



**FRED REINFELD CHESS CLASSICS** Peter Kurzdorfer, General Editor

# REINFELD

## ON THE

# ENDGAME

## Fred Reinfeld

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition**



**Reinfeld**  
on the  
**Endgame**

by  
Fred Reinfeld

*21st Century Edition*

*Fred Reinfeld Chess Classics*  
Peter Kurzdorfer, General Editor



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Why You Lose at Chess  
by Fred Reinfeld

Fred Reinfeld Chess Classics  
Peter Kurzdorfer, General Editor

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## From the Editor

*Reinfeld on the Endgame* is a very fine specialty book about several aspects of endgames. It is no giant tome on the entire endgame such as Rubin Fine attempted (*Basic Chess Endgames*) and Mark Dvoretsky succeeded in producing (*Dvoretsky's Endgame Manuel*). Rather, this charming piece concentrates on a very difficult, too-often glossed over aspect of the transition between the middlegame and the endgame.

Transition phases are harder to cover than either of the three favorite phases because they don't fit quite so neatly into the rigid classification that openings, middlegames, and endgames do. But mastering them is essential to those who wish to master or understand the game at a high level.

Each section is introduced with pithy explanations, and each example is shown and then summarized. It all begins with transitions into a favorable endgame, dividing the topic into material or positional advantages. This skill is often known as winning technique, and a good explanation of how it is done is invaluable. Here we get that explanation by one of the most prolific chess writers of the twentieth century.

Next we get into transitions into unfavorable endgames, which can come from compulsion (fatigue, time pressure, etc.); poor choice of which bad endgame to head for; incorrect appraisal of the character of the ending; and disregard of a specific exception to a general principle (the queenside majority is favorable; bishops of opposite colors draw; bishop vs. knight).

The final two sections cover missed opportunities (missing a win; missing a draw; and double oversights) and defending difficult positions (positional and material disadvantages are covered).

Mid-twentieth century best-selling author Fred Reinfeld introduced thousands of players to the wonderful game of chess through his tireless efforts. His books were ubiquitous and covered every conceivable aspect of the royal game.

I was one of countless chess players representing several generations who grew up surrounded by Reinfeld books. We couldn't get enough of them! He not only taught us how to play the game well, but also implanted in us his enthusiastic passion for learning the game.

Fred's books are peppered throughout with words and phrases in italics to emphasize ideas. Moves are punctuated with single, double, and even triple exclamation marks and question marks to span the entire spectrum of emotions the moves conjure up.

## Reinfeld on the Endgame

He had a way of reducing the most intricate, complicated combinations to their basic components. After Reinfeld explains a combination, it makes sense.

Thus I am pleased and honored to be a part of bringing back my old mentor to new generations of chess players. Russell Enterprises Inc. is engaged in a project of resurrecting the immortal Reinfeld classics, republishing them with the modern algebraic notation in place of the archaic English descriptive notation that was popular years ago to make them accessible to twenty-first century chess players.

This undertaking, begun under General Editor Bruce Alberston, has been passed on to me. So I get to reread these wonderful old books, change the notation in ChessBase, type up Fred's snappy prose, and look out for potential errors.

The few analytical mistakes that crop up from time to time are easily checked with a monster chess engine, something which Fred never had access to. In those far-off pre-computer days, you analyzed each and every position, including any variations you thought up, with nothing more than a board and pieces, using your knowledge of the pieces' potential. Thus such errors are no reflection on the author's ability or knowledge. I have called attention to only the most egregious ones, and they certainly do not detract at all from the fresh charm he imparts on each and every position he looks at.

Peter Kurzdorfer

## Part IV

# Defending Difficult Positions

### I. Introductory

We come now to the concluding section of this volume, and the one which will require the greatest application on the part of the reader. I used to think that the ability to put up strong resistance was one which could not be developed—it depended on character and temperament. A player either had the will and the inclination to put up a stubborn, resourceful defense, or he despaired easily, put up no fight, feebly fell in with this opponent's intentions, and took the blackest view of the situation.

Further observation reinforced this point of view. I have seen players resign defensible positions, because they were infuriated at having blundered away a won game; I have seen players spend hours of the most painstaking analysis to find long, refined wins for their opponents, and then resign without resumption of play, as they had a "lost" game; I have seen players simplifying when simplification was just what the opponent needed, and avoiding simplification when it was necessary for their opponent to keep the remaining pieces on the board in order to win; I have seen players moving mechanically, without interest or plan, when a little close application to the work in hand might have made the other player's task maddeningly difficult.

I subsequently came to the conclusion, however, that enhanced ability brings with it its own psychological correctives. As a player improves, his greater powers enable him to hold out in positions that were formerly beyond his comprehension. Furthermore, he develops a sense of pride in avoiding loss in difficult positions—for there are few greater thrills than the ones we experience in being constantly on the edge of the abyss, where the slightest false step means defeat. For a skillful player, success in obtaining a draw in a desperate position may afford more pleasure than gaining an oftentimes all-too-easy victory.

The foregoing comments are borne out in a rather interesting way by the trend of master play during the last 60 years. While it would be foolish to deny that the outstanding masters of earlier generations (such men as Steinitz, Zukertort, Blackburne, Chigorin, etc.) were the equal of our outstanding contemporary players, there cannot be the slightest question that the *rank and file* masters (and amateurs as well) have improved enormously since the 1880s. Today the average player cannot be bowled over in the manner of Morphy's opponents. The modern player has at his command the whole arsenal of valuable theory that has been built up since Morphy's day.



## Reinfeld on the Endgame

The result has been an interacting process. As the average power of resistance grew, the more refined became the winning process. This in turn led to a greater proportion of winning possibilities, which in its turn has led to a still more, highly developed defensive ability. Historically, the great forerunner of the lion-hearted defensive policy was Dr. Lasker, whose superlative achievements in this field have already become proverbial. He was followed by such apostles of the "heroic defense" as Alekhine, Nimzowitch, and Bogoljubow; and in our own day, the grimness and fertility of resource which our younger masters (Keres, Reshevsky, Botvinnik, Fine) display in difficult positions are perhaps the chief traits which they have in common. Flohr also has this ability, but occasionally he "blows up." In the case of the other four, this rarely happens.

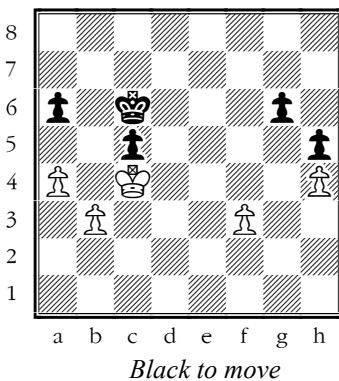
### II. Examples

#### A. Positional Disadvantage

Example (51)

**Grob – Nimzowitsch**

Zürich 1934



Example (51) is the type of position in which an inexperienced player might very easily lose his way.

If, for example, 57...a5? 58.f4 wins, as Black must permit the intrusion of the hostile king, with fatal results. Or 57...♖b6? 58.♕d5 and White wins the queen and pawn ending which results from 58...g5 etc. Or 57...♕d6 58.f4 ♖c6 59.b4 cxb4 60.♗xb4 ♖b6 61.a5+ ♖c6 62.♗c4 (taking the opposition) 62...♕d6 63.♕d4 and White must penetrate *via* e5 or c5 and win (Alekhine in the *Tournament Book*).

Perhaps the rather wild 57...g5 will save Black? No, for the resulting queen and pawn ending is easily won for White. Shall we then conclude that the ending is lost for Black? But that would be a hasty decision. Let us see how Nimzowitsch reasons it out: "I must avoid losing the opposition; and if I combine this idea with a king move toward the kingside, so that I am threatening ...g5, I have solved the problem; for one extra move of my king enables me to play 58...g5 59.hxg5 h4 and still be in the quadrate of the g-pawn. *But in that event my h-pawn would queen!* Therefore White could not answer 58...g5 with 59.hxg5. Therefore 57...♕d6 answers the problem?! Oh, but it doesn't! For then White stifles the possibility of ...g5 by playing 58.f4 and I subsequently lose the opposition" (as shown in the previous paragraph).

What is required, therefore is a king move which prepares for 58...g5 *but does not lose the opposition*. Nimzowitsch's solution of this problem gives us the paradoxical move:

## Defending Difficult Positions

### 57...♖d7!!

If now 58.♖xc5 g5! 59.♖d4! (if 59.hxg5? h4 60.g6 ♖e7 and Black wins!) 59...g×h4 60.♖e3 a5! (an important move, preventing White's b3-b4) 61.♖f2 ♖e6 62.♖g2 ♖f5 63.♖h3 ♖g5 64.f4+ ♖xf4 65.♖×h4 ♖e4 66.♖×h5 ♖d4 67.♖g4 ♖c3 68.♖f3 ♖×b3 69.♖e2 ♖×a4 70.♖d1 ♖b3 71.♖c1 (Alekhine) and White just manages to draw! It is this variation (hardly to be expected from an inexperienced player!) that established the soundness of 57...♖d7!!.

### 58.f4

Rather than draw by so narrow a margin, White prefers to draw with ease by adopting the text. The specter of ...g5 is definitely banished.

### 58...♖d6!

Now we see the difference between 57...♖d6? and 57...♖d7! As actually played, Black need have no fear about losing the opposition.

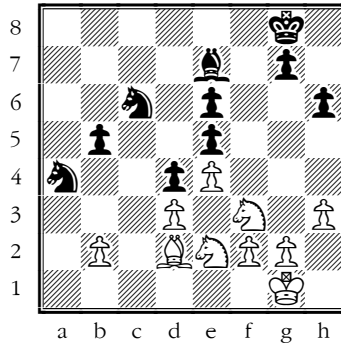
**59.♖d3 a5 60.♖c4 ♖c6 61.♖c3 ♖d6 62.♖c4 ♖c6** Drawn

“Only a draw,” the inexperienced player will say disparagingly. But to be able to achieve a draw so resourcefully is the hallmark of a fine player.

Example (52)

**Dr. Lasker – Rabinovich**  
Moscow 1935

Example (52) does not call for any tricky moves. It has a prosaic, everyday character, totally lacking in combinative dainties. But it should not be disdained on that account, for it is extremely useful for the student who wishes to excel in



*White to move*

practical play. Black has brought about the exchange of queens under advantageous circumstances, as White's b- and d-pawns are weak and his pieces are rather cramped in their defensive efforts. To defend such positions patiently and accurately is no easy task; but these are qualities which the great Lasker possesses to a preeminent degree!

### 30.b3!

As will be seen, the pawn now becomes subject to dangerous threats; yet White has wisely chosen the lesser evil, for if 30.♙c1? (this square is needed for a knight) 30...♖b4 31.♗e1 ♗c5 and the d-pawn falls.

### 30...♗c5 31.♗c1 ♗d7!

Very strong; he threatens to play ...♙a3 followed by ...♗c5, winning a pawn.

### 32.♗e1 ♙a3

Threatening to win the pawn with 33...♙xc1 34.♙xc1 ♗c5.

### 33.♗a2!

The only move.

## Reinfeld on the Endgame

**33...♖c5 34.b4 ♗b3**

Of course 34...♖a6 35.♗c2 and White is safe.

**35.♗c2!**

Saves the piece—and the b-pawn as well.

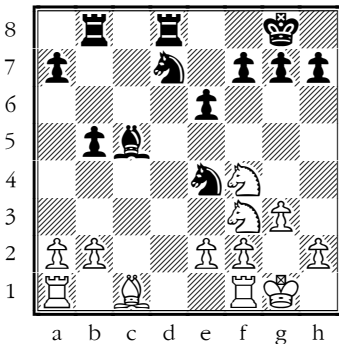
**35...♗b2**

Now the draw is clear.

**36.♗e1 h5 37.♝f1 ♗c1 38.♗×c1 ♗×c1 39.♝e2 ♝f7 40.♗d2** Drawn.  
A fine example of cool defensive play.

Example (53)

**Flohr – Reshevsky**  
Hastings 1937-1938



*White to move*

Striking and brilliant games between the leading contemporary players are the exception rather than the rule. This is to be expected, in view of the highly developed defensive powers of the modern masters. They have learned from sad experience that the direct assault is less likely to yield dividends than is an indirect and subtler form of pressure which seems to allow the opponent a greater diversity of choice

and hence an enlarged number of opportunities to go wrong.

The average player, however, prefers direct action and a minimum of preparation, with the unfortunate result that both the great artistry of the player with the initiative, and of the player on the defensive, are lost on him.

Here we have what appears to be a position without character, and the queens have just been exchanged (that *bête noire* of the amateur!). To the average player it is all a conspiracy, and he has no doubt that the players have already tacitly agreed to a draw, and are playing on for form's sake. As it happens, nothing could be further from the truth. These "simple" positions are often quite difficult to draw, and a good working knowledge of how to treat these vaguely uncomfortable situations is indispensable for the player who is anxious to improve.

Regarding the character of Example (53) let us hear the testimony of an expert and impartial witness: "The situation seems to offer little of interest. The queens are off, the pawn formations are symmetrical (in the sense that the pawns are opposed to each other on identical files), and finally there is not the slightest opportunity for attack or complications. Yet White's game is quite difficult, for Black has a decided lead in development and controls more space. It is true that there has been no serious departure from positional equality, but a somewhat weaker player would be hopelessly lost if he had White here against Flohr or Reshevsky. He sees no positive danger, and yet he has an indefinable feeling that there is something wrong with his position;