

Zugzwang

Chess

Being forced to move, when every move loses.

A position in which any legal move worsens the position. The player would prefer to pass, and the rules do not permit it.

COMMON IN
endgames

TECHNIQUE
triangulation

MUTUAL
both lose on the move

- Almost exclusive to endgames, where few pieces can shuffle harmlessly.
- Underlies the opposition in king-and-pawn endings.
- Triangulation is the technique for putting the opponent in it.
- Mutual zugzwang: whoever is to move loses.
- Rare with many pieces on, because a spare move usually exists.
- Recognising it changes which side wants the move.

LOOK FOR IT

King and pawn against king: with the opposition, the defending king must step aside and the pawn promotes.

Triangulation is deliberately taking three moves to reach a square you could reach in two, handing the obligation back.