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Correct and incorrect use of six-piece EGTB in composing mutual zugzwang studies

(the lecture in Dresden-2017)

Since the time the database on six-piece mutual zugzwang became available in the internet, I have refused to use it as a matter of principle. Any creative person will understand me. You want to find something of your own, from beginning to end. But then, looking at the scale and the lack of talent with which modern composers use the database of six-piece mutual zugzwang, I decided to try it myself six months ago.

Here are some principles I follow in studies based on EGTB with mutual zugzwang.

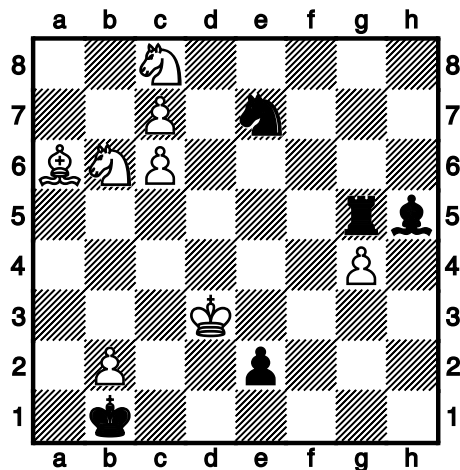
Point 1. Not every mutual zugzwang is interesting. If it presupposes a multi-move, complicated computer play it's place is the dustbin.

Point 2. Initial play, leading to a position from the EGTB, must somehow be connected with it, ideally by a definite idea. Crude captures, exchange of pieces for the sake of building up the introduction are inadmissible.

Point 3. Desirable (but not obligatory) is a thematic try. Some composers, trying to increase the number of thematic tries, introduce more and more pieces, like pieces of meat on a spit. As a result the study is ruined.

1. V. Tarasiuk

1-2 приз, «Die Schwalbe», 2016



Win

1.Kd2 Re5 2.Bd3+!

Thematic try 2.Bxe2?! Rxe2+ 3.Kxe2 Bxg4+ 4.Kd3 Bxc8 5.Nxc8 Nxc8 6.Kc3 Ka1! 7.b3 Kb1! 8.b4 Ka2 9.b5 Ka3 10.Kc4 Ka4 11.Kc5 Ka5=.

2...Ka1! 3.Bxe2 Rxe2+ 4.Kxe2 Bxg4+ 5.Kd2!

Thematic try 5.Kd3?! Bxc8 6.Nxc8 Nxc8 7.Kc3 Kb1! 8.b3 Ka1! 9.b4 Ka2 10.b5 Ka3 11.Kc4 Ka4 12.Kc5 Ka5=.

5...Bxc8 6.Nxc8 Nxc8 7.Kc1! zz. 7.Kc3?! Kb1! ...

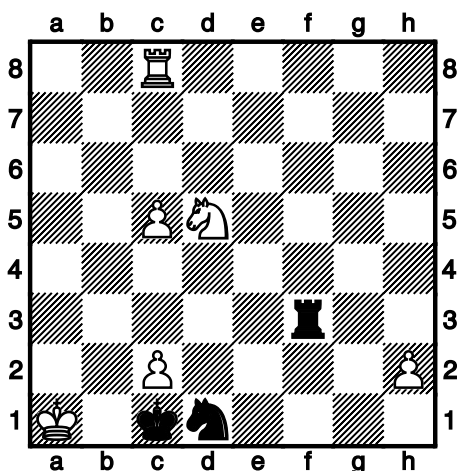
7...Nb6 8.Kc2 Ka2 9.Kc3 Nc8 10.b4 Ka3 11.Kc4 Ka4 12.Kc5 Na7 13.b5 Ka5 14.b6, wins.

13 pieces in the initial position! Example from a series when the aim doesn't justify means.

Point 4. A thematic try, if there is one, must be sufficient (at least 4-5 moves) but not an excessive depth (15-20 moves or more). A short two-three move thematic try with a piece-exchange are inadmissible.

2. J. Akobia, R. Becker

UAPA, 2014, 2 spec. HM



Win

1.c3!

Thematic try 1.Ka2?! Nc3+! 2.Nxc3 Rxc3 zz Two move try, 2 pieces left the board! 3.c6 Kxc2 zz 4.c7 Rc6! 5.Ka3 Kc3 6.Ka4 Kc4 7.Ka5 Kc5 8.h4 Kd6 9.Kb5 Rc1 (c2) 10.Rd8+ Kxc7=.

1...Nxc3 2.Nxc3 Rxc3. Two moves — 3 pieces left!

3.Ka2 zz 3...Kc2 4.c6 zz 4...Rc4 5.Ka3 Kc3 6.h3! zz (6.c7? Rc6=) 6...Rc5 7.Ka4 Kc4 8.h4 Rh5. 8...Kd5 9.Kb4 (or 9.h5+-) 9...Rc1 10.Rd8+ (or 10.h5+-) 10...Kxc6 11.Rc8+-.

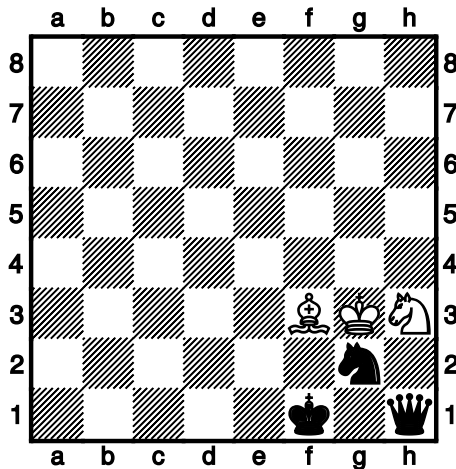
9.Rb8! Rh7 10.Rb7 Rh8 11.Ka3 Ra8+ (11...Kc3 12.Rb3+-) 12.Kb2 Kc5 13.c7 Kc6 14.Rb8, wins.

One of judges of the last Album FIDE has given to this study 4 points! A real masterpiece?? I am not sure...

Point 5. Unacceptable is a position, “borrowed” from the database and lacking any additional ideas. This is simply “theft”!

Point 6. A very promising direction is the use of six-piece zugzwangs as a “skeleton” for studies.
And now I would like to show you two of my new studies.

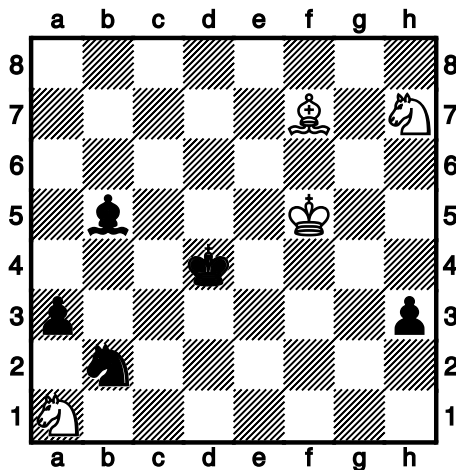
3. Position of mutual zugzwang



This is a unique zugzwang position with this material!

4. O. Pervakov

Blog of S. Didukh, 2017



Draw

1.Ng5 (1.Nc2+? Kc5—) **1...Bc4!** The best move. 1...Bd7+ 2.Kf4 Nd3+ 3.Kg3 Kc3 4.Ne4+ Kb2 5.Nb3 a2 6.Na1!=.

2.Nc2+!

Try 2.Bh5? h2! (2...Kc3? 3.Ne4+ Kd3 4.Kf4 h2 5.Bf3 Na4 6.Kg3=; 2...Bd3+? 3.Kf4 Bb1 4.Nxh3 Nd3+ 5.Kf3 Kc3 6.Ke3 Kb2 7.Kd4 Kxa1 8.Kc3!=) 3.Nf3+ Kc3 4.Nxh2 Nd1!! First sacrifice of the black knight (4...Nd3? 5.Ng4=) 5.Bxd1 (5.Nf3 Ne3+ 6.Ke4 Nc2 7.Nxc2 Kxc2—) 5...Kb2 6.Ng4

Kxa1 7.Ne5 (7.Ne3 Bd3+! 8.Ke5 Kb2-+) 7...Bg8! 8.Kf4 (8.Ke4 Kb1! 9.Nd3 Bh7+--+) 8...Kb2!
 9.Nd3+ Kc3 10.Nc1 Kd2 11.Bb3 Bxb3 12.Nxb3+ Kc2! 13.Nd4+ Kb2-+, and pawn will promote.
 2.Bxc4? Nxc4! 3.Nxh3 Kc3 4.Ke4 (4.Nf4 Kb2-+) 4...Nd2+ 5.Ke3 Nb3-+.
2...Kd3! (2...Kc3 3.Nxa3 h2 4.Ne4+=) **3.Nxa3 h2 4.Nxc4 Nxc4.** Checkers theme (Nxa3xc4xb2)
 after 4...h1Q 5.Nxb2+ Kc2 6.Nc4!=.

5.Nh3!

Try 5.Ne4? Nd6+!-+ The second sacrifice of the black knight.

5.Bd5? Ne3+--.

5...Ne3+ 6.Kf4! From the queen's side a game has smoothly flowed on royal's side.

Try 6.Kg5? Ke2 7.Bh5+ Ng4!! The third sacrifice of the black knight. 8.Bxg4+ Ke3-+.

6...Ke2 7.Bh5+ Kf1 8.Bf3 Ng2+ 9.Kg4!

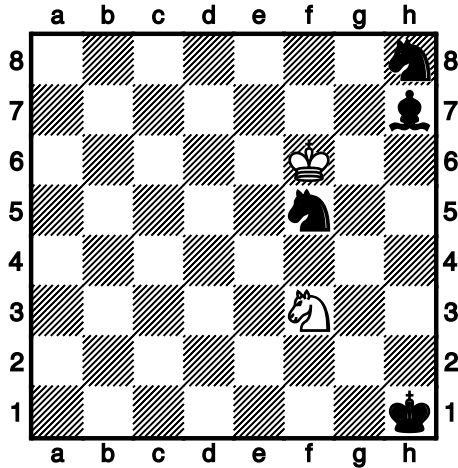
Thematic try 9.Kg3? h1Q zz 10.Be4 Ke2-+.

9...h1Q. Now pawn "h" promoted, but...

10.Kg3 zz 10...Ke1 11.Bxg2. And the queen is caught.

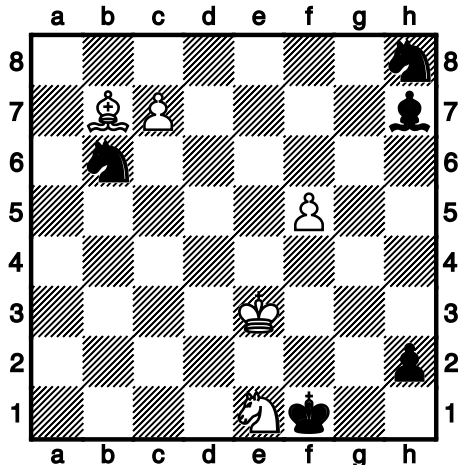
Minus of this study is that the thematic try is too short. It's plus — initial play has a tries with a triple sacrifice of the black knight on d1, d6 and g4.

5. Position of mutual zugzwang



6. O. Pervakov

Sent to JT A. Selivanov-50, 2017



Draw

1.Nf3! To deal with a pawn it is necessary to force her to promote into a queen!

1...h1Q 2.Nd2+ Kg1 3.Bxh1! To leave on a board a bishop — means to die: **3.Nf3+? Qxf3+!**
4.Bxf3 Bxf5 5.Kf4 Bc2! (*5...Bd7? 6.Bg4=*) **6.Bb7 Ng6+ 7.Kg5 Ne7—+.**

3...Kxh1 4.Kf4!!

Logical try **4.Ne4? Nd5+** (*4...Bxf5? 5.Ng3+=*) **5.Kd4 Nxc7 6.Ke5 Ne8!** (*6...Bg8? 7.Kf6 Ba2 8.Nd6!*) **7.Ke6 Ng7+! 8.Kf6 Nxf5! 9.Ng5 Bg6 10.Ne6 Nd6! 11.Kg7 Ndf7—+, wins.**

4.Ke4? Nf7—+; or **4.Kd4? Bxf5—+.**

4...Nd5+ (*4...Bg8 5.Ne4 Nd5+ 6.Ke5 Nxc7 7.Kf6;* *4...Nf7 5.Ne4! Nd5+ 6.Kg4! Nxc7 7.Nf6=*)

5.Ke5! (*5.Kg5? Nf7+!—+*) **5...Nxc7 6.Kf6! Ne8+ 7.Ke7.** Amusing route of the white king on e3-f4-e5-f6 as a snake!

7...Ng7 8.Kf6 Nh5+ 9.Kg5! Ng3 10.Kf6 Nxf5. It wasn't succeeded to frighten White: after **10...Bxf5 11.Nf1!** black remain with two useless knights.

Just a moment! This is the same position from the logical try, apparently with tempo for Black (there the knight already stood on e4!). An, no!..

11.Nf3!! The key! You see mutual zugzwang.

11...Bg6 12.Ne5 Bh7 13.Nf3 Kg2. What else? It is necessary to play...

14.Ng5 Bg6 15.Ne6! Kf3. No time for **15...Nd6 16.Nf4+!=** — fork!

16.Nf8! with draw.

Plus of this study is the unusual logical try — imperceptible loss of a tempo.