

Saving a lost game (resources to save a game)

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When you find yourself in a seemingly lost position in a game, there is always a way to figure a way out, to save the game. In an endgame situation, there are mainly three ways that you can draw a game if you think there is no way for you to win the game.

1. **Stalemate:** Always look for a way for your king not to have a move when it is not in check!
2. **Perpetual Check:** This can be handy at any part of the game, but becomes more useful when you need a draw or in a losing endgame where there may not be an opportunity of option 1
3. **Insufficient mating material:** At the endgame phase, a pawn becomes a decisive factor between winning and losing. So, trading the pawns with your opponent's and even sacrificing a piece for that extra pawn which eventually may become a Queen may be a sure way to hold a draw as your opponent may feel that motivated to play on with King, Bishop and Knight against your lone King. Not to mention, you can't mate with just a lone Bishop or lone Knight!

In our first example, we will look for a stalemate idea in the endgame.

White: King on a6, Rook on a7

Black: King on b8, pawn on c2



(White to move)

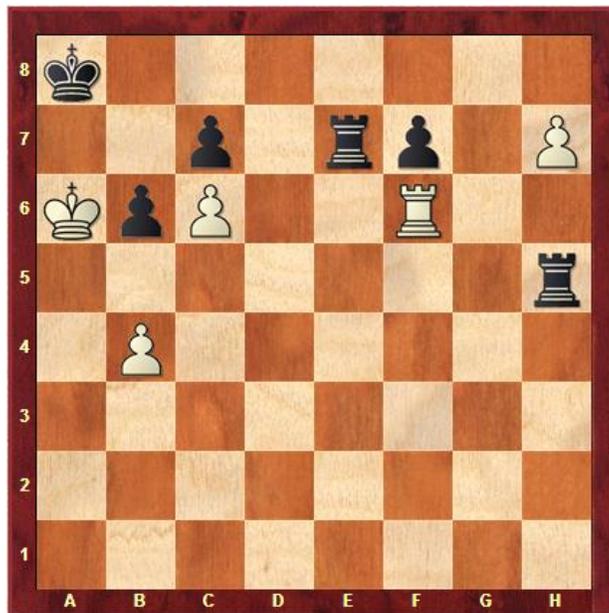
Here it seems that white will lose. Black threatens to promote the c pawn to Queen. But, White can make use of the stalemate idea if he/she looks for it!

1.Rb7+ Kc8 2. Rb5 c1= Q 3. Rc5+! Qxc5 Stalemate!

In our next example, we will see something from Frank Marshall. This was from a Marshall-MacClure game. Marshall was famous for his ability to save lost games. In fact, for his ability to do this he was often called a swindler, the term he gladly accepted and even wrote a book called Marshall's Chess Swindles.

White: King on a6, pawn on b4, pawn on c6, Rook on f6, pawn on h7

Black: King on a8, pawn on b6, pawn on c7, Rook on e7, pawn on f7, Rook on h5



(White to move)

Situation: Marshall (white) is a Rook down. Now he played **1. Rh6!!**
Play continued **1... Rxh6 2. h8(Q)+ Rxh8 3.b5**

A very unusual position has arisen! No matter what Black moves, it is a stalemate. Black is 2 Rooks up and it is his move. But the only way to avoid stalemate is **3...Rd7 4. cxd7** (threatening **5. d8(Q)+**, forcing stalemate) **c5?? 5.bxc6 Kb8 6.Kxb6**, when White has a chance of winning!

In our next example, we see how the world champion was not immune from the stalemate ideas.

White [Kasparov]: pawn on c5, Bishop on d5, Queen on e7, Bishop on g3, King h3
Black [McDonald]: Queen on d4, pawn on e4, Rook on f3, King on h6



(White plays **1.Bxe4??**)

Situation: White king is pinned by Black rook. Black is threatening to march the e pawn down the e file.

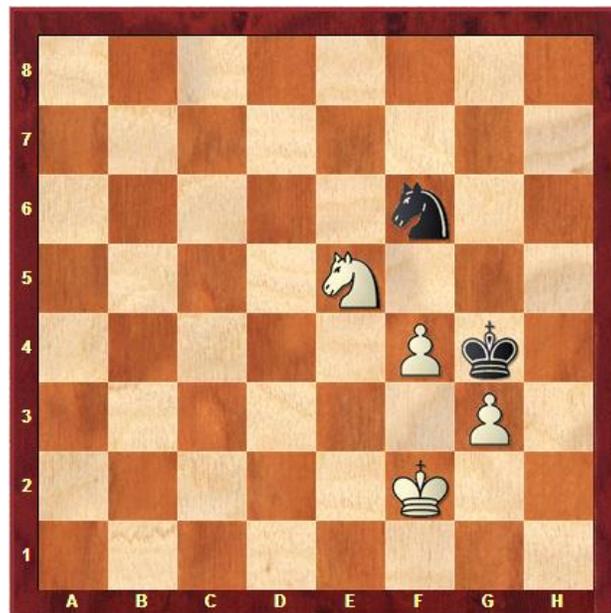
Here Kasparov played **1.Bxe4??**

Now came **1...Rxf3 2. Kxf3 Qe5+** draw since the forced **3.Qxe5** gives stalemate. Note that **2.Kh4** (instead of **2.Kxf3**), with the strong threat of **2.Qh7#**, would have been met by **2...Rg4+ 3.Kxf4** (forced) **Qd7+!** **4. Qxd7** with a different stalemate

Our last example from the endgame scenario, comes from Grischuk vs Polgar

White [Grischuk]: Knight on e5, pawn f4, pawn g3, King on f2

Black [Polgar]: Knight on f6, King on g4



(Black to move)

Situation: It is Black's move. Polgar is 2 pawns down with a lost position. On the natural 1...Kf5, blocking White's more forward pawn, White can play 2.Kf3 followed by slowly advancing his pawn. Instead Polgar played 1... Kh3, hoping to induce the attractive looking 2.Kf3, when White is ready to play g4 and roll his pawns forward with Black's king out of play at h3, So White did play 2.Kf3 [correct move for white, believe it or not is 2. f5], but then came 2...Ng4. Now 3.Nxg4 would give stalemate. But White is in Zugzwang, having no useful move. i.e. 3.f5 Nxe5 4.Ke2 kxg3 OR 3.Ke4 Nf6+ 4.Kf5 Kxg3 5.Kxf6 Kxf4 with a draw by material insufficiency. The game continued 3.Nd3 Nh2+ 4.Ke4 Ng4 since white has no way of saving the g pawn other then repeating the position with 5.Kf3 Nh2+, white played 5.Ne5 Nf6+ 6.Kf3 Ng4 repeating the position that occurred after Ng4 2...Ng4, so this time white tried 7.Nc4 but play continued 7...Nh2+ 8.Ke4 Nf1 9. Ne3 Nxg3 10.Ke5 Kh2 11.Kd6 Nh5 12.f5 Ng7 13.f6 draw since Nxf6 leaves white unable to mate with lone knight.

In the middle game part, if your position looks bad, then basically there are 2 strategies you can decide upon: 'Grim Defense' or 'Create confusion'. 'Grim Defense' involves finding some way to hang on, often by liquidating to an ending. 'Create Confusion' entails trying to gain the initiative, even at material cost, hoping to stir up complications and cause the opponent to go wrong. However, if you want to try this option then you have to decide early so that you have some resources available.

We will look at an example from Karpov's game.

White [Karpov]: pawn on a4, pawn on b3, pawn on c4, Queen on c7, Rook on d1, Knight on g3, King on g1

Black [Csom]: pawn on a6, pawn on b6, pawn on e6, pawn on f6, Queen on a8, Rook on e8, Knight on g2, Knight on h7, King on h8



(White to move)

Situation: Karpov is a knight and a pawn down. So he needed to do something in order to create confusion for his opponent. One way to create confusion is to start a mating attack as pieces will be diverted from your opponent's attack.

Karpov started a mating attack by moving his rook on d1 to d7 **1.Rd7**, Black played **1...Nf8??** Now Karpov played **2.Nf5!!** here Csom resigned

The correct move for black was 1...Ng5 when 2.Nf5 could be met by 2...exf5 3.Qh2+ Kg8 4.Qh6 Re1+ 5.Kh2 Rh1! 6.Kxh1 Nf4+ 6.Rd5 Nxd5 and wins