

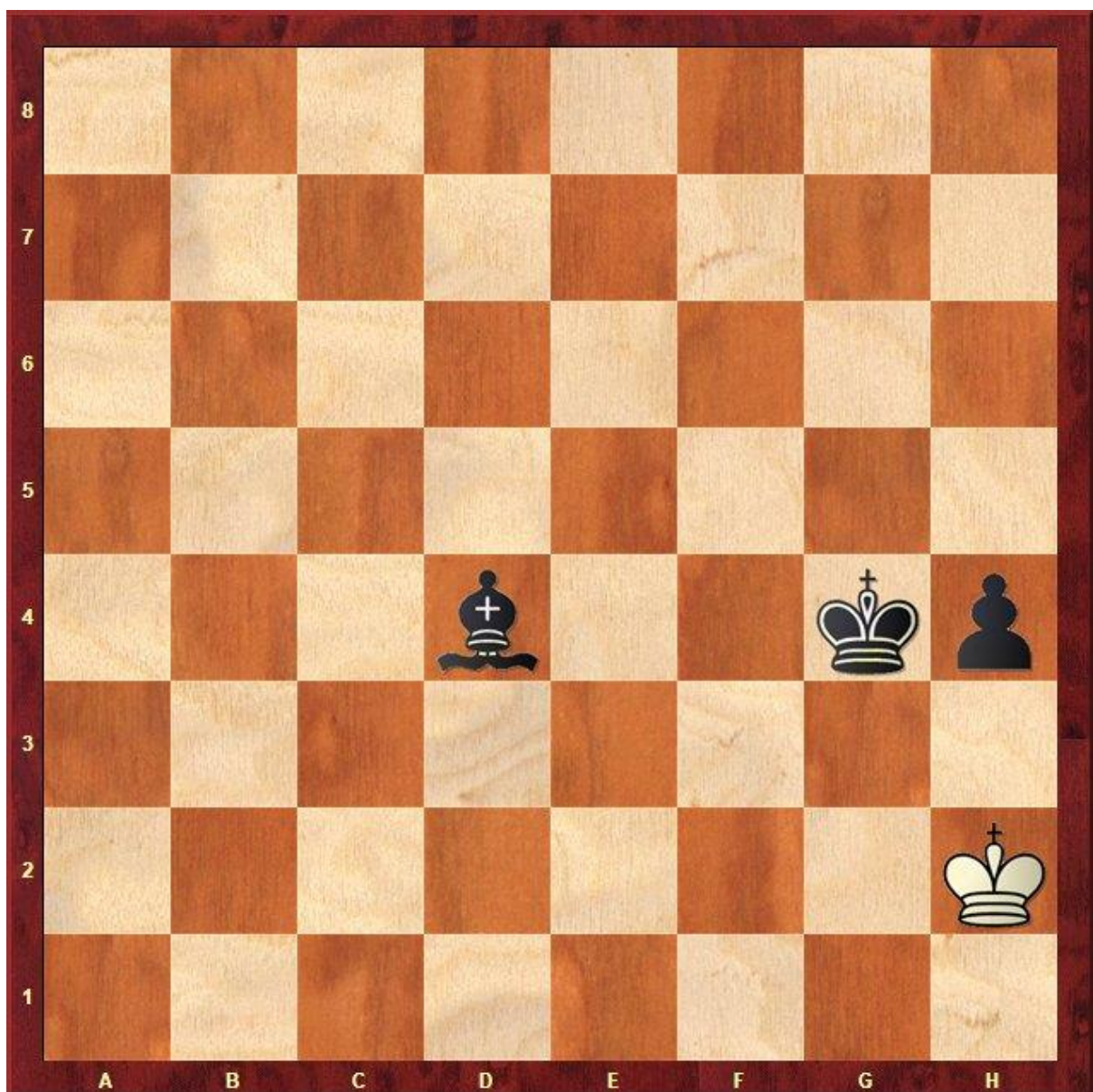
End Games - The Wrong Coloured Bishop

Normally, if a player has a bishop, pawn and king against a king, it is sufficient material to easily win the game by promoting the remaining pawn usually to a queen at which point the game will be concluded in a few moves.

However, there is an exception to this rule where the pawn involved is either on the "a" or "h" files, i.e., on the edge of the Board. In such cases if the bishop left on the Board is the opposite in colour to the "queening" square on the a or h files, then the defending player with just the king remaining can get a draw if the defending king is in front of the pawn.

When the king is in the corner blocking the advancing pawn from reaching the end of the Board, the bishop cannot check the king to force him out of the queening square.

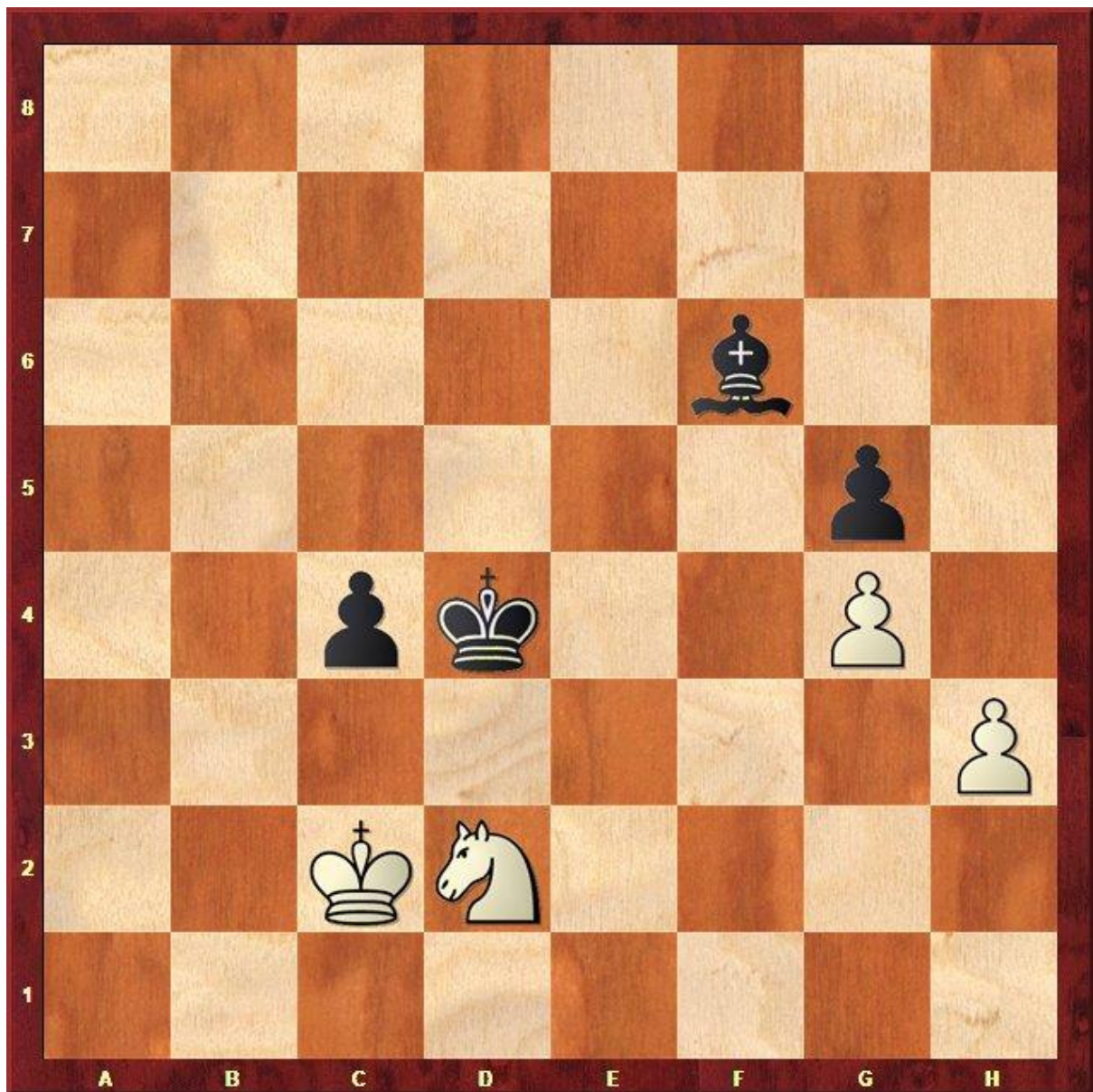
See diagram below with black to move.



No matter what black does, the white king can simply retreat to occupy the h1 square and cannot be dislodged thus gaining a draw even though black has the advantage of an extra minor piece and a passed pawn. If the bishop on the Board was a light squared bishop it could check the white king when it occupied the h1 square and then safely shepherd the h pawn to h1 with support from the king.

The following position occurred in the 2019 Elm Mount Club Championship and white managed to draw the game by creating a “wrong coloured bishop position”. Can you see how from the position below with white to move?

Fitzsimons, Pat v Boyle, Bernard Elm Mount Club Championships July 2019



The key move is Nxc4! Sacrificing the knight gets rid of Black's passed pawn on the queenside of the board and leaves the white king free to travel across to the h file. The game concluded:

.....Kxc4,

kd2, kd4,

ke2, ke4,

h4, (to force black's remaining pawn onto the h file), gxh4

kf2, kf4

kg2, kxg4

kh2, Be5+

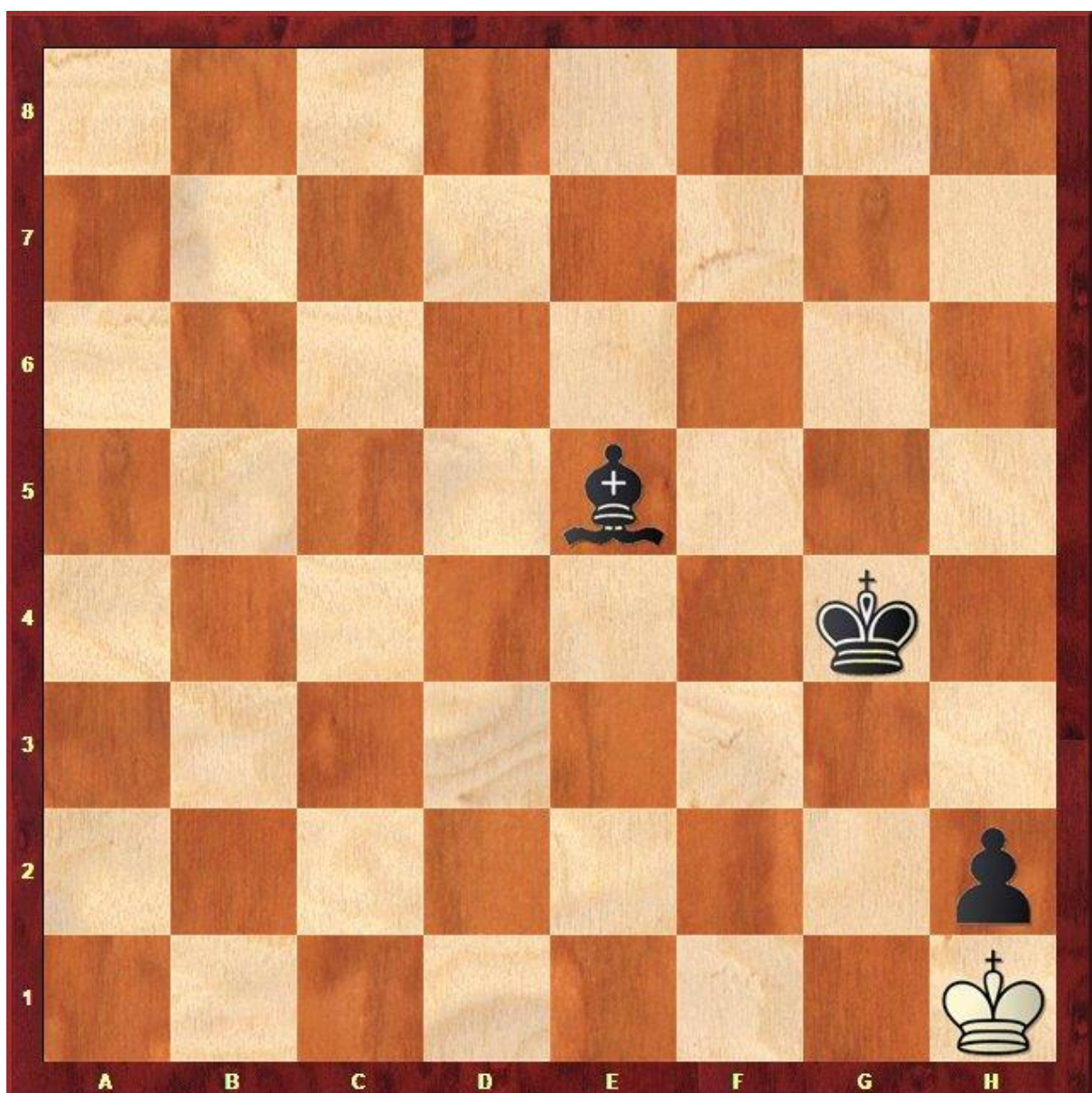
kh1, h3

kg1, h2+

kh1

½ - ½

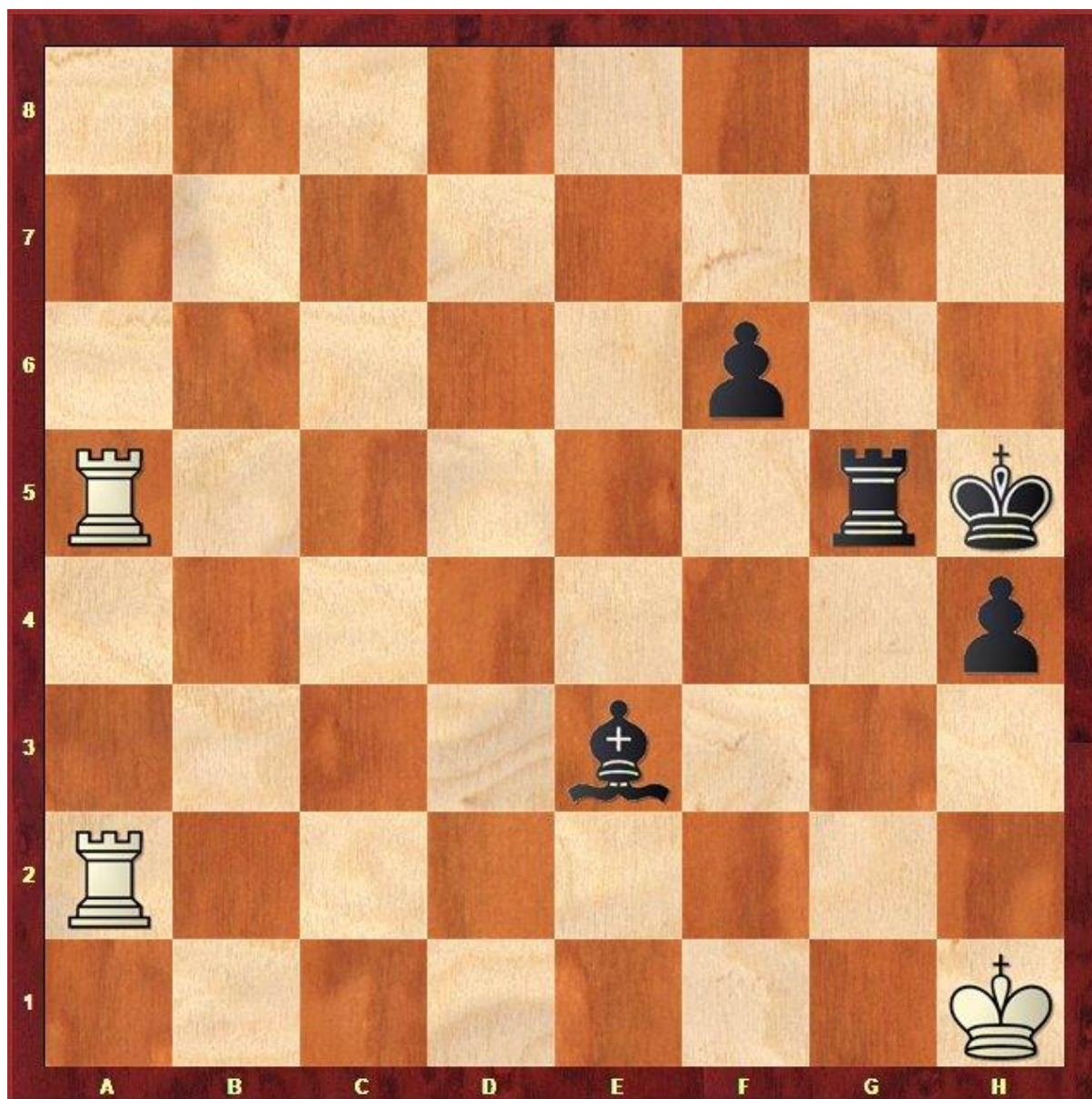
Final Position



The following is another position where a player used the wrong coloured bishop theme to force a draw.

Fitzsimons, David v McShane, Luke (GM) Bunratty Masters 2018

White to move and draw!



Rxg5, fxg5 Rg2, g4 Rxg4!!, kxg4

½ - ½ due to wrong coloured bishop!