

# DVORETSKY'S ENDGAME MANUAL



***FastTrack Edition***

**Edited by Karsten Müller and Alex Fishbein**

**Foreword by Ian Rogers**

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by  
**Mark Dvoretsky**

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**2021  
Russell Enterprises, Inc.  
Milford, CT USA**

Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual  
FastTrack Edition

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Leonid Dvoretsky

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ISBN: 978-1-949859-33-1 (print)  
ISBN: 978-1-949859-34-8 (eBook)

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Published by:  
Russell Enterprises, Inc.  
PO Box 3131  
Milford, CT 06460 USA

[www.russell-enterprises.com](http://www.russell-enterprises.com)  
[info@russell-enterprises.com](mailto:info@russell-enterprises.com)

Cover design by Fierce Ponies  
Printed in the United States of America



# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> by Karsten Müller & Alex Fishbein	5
<b>Foreword</b> by Ian Rogers	7
<b>Signs, and Symbols</b>	9
<b>Chapter 1 Pawn Endgames</b>	10
<b>Chapter 2 Knight versus Pawns</b>	40
<b>Chapter 3 Knight Endgames</b>	45
<b>Chapter 4 Bishop versus Pawns</b>	49
<b>Chapter 5 Opposite-Color Bishops</b>	52
<b>Chapter 6 Bishops of the Same Color</b>	60
<b>Chapter 7 Bishop versus Knight</b>	70
<b>Chapter 8 Rook versus Pawns</b>	81
<b>Chapter 9 Rook Endgames</b>	87
<b>Chapter 10 Rook versus Knight</b>	141
<b>Chapter 11 Rook versus Bishop</b>	148
<b>Chapter 12 Queen Endgames</b>	158
<b>Chapter 13 Queen versus Rook</b>	167
<b>Chapter 14 Other Material Relations</b>	175
<b>Chapter 15 General Endgame Ideas</b>	188
<b>Chapter 16 Solutions</b>	204

# Introduction

With the great success of *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual*, the question arose of how intermediate players should approach the book. Mark Dvoretsky's original concept was that they should study only the text that is highlighted. This highlighted text has always served a dual purpose: to delineate the exact positions and practical techniques that the readers should try to remember, and to point the less advanced readers to the more accessible material.

But with the revolutionary changes in chess in the last twenty years, the lines became blurred. Faster time controls increased the number of precise positions to remember, as players often have only seconds to make a decision. Meanwhile, computer engines and tablebases have revealed more endgame secrets, making the theory larger and more difficult to master.

*DEM-FastTrack* brings a back-to-basics approach. We have started with just the text that was highlighted in gray in the fifth edition. Where necessary, we have retained practical examples of how to apply the theory. The overriding principle is accessibility to readers who have not yet reached master or expert level, or perhaps have only begun their chess journey.

We have included 60 exercises, as they form an integral part of Dvoretsky's didactic concept. All of these came from the fifth edition of the *Endgame Manual*, where some were exercises and others were tragicomedies. We have graded all exercises with one, two or three stars, according to their difficulty. One-star exercises test how well you have learned the theory, but three-star positions can require a good amount of creativity. Of course, the difficulty level can be subjective, and it is good to remember that grandmasters have often made mistakes in these positions.

Some of the more difficult exercises are labeled as "Play" positions. They ask the solver to see not just the first move or two, but an entire variation. They will be easier to solve if you find a coach or friend to play out the

position against you, using the solution in the back of the book. You play it move by move, with your friend playing the opponent's response. If you play a different move than what is in the solution, you replace it with the correct move and continue from there.

The main line of the solution is always in bold print. Another way is to use paper to cover the moves of the solution, or better yet, ask someone (who does not need to be a chessplayer) to prepare a sheet of paper for each move, using the solution at the end of the book. It can also sometimes be useful to play out exercises, or other positions that you have mastered, against a computer engine or tablebase, with the clock ticking.

While the book was specially prepared with the general audience in mind, we do want to offer some remarks for the more advanced reader. We have retained some analysis in the rook ending section, particularly the Kantorovich-Steckner position (beginning on page 121), which is considerably more complicated than most of the text. However, it is part of endgame theory now, and your opponents might know it. We have also updated the famous Spielmann-Rubinstein endgame with the latest (and remarkable) discovery by Charles Sullivan already after the publication of the fifth edition. Finally, a few of the three-star exercises at the end (pages 201-203) feature some beautiful endgame studies.

If you like this FastTrack edition, you should of course consider getting the full book to deepen your understanding of this very important phase of the royal game. Finally, there is no better way to close than quoting grandmaster Artur Yusupov, considered by many to be Dvoretsky's most successful student: "I am sure that those who study this work carefully will not only play the endgame better, but overall their play will improve. One of the secrets of the Russian chess school is now before you, dear reader!"

Karsten Müller, Hamburg  
Alex Fishbein, New Jersey  
April 2021

## Foreword

In an era when tournament players are often required to make key endgame decisions at 30 seconds per move – and far less when playing online – knowledge of the endgame has become more important than ever before.

Knowledge of a wide variety of endings is now obligatory to survive in modern chess, since there will be no time during a game to work out if a particular technical position of, say, rook and pawn v rook is winning – and if so how to do it.

*Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* has, since it was first published in 2003, been the first point of call for many players. It occupies a deified position in the pantheon of endgame chess literature; a work combining accessibility with academic rigour which has helped thousands of chess students build up their knowledge base and master even the trickiest of endings.

*Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* was notable for the unique feature of distinguishing the essentials from the advanced material, using different printing colours to distinguish the two. Thus it was possible for a student new to endgames to concentrate on the basics and leave the more complex parts for later.

For such a reader, *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual: FastTrack Edition* is a boon. Müller and Fishbein have extracted all the highlighted sections from *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* and created a slimmed-down version of the original, covering all the essentials without reducing the academic rigour of the late, great Mark Dvoretsky's work.

The theoretical knowledge is leavened with practical examples, keeping the student's eye on the multiple ways a complex position can be reduced, through suitable tactics, to the set of basic positions which have already been taught.

However, lazy players hoping for a quick fix for their endgame problems will be disappointed. As I read through *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual – FastTrack Edition* I realised basic is not synonymous with easy.

For example, a basic endgame which bugged me throughout my career, rook + h-pawn v bishop, is covered in a page and a half on pages 149-150. To understand why the generic endgame is drawn with the pawn on h5 but winning with the pawn on h4, and how to win by pushing the h pawn at exactly the right moment, is explained simply and well. However that explanation cannot be fully understood – at least with any hope of implementing the correct technique in practice – without following each and every sub-variation.

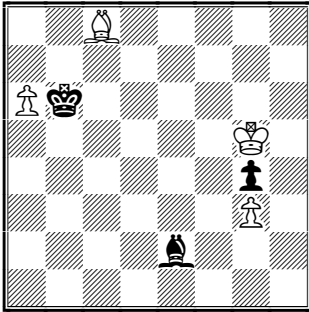
As you might have gathered, I am very pleased that *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual: FastTrack Edition* has come along. It is eminently suitable to sit in an amateur player's library as their only endgame book, and equally good at preparing a serious student for many other fine endgame books – not forgetting of course the storied father of this volume, *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual*.

Ian Rogers  
Sydney  
April 2021



## Transpositions to Positions with One Pawn

Charushin – Rosenholz  
cr 1986



A typical situation: White can take the g4-pawn only at the cost of his a6-pawn. The question is whether the enemy king can get back in time.

**1 ♖f4! ♠**

Excellently played! White improves his own king's position (now it no longer stands in the path of its pawn) while simultaneously using zugzwang to force the enemy king further away from the kingside. The hasty 1 ♖xg4? ♖xa6 2 ♖f4 ♖c7 3 ♖f3 ♖d6 4 g4 ♖e7 leads only to a draw.

**1... ♖a7 ♠** (1... ♖c7 2 a7 ♖f3 3 ♖xg4) **2 ♖xg4 ♖xa6 3 ♖f3 ♖b6**

No better is 3... ♖c8 4 ♖e4 ♖b6 5 ♖f5.

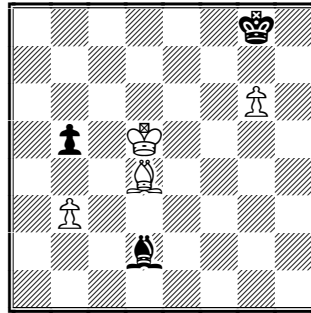
**4 g4 ♖c5 5 g5 ♖d6 6 g6 ♖e6**

Nothing is changed by 6... ♖e7 7 ♖g5 ♖f8 8 ♖h6 ♖c4 9 g7+ ♖g8 10 ♖e4 ♠ 11 ♖h7+.

**7 ♖g5 ♖c4 8 g7**

Black resigned, in view of 8... ♖f7 9 ♖h6 ♖f6 10 ♖h7 ♖g5 11 ♖h8 ♖h6 12 ♖e4, followed by ♖h7-g8 (the h7-g8 diagonal, where the black bishop must move, is too short).

Capablanca – Janowsky  
New York 1916



White has nothing to play for, other than to pick up the b-pawn in exchange for his g6-pawn. Unfortunately, this plan would not be enough to win. I present the main variation: 1 ♖c5 b4 2 ♖c4 ♖e1 3 ♖c5 ♖g7 4 ♖xb4 ♖g3! (Averbakh's analysis shows that 4... ♖f2 also draws, but that 4... ♖h4? loses) 5 ♖c3+ ♖xg6 6 b4 ♖f7 7 b5 ♖c7! 8 ♖d5 ♖e7 9 ♖c6 ♖d8 10 ♖b7 ♖d7=

**1 ♖e4**

Capablanca is in no hurry to force matters – he maneuvers, hoping for a mistake by his opponent.

**1... b4**

By no means forced (1... ♖e1 2 ♖d3 ♖b4 3 ♖c3 ♖e7 is not bad); but, on the other hand, it does not spoil anything.

**2 ♖e3 ♖c3 3 ♖d3 ♖e1 4 ♖d2 ♖f2 5 ♖e4** (5 ♖xb4 ♖g7=) **5... ♖c5?**

And here is the mistake! Now White captures the b4-pawn, with a tempo ahead of the other variations. First Black had to lure the king away from the queenside: 5... ♖g7! 6 ♖f5, and now he can defend the pawn (6... ♖c5 7 ♖f4 ♖f2 8 ♖e5+ ♖g8=).

**6 ♖d5! ♖e7**

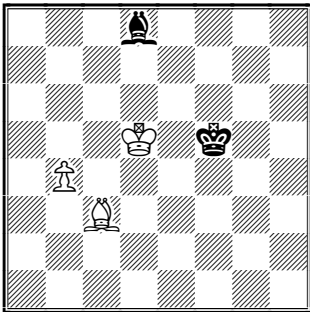
Still worse is 6... ♖f2 7 ♖xb4 ♖g7 8 ♖c3+ ♖xg6 9 b4 ♖f7 10 ♖d4 ♖g3

11 b5 ♖c7 12 ♖c6 ♖a5 13 ♖e5 Δ  
 ♖c7+-

7 ♖c4 ♖g7 8 ♖x b4 ♖d8 9  
 ♖c3+?

White errs in return – although it is not at all obvious. The win was 9 ♖d2! – a variation we shall examine later.

9... ♖xg6 10 b4 ♖f5 11 ♖d5



In this position, Janowsky resigned. And wrongly so – as Averbakh has shown. Black could get a draw by employing the basic defensive plan of “king behind king.”

Since White is going to put his king on c6, Black must hurry his king over to c4:

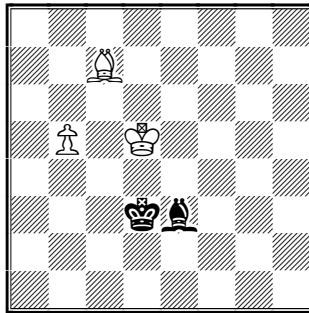
11... ♖f4!! 12 ♖d4 (12 ♖e5+ ♖e3 13 b5 ♖d3 14 ♖c6 ♖c4=)

12... ♖f3! 13 b5 (13 ♖c5 ♖e2 14 ♖c6 ♖d3 15 ♖d7 ♖g5 16 b5 ♖c4)

13... ♖e2! 14 ♖c6 ♖d3 15 ♖b6 ♖g5 16 ♖c7 ♖e3

After 17 ♖d6 ♖c4, Black prevents the interference along the diagonal at c5 just in time. But the struggle is not over yet.

17 ♖d5!



The most dangerous continuation, as pointed out by Issler. If Black now plays 17... ♖c3? then 18 ♖d6 ♖b6 (18... ♖b3 19 ♖c5 ♖a4 20 ♖c6) 19 ♖c6. Black has no time to play ♖c4 – White is ready to reply with either 20 ♖c7 or ♖c5, depending on where Black’s bishop retreats.

Black is saved by a tactic, which is very useful to remember: it is a typical trick in bishop endgames.

17... ♖d2!!

On 18 b6, the *pin* 18... ♖a5 saves him.

18 ♖d8 ♖e3!

Now the threat of 19 b6 ♖a5 20 b7 forces Black to retreat. That is fine – White’s bishop stands worse on d8 than it did on c7, and there is no longer any danger in 19 ♖e7 (Δ 20 ♖c5) 19... ♖b6! 20 ♖c6 ♖a5! (White no longer has 21 ♖c7) 21 ♖d6 ♖c4=

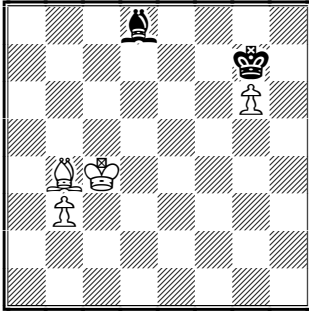
White has just one final trap:

19 ♖c7 ♖d2! 20 ♖c6 ♖e3! 21 ♖b7! (21 ♖d6 ♖c4=) 21... ♖c4 22 ♖a6 ♖b3!!

Once again, the same technique of “king behind king”: the black king heads for a4. He would lose after 22... ♖f2? 23 ♖b6 ♖h4 24 ♖e3 ♖d8 25 ♖d2 Δ ♖a5+- And 22... ♖b4? 23 ♖b6 ♖g5 24 ♖a5+ and 25 b6+- is wrong too.

23 ♖b6 ♗g5 24 ♜f2 ♜d8 25 ♜e1 ♜a4=

All that is left for us to see is what would have happened, had Capablanca played more precisely on his ninth move.



9 ♜d2! ♜xg6 10 b4 ♜f5 11 ♜d5

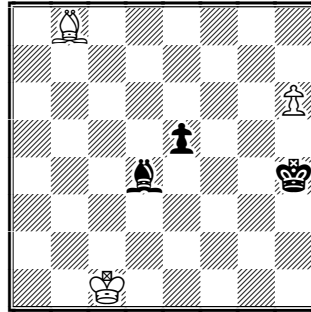
Now we are looking at the position from the next-to-last diagram, but with the bishop on d2 (instead of c3). Here Black's king is unable to get behind White's.

11...♜g4 12 b5 ♜f3 13 ♜c6 ♜e4 14 ♜b7!! ♜d3 15 ♜e1! ♜c4 16 ♜a6 ♜b3 17 ♜a5 ♗g5 18 b6+-

### Interference

We know that interference is the primary instrument by which the stronger side secures (or attempts to secure) the queening of its pawn. In all the examples we have looked at thus far, the bishop has done this work. But sometimes (although certainly not nearly as often), interference is carried out with the aid of the pawns. For instance, there is the following spectacular study.

P. Heuäcker 1930



1 ♜a7! (1 h7? e4=) 1...♜a1 2 ♜b1 ♜c3 3 ♜c2 ♜a1 4 ♜d4!! ♜x d4 (4...ed 5 ♜d3+-) 5 ♜d3 ♜b2 6 ♜e4+-

### The Bad Bishop

A vital principle of chess strategy (which is certainly applicable to more than just the endgame) requires us *not to place our pawns on the same color squares as our own bishop*.

In the first place, pawns that are fixed on the same color squares as the bishop limit its mobility – this is why such a bishop is called “bad.”

In the second place, a bad bishop is unable to attack the enemy pawns (which are usually placed on the opposite color squares), which dooms it to passive defense of its own pawns.

And third, since both pawns and bishop control only one color of squares, there will be “holes” in between those squares that the enemy pieces will occupy.