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10...f3 11 b1 xg3 12 c4 bxc4 13 b4 f3 14 b5 c3 15 b6 c2 16 b7 d1 17 b8 c2+ 18 a2 c1 19 b3+ e2 and Black will swap queens on b2, with an easily winning ending.

2b) 8 bxa4 bxa4 9 c4 e4 10 b4 d3 11 xd3 c3 12 b5 c4 13 c6 e4 14 c6 f3 is the key variation; Black’s pawn sacrifice has changed the kingside pawn-structure in his favour, in that taking on g3 and then on g4 defends the g5-pawn, whereas taking on g3 and then h3 didn’t.

2...d5 3 b4 a4

In this line too, the outside passed pawn proves decisive.

4 c4+ e5 5 c3 (D)

5...g4!

White had set a vicious trap, which Black cleverly avoided. After the obvious 5...e4? 6 b2 f3 7 g4! g3 8 a3 xb3 9 xa4 xg4 10 a5 f4 (it doesn’t make any real difference where Black moves his king) 11 b6 g4 12 xb7 g3 13 b5 g2 14 bxc6 g1 15 f7 Black is unable to win as he can never force White’s king in front of the c7-pawn, nor can he reach a winning queen and pawn ending. The preliminary sacrifice deprives White of his reserve tempo on the kingside, and now Black can win by playing his king to the queenside rather than the kingside.

6 hxg4 g5 7 b2 d4 8 a3 c3! 0-1

The finish might be 9 xa4 xc4 (Marić gave 9...a2?? in Informator, but this loses to 10 a5 10 a3 c3 11 a4 b2 12 a5 b3 13 b5 c4 14 bxc6 bxc6 15 b6 d5 and now we see how important it was to deprive White of his spare tempo on the kingside.

**Summary:**

- An outside passed pawn can be a powerful weapon, drawing the enemy king away from the defence of the remaining pawns.
- Much depends on whether the attacker’s king can quickly penetrate into the pawn-mass on the opposite flank to the passed pawn. Sometimes it is necessary to advance pawns to create an opening for the king.
- A pawn-majority that can produce an outside passed pawn may be almost as effective as the passed pawn itself.

### 2.7.2 Who’s Afraid of the Outside Passed Pawn?

Our treatment of outside passed pawns has thus far been rather typical of endgame books in general, but now we depart from the traditional script. After emphasizing the power of outside passed pawns, most books then pass straight on to the next topic. The consequence of this is that most players have an over-inflated idea of the strength of outside passed pawns. As we have seen, there are indeed many positions in which such a pawn gives a decisive advantage, but there are also many positions in which it does not. In this section we shall explore some of the situations in which an outside passed pawn loses its effectiveness.
At first sight this is a standard outside passed pawn win, with Black using his f-pawn to deflect the white king while Black’s own king gobbles up White’s queenside pawns; indeed, so standard did it appear to Mnatsakanian that he resigned at this point (0-1). However, as Minev pointed out in Informator, the position is actually a draw. If the outside passed pawn were on the g- or h-file, then Black would indeed win, but in this position White can take the f-pawn and still make it back to the queenside in time to stop Black’s a-pawn.

1 e2

At this stage, White doesn’t even have to be particularly accurate. He can also draw by 1 d2, 1 c3, 1 e1 or 1 a5.

1...e5 2 d3 d5

2...f5 3 c4 f4 4 c5 dxc5 5 a5 bxc4

6 e3 f4 7 d3 f3

In this position there were two factors that enabled White to draw. The first is that Black’s only pawn on the queenside was an a-pawn, so it was only necessary for the white king to return to c1 to save the game. The second was that the outside passed pawn wasn’t as far away as it might have been, so that the journey to take the f-pawn and still return to c1 was within the range of White’s king.

The next position is rather different. The outside passed pawn is on the edge of the board, and there are plenty of pawns on the opposite flank, but it’s a draw for a different reason.

1 h3!!

It was quite an achievement for White to find the only move to save the game. Other moves lose:

1) 1 h5? h4 2 g4 xg3 3 xe4 h6! reaches a position of reciprocal zugzwang. It’s
clear that White loses if he is to play, but it’s not so obvious that Black can only draw if it is his move. However, the position after 4...\textit{xe}3 5 \textit{f}5 \textit{h}5 occurs later in the game and we shall see there why it is drawn.

2) 1 \textit{e}4? and now:

2a) 1...\textit{f}6? 2 \textit{g}4 \textit{e}5 3 \textit{g}5 is a position of reciprocal zugzwang with Black to play. The result is a draw after 3...\textit{xe}4 4 \textit{f}6 \textit{h}5 5 \textit{e}6 \textit{h}4 6 \textit{x}d6 \textit{h}3 7 \textit{c}7 \textit{h}2 8 \textit{d}6 \textit{h}1\textit{\texttt{\textasciitilde}} 9 \textit{d}7, much as in the game (Black’s king is on \textit{e}4 instead of \textit{e}3, but this makes no difference).

2b) 1...\textit{h}5? is given as winning by Minev and Milić in \textit{Informator 15}, but actually it allows White to escape: 2 \textit{f}3! (2 \textit{h}3? \textit{f}4 3 \textit{h}4 \textit{xe}4 4 \textit{xb}5 \textit{d}3 5 \textit{g}5 \textit{c}3 6 \textit{f}6 \textit{xb}3 7 \textit{e}6 \textit{a}4 8 \textit{xd}6 \textit{a}3 9 \textit{c}7 \textit{a}2 10 \textit{d}6 \textit{a}1\textit{\texttt{\textasciitilde}} 11 \textit{d}7 \textit{f}6 wins for Black) 2...\textit{h}4 3 \textit{e}5 \textit{dxe}5 4 \textit{d}6 \textit{e}4+ 5 \textit{xe}4 \textit{f}6 6 \textit{d}5 \textit{h}3 7 \textit{c}6 \textit{h}2 8 \textit{c}7 \textit{h}1\textit{\texttt{\textasciitilde}} 9 \textit{d}7 with the same type of positional draw as in the game.

2c) 1...\textit{h}6! (this is the winning move) 2 \textit{f}3 (2 \textit{e}5 \textit{dxe}5 3 \textit{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}f3 \textit{f}5 is similar) 2...\textit{f}4 3 \textit{f}4 \textit{h}5 4 \textit{e}5+ \textit{dxe}5+ 5 \textit{f}3 \textit{f}5 6 \textit{g}3 \textit{e}4 and Black wins easily.

1...\textit{f}5

1...\textit{h}6 2 \textit{g}3 \textit{f}5 3 \textit{h}4 \textit{e}4 4 \textit{g}4 is one of the above reciprocal zugzwangs with Black to play.

2 \textit{h}4 \textit{e}4 3 \textit{g}5 \textit{xe}3 4 \textit{f}5!

It takes too much time to go for the h-pawn, so White must create his own passed pawn as quickly as possible.

4...\textit{h}5

This is the only chance, since if Black runs for the h-pawn, White promotes first.

5 \textit{e}6 \textit{h}4 6 \textit{xd}6 \textit{h}3 7 \textit{c}7 \textit{h}2 8 \textit{d}6 \textit{h}1\textit{\texttt{\textasciitilde}} 9 \textit{d}7 (D)

It is perhaps surprising that Black cannot win here, but this is the point at which the weakness of \textit{b}6 enters the picture. Black cannot force the white king in front of the d-pawn and the best he can do is transfer his queen to \textit{e}7 with gain of tempo. Then he has a free move before he has to exchange queens on \textit{d}8. If Black’s pawn were on \textit{a}7 instead of \textit{a}5, then the resulting king and pawn ending would be winning for Black, but as it is, White is in time to take on \textit{b}6 and create a passed b-pawn.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.2\textwidth]{image1.png}
\end{center}

9...\textit{h}2+ 10 \textit{c}8 \textit{h}3 11 \textit{c}7 \textit{g}3+ 12 \textit{c}8 \textit{g}4 13 \textit{c}7 \textit{f}4+ 14 \textit{c}8 \textit{f}5 15 \textit{c}7 \textit{e}5+ 16 \textit{c}8 \textit{e}6 17 \textit{c}7 \textit{e}6 18 \textit{c}8 \textit{f}5 19 \textit{c}7 \textit{e}7 20 \textit{c}8\textit{\texttt{\textasciitilde}}

After 18...\textit{d}3 19 \textit{d}8\texttt{\textasciitilde}+ \textit{xd}8+ 20 \textit{xd}8 \textit{a}4! (20...\textit{e}3?! 21 \textit{c}7 \textit{xb}3 22 \textit{xb}6 \textit{a}4 23 \textit{xc}5 \textit{a}3 24 \textit{b}6 \textit{a}2 25 \textit{b}7 \textit{a}1\textit{\texttt{\textasciitilde}} 26 \textit{b}8\texttt{\textasciitilde}+ \textit{c}2! is also drawn, but it would be a tough task to defend this over the board) 21 \textit{bxa}4 \textit{xc}4 22 \textit{c}7 \textit{xb}4 23 \textit{xb}6 \textit{c}4, the draw is clear.

In the next position, White could choose to make an outside passed pawn on either side of the board, but in the game he picked the wrong one.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.2\textwidth]{image2.png}
\end{center}

Lutz – Nisipeanu
\textit{Bundesliga 2005/6}

White is a pawn up, but has two backward pawns. He can create a passed b-pawn by playing \textit{c}4, or a passed h-pawn by playing \textit{g}3. Which plan is correct?
1...e2

The immediate 2 g3? is wrong, because after 2...hxg3+ 3 hxg3 e3 Black’s f-pawn is just as dangerous as White’s h-pawn. Instead, White must manoeuvre to find a better opportunity for playing g3.

2...e5

Or 2...f6 3 d2 f5 4 c2! and White wins after 4...e5 5 d3 d5 6 c4+ bxc4+ 7 c3 f4 8 b5 or 4...f4 5 c4 bxc4 6 b5 d5 7 c3 e5 8 b6.

3 e3

3 f3 f5 4 e3 d5 5 f4 is also an easy win because Black is in zugzwang; after 5...e4 6 g3 hxg3 7 xg3 (Black’s king cannot now move to e4) 7...xc3 8 h4 xc4 9 h5 the h-pawn is too fast.

3...d5 4 f3 f6 (D)

After 4...c4 5 g3 White wins easily.

5 f4?!

It often happens that a player makes his life more difficult with an inaccuracy, and only then makes a result-changing blunder. Here White could have won at a stroke by 5 g3! hxg3 6 h4 e5 7 xg3 e4 (7...f5 8 f3) 8 h5 f5 9 h4 d6 10 d4 and there are no more problems. In the game White decided to play his king to the queenside and create a passed pawn with c4, but this does not work.

5...f5

Now we have the same position as in the note to White’s third move, but here it is White to play. He can still win but it is more difficult, as he must first triangulate with his king.

6 e3

6 xf5 only leads to a drawn ending of +h4 vs +.

6...e5 (D)

7 d3?

White has become confused and goes the wrong way with his king. He could have won on the kingside by completing the triangulation: 7 f3 d5 (7...f4 8 g4 e4 9 xh4) 8 f4, transposing into the note to White’s third move.

7...f4!

Black seizes his chance to force a draw.

8 c4

8 e2 g3 9 f1 f4 10 g1 f3 11 xg3 xf3 is an easy draw, so White has no choice.

8...bxc4+ 9 xc4?!

Other moves also lead to a draw, but would have offered more practical chances:

1) 9 g3 g3 10 b5 xg2 11 b6 f4 12 b7 f3 13 b8= w f2 14 wb7+ (14 wg8+?! xh3 is an immediate draw, so when the king is on g2, White has to check on the long diagonal) 14...g1 15 wg7+ xh2 16 wf6 g2 17 wc6+ g1 18 wc5 g2 19 wd5+ g1 20 wg8+ xh2 21 xc4 (by means of a careful sequence of checks, White has managed to take the c-pawn with tempo) 21 g2 22 xh4 f1= w 23 wg4+ xh2 24 h4 and, while the position is a draw, in practice White would have some justification in playing on.

2) 9 d4 and now 9...c3! 10 xc3 g3 11 b5 xg2 is simplest, with the same draw as in the game. Black doesn’t have to play ...c3 at once and can delay it for a couple of moves, but
if he waits too long then he will lose; for example, 9...\texttt{g}3 10 \texttt{b}5 \texttt{gxg}2 11 \texttt{b}6 \texttt{f}4? (this was the last chance for ...\texttt{c}3) 12 \texttt{b}7 \texttt{f}3 13 \texttt{b}8\texttt{\texttt{g}2} 14 \texttt{g}8+ \texttt{hxh}3 (14...\texttt{h}2 15 \texttt{xc}4 \texttt{g}2 16 \texttt{e}3 \texttt{f}1\texttt{\texttt{w}} 17 \texttt{xf}1+ \texttt{xf}1 18 \texttt{f}3 and White wins) 15 \texttt{e}6+ \texttt{h}2 16 \texttt{f}5 \texttt{g}2 17 \texttt{g}4+ \texttt{h}2 18 \texttt{hxh}4+ \texttt{g}2 19 \texttt{g}4+ \texttt{h}2 20 \texttt{f}1\texttt{\texttt{g}1} 21 \texttt{g}3+ \texttt{f}1 (Black has to move to f1 because the pawn on c4 destroys the usual stalemate) 22 \texttt{e}3 and White wins.

9...\texttt{g}3 10 \texttt{b}5 \texttt{gxg}2 11 \texttt{b}6 \texttt{f}4 12 \texttt{b}7 \texttt{f}3 13 \texttt{b}8\texttt{\texttt{f}2} (D)

Black has a queenside pawn-majority which, given enough time, will allow him to create an outside passed pawn. However, at the moment White is not worse since he can easily create counterplay on the kingside.

\texttt{1 a}4 \texttt{a}6 2 \texttt{g}5?! 

After this White has to take a little care to reach the draw. 2 \texttt{f}4! was sounder and after 2...\texttt{e}6 (not 2...\texttt{b}5? 3 \texttt{axb}5 \texttt{axb}5 4 \texttt{f}5 \texttt{b}4 5 \texttt{e}4 \texttt{c}4 6 \texttt{d}4 and White even wins) 3 \texttt{g}5 \texttt{hxg}5+ (not 3...\texttt{b}5? 4 \texttt{gxh}6 \texttt{gxh}6 5 \texttt{axb}5 \texttt{axb}5 6 \texttt{e}4 and White wins after 6...\texttt{c}4 7 \texttt{d}4 or 6...\texttt{b}4 7 \texttt{b}3 \texttt{c}4 8 \texttt{xc}4 \texttt{b}3 9 \texttt{d}3 \texttt{xe}5 10 \texttt{e}3) 4 \texttt{g}xg5 \texttt{b}5 5 \texttt{g}6 \texttt{c}4 6 \texttt{g}xg7 \texttt{b}4 7 \texttt{h}6 \texttt{c}3 8 \texttt{bc}3 \texttt{bxc}3 9 \texttt{h}7 \texttt{e}2 10 \texttt{h}8\texttt{\texttt{w}} 1\texttt{\texttt{w}} \texttt{c}1 \texttt{\texttt{w}}. White is even a pawn up in the queen ending. However, it’s an easy draw as Black’s king is actively placed and the e5-pawn is vulnerable; for example, 11 \texttt{e}8+ \texttt{f}5 12 \texttt{g}6+ \texttt{xe}5 13 \texttt{xa}6 \texttt{c}7+ 14 \texttt{g}6 \texttt{d}6+.

\texttt{2...hxg}5 3 \texttt{g}4 \texttt{b}5 4 \texttt{axb}5 \texttt{axb}5 5 \texttt{\texttt{g}xg}5 \texttt{c}4 (D)

\texttt{6 \texttt{g}6?}

This mistake costs White the game. Although the two players promote at the same time, Black has the first check and can use it to launch a mating attack. White could still have drawn by 6 \texttt{f}5! \texttt{b}4 7 \texttt{e}4 \texttt{c}3 8 \texttt{bc}3 \texttt{bxc}3 9 \texttt{\texttt{d}3} \texttt{\texttt{e}6} 10 \texttt{\texttt{xc}3} \texttt{\texttt{xe}5} 11 \texttt{\texttt{d}3} \texttt{\texttt{f}5} 12 \texttt{h}6!, converting
Black’s g-pawn into an h-pawn, after which the draw is obvious.

6...b4 7 Êxg7 c3 8 bxc3 bxc3 9 h6 c2 10 h7 c1Ë 11 h8Ë Ëg5+

Black first wins the e-pawn with check.

12 Êh7 Ëh5+ 13 Êg7
Or 13 Êg8 Ëf7#.

13...Ëxe5+ 14 Êg8 Ëe6+ 15 Êg7 15 Êh7 Ëe4+ 16 Êg7 Ëg4+ transposes.

15...Ëg4+ 16 Êh6 Ëh4+ 0-1
17 Êg7 Ëg5+ 18 Êh7 Ëf7 leads to a quick mate.

The propaganda about outside passed pawns sometimes leads players to make the wrong decision when liquidating into a pawn ending.

1 fxe5?
The wrong choice, after which Black has a winning position. The correct capture 1 dxe5! may look wrong, as it gives Black an outside passed pawn, but it is relatively close to the pawn-mass and this enables White to hold the game. Black can try:

1) 1...g5? 2 f5 is not equal, as Flear gives, but winning for White.

2) 1...Êf8 2 Êf2 Ëe7 3 g4! hxp3+ 4 Êxg3 Ëe6 5 Êf3 Ëf5 6 Ëe3 leads to a draw after 6...d4+ 7 Êxd4 Ëxf4 8 Êd5 Ëf5 9 h4 or 6...g5 7 Ëxg5 Ëxe5 8 Êf3 Ëf5 9 Ëe3! Ëxg5 10 Êd4.

3) 1...f6! (the most troublesome move) 2 Êf2 Ëf7 (2...fxe5 3 fxe5 Ëf7 4 Êf3 Ëe6 5 Êf4 is an easy draw) 3 Ëe3! (3 g3? fxe5 4 fxe5 Ëe6 5 Êh4 Ëxe5 6 Ëe3 d4+ 7 Êd3 Ëd5 8 Êd2 Ëe4 9 Êe2 Ëf4 10 Êd3 Ëg3 11 Êxd4 Ëxh3 wins for Black) 3...Êe6 4 exf6 (not 4 Êd4? fxe5+ 5 fxe5 g5) 4...Êxf6 (D).

We have reached a key moment at which White must choose the correct square for his king in order to draw: 5 Êf3! (it is surprising that White only draws by moving away from Black’s passed pawn, but the right strategy is to wait until the pawn is further advanced before attacking it; 5 Êd4? loses to 5...Êe6 6 Êd3 Êd7 7 Êc3 Êc6 8 Êd4 Êd6 9 Êd3 Êc5 and White is gradually forced backwards) 5...Êe6 (5...Êf5 6 Êe3 is a position of reciprocal zugzwang; if