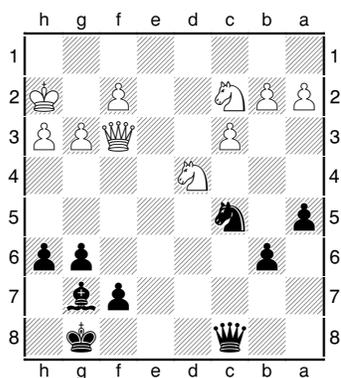


Problem 1



Thinking time: 7 minutes. Black is to move.

- What would you move?
- Give concrete variations

Problem of 7 points.

Your score:

White is a pawn up, with majority on the queenside. However, with **1...Na4**, Black has the chance to re-establish the material equality. This move is not very hard to see, but a knight-move on the edge of the table can be sometimes overlooked.

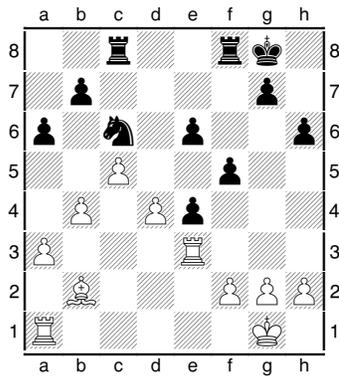
However, how can White continue? After losing the b2-pawn, his queenside pawn structure becomes weak and the pressure of fianchettoed bishop on g7 can give White's big troubles. The game continued with **2.Ne3!** Nxb2 3.Nd5 and, now, the excellent quality of white knights on the centre at least compensates the damaged pawn structure on the queenside.

So, Black cannot be stopped to win a pawn, but any material gain takes time (see Nc5-a4-b2 and the black knight has not the best position there). Meanwhile, White improved his knight position a lot (Nc2 came on the centre of the board) – a first importance element is White's TO DO list.

Conclusion and score:

- Black re-establishes the material equality with 1...Na4 (4 points)
- "Chess is generalized exchange", a "closed system" meaning that *if you win something, you lose something*. White took advantage from Black's lost tempos and improved the quality of his knight with Nc2-e3-d5. (3 points)

Problem 2



Thinking time: 12 minutes.

White is to move.

- Which is main Black's threat?
- How should White continue?
- Give concrete variations and evaluate.

Score:

- Nc7-e7-d5 (4 points)
- 1.f3 followed by 2.Rxe6 (4 points)
- If you correctly evaluated the resulted position after 4 moves (2 points)

Problem of 10 points

Your score:

About pieces:

- This is an endgame with bishop against the knight. The bishop + rook collaboration is bigger than knight + rook collaboration. Also, the bishop is stronger than the knight in endgames with pawns on both sides.
- However, if the knight can occupy a *defended operational base*, the knight becomes very strong. So, we have to find if the black knight can occupy an operational base... and, yes, this is on d5. The knight will block the white d-pawn, the knight cannot be attacked by any white piece and pawn and will exert a strong pressure on both sides (the quality of a central square).

About pawn structure:

- Black has doubled pawns, so White should have a pawn majority which is a good plus in endgames. So, we notice that White has a plus on the queenside-centre with 4 pawns against 2 pawns!
- However, White's pawns on the queenside are arranged on dark-squares as the bishop, limiting a lot his ray of action.

From the above basic evaluation of the pluses and minuses of this position, we can give the solution:

- Black's threat is to play Nc6-e7-d5, placing the knight on the operational base.
- White should destroy any blockade on its pawns, in order to free his bishop and to be able to advance his pawn majority. Which is the black pawn who defends the d5-square? The e6-pawn. How can White attack this pawn? With his rook from e3, so the move is **1.f3!** with the idea to open the e-file.
- The game continued normally with: **1...exf3**
2.Rxe6! and the operational base from d5 is semi-destroyed. **2...Rcd8** **3.Rd1** forced **3...Rd5** to block the white pawn (after 3...Kf7, White can play 4.d5)
4.gxf3

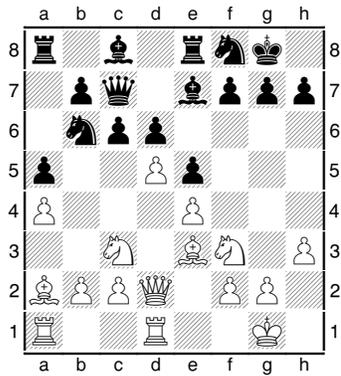
Now, White has an advantage because his pawn majority and the control over the e-file.

White's TO DO list now is:

- bring the king on c4
- dislocate the c6-knight by a3-a4 and b4-b5

White succeeded to realize both elements from his TO DO list and won the game easily.

Problem 3



Thinking time: 10 minutes.

White is to move.

- How should White continue?
- Give concrete variations

Problem of 5 points

Your score:

The opening ended very badly for Black, with lack of space, undeveloped pieces and, moreover, his pieces do no co-operate.

White has all the pieces in their best positions and it seems he cannot improve more his position. It is time to take a decision for how to win the game.

When you have an excellent position that you cannot improve more, you should choose between:

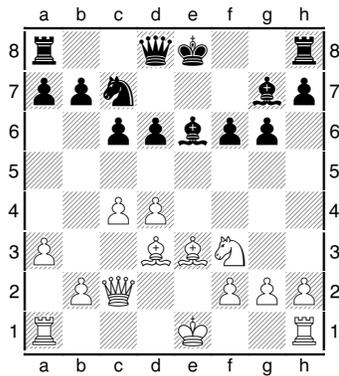
- entering a technically won endgame or*
- attack on the enemy king.*

By a small combination, White can choose the first option: 1.Nxe5 dxe5 2.d6 Bxd6 3.Qxd6 Qxd6 4.Rxd6. All was forced until this moment and it is clear that White has a clear edge because of the total control over the d-file and bishop-pair.

Score:

- 1.Nxe5 (4 points)
- 1.Nxe5 dxe5 2.d6 Bxd6 3.Qxd6 Qxd6 4.Rxd6 +/- (clear advantage to White) (1 point)

Problem 4



Thinking time: 10 minutes.
White is to move.

- Evaluate the position and give a plan of play for White.
- What would you move?

Problem of 5 points

Your score:

White is clearly better because of the Black's weak pawn structure on the kingside. The normal black pawn formation should be f7, g6, h7.

The consequences of the pawn placed on f6, instead of f7 are:

- weakness on e6 – and being on an open file, this weakness will give Black big troubles;
- weakness on g6 – where the Black pawn is defended, but the advance h2-h4-h5 and the 2 white pieces targeting there gives Black another big problem.

Moreover, White has a big space advantage and the only Black's option to challenge White's centre is d6-d5, with unclear consequences.

White's strongest plan is to attack immediately the black kingside with h2-h4-h5 creating threats when the black king is still on the centre and his pieces can hardly take good defensive positions. White will castle long in order to bring the last piece into play and to conquer the h-file (after h2-h4-h5).

Solution:

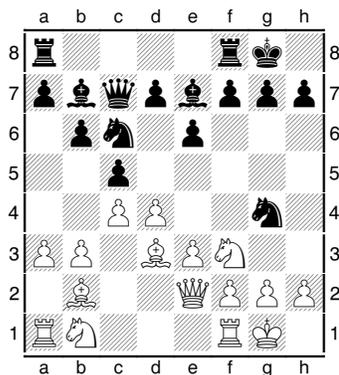
- the plan: h2-h4-h5 and 0-0-0 (5 points)
- the move: h2-h4 (1 point)

Bad solution:

This problem was given with 2 reasons, the second being to see how much you were for the piece sacrifice on g6, which is (totally) unsound. Many times during our games, we start calculating a sacrifice with the strong wish to make it work, but this only leads to loose important minutes on the chess clock and tire our minds without any point.

Advise: when you have a big strategic plus, don't complicate the game with unclear variations that you cannot calculate until the end.

Problem 5



Thinking time: 12 minutes.
White is to move. How would you continue with White?

Problem of 5 points

Your score:

The position is about equal, but the black knight looks strange on g4 and White may be tempted to chase it away with 1.h3

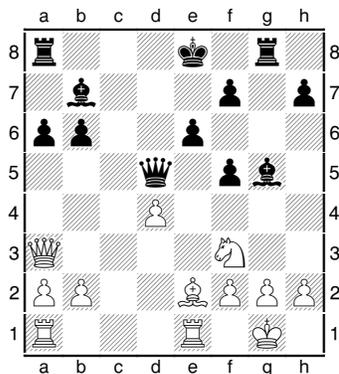
However, the first thing a player should do immediately after the opponents has played is to look after the threats.

So, what does Black threaten here?

The position of the knight on g4, the black queen on c7, and, possible, bishop on b7 should tell us to look very carefully on the kingside. ...and, yes, Black is threatening: 1...Nxd4, followed by 2...Bxf3 with double attack on queen and mate on h2.

If you saw the Black's threat 1...Nxd4, you won the full score: 5 points. So, any move, as 1.Nbd2, 1.d5 and others which doesn't allow 1...Nxd4, receives 5 points.

Problem 6



Thinking time: 12 minutes.
White is to move.
a) Evaluate the position
b) What would you play with White?

Problem of 7 points

Your score:

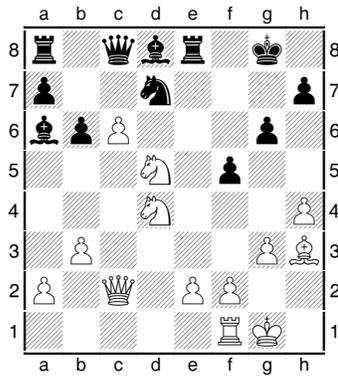
One of our clients sent us his solution and it is 100% correct and excellent explained:

“Black has a big edge in this position. He has the two Bishops in an open position. He also has the Open g file and g2 in particular looks vulnerable. d4 could also prove to be a weakness especially in an ending. Black's king is in the centre but appears to be safe. I am struggling to find a plan for white but it must hinge around trying to dislodge Black's Queen, which is very powerful. (3 points)

1 Qb3 Qb3 2 ab3 a5 and White is still worse but he has removed the queens and will have to take his chance in the endgame.” (4 points)

In the game, Black played 2...b5 and won the endgame at the move 72.

Problem 7



Thinking time: 10 minutes.

White is to move.

- How would you continue?
- Give concrete variations.

Problem of 7 points

Your score:

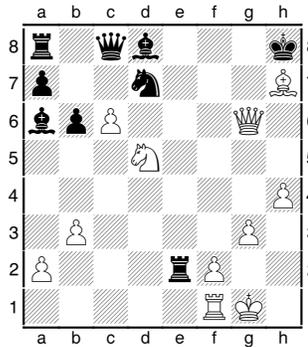
A complicated position, with White having a rook down, but a strong initiative. However, Black is not lost yet and the game will be finally won by the player with a stronger calculation power and stronger nerves.

In the evaluation of this position, the first importance element is the black's king safety, and then the presence of the threatening white pawn on c6.

The black king's pawn structure is extremely weak, if not inexistent and the black pieces cannot defend well their king.

If White plays calmly now, taking the piece with 1.cxd7, after 1...Qd7 2.Bg2 (forced) Rac8, Black's advantage is incontestable.

White's only chance to continue his attack is to sacrifice one more piece with: **1.Nxf5! gxf5** (forced) **2.Bxf5 Rxe2** (forced, otherwise 3.cxd7, forking black pieces, wins) **3.Bxh7+ Kh8 4.Qg6**



After this forced line that White should calculate without problems until this moment, he has 3 pieces in attack and no Black piece exist in defense. The most important is the White's control over the light squares and this is why White sacrificed his knight on f5: to bring the bishop into attack.

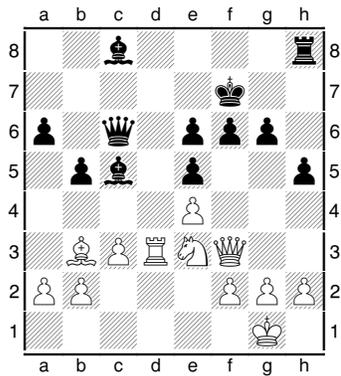
So, by calculating the variations, we should arrive until here and with the "mind's eye" to see that the resulted position is good for us.

The game continued: 4...Nf6 5.Nxf6 Bxf6 6.Qxf6+ Kxh7 7.Rd1 and White won

Score:

- 1.Nxf5 = 5 points
- The forced variation until move 4 = 2 points

Problem 8



Thinking time: 10 minutes.

White is to move.

- How would you continue?
- Give variations.

Problem of 6 points

Your score:

This is a simple position if you do the correct evaluation first.

Pieces:

Black has the bishop pair and its power in the endgame could give Black the full point. Also, the white knight has not any operational base.

White's rook is on the open d-file, but without any entrance or outpost. So, this doesn't give White a long-term advantage.

However, White pieces are all together in attack and the Black's king position is weak (the king is the only one to defend the f6 and g6 pawns and he is also placed on 2 dangerous lines: the f-file and a2-g8 diagonal).

Such elements must make us to think carefully at some way to destroy the king's defense, usually by combinational motifs.

White's move is **1.Nd5** attacking on f6. The white knight cannot be captured because of **Bxd5+** winning the queen. (4 points).

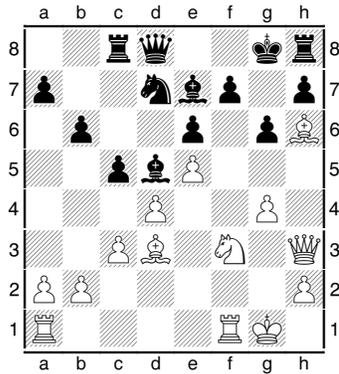
Black can move only:

a) **1...Be7**, but now Black is loosing his long-term strategic advantage: the bishop-pair: **2.Nxe7 Kxe7**. Now the position looks better for White.

b) **1...f5?!**, trying to keep the advantage, is not good because of **2.exf5 gxf5 3.Qg3!** and White has a winning position

(the 2 variations = 2 points)

Problem 9



Thinking time: 20 minutes.

White is to move.

- Find a way to continue with White. Explain your idea.
- Give concrete variations.

Problem of 10 points

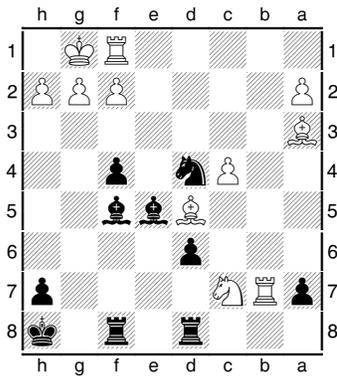
Your score:

A position where White is in attack and for the moment Black is a rook down (the piece out of play from h8).

How can we take advantage from this? First of all, the exchanges should favor White. Also a direct confrontation between pieces is in White's favor because he has more resources. So, White decided to open up the position using a double pawn sacrifice: 1.c4! (7 points).

1.c4! Bb7 [1...Bxf3 2.Qxf3 is also good for White]
2.d5! exd5 3.e6! fxe6 4.g5! Rc6 5.Rae1! bringing the extra rook into attack. If you saw all the moves until here, you have other 3 points. Now, Black is lost. White opened the f-file where he will threaten a mate on f8, cleared the e5-square with the threat of playing: Qg3-e5-g7 and managed to force black pieces to occupy catastrophic positions.

Problem 10



Thinking time: 15 minutes. Black is to move.

- Find a way to continue with Black. Explain.
- Give concrete variations

Problem of 6 points

Your score:

Black is a pawn down, the a7- and d6- pawns are in danger, his king has not a secure position and White's rook entered the 7th rank.

However, his chance hangs in complicating the game with **1...f3** which creates some threats against the white king. (4 points)

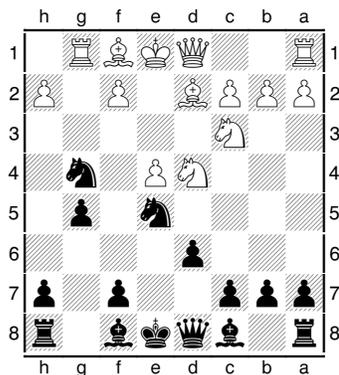
One cannot calculate all the variations in 15 minutes, but this is not required when your chance stays in only one move.

Variations:

- if White doesn't look at the kingside at all and plays 2.Rxa7, Black can continue: 2...Ne2+! 3.Kh1 f3 4.Bxg2 Nf4 with counter-chances
- 2.g3 is wrong because of 2...Nh3 3.Rb1? Ne2+ 4.Kh1 Bg2#
- In the game, White has played 2.Re1 Ne2+ 3.Kh1 f3 4.Bxg2 Nf4 5.Nd5 Nd3! 6.Rxe5!? Nxe5 7.f4 Rb8! 8.Ne3 Nd3 with complications, but good chances for Black
- an interesting variation is 2.Nb5 Rg8! 3.Bxg8 Ne2+ 4.Kh1 f3 5.Kxg2 Be4+ 6.f3 Nf4+ 7.Kf2 Bxb7 and Black is winning.

You have 2 points in case you saw that White defends his king's position without too much problem.

Problem 11



Thinking time: 30 minutes.

Black is to move.

- Find a way to continue.
- Give concrete variations.

Problem of 8 points

Your score:

A position from the opening, where White sacrificed a pawn for initiative. Unfortunately for White, he made a small mistake and now Black can remain with the pawn and a good position. But let's see how.

First of all, it is clear that we have to start answering to the question of what does White threaten, especially in such positions. So... White is threatening to play h2-h3 or Be2, chasing the black knight, then to capture the g5-pawn, then to play f2-f4 chasing away the second black knight.

White is also intending to castle long, so even Qd1-e2 followed by 0-0-0 is a threat as the black king will have no chance in the centre.

What Black has to do:

a) First of all, Black has to sustain the position of the knight on e5. That knight is the only defender, taking care of the c4- and f3- squares (where the white bishop and queen would love to come) and defends f7 and g4. The black knight is protected by the g5-pawn against f2-f4, pawn which is protected by the position of the knight on g4.

b) Black has to find a place for his king. The kingside looks really unsafe because of the mess on the g-file, the centre won't be comfortable place for the king in such an open position, so the queenside is the only good choice. So, Black has to move the queen and the bishop, in order to castle.

But where to move these pieces? The queen on f6 looks ugly because after 1...Qf6 2.Qe2, White is threatening f2-f3 and the g4-knight and g5-pawn are hanging.

So, we have to move the queen, but where? On b6! It looks excellent there, but we have to move the c-pawn and losing a tempo with such a passive move doesn't look too good for most of the chess players.

However, looking better at the position, we notice that Black will win his tempo back, by attacking the d4-knight when moving Qb6.

Of course, c7-c5 is not good, because it weakens the d5-square too much and the queen will be restricted on b6 with the pawn on c5.

Black has the direction where to look now: c7-c6 which also defends the important d5-square.

Is c7-c6 a good move?

Of course, we have to calculate the variation (as played in the game): **1...c6 2.h3 Qb6!** (of course, the weakness of the f2-square is helping Black) **3.hxg4 Qxd4 4.Qe2** (4.Bxg5 Qxd1 followed by 5...Nf3 wins for Black) and, now, it's all over.

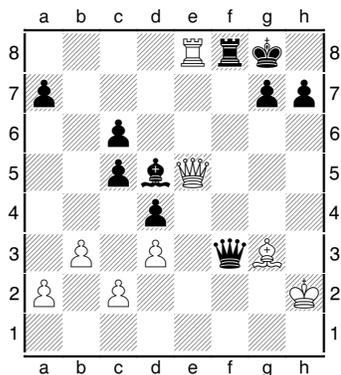
Black managed to get out his queen, the g5-pawn is protected, White doesn't threaten anything, and the centre is well protected.

Black's TO DO list now is Bc8-e6, followed by 0-0-0, queen back to b6 and a5 (after Be3), f7-f6 and Rg8-g7-d7. His extra pawn will decide the game.

Score:

- a) 1...c6!! = 6 points
- b) The variation until 3...Qxd4 and White cannot take on g5 = 2 points

Problem 12



Thinking time: 7 minutes. White is to move. How should White continue?

Problem of 5 points

Your score:

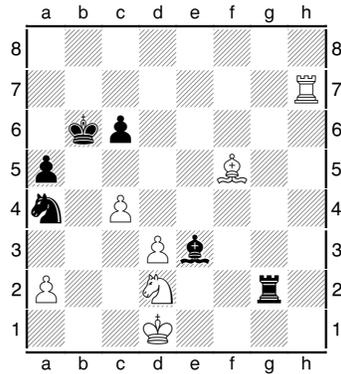
White was completely lost and Black blundered in time crisis. Now, White can fight for the draw by entering an opposite-colored-bishop endgame:

- a) **1.Rxf8** Qxf8 2.Qb8! as in the game, and White managed to draw
- b) 1...Kxf8 would give Black better chances. 2.Qf4+ Ke7 3.Qe5+ Kf7 4.Qf4+ Qxf4 5.Bxf4 Ke6 still keeping good chances to win.

Score:

If you saw 1.Rxf8 and 2.Qb8 after Qxf8, you have 5 points.

Problem 13



Thinking time: 7 minutes. White is to move. How should White continue? Give concrete variations.

Problem of 5 points

Your score:

White is a pawn up, but the position of the king is seriously threatened even if it's an endgame.

After the white knight will leave his position, Black can mate with Na4-c3+, Kd1-e1 and Rg1#.

So, White has to play actively and use the fact that all black pieces are hanging.

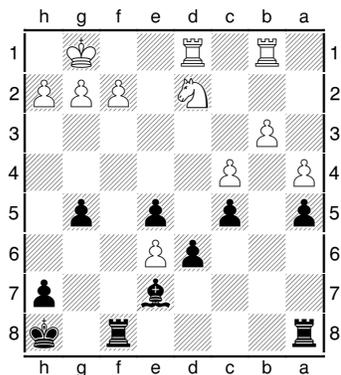
35.c5+! Kxc5 [35...Bxc5 36.Nc4+ Kb5 37.Rb7+ Ka6 38.Bc8!÷] **36.d4+!!** this is the best chance for White and now the game is extremely complicated. It's almost impossible to calculate all the variations, but such moves as 1.c5, followed by 2.d4 with the idea to take advantage of the hanging pieces and knight-fork can be given by our tactical intuition. [36.Ne4+ Kb6 37.Bc8 Nc5=+] **36...Kb5** [36...Kxd4 37.Rh4+ Ke5 38.Nc4+ Kf6 39.Nxe3 Nc3+ 40.Kc1 Nxa2+=; 36...Bxd4 37.Nb3+ Kc4 38.Be6+ Kd3 39.Bf5+ Kc4=; 36...Kb4 37.Rb7+ Kc3 38.Rb3+ Kxd4 39.Nf3+ Kc5 40.Rxe3 Rxa2 +/=] **37.Bd3+ Kb4 38.Rb7+ Kc3 39.Rb3+ Kxd4 40.Nf3+ Kc5 41.Bf1 Rf2 42.Be2 Bd4 43.Ke1** very unclear

Solution:

If you saw 35.c5+, you have 3 points.

If you saw 36.d4+, you have other 2 points.

Problem 14



Thinking time: 13 minutes.

Black is to move.

- Evaluate the position.
- How should Black continue?

Problem of 9 points

Your score:

The white extra pawn from e6 is as already won by Black with the king maneuver: Kh8-g7-f6-xe6. Or Rf6-xe6.

The black bishop is blocked by his own pawns and has no any chance to get out from his passive position.

Both players have one weakness on open files that cannot be repaired: Black on d6, White on b3. Both players can arrange their rooks to defend actively these weaknesses: White – rook on d3, Black rook on b6.

The “bad” black bishop has an important role (but the only role) to defend the weakness on d6.

However, Black has a second weakness: the a5-pawn; and 2 pawn weaknesses in an endgame are rather fatal.

White’s knight is the piece which can make the difference between the 2 players’ positions. The knight is able to come on excellent positions as: Ne4-c3-d5 or -b5. If White manages to play undisturbed, Black has not any chance to draw this endgame by only defensive measures.

So, Black has to look for a way to draw and this way is really unique here. In this moment, Black can try to close the d-file, thus eliminating the weakness from d6 with the maneuver: 1...Rf8-f4-d4

Score:

- you saw the “bad” bishop for Black = 1 point
- you saw the 2 weaknesses (from b3 and d6) = 1 point
- you saw the weakness from a5 = 2 points
- Black is worse, so he should fight for draw = 1 point
- You saw 1...Rf4 = 4 points

Problem 15 = White can win by building a “bridge” with 1.Re4, the rook will help the white king to escape from checks – see **Lucena** position.

Problem 16 = Black can draw by cutting the White’s king on the rank by 1...Ra6 and forcing him to advance the pawn. After that, White’s king will have no place to hide from checks from behind. – see **Philidor** position.