

Michael Adams



No secrets from Nunn

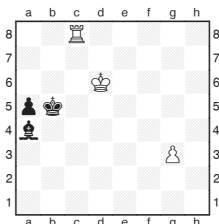
A few years ago, just after John Nunn's excellent book *Secrets of Rook Endings* had been published, he told me about a review it had received. The gist of it was that the reviewer mused on why the Doc claimed a complete manual when he had only considered cases with the pawns on a-d files, but not e-h?

I will try and do a slightly better job with his most recent endgame treatise *Nunn's Chess Endings 1 and 2* (www.gambitbooks.com), which features instructive practical examples that John has investigated with his endgame tablebases. I'd only had a quick skim through the first volume when the follow-up hit my doormat. As usual with this kind of book it's not easy to know where to start. I resorted to the index and stumbled upon an interesting encounter of mine from many years ago.

A little background: I had been considerably worse for most of the game, but an over-ambitious winning attempt had rebounded on Alexei Shirov and this probably influenced the endgame play as my opponent has a deserved reputation as an expert on this aspect of the game.

I actually annotated the game myself some years ago, but passed over much of the endgame section including the key moment without comment. Having read the book this doesn't seem like such a bad idea, as other players'

comments are mercilessly corrected, but my sin of omission was even worse, as is revealed.



Adams, M - Shirov, A
Linares 1997

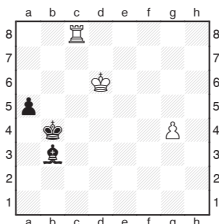
88... Kb5-b4

After 88...Ba4-b3 I was intending the correct 89.Kd6-e5 bringing White's king back to marshal Black's pawn 89...a5-a4 90.Ke5-d4 Bb3-e6 (or 90...Kb5-b4 91.Rc8-b8+ Kb4-a5 92.g3-g4) 91.Rc8-a8 Be6-d7 92.Kd4-c3 Kb5-c5 93.Ra8-a7 Kc5-d6 94.Kc3-d4 are winning.

89.g3-g4

89... Ba4-b3

This is the critical point.



90.Kd6-e5

The only winning continuation was the subtle 90.Rc8-b8+ Kb4-c3 91.Rb8-a8 a5-a4 (91...Kc3-b4 92.Kd6-e5 a5-a4 93.Ke5-d4 Kb4-a3 94.Kd4-c3 now wins due to the improved White rook position) 92.Kd6-c5 Bb3-c2 93.Kc5-b5 Kc3-d4 94.Kb5-b4 Kd4-e5 95.Ra8-f8 Ke5-e6 96.g4-g5 Ke6-e7 97.Rf8-f2 and all is under control.

Pushing the pawn leads nowhere 90.g4-g5 a5-a4 91.g5-g6 a4-a3 92.g6-g7 a3-a2 93.Rc8-a8 Bb3-c4 is a draw.

90... Kb4-a3

The Doc reveals the surprising save, 90...a5-a4, I was intending to track back with my King, 91.Ke5-d4 Kb4-a3 92.Kd4-c3 (92.g4-g5 Ka3-b2 93.g5-g6 a4-a3 is an easy draw), but then out of the blue 92...Bb3-e6 and the pawn and all winning chances are lost. It's always surprising how complicated positions with little material remaining can be, but it's not too common to get your few remaining pieces skewered!

91.g4-g5

Now with Black's king temporarily impeding his foot soldier my pawn is too swift.

91... Ka3-b2
92.g5-g6 a5-a4
93.g6-g7 Bb3-f7

If the pawn advances 93...a4-a3 94.Rc8-b8 Kb2-c2 95.Rb8xb3 wins easily, but now I can harass the Black bishop.

94.Rc8-f8 Bf7-c4
95.Rf8-f4

Shirov resigned as 95...Bc4-b3 96.Rf4xa4 removes any doubt.

I will briefly mention *60 Years in the Same Room* by Robert H. Jones (www.keverelchess.com), a well-researched history of the picturesque Paignton chess congress held each year in the historic Oldway Mansion. This year's anniversary event was appropriately won by regular visitor Keith Arkell.