



**GRIVAS CHESS
INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY**

FOUNDED 2012

QUEEN VS ROOK

EFSTRATIOS GRIVAS

Queen vs Rook

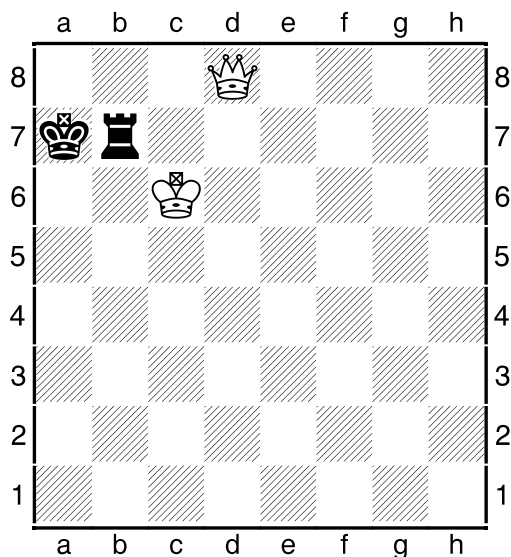
In the play-offs of the semifinals match for the FIDE World Cup in Tbilisi (21.09.2017) and in the game So-Ding, we had an interesting ending of queen vs rook.

Although this is a more or less not a difficult win, many humans have failed in cashing the point, due mainly to short time available in such a late stage.

I would strongly recommend to all players and trainers to study well the excellent work of Derek Grimmell, who made a fantastic research of this ending in his 'Queen versus Rook Endgame Training Database' (Chessbase 2008).

To start with, the fundamental position of the ending should be known:

Philidor Position ●



This is the most important position to know; the so called 'Philidor Position', as it was firstly discovered and studied by the famous French player and researcher Antoine Francois Philidor back in the 17th Century! In this standard, zugzwang position, Black must on the move.

1...Rh7

All alternatives equally lose:

1...Ka6 2.Qc8.

1...Rb8 2.Qa5 #.

1...Rb4 2.Qa5+.

1...Rb3 2.Qd4+ Kb8 3.Qf4+ Ka7 (3...Kc8 4.Qf8 #) 4.Qa4+.

1...Rb2 2.Qd4+.

1...Rb1 2.Qd4+ Kb8 3.Qf4+ Ka8 4.Qf8+ Ka7 5.Qf2+ Kb8 6.Qh2+ Ka7 7.Qa2+.

1...Rf7 2.Qd4+ Kb8 (2...Ka8 3.Qa1+) 3.Qb2+ Ka8 4.Qa2+.

1...Rg7 2.Qd4+.

2.Qa5+ Kb8 3.Qb4+ Ka7 4.Qa3+ Kb8 5.Qb3+ Ka7 6.Qa2+ Kb8 7.Qg8+ 1-0

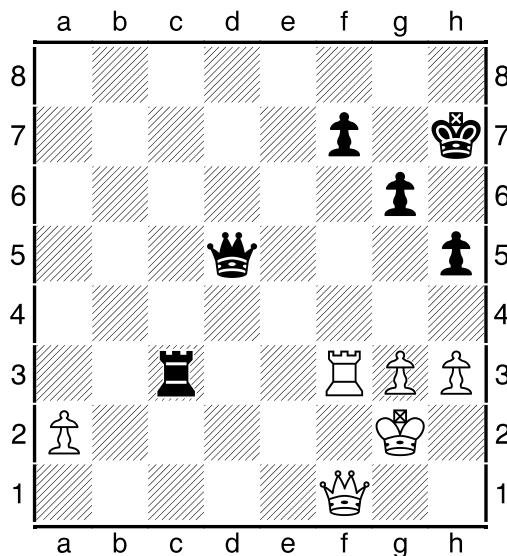
So, let's move to the above mentioned game:

□ So Wesley (2810)

■ Ding Liren (2777)

D78 Tbilisi (5) 21.09.2017

1.Nf3 d5 2.g3 g6 3.Bg2 Bg7 4.d4 Nf6 5.c4 c6 6.0-0 0-0 7.Nbd2 a5 8.b3 a4 9.Bb2 Bf5 10.e3 Nbd7 11.Qe2 Ne4 12.Nxe4 Bxe4 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.Qb5 Ra5 15.Qxb7 Nc5 16.Qb4 Nd3 17.Qd2 Rb5 18.Bc3 axb3 19.Ng5 b2 20.Rab1 Nxf2 21.Qxf2 Bxb1 22.Rxb1 e5 23.Nh3 exd4 24.exd4 Qc7 25.Qd2 Rfb8 26.Nf4 Qc4 27.Bxd5 Rxd5 28.Nxd5 Qxd5 29.Rxb2 Rc8 30.Rb3 h5 31.Bb2 Kh7 32.h3 Qe4 33.Qd3 Qe1+ 34.Qf1 Qd2 35.Qf2 Qd1+ 36.Qf1 Bxd4+ 37.Bxd4 Qxd4+ 38.Kh1 Qd5+ 39.Rf3 Rc3 40.Kg2 (D)



Black has a won position, as the white king is completely naked and the white rook badly pinned.

40...Qc6

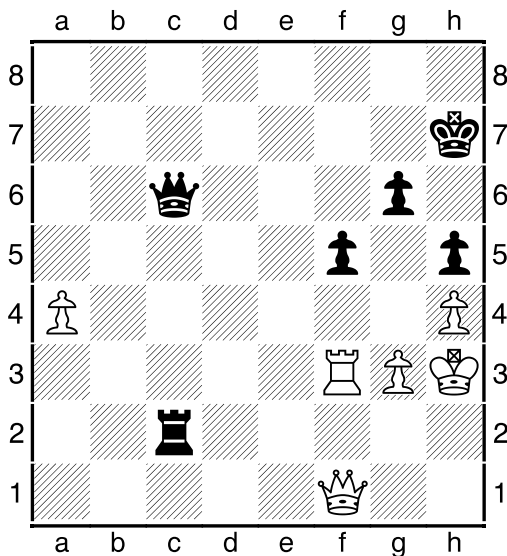
One of the winning continuations, but 40...Ra3! 41.h4 f5, wins on the spot, as White is in zugzwang.

41.h4

White understands that he will have to try to save himself in a possible ending of queen vs rook. Many have failed to win this ending vs a computer engine, but with humans is easier, as we tend to err...

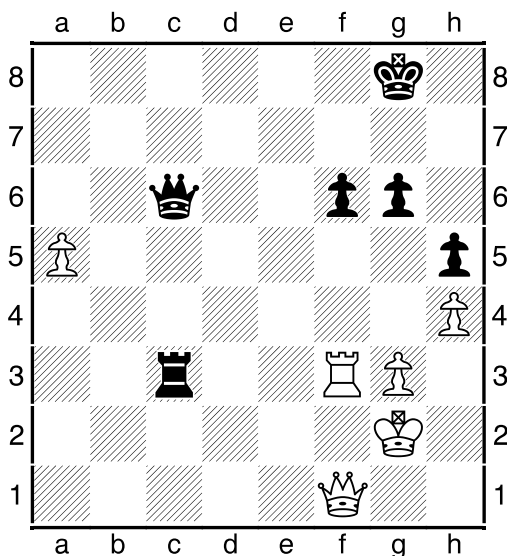
41...Kg8

Black can win in different ways; he only has to avoid 41...f5? 42.a4 Rc2+ 43.Kh3 -/+ (D)



As he needs to keep the option of a queen check on the h3-c8 diagonal. 41...Rc2+ 42.Kg1 Rc1 43.Rxf7+ Kh6, is similar to the game, as White will lose his a-pawn soon.

42.a4 f6 43.a5 (D)



43...Kg7

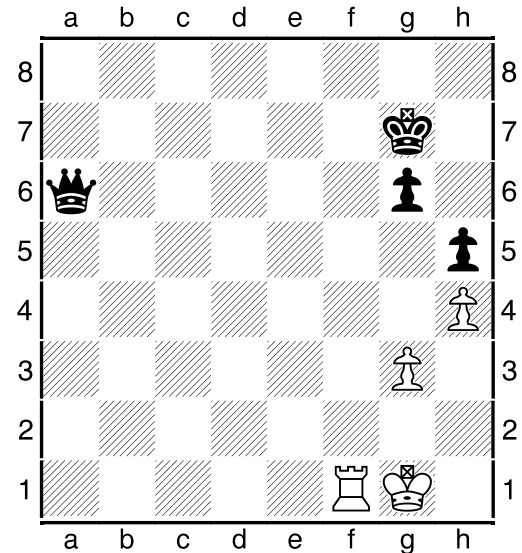
Not bad again, but 43...g5 44.hxg5 fxg5

45.Qd1 Rc2+, would be curtains.

44.a6 Rc2+

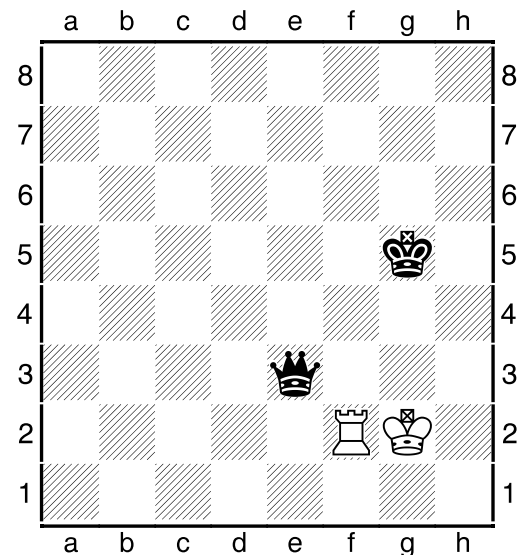
Black decides to go for the main variation; an ending of queen vs rook.

45.Kg1 Rc1 46.Rxf6 Rxf1+ 47.Rxf1 Qxa6 (D)



So, the notorious ending is about to appear, as Black will have nothing better than to exchange the pawns and march with his king.

48.Kg2 Qe2+ 49.Rf2 Qe4+ 50.Kh2 g5! 51.hxg5 h4 52.Rf4 Qe2+ 53.Kh3 hxg3 54.Kxg3 Kg6 55.Rf2 Qe3+ 56.Kg2 Kxg3 (D)



The ending is on the cards and now as per tablebases, Black mates in 22 moves.

57.Rf3 Qe2+ 58.Kg3 Qe1+ 59.Kg2

White doesn't play the best as per tablebases (he is a human after all!) and makes Black's

life easier!

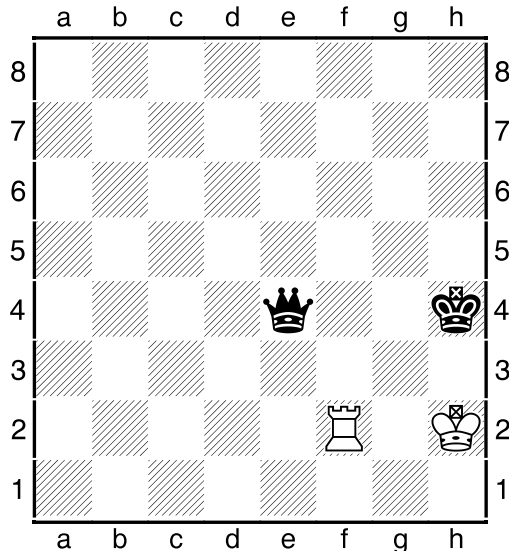
59...Kg4 60.Rf2 Qe4+

60...Qd1 61.Rf8 Qd5+ 62.Kf1 Kg3 63.Ke2 Qe6+ 64.Kd3 Qd6+ was the most accurate.

But I do not think it is a big deal if here Black wins on 14 or 17 moves, as long as the difference in moves is not that great.

After all we are humans!

61.Kh2 Kh4 (D)

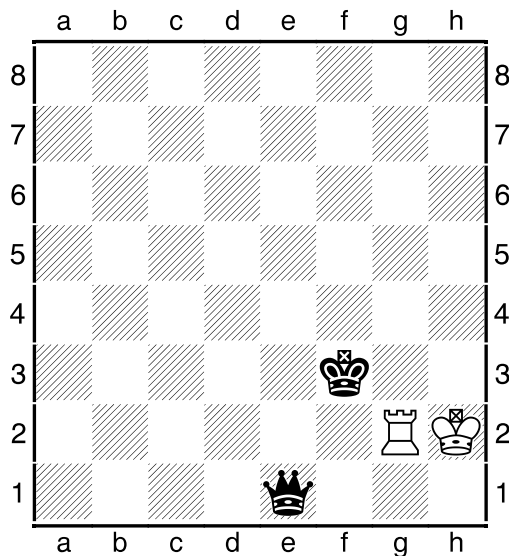


62.Ra2

62.Rg2 loses to 62...Qe5+ 63.Kg1 Kh3 64.Kf1 Qa1+ 65.Kf2 Qb2+.

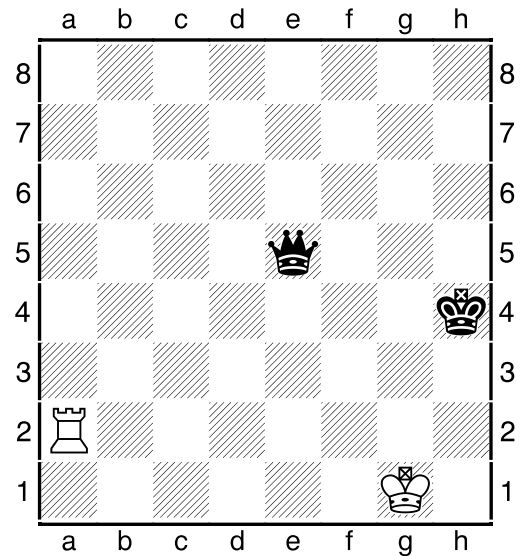
62...Qe5+

62...Kg4 63.Rf2 Qd5 64.Rg2+ Kf3 65.Kg1 Qd1+ 66.Kh2 Qe1 (D)



Leads to the 'Philidor Position', with White on the move. But anyway Black wins as the rook got far away from his king and can be captured.

63.Kg1 (D)



63...Qd4+

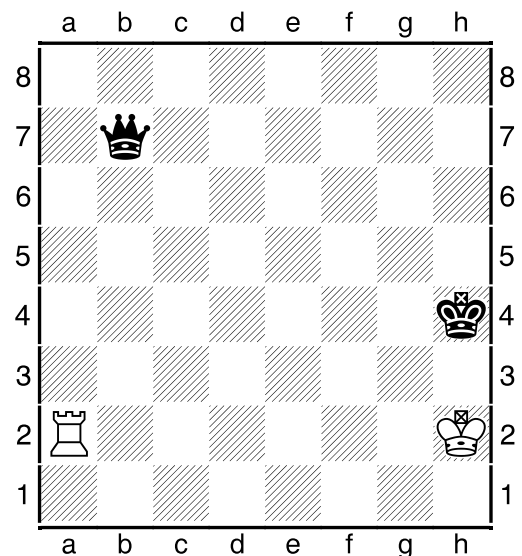
Starting the 'usual' zigzag procedure; this in the end wins the rook. The queen must be able to go simultaneously to both g8- and b1-squares.

64.Kh2 Qd6+ 65.Kg1 Qc5+ 66.Kh2

66.Kf1 Qc4+.

66...Qc7+ 67.Kg1 Qb6+ 68.Kg2 Qb7+

69.Kh2 (D)



69...Qb8+

And White resigned, as he loses the rook after 70.Kg2 Qg8+ or 70.Kg1 Qb1+.

0-1

This proved to be an important game, as Ding drew the next one and he won the match 3½-2½, advancing to the final stage of the FIDE World Cup.

Not so long time after, the other semifinal match Aronian-Vachier Lagrave (which had reached also the play-offs) was on the 9th and last game, where an Armageddon had to be played.

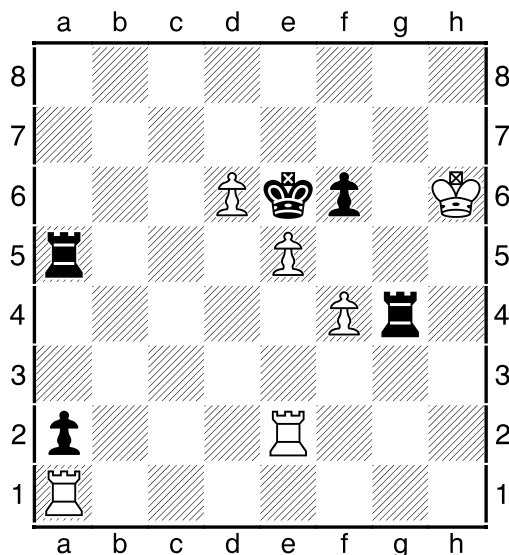
As per Regulations, White had 5 minutes to Black's 4, but Black had the draw odds.

□ Aronian Levon (2799)

■ Vachier Lagrave Maxime (2789)

D00 Tbilisi (9) 21.09.2017

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.Bf4 Bg7 4.Nc3 d5
5.Nb5 Na6 6.e3 0-0 7.h3 c6 8.Nc3 Nc7
9.Be2 b6 10.0-0 Bb7 11.Bh2 c5 12.a4 a5
13.Ne5 Nd7 14.Nxd7 Qxd7 15.Bg4 e6
16.Qd2 Bc6 17.b3 Rfc8 18.Ne2 cxd4
19.Nxd4 b5 20.axb5 Nxb5 21.c3 Nxd4
22.exd4 a4 23.b4 Bb5 24.Rfc1 a3 25.Be2
Qc6 26.Bxb5 Qxb5 27.Bd6 Rc6 28.Bc5
Rca6 29.Ra2 Qc4 30.Qe2 Qxe2 31.Rxe2 a2
32.Ra1 Ra3 33.Rc2 Bf8 34.Kf1 e5 35.Bxf8
Kxf8 36.dxe5 Ke7 37.Ke2 Ke6 38.f4 d4
39.cxd4 Kd5 40.Rd2 Kc4 41.d5 Kxb4
42.d6 Kb3 43.Kf3 Kc3 44.Rf2 h5 45.Kg3
Kd4+ 46.Kh4 Kd5 47.Kg5 Ke6 48.g4 hxg4
49.hxg4 R3a5 50.Re2 f6+ 51.Kxg6 Rg8+
52.Kh6 Rxc4 (D)

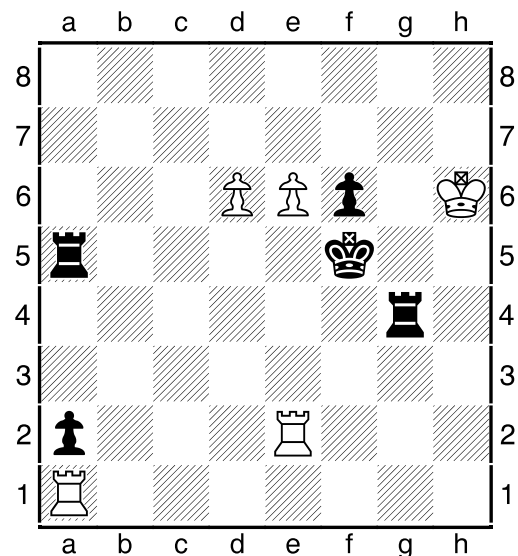


The position is equal as per engines but still humans are playing... Yes, Vachier Lagrave was quite near to get to the final match...

53.f5+!

53.Rxa2 Rxa2 54.Rxa2 fxe5 55.fxe5 Kxe5
56.Rd2 Rg8 is an easy draw, so White tries his last chance.

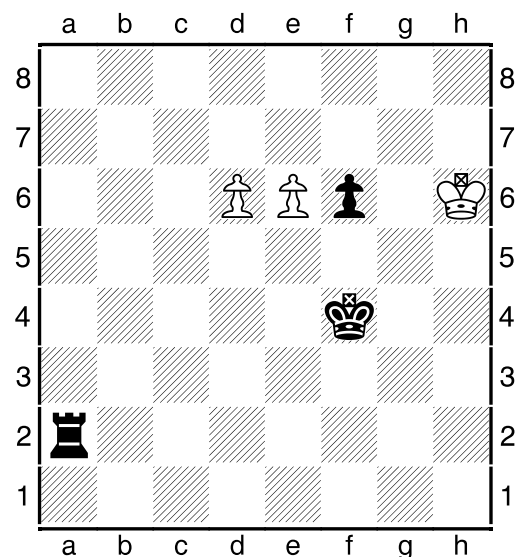
53...Kxf5 54.e6 (D)



54...Ra8?

Quickly played... Difficult to find, but Black could draw now with 54...Raa4!, when White has nothing better than 55.Rf1+ (55.e7? Rg6+ 56.Kh5 Rg5+ 57.Kh6 Rh4 #)

55.Rf1+! Rf4 56.Rxf4+ Kxf4 57.Rxa2! Rxa2 (D)



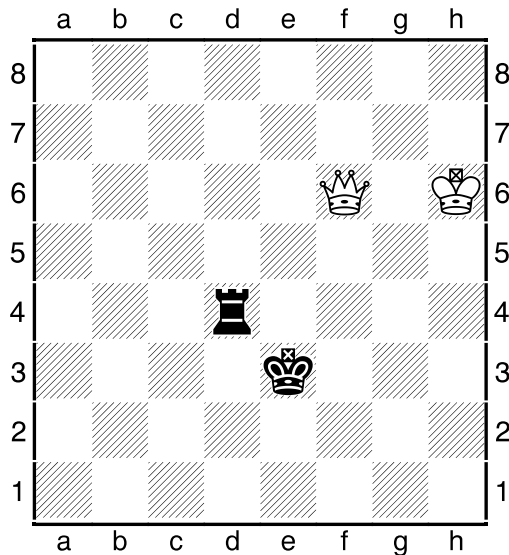
Two connected passed pawns, on their sixth rank, wins against a lonely rook...

58.e7 Rd2 59.e8Q Rxd6 60.Qe7 Rd4

60...Rc6 61.Qd7 and the rook has to abandon the pawn anyway.

61.Qxf6+ Ke3 (D)

And here we have again the notorious ending! Well, what are the chances in two qualification matches, the winner to be decided by this special ending? I do not really know...



Now White mates in 30 moves as per table-bases.

**62.Kg5 Rd5+ 63.Kg4 Rd4+ 64.Kg3 Rd3
65.Qe5+ Kd2+ 66.Kf2 Kc2 67.Qc5+ Rc3
68.Qf5+ Kb2 69.Ke2**

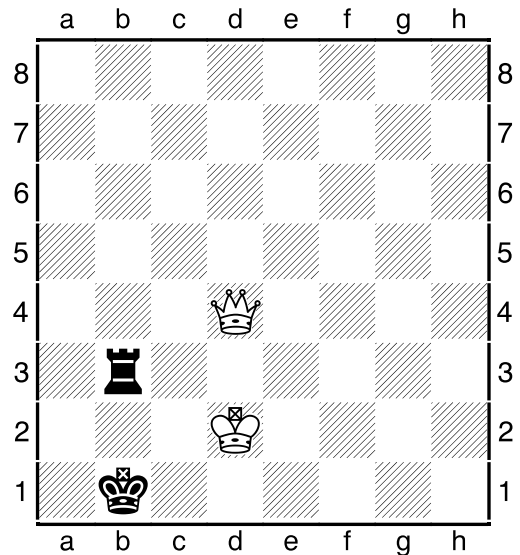
By now White has played flawlessly, while Black could 'save' some moves...

69...Rc2+

69...Kb3 70.Qb5+ Kc2 71.Qb4, mates in 17.

70.Kd3 Rc3+ 71.Kd2 Rb3 72.Qe5+ Kb1

73.Qd4 (D)



73...Rh3

After 73...Rb2+ 74.Kc3 Ka2 75.Qd1 we reach the 'Philidor Position'! But now the rook got away from the protection of its king and its lost...

74.Qb6+! Ka1 75.Qf6+ Ka2

75...Kb1 76.Qf5+.

76.Qe6+ Rb3 77.Kc2 Ka1 78.Qa6+

Also good was 78.Kxb3 Kb1 79.Qe1 #, but not 78.Qxb3? with stalemate! After the text Black resigned: 78...Ra3 79.Qxa3 #.

1-0