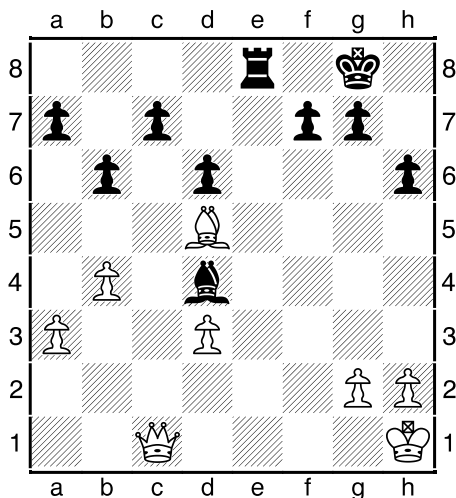


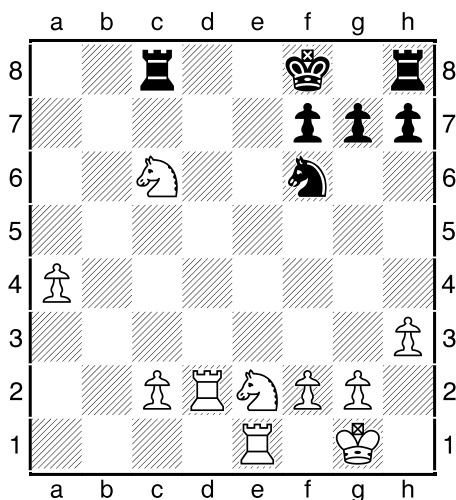


Novice Lecture – Back Rank Checkmates

by Carl Gorka



Two Juniors in an RJ Shield event reached this position. White is winning easily, but just needs to be aware that his back rank is vulnerable. **1...Bb2!** A very good move, the bishop sacrifices itself for the greater good. **2.Qxb2?** Forgetting about the only weakness in his position **2...Re1#**



Lipp, Josh

Bayliss, Henry

RJ Shield, 29.11.2009

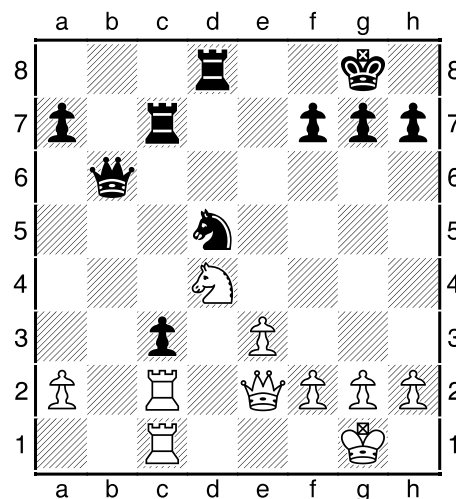
<see diagram above>

Spotting that the back rank is weak is a good skill to learn. You can then tempt your opponent with sacrifices, like this. **1.Ng3! Rxc6?** of course, if Black doesn't take the knight he will be well down on material, but **2.Rd8+** Black's king is stuck on the back rank **2...Ne8 3.Rexe8# 1-0**

Bernstein, Ossip

Capablanca, Jose Raul

Moscow game Moscow, 1914

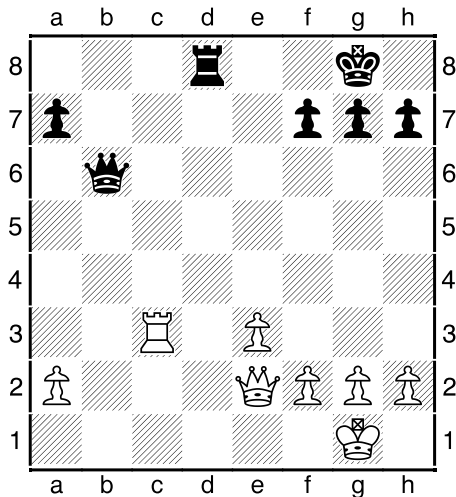


26.Nb5 A tempting move that wins the dangerous c-pawn, but Bernstein should have known that Capablanca had a nasty trick up his sleeve.





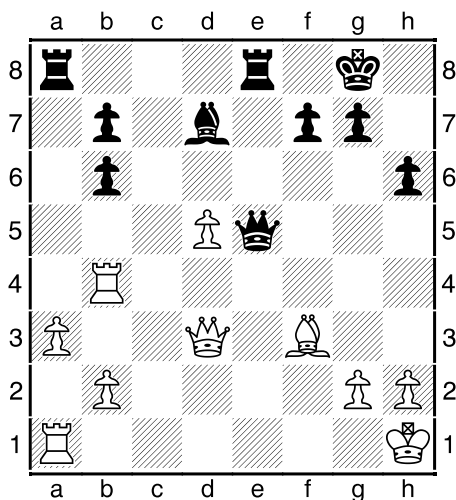
26...Rc5 27.Nxc3 Nxc3 28.Rxc3 Rxc3
29.Rxc3



29...Qb2! [29...Qb1+ looks good but doesn't work as after 30.Qf1 Rd1 it is Black who gets mated 31.Rc8+ Rd8 32.Rxd8#]
30.Qe1 [30.Rc2 Qb1+; 30.Qf1 Qxc3]
30...Qxc3 31.Qxc3 Rd1+ 32.Qe1 Rxe1#
0-1

Mikenas, Vladas
Bronstein, David

URS-ch33 Tallinn (2), 23.11.1965

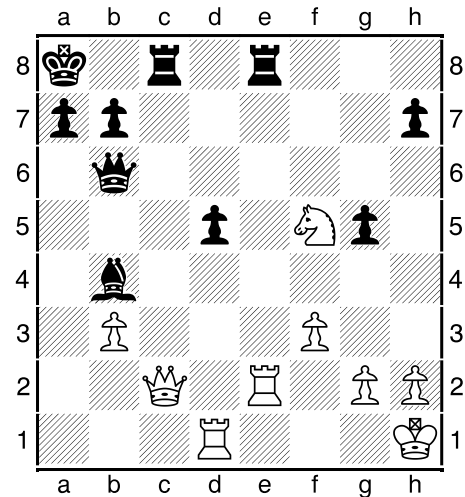


24...Rxa3 White resigned as whatever he takes the rook with will be bad. 25.bxa3 [25.Rxa3 Qe1+ 26.Qf1 Qxf1#; 25.Qxa3 Qe1+ 26.Rxe1 Rxe1#] 25...Qxa1+ 26.Qd1 Qxd1+ 27.Bxd1 Re1# 0-1

Teschner, Rudolf

Portisch, Lajos

Monte Carlo-A Monte Carlo (9), 08.04.1969



29.Rxd5 Both back ranks are weak, but how can Black exploit this? 29...Qf2!! [In the actual game, Portisch missed this amazing move and played 29...Qa6 30.Ng3 Red8 31.Rxd8 Rxd8 32.Rf2 Qd3 33.Qc7 a6 34.Rf1 h5 35.Qb6 h4 36.Qxb4 hxg3 37.Qc4 gxh2 38.Qxd3 Rxd3 39.Rb1 Ka7 40.Kxh2 Kb6 41.Kh3 Draw] 30.Rxf2 [30.Ng3 Qe1+ 31.Rxe1 Rxe1+ 32.Nf1 Rxf1#; 30.h4 Qxe2 wins a rook] 30...Re1+ 31.Rf1 Rxf1# 0-1

