

Just in time endgame study part II - nearly there!

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As discussed in this previous [{In:just in time endgame study 'post}](#), it should be possible to study endgames as they are coming up during correspondence chess games. If "just in time" deliveries help car manufacturers become more efficient, why not doing the same in chess? The slow pace and explicit encouragement of the use of chess books enables just in time studies during correspondence chess games. A week or so ago, I browsed through a used book store and found (surprise!) a small shelf filled with chess books. Not that I need another one - in fact, I promised myself not to buy more chess books before I work through the ones I already own, but well... After extensive browsing I finally grabbed a nearly new copy of Reuben Fine's "Basic Chess Endings". Good decision, because apparently, Fine's work is (was?) the chess endgame "bible", for more about the book see [Anthony Saidy's insightful review at Jeremy Silman's web site](#) (By the way, I learnt from the review that even grandmasters consult books during adjourned games. And I always thought grandmasters have everything in their memory...).

The diagram on the left shows the position from one of my recent games on ChessWorld after 45. ... Rh4 with me playing white to move. I figured with as few as two rooks and three pawns left on the board, it might be worth to take a look in "Basic Chess Endings". I have to admit that I was quite surprised to find out how complex rook and pawn endgames are (at least to a beginner like me who never seriously thought about them). Therefore, I decided to simplify it further by playing 46. b5. I was sure that black's response would be ...Rh5 to skewer my K and P and after playing 47. Ke4 Rxb5 48. Rxh7 only one pawn would be left over reducing the analysis in "Basic Chess Endings" to just slightly more than 20 pages of densely written variations. Of course, there are other possible replies for black such as 46. ... h6 but during the post-mortem computer analysis it seemed to me that all variations sooner or later lead to captures leaving only one black pawn on the board. White is then able to obtain a draw if he/she manages to maneuver the king in front of the black pawn. The full game with annotations can be found [{In:sciurus vs. sparky10 1/2-1/2 'here}](#).

The most surprising thing that I learned from this just-in-time study was how complex even these very simple endgames can become. On the other hand, I had fun analyzing the position, something I never really imagined since I started to do some basic endgame study. My previous lack of motivation to study endgames is probably due to the fact that I started and got stuck with elementary mates, which seem just much too far from reality to be interesting. This game, however, got me interested in learning more about endgames. Unfortunately, there is still one big limiter: time.