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**5**

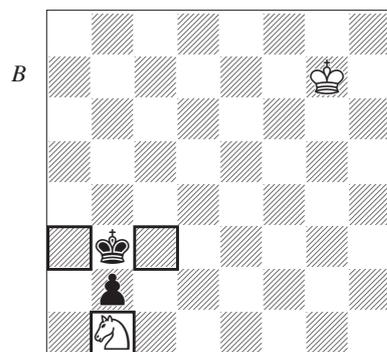
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## 5 Knight Endings

The knight can do some remarkable things but, being a short-range piece, only if the pawns are on one side of the board. Before addressing the general principles that apply in these endings, we shall first look at a number of basic positions.

### Stopping a Pawn without the King's Support

With enough time to get into position, the knight can hold the draw against any pawn, without support from the king. For any pawn other than a rook's pawn, the task is relatively easy.

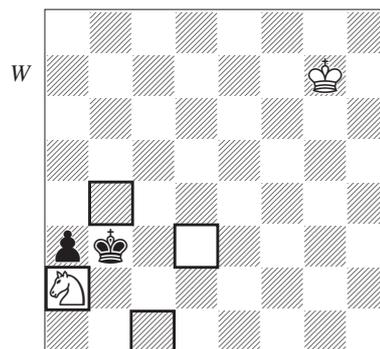


Black can do nothing as the white knight can move between b1, a3 and c3.

**1...♔c2 2 ♘a3+ ♕b3 3 ♘b1**

With a draw.

The situation with an a- or an h-pawn is slightly more complex as the knight has less freedom of movement. Nevertheless, it can still stop a supported pawn provided the pawn has not yet reached the seventh rank.



The white knight moves round the squares a2, c1, d3 and b4. Black can make no progress:

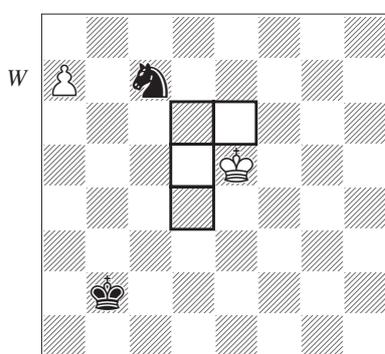
**1 ♘c1+ ♕b2 2 ♘d3+ ♕c2 3 ♘b4+ ♕b3 4 ♘d3**

The game is drawn.

For an a- or h-pawn, the same result applies if the black pawn is less far advanced. In summary, with the exception of an a- or h-pawn that has reached

the seventh rank, the defending side need only get his knight on the square in front of the pawn to secure the draw.

However, even with an a-pawn or h-pawn on the seventh rank, the knight can provide surprising defensive resources that may yet save the day.



With White to play, the black king appears to be too far way from the action. However, the knight has effectively created a barrier for the white king; d5 and e6 are covered directly, while d4 and d6 are covered indirectly due to the threat to fork king and pawn. The white king therefore has to make a time-consuming detour and this allows the black king back into play:

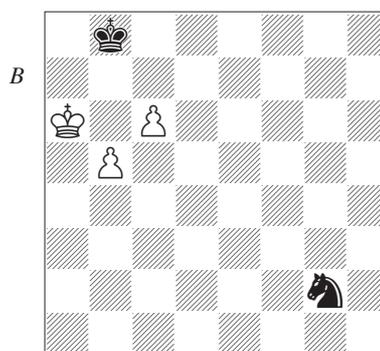
**1 ♔f6 ♕c3 2 ♔e7 ♕d4 3 ♔d7 ♖a8 4 ♕c8 ♖b6+ 5 ♔b8 ♕c5**

With a draw. Indeed, the black king would have to start as far away as the first rank in order not to be able to secure a draw.

Similarly, a knight on b6 would create a barrier on d5-d7 and e7.

## Knight vs Two or Three Pawns

With the king's help, knight vs two pawns should be drawn. If the pawns are far apart, the king and knight take one each. If together, the king in front of the pawns and the knight adjacent normally secure the draw. This is true even against two well-advanced and supported connected pawns.



**Buhmann – Nikolić**  
*Bundesliga 2002/3*

Black secures a draw easily:  
**62... ♖e3 63 b6 ♖d5 64 ♕b5 ♖e7 65 ♕c5 ♖xc6 66 ♕xc6 1/2-1/2**

However, the knight can also survive against three adjacent pawns provided the king and knight are optimally placed and the majority of the pawns are not advanced beyond the fourth rank.

In the following diagram, White can make no progress. The knight controls