



11/4. Y. Roslov, 1996*

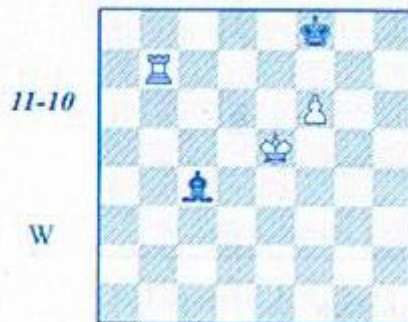
In case of 1 ♖f2? ♔d5 2 ♖e3 ♜f7 3 ♖d4 ♕b3 the game comes to the Del Rio position. To avoid it, only tactical measures will do.

1 f7+! ♜e7 2 ♞d6!! (rather than 2 ♞h8? ♕a6+! 3 ♜f2 ♜xf7) **2...♔h1**

Amazingly enough, the bishop cannot find a refuge from rook attacks: 2...♜f8 3 ♞d8+ ♜xf7 4 ♞d7+; 2...♕c8 3 ♜8♙+ ♜xf8 4 ♞d8+; 2...♕f3 3 ♜8♙+ (or 3 ♞f6).

3 ♜g1 ♕e4 (3...♕b7 4 ♞d7+!) **4 ♞e6+!**

Szabó – Botvinnik
Budapest 1952



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In the middle of the 18th century Ercole del Rio proved that this position is drawn. Two centuries later, M. Botvinnik followed his analysis and saved a difficult endgame against L. Szabo.

When the pawn is still on f5, White has no problem, but here the pawn occupies the important square f6. If 1 f7 (hoping for 1...♕xf7? 2 ♜f6+-), then 1...♜g7!+. All attempts to prepare an invasion by the king to g6 or e6 can be parried by Black if he defends correctly.

1 ♞b4 ♕a2 2 ♜f5 ♕d5
2...♜f7? 3 ♞b7+ ♜f8 4 ♜g6+-
3 ♜g6 ♕f7+ 4 ♜g5 ♕d5 5 ♞h4 ♕b3
6 ♞h8+ ♜f7 7 ♞h7+ ♜f8 8 f7 ♜e7! 9 ♜g6
♕c4!

But, of course, not 9...♕c2+?? 10 ♜g7+-.

10 ♞g7 ♕b3 11 ♜8♙+ ♜xf8 12 ♜f6
♜e8 13 ♞c7+ ♜d8 Draw.

We should add that, if all the pieces are shifted down by a rank, a similar defense does not work. As L. Centurini proved in 1865, White wins, although it can take some effort. All similar situations are lost also against a central or a knight pawn, so the del Rio position is the only successful elementary fortress of this kind.