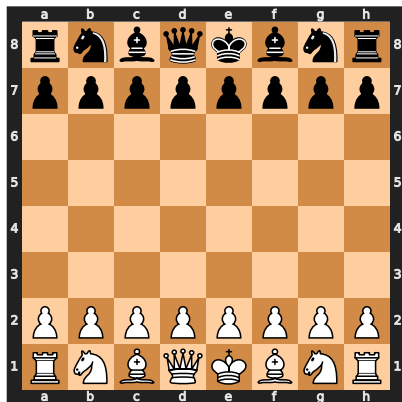


King + 2 pawns vs. King

<https://lichess.org/@/asadangelo>

2024.07.09

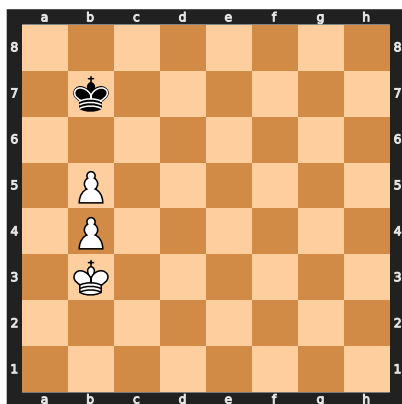
1 Introduction



We already know what happens with a single pawn. Obviously, a King with two Pawns almost always wins (95 on 100, according to our stats) . This figure would be even higher if we left aside those cases where the capture of one of the pawns is forced. We can distinguish three scenarios:

- 1) Connected pawns. Here both pawns defend each other and then the king approaches to give them support. The ending is always won unless a pawn is captured. The only important thing to know is this: if we have a rook's pawn on the 7th rank, we have to give it up in order to promote the knight's pawn.
- 2) Doubled pawns
- 3) Isolated pawns

2 Doubled Pawns 1

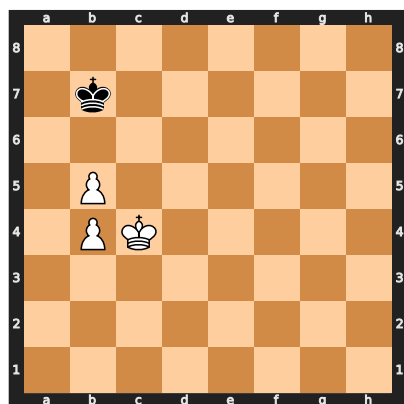


The most interesting case in this section. If we have rook's pawns we know the important thing is not the number of Pawns but the position of the King.

Let us see what happens with other pawns.

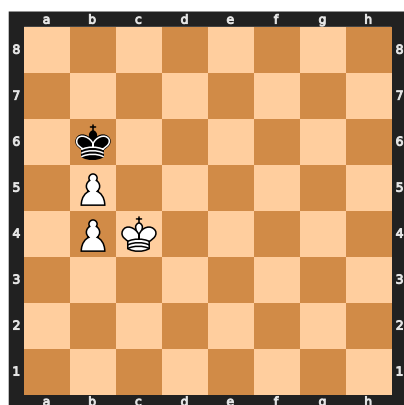
The standard (and easy) procedure: to use the less advanced pawn to waste a move when the critical position (king opposition on the 6th rank) arises. Here White follows this procedure, but he has to be careful due to two special circumstances worth noting :

- A) We are dealing with knight's pawns, which usually involves stalemate motifs.
- B) The pawns are together, which complicates the defence of the more advanced pawn. The following variation illustrates this idea.



White 1. Kc4

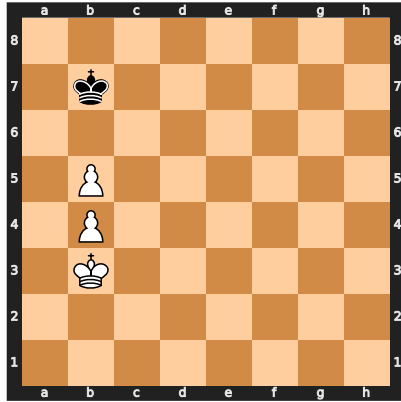
Kc4 is a bad move for White. Black can defend with Kb6.



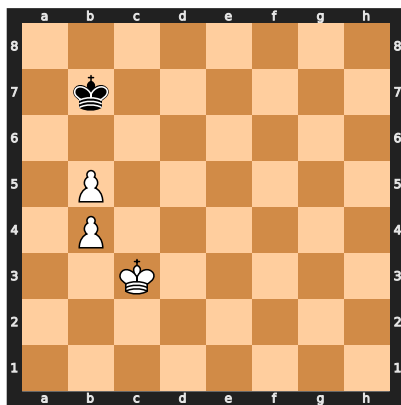
Black 1... Kb6

At this point, the Pawn in b5 is lost and there is no way White can force a win.

3 Doubled Pawns 2

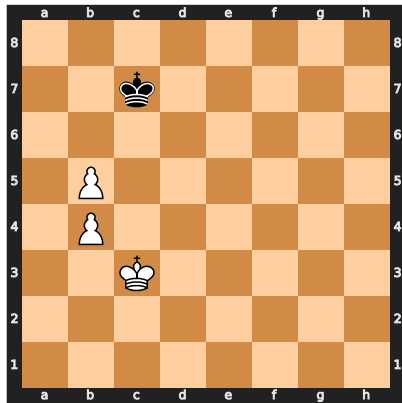


The best move for White is Kc3.



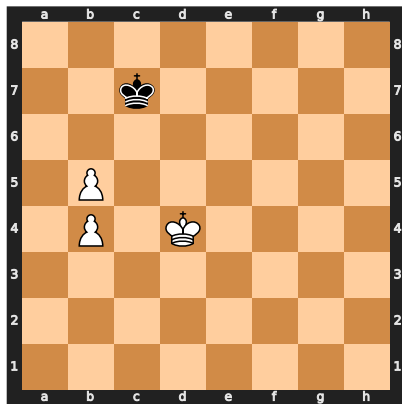
White 2. Kc3

Black move Kc7.

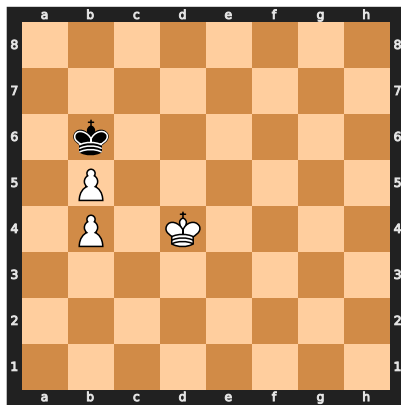


Black 2... Kc7

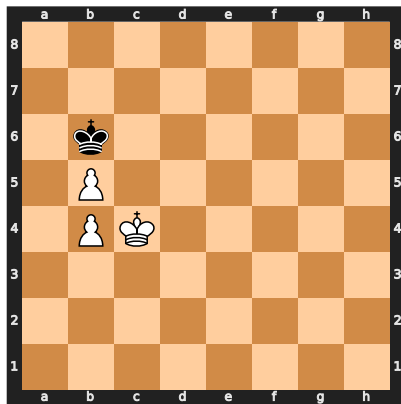
Let's see how this variation continue.



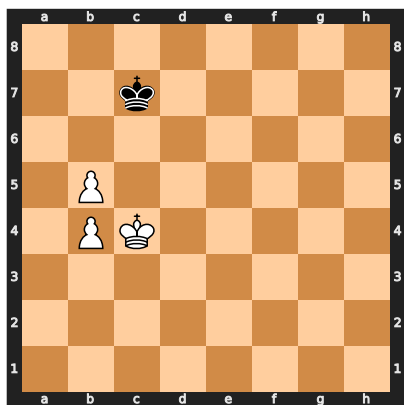
White 3. Kd4



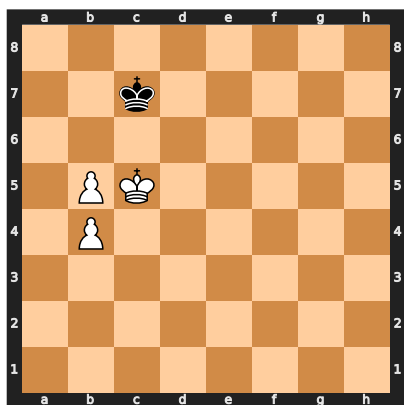
Black 3... Kb6



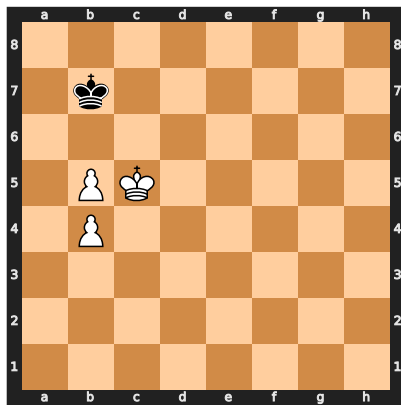
White 4. Kc4



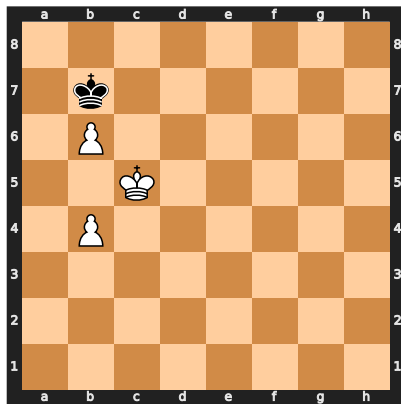
Black 4... Kc7



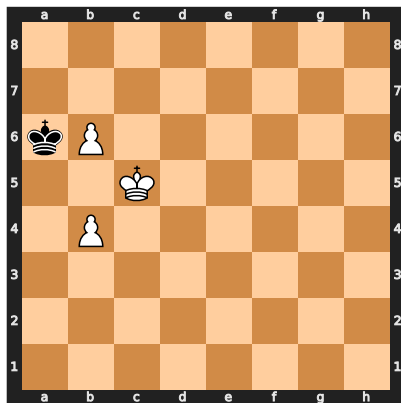
White 5. Kc5



Black 5... Kb7

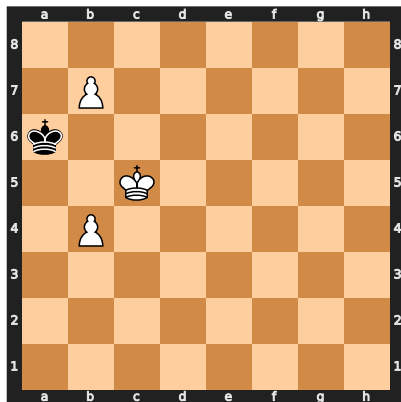


White 6. b6



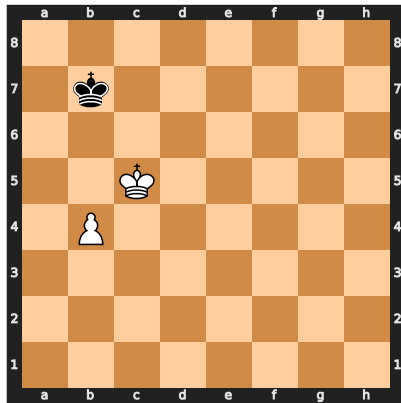
Black 6... Ka6

White can't play Kc6 because it is stalemate.

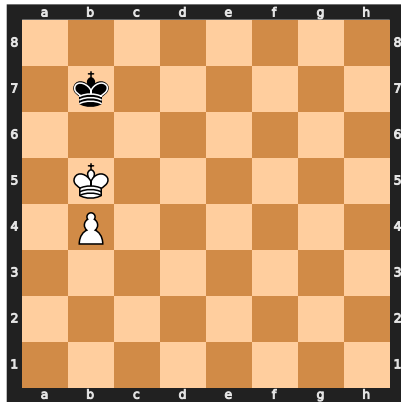


White 7. b7

Pay attention here, Kc6 is stalemate.



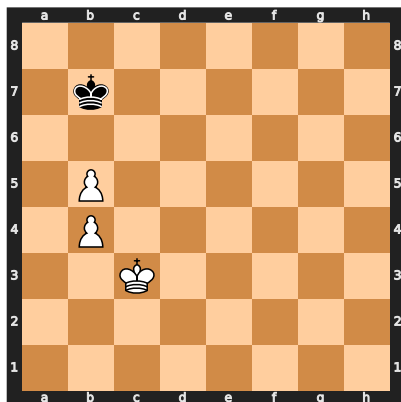
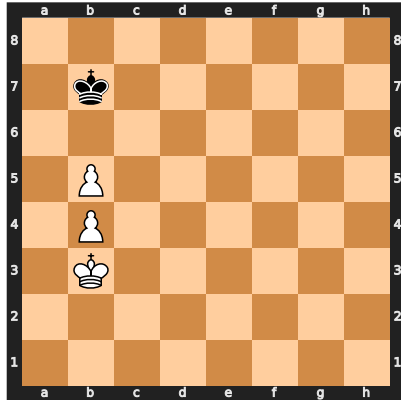
Black 7... Kxb7



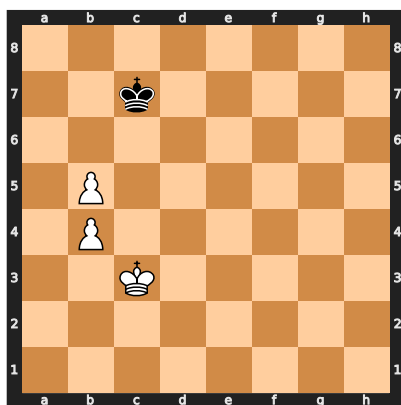
White 8. Kb5

White has the opposition and win the game (see King + Pawn vs King study).

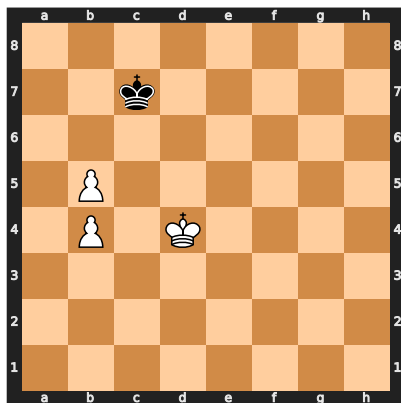
4 Doubled Pawns 3



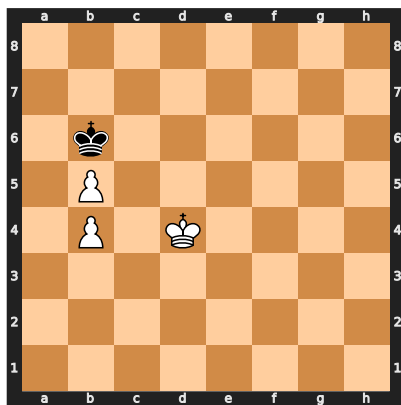
White 8. Kc3



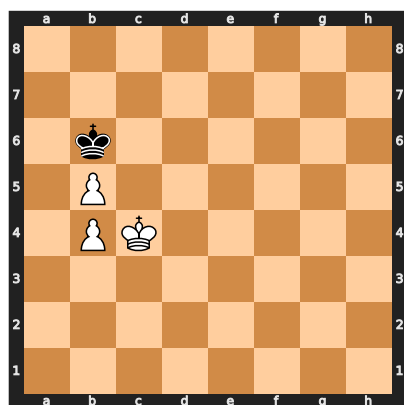
Black 8... Kc7



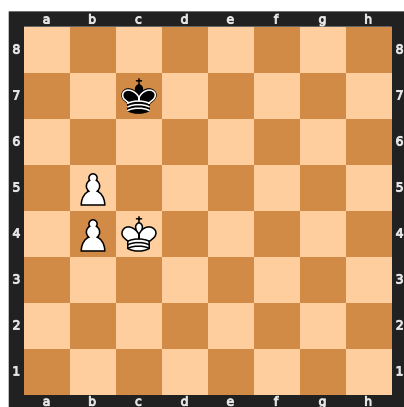
White 9. Kd4



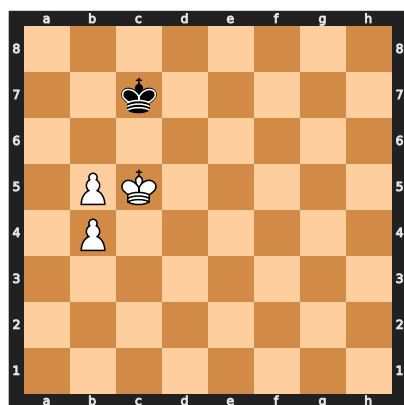
Black 9... Kb6



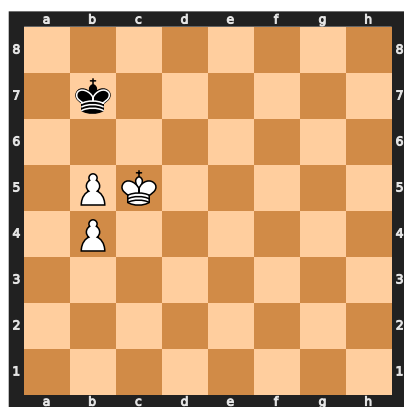
White 10. Kc4



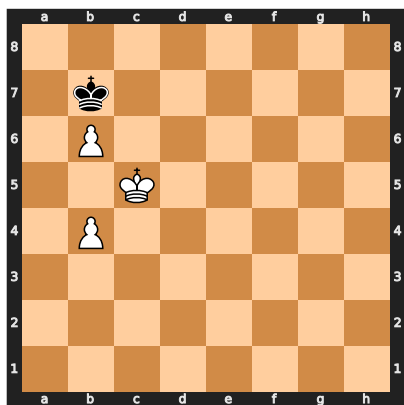
Black 10... Kc7



White 11. Kc5

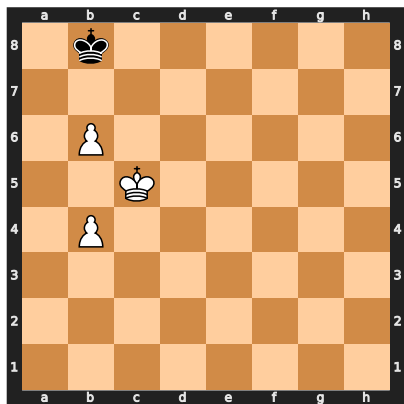


Black 11... Kb7

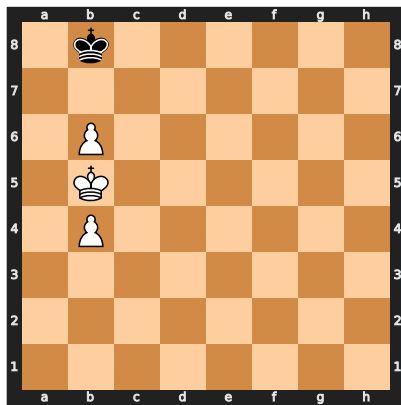


White 12. b6

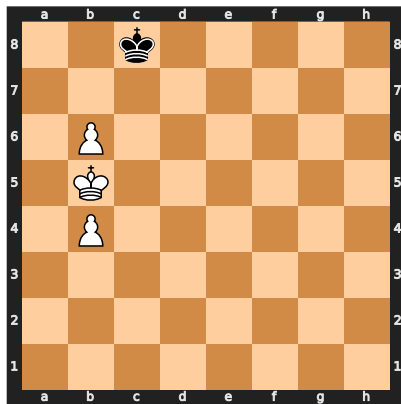
Trying to trouble White as much as possible. Direct play would go as follows:



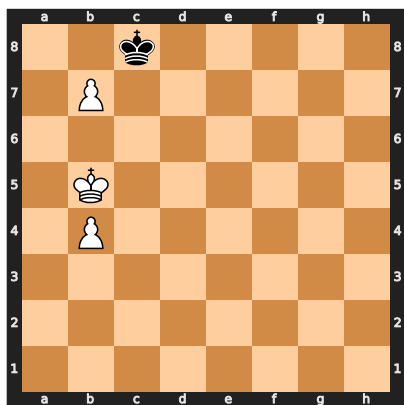
Black 12... Kb8



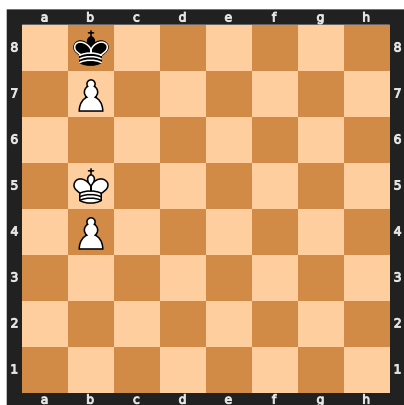
White 13. Kb5



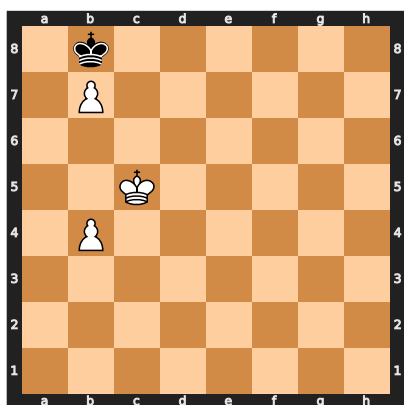
Black 13... Kc8



White 14. b7+

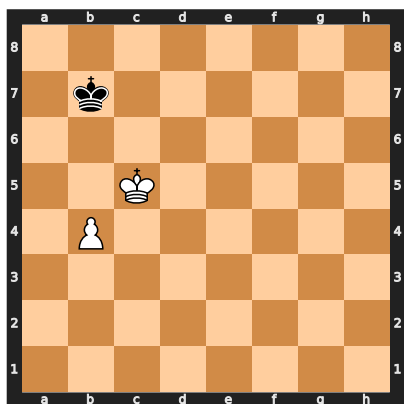


Black 14... Kb8

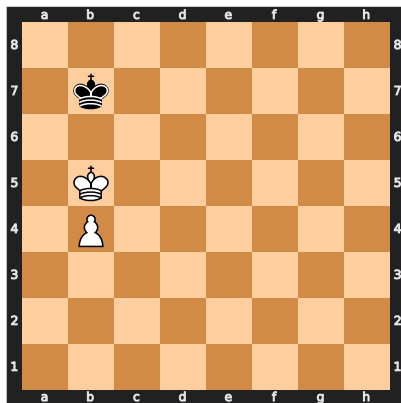


White 15. Kc5

White must give up the most advanced pawn to gain the key squares of the other pawn.



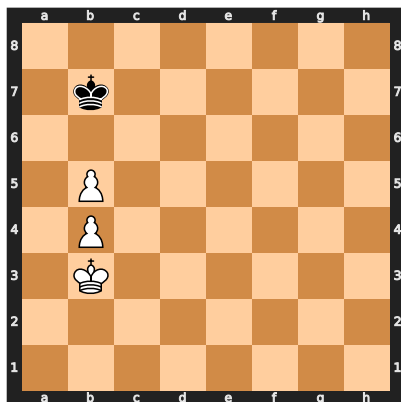
Black 15... Kxb7

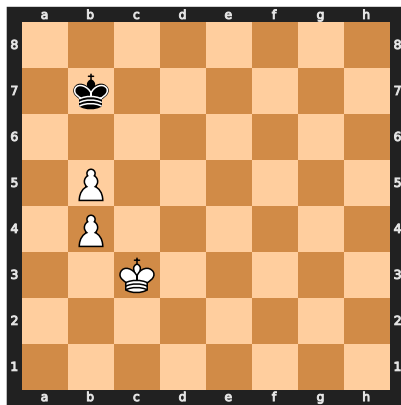


White 16. Kb5

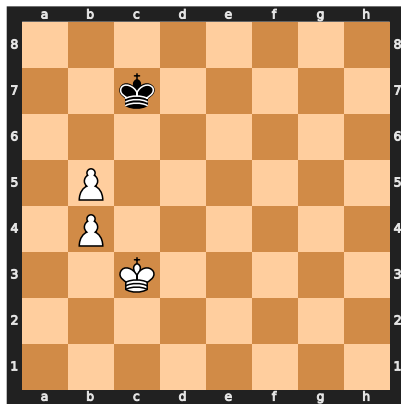
White has the opposition and win the game (see King + Pawn vs King study).

5 Doubled Pawns 4

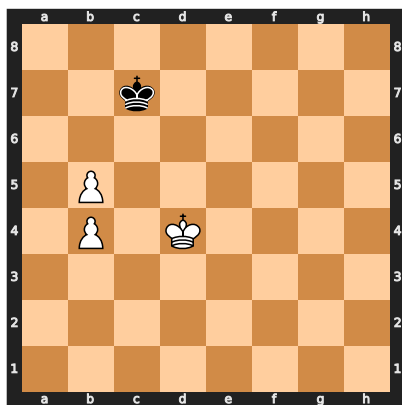




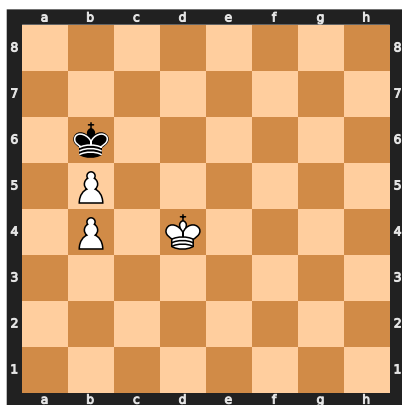
White 16. Kc3



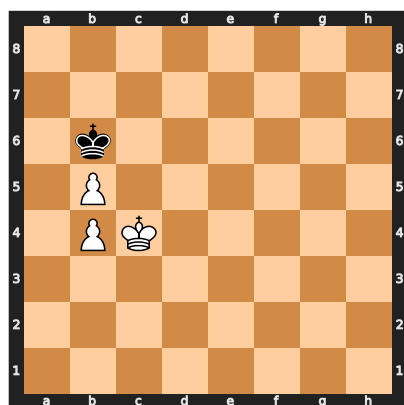
Black 16... Kc7



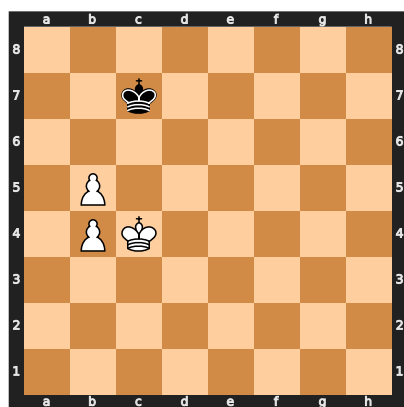
White 17. Kd4



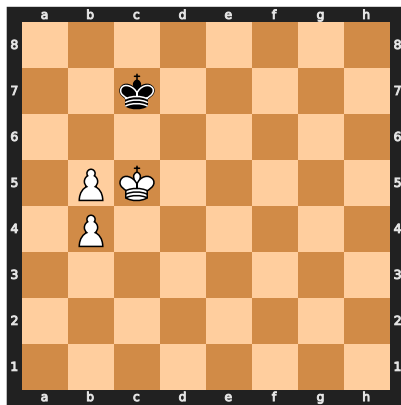
Black 17... Kb6



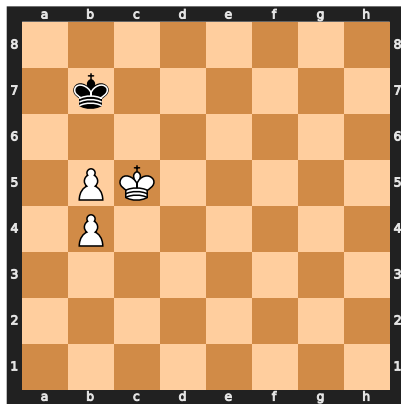
White 18. Kc4



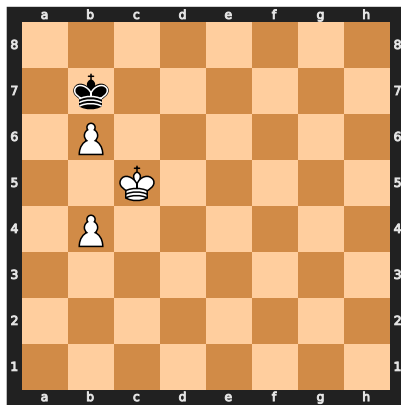
Black 18... Kc7



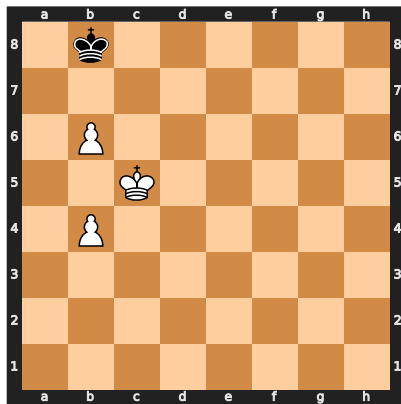
White 19. Kc5



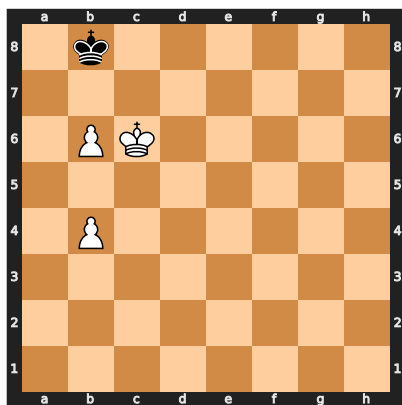
Black 19... Kb7



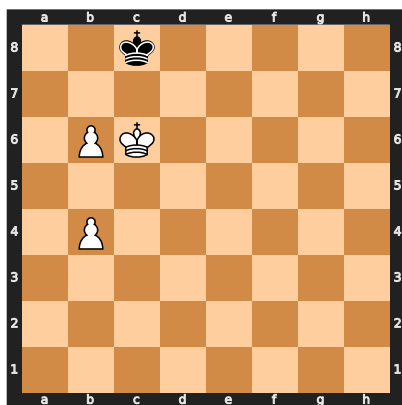
White 20. b6



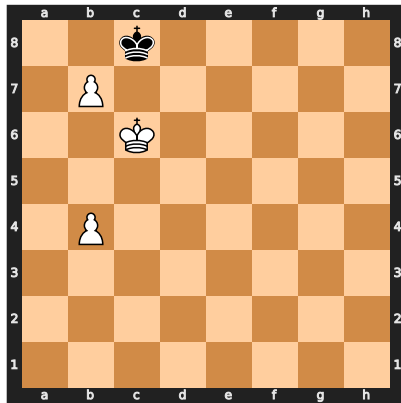
Black 20... Kb8



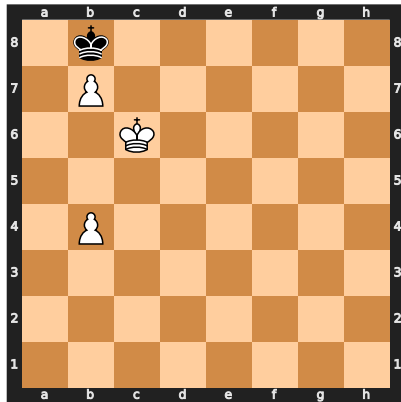
White 21. Kc6



Black 21... Kc8

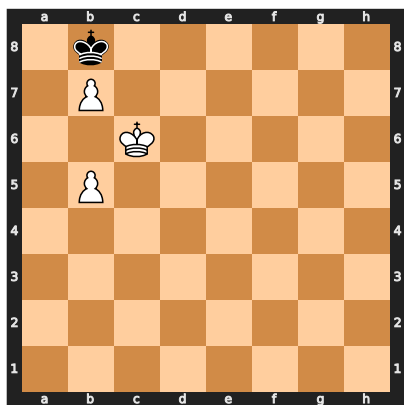


White 22. b7+

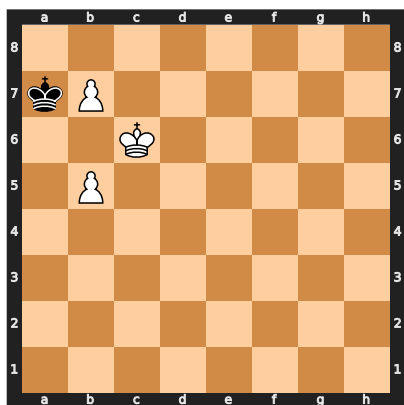


Black 22... Kb8

b5 looks logical

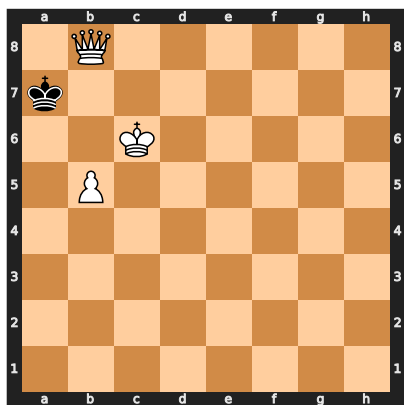


White 23. b5

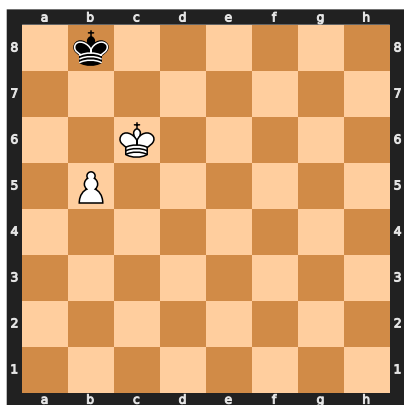


Black 23... Ka7

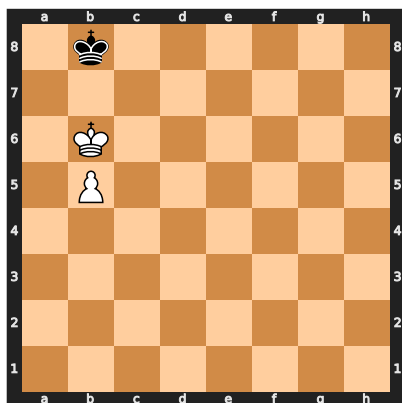
In this position, White has to give up the more advanced pawn, because Kc7 is stalemate.



White 24. b8=Q+



Black 24... Kxb8



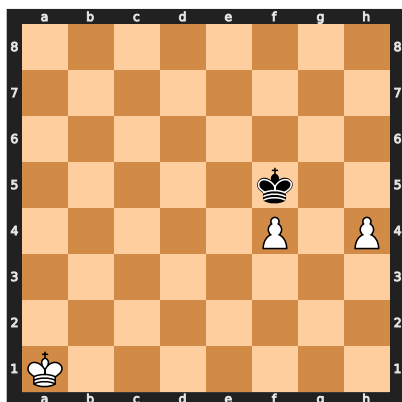
White 25. Kb6

White has the opposition and win the game (see King + Pawn vs King study). It is easy to see that, if we cannot lose a move with the less advanced pawn, it is impossible to win. This situation arises if the pawn is on the 5th rank. If you have doubts, I recommend that you check it as an Exercise.

Conclusion: Two doubled pawns always win, except in these two situations:

- 1) Rook's pawns.
- 2) The less advanced pawn is on the 5th rank.

6 Isolated Pawns - Introduction

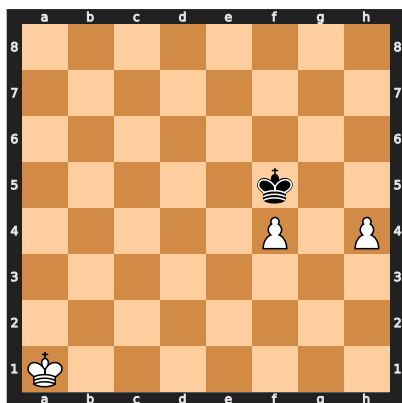


Here the winning chances are great, too. The only situation worth studying occurs when the enemy king threatens the pawns. However, usually the pawns have one of these resources at their disposal:

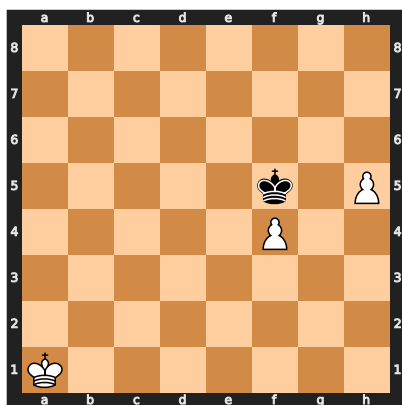
- 1) Mutual defence: one pawn threatens to promote to avoid the capture of the other one.

2) Delay the capture of one pawn until the strong king arrives to defend them and reaches the key squares of the other one.

7 Isolated Pawns - Mutual defense

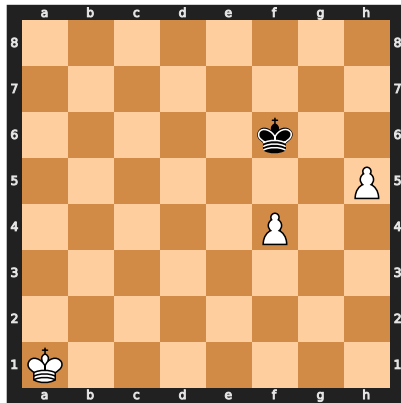


This is the first resource: Two pawns separated by one file can defend each other as long as the king does not attack the more advanced one.

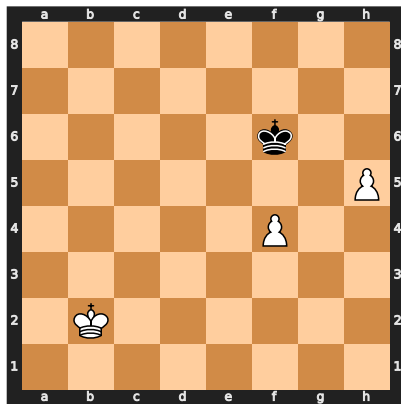


White 25. h5

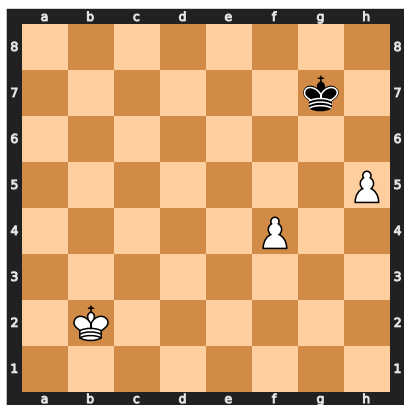
Thus the h-pawn prevents the capture of the f-pawn and gives the white king time to come near. If the king captures the f-pawn, he will be outside the square of the h-pawn. For this reason, he moves Kf6.



Black 25... Kf6

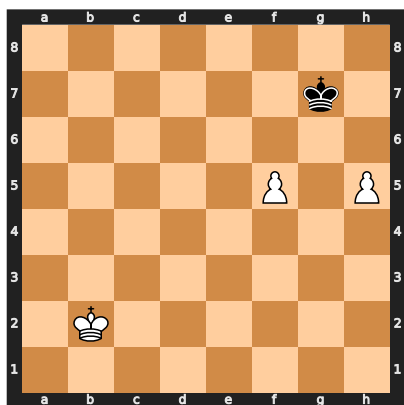


White 26. Kb2

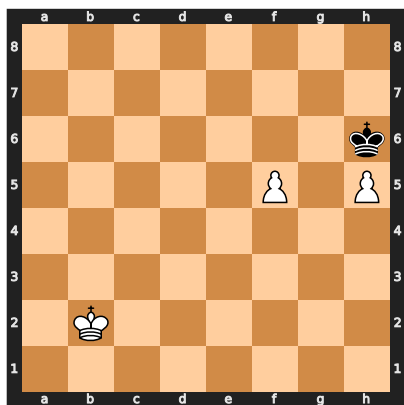


Black 26... Kg7

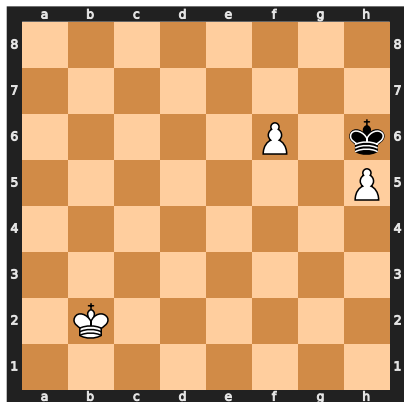
The king is about to capture the advanced pawn, but ...



White 27. f5



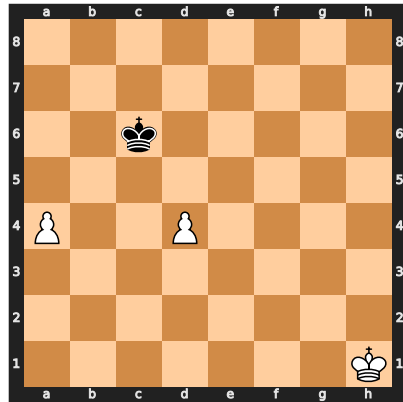
Black 27... Kh6



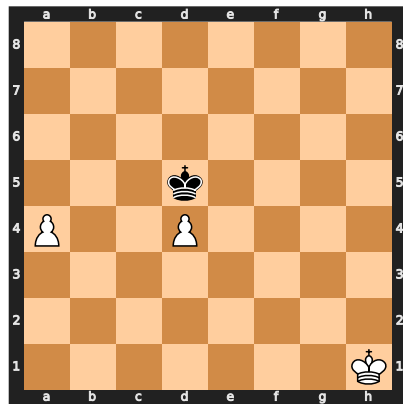
White 28. f6

Here we have the same situation as on move 1. The f6 pawn prevents the capture of the h5 pawn. Now White just has to bring the king near and promote one pawn. This is a very useful procedure, especially when there are more pawns on the board. If the pawns are separated by more files, the situation becomes more interesting, assuming, of course, that there are more pawns on the board. Otherwise, it is almost impossible that the stronger side's king does not manage to secure promotion of one pawn.

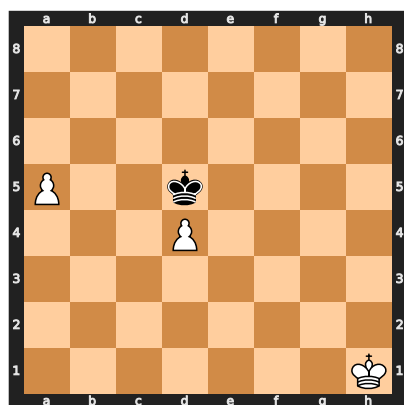
8 Isolated Pawns - Delay the Capture



It is Black's turn. However, there is not a single square on the whole board from which the white king fails to support his pawns in time. Let us see a possible sequence of play.

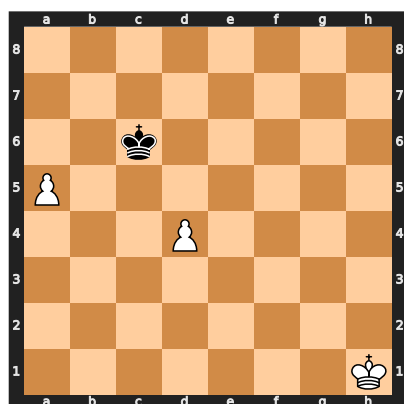


Black 28... Kd5

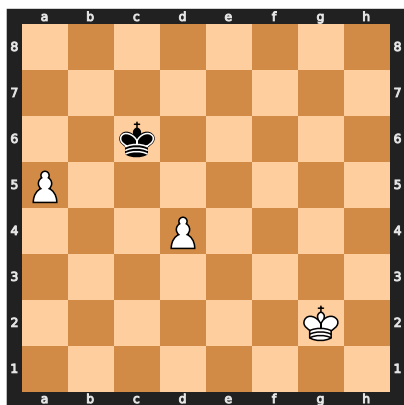


White 29. a5

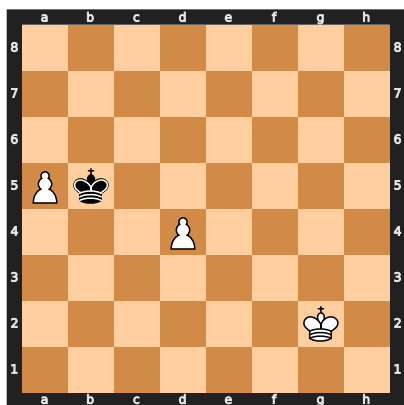
Preventing the capture of the central pawn.



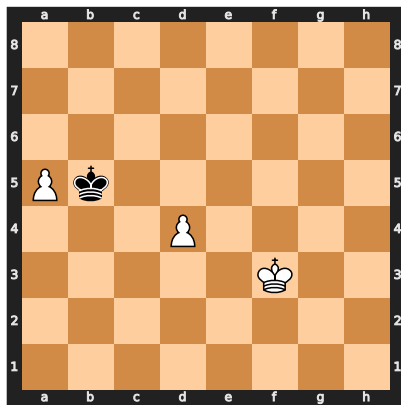
Black 29... Kc6



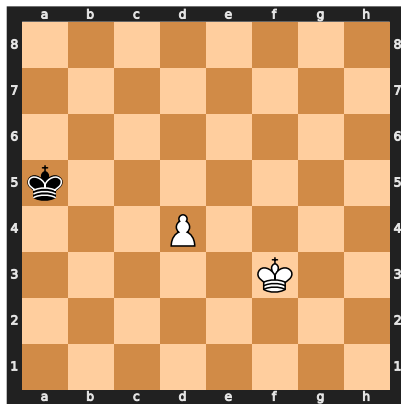
White 30. Kg2



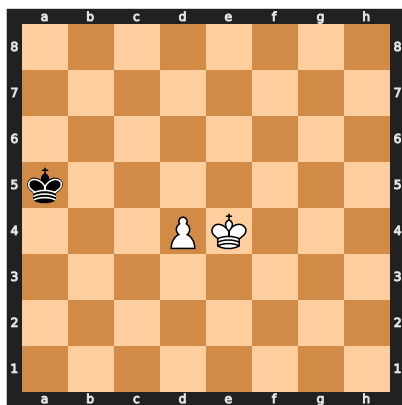
Black 30... Kb5



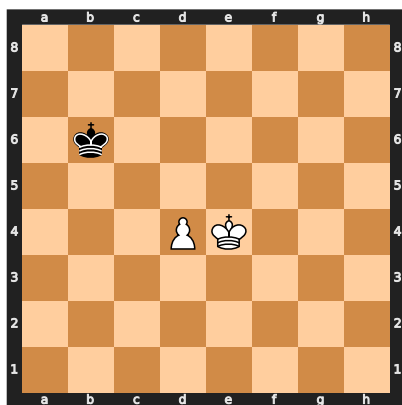
White 31. Kf3



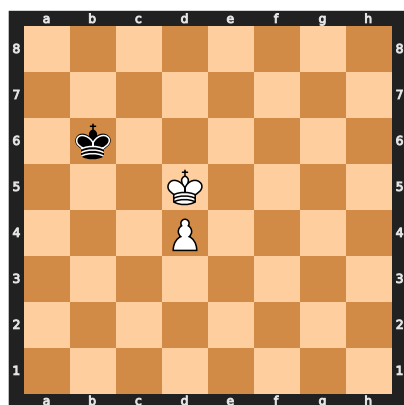
Black 31... Kxa5



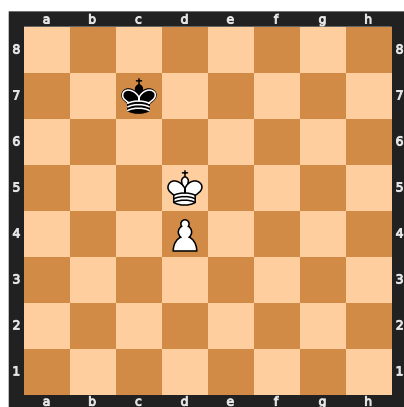
White 32. Ke4



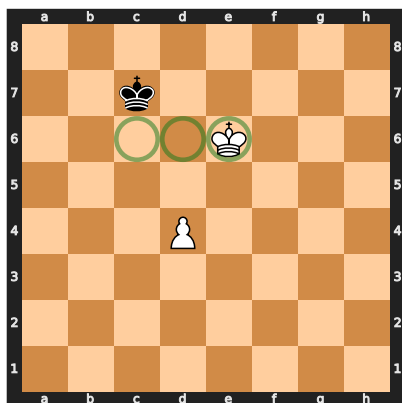
Black 32... Kb6



White 33. Kd5



Black 33... Kc7



White 34. Ke6

The white king has reached one of the key squares of the d4 pawn. Therefore, the most important scenario arises with more pawns on the board. We will come back to this idea when we deal with the floating square. White won the game.