



THE PUZZLING SIDE OF CHESS

Jeff Coakley

PROOF GAMES: Rookless Homebase Pronkins

number 141

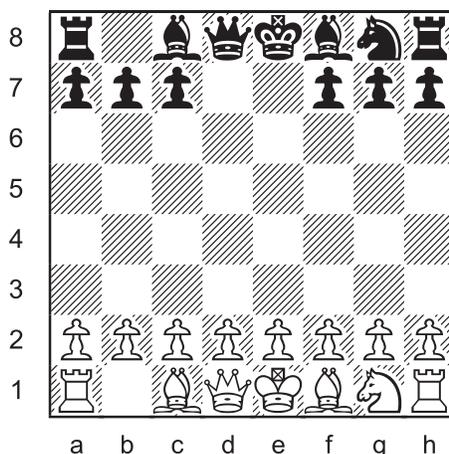
December 16, 2017

The task in a *proof game* is to show how a given position can be reached in a legal game. The puzzles in this column have a *move stipulation*. The position must be reached in a precise number of moves, no more and no less. The first two problems are proof games in 4.0 which means four moves by each side.

The positions may be crazy, and the strategy hazy, but the moves are legal.

This problem is a *homebase* proof game. Every piece is on its starting square, or at least seems to be. Only ten such 4.0 games exist. All ten have now appeared on *The Puzzling Side of Chess*. A reference list is given on the solution pages.

Proof Game 72

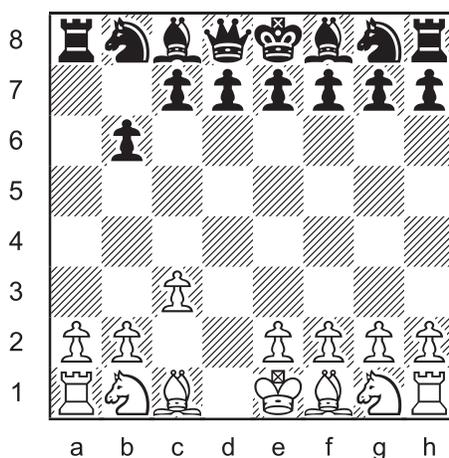


This position, with White to play, was reached in a game after each player made exactly four moves. What were the moves?



Scrutiny of tiny details.

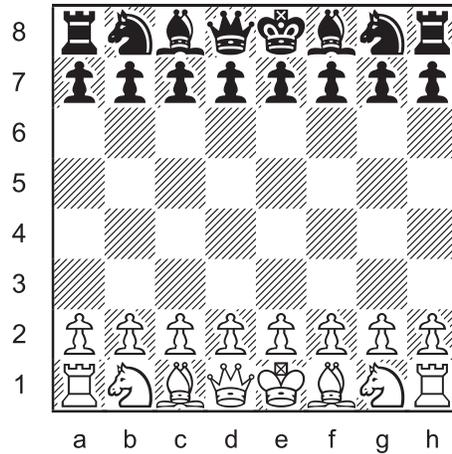
Proof Game 73



This position was reached after Black's fourth turn. What were the moves?

A *synthetic game* is similar to a proof game. But instead of finding the move sequence that leads to a given position, the task is to compose a game that ends with a particular move.

Synthetic Game 34

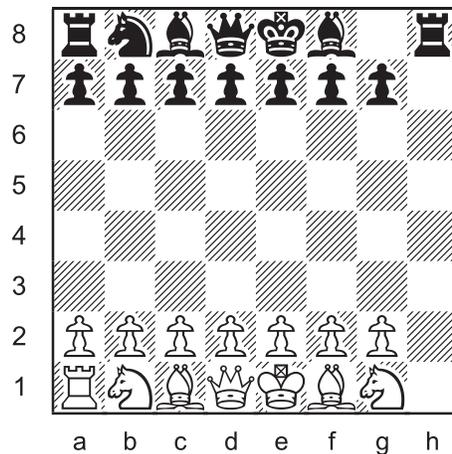


Compose a game that ends with the move **5.e4#**



The next “longer” game is length 5.0. Homebased and missing a rook.

Longer Proof Game 43 (5.0 moves)



This position was reached after Black's fifth turn. What were the moves?

PG SHOWCASE

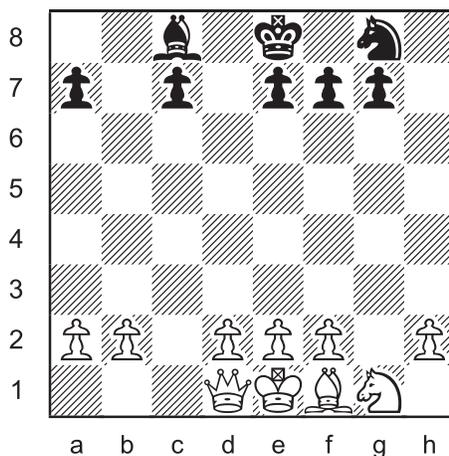
The following proof games exceed the normal limits of solvability for most chess detectives. They are presented here, not as puzzles, but as artistic endeavours, demonstrating some of the compositional possibilities in this type of retro problem.



This showcase continues the *rookless homebase* theme of column 139 and incorporates the additional feature of *pronkin* pieces.

A *pronkin* is a promoted piece which moves to a square on its first rank that was originally occupied by a piece of the same type. For example, a promoted black rook moving to h8. Named for Ukrainian composer Dmitry Pronkin.

Longer Proof Game 44 (11.5 moves)

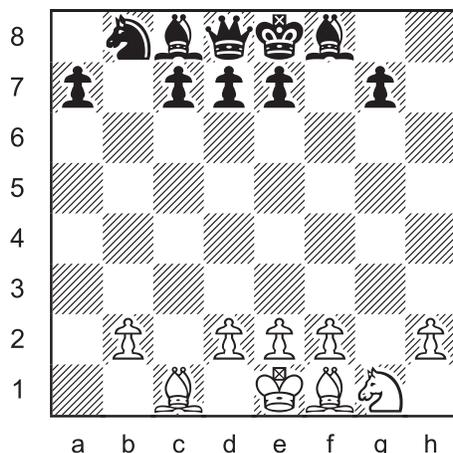


This position was reached after White's twelfth turn. What were the moves?



Each of the three showcase problems has a different kind of promoted piece. We started with a pronkin knight. You can guess what's next.

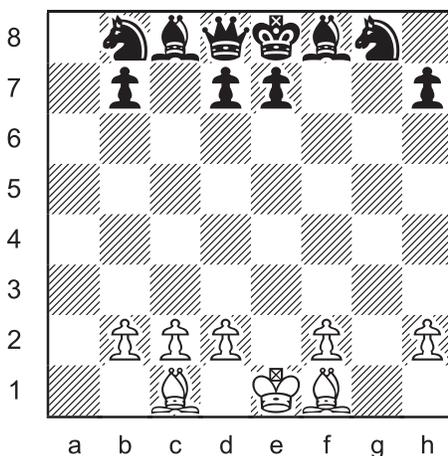
Longer Proof Game 45 (11.0 moves)



This position was reached after Black's eleventh turn. What were the moves?

The *Puzzling Side* archives are still under reconstruction and now 91% complete. Only twelve columns from Season 3 are missing. Once they are added, an index of puzzle types and composers will also be available.

Longer Proof Game 46 (11.0 moves)



This position was reached after Black's eleventh turn. What were the moves?

For more on this theme and *The Unusual Case of the Six Move Pronkin*, see column 68.

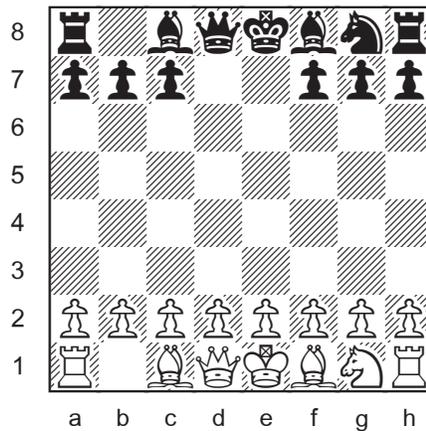
SOLUTIONS

Except for proof game 72, all problems by J. Coakley, *Puzzling Side of Chess* (2017).

PDF hyperlinks. You can advance to the solution of any puzzle by clicking on the underlined title above the diagram. To return to the puzzle, click on the title above the solution diagram.

Proof Game 72

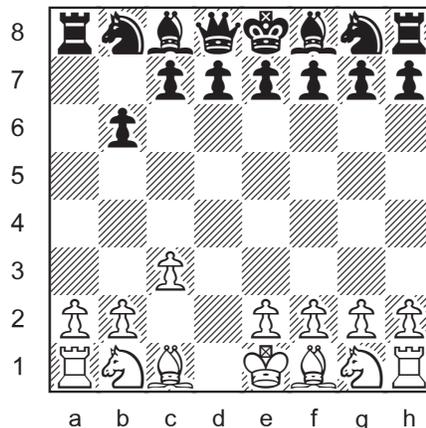
reflection of Ernest C. Mortimer (version by Andrey Frolkin) 1991
Shortest Proof Games (by Gerd Wilts & Andrey Frolkin)



1.Nc3 d5 2.Nxd5 Nd7 3.Nxe7 Ndf6 4.Nxg8 Nxg8
Impostor knight on g8.

The original problem is discussed in detail in column 8 (puzzle 6b).
The other eight homebase 4.0 proof games can be found in
columns 38 (22ab), 46 (25ab), 64 (35), 77 (39), 88 (44), 139 (70).

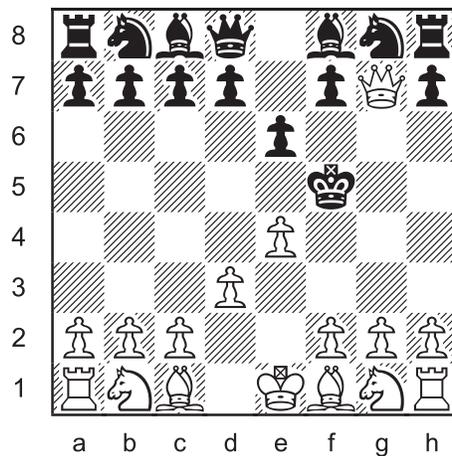
Proof Game 73



1.c4 b5 2.Qb3 bxc4 3.Qb6 c3 4.dxc3 axb6

An English Opening gone awry.

Synthetic Game 34



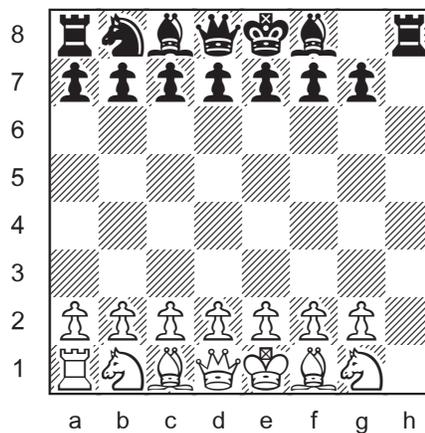
1.e3 e6 2.Qg4 Ke7 3.d3 Kf6 4.Qxg7+ Kf5 5.e4#

The first three white moves can be played in different orders.

[August 2023: Also possible is 1.d3 e5 2.Qd2 Ke7 3.h3 Kf6 4.Qh6+ Kf5 5.e4#.]

Longer Proof Game 43 (5.0 moves)

.François Labelle 2004



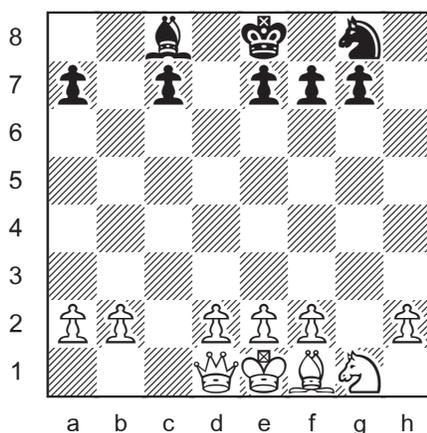
1.h4 Nf6 2.h5 Nxh5 3.Rxh5 h6 4.Rxh6 Rg8 5.Rh8 Rxh8

A nifty shuffle by the black rook to g8 and back.

This puzzle was “composed” by me last year, sitting at a chessboard with wooden pieces. But I cannot claim credit.

In 2004, Canadian computer expert François Labelle published lists of all homebase proof games of length 4.0, 4.5, and 5.0 moves. They include 10, 41, and 116 games, respectively.

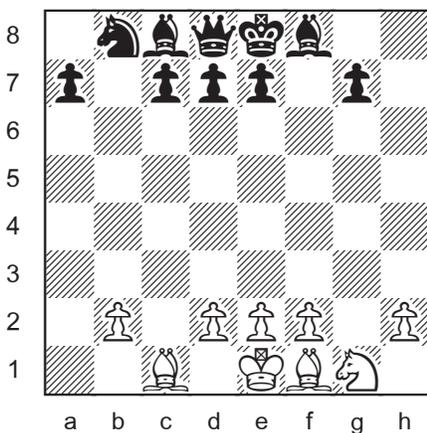
Longer Proof Game 44 (11.5 moves)



1.c4 d5 2.cxd5 Nc6 3.dxc6 Qd3 4.cxb7 Qxb1
 5.bxa8=N Qxa1 6.Nb6 Qxc1 7.Nxd7 Qc6 8.Nxf8 Qxg2
 9.Nxh7 Qxh1 10.Ng5 Rh3 11.N5xh3 Qxg1 12.Nxg1

All white moves by the heroic c-pawn, with a roundabout route for the promoted knight from a8 to g1.

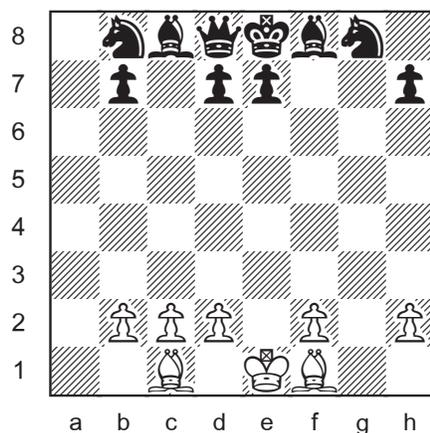
Longer Proof Game 45 (11.0 moves)



1.c4 f5 2.Qc2 f4 3.Qxh7 f3 4.Qxh8 fxg2
 5.Qxg8 gxh1=B 6.Qd5 Be4 7.Qxb7 Bxb1
 8.Qxa8 Bxa2 9.Qxb7 Bxc4 10.Ra6 Bxa6
 11.Qxc8 Bxc8

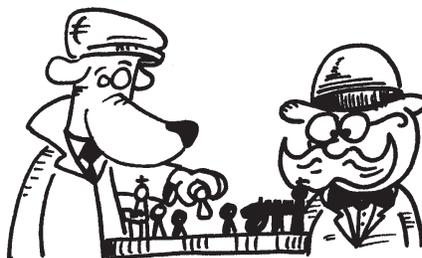
The black f-pawn gets the glory in this adventure. Pronkin bishop, with switchback capture on c8. That's what we call the *Orbán effect*. See column 3.

Longer Proof Game 46 (11.0 moves)



1.e4 f5 2.Qg4 fxe4 3.Nf3 exf3 4.Qxg7 fxg2
5.Qxh8 gxh1=Q 6.Qd4 Qd5 7.Qxa7 Qxa2
8.Qxa8 Qxb1 9.Qa5 Qxa1 10.Qxc7 Qa5
11.Qxd8+ Qxd8

Another f-pawn extravaganza. Pronkin queen with a stretch of pseudo-symmetry.



Until next time!

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