

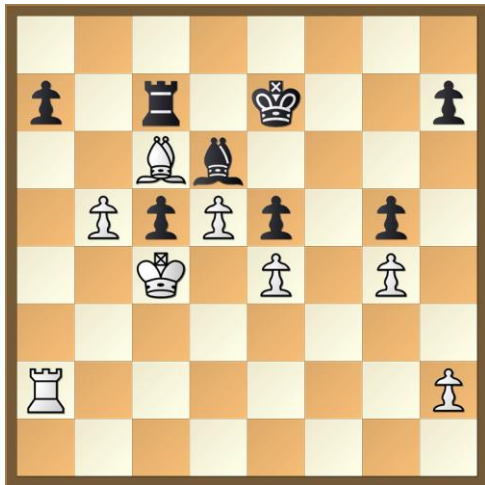
## Arkell's Endings



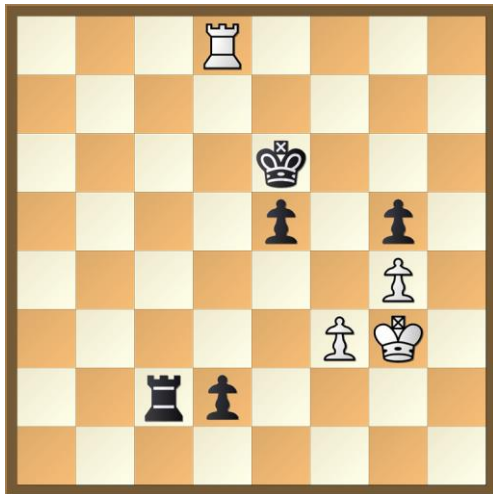
When your commissioning editor Nigel Towers approached me to write a regular column based around my endgames I was only too happy to oblige.

I would like to begin with the theme of Zugzwang. A very common aid to making progress in positions with reduced material is your opponent's obligation to make a move - from simple K+P v K positions, when they must give way when facing the opposition, to more complex situations.

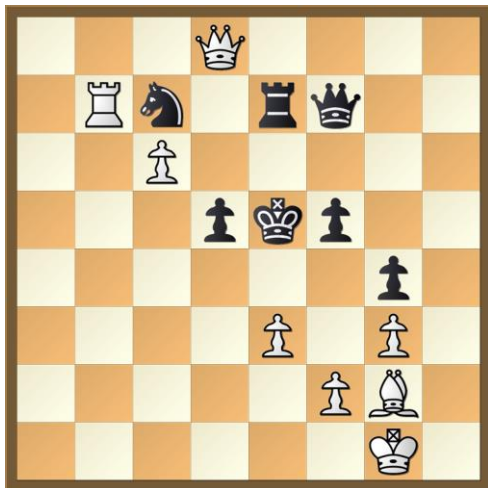
After a quick scan of my games I was surprised how often Zugzwang has come to the rescue. Here are four examples; in each case the key move is made by a rook.



Against GM Pia Cramling, in a French team match in 1999, I played **48 Ra6**. If Black were now allowed to pass I would have problems making progress, but instead she must either move the Rook and drop the a pawn, or move the King and leave the Bishop undefended. The game concluded **48...Kd8 49 Bb7** (exploiting the attack on the loose Bishop to win the a pawn.) **49...Rd7 50 Rxa7 Bb8 51 b6 Rf7 52 Kxc5 Rd7 53 Kc6 Rd6+ 54 Kb5 1-0**

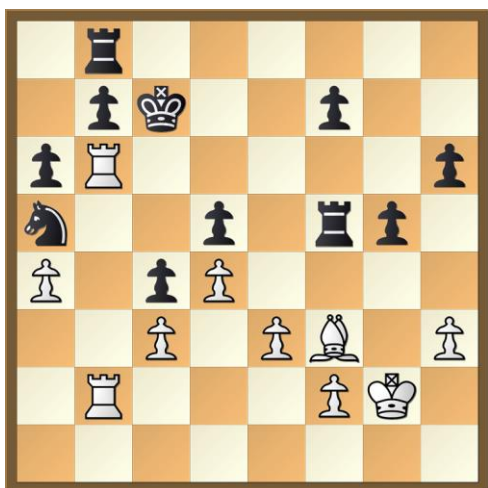


This position, against FM Francis Rayner at the 2008 Liverpool British Championship, would be a draw without Zugzwang. After **65...Rb2**, however, he is obliged to play either 66 Rd3 or 66 Kh3. Against 66 Rd3 I have a neat little trick, viz: 66 ...e4! 67 dxe4 Rb3! exploiting the lateral pin to promote my pawn. In the game he chose **66 Kh3**, after which, with his King now forced away from the action, I was nonetheless able to break through with **66...e4 67 dxe4 Ke5 0-1**



I already had a winning position v GM Hichem Hamdouchi in the French team Championship of 1995, but 57 Ra7 terminated the game immediately. He clearly can't move a pawn; if he moves his Knight he drops a Rook; if he moves his Rook he loses a lot of material; if he moves his King then Rxc7 wins, so that just leaves the Queen:

**57...Qg7 58 Bxd5! 1-0**. The queen no longer defends d5 so after 58...Nxd5 59 Ra5 Qd7 60 Rxd5+ and when he recaptures I can take the loose Rook on e7.



In the fourth case the Zugzwang didn't happen over the board but only in my head.

Against FM David Zakarian in the 2014 4NCL I am attacking the h6 pawn which he can't defend with either 35...f6 or 35...Rh8 because I trap his Rook with 36 Bg4. In the game he just gave up the pawn with 35...Nb3, and I soon went on to win. If he tries to save the pawn he must play 35...Nc6 when I was ready with 36 R2b1! Amazingly Black would then be in Zugzwang even though there are still 21 pieces on the board!



I will let you work out for yourself precisely why Black is in Zugzwang here.

GM Keith Arkell