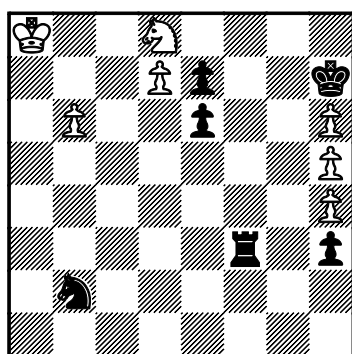


**YOCHANAN
AFEK**

**PRIZEWINNERS
EXPLAINED**

Vive la petite différence

EG is first and foremost a documentary periodical aimed at collecting and reprinting all published studies from around the world. As such, it usually introduces just diagrams and moves and rarely offers additional verbal explanations. Owing to permanent space distress, *EG* trusts its readers to successfully navigate through the mazes of piles of main and side lines. This is often not that easy and even far from appetizing, especially for newcomers. This new column, a welcome initiative of the new editor-in-chief, will try to partially make up for the lack of the “human touch” by selecting a couple of recent complex prizewinners and serving them in a more digestible and comprehensible manner.



– 1 –

Andrei Visokosov

1st prize

Vecherny Krasnoturinsky 10 JT, 2005

Draw

This first column pays tribute to the ever superior Russian art of the endgame study composition. The two first prizewinners below, which excelled in recent Russian tourneys, have a lot in common despite looking so different. They both display a strong thematic try that fails for missing one “tiny” detail which appears in the actual solution to make the entire difference. The **logical try** has become the trademark of two of the leading composers of our time, yielding for both so many prizes and distinctions.

In No. 1 the thematic try appears as early as in move two.

A rook down, White’s surviving chances lie in promoting one of his advanced pawns. But which one?

1.b7!

Not the other pawn: 1.Sxe6? Rd3 2.Sf4! (2.Sg5+ Kxb6 3.Sxb3 Sa4 wins; 2.Sf8+ Kxb6 3.b7 h2 4.b8Q Ra3+ 5.Kb7 h1Q+ 6.Kc8 Qc6+ 7.Kd8 Ra8 wins) 2...h2! 3.Sxd3 h1Q+ 4.b7 Qd5! 5.Sc5! Sa4! 6.Sxa4 Qxd7 7.Sb6 Qc6! 8.Ka7 Qc7! 9.Sa8 Qa5+ 10.Kb8 Qc5 11.Sc7 e5 and Black wins easily.

– 1 –

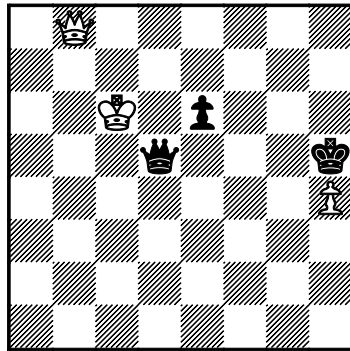
Now, how to stop the pawn? The direct approach would fail: 1...Ra3+ 2.Kb8 h2 3.Sc6 Rd3 4.Kc7 h1Q 5.b8Q Qh2+ 6.Kc8 Qxb8+ 7.Sxb8 e5 8.d8Q Rxd8+ 9.Kxd8 e4 10.Sc6 e3 11.Sd4 e5 12.Sc2 Sc4 13.Ke7 draws.

1...Sc4!

A highly efficient prophylactic move against both pawns, as demonstrated in the following try 2.b8Q? Ra3+ 3.Kb7 Rb3+ 4.Kc7 Rxb8 5.Kxb8 Se5 6.Sxe6 Sxd7+ 7.Kc7 h2 wins. Alternatively, letting queens on board by: 1...h2 2.b8Q Ra3+ 3.Qa7 h1Q+ 4.Sb7 Qa1 5.Qxa3 Qxa3+ 6.Kb8 is good for just a draw.

2.Sf7!

Here we come to the thematic crossroad. There are two knight's moves to create a double threat: promoting the d-pawn as well as a fork on g5. The **thematic try** shows the essence of the entire idea: 2.Sxe6? Sb6+ 3.Ka7 Sxd7 4.Sg5+ Kxh6 5.Sxf3 Kxh5! 6.Ka8! e6 and it is reciprocal zugzwang position! Here it is White to play and he loses after: 7.Se5 h2 8.Sxd7 h1Q 9.Ka7 Qc6 10.b8Q Qxd7+ 11.Kb6 Qd4+! 12.Kc6 Qd5+!



The point! The earlier move 6...e6 eventually enabled this last winning move (see diagram) as following 13.Kb6 Qb3+ wins, or 13.Kc7 Qe5+. Black trades queens and his last pawn decides. Therefore white will strive to prevent the move 6...e6 simply by not capturing the pawn standing there as early as in move two!

2...Sb6+ 3.Ka7 Sxd7 4.Sg5+ Kxh6 5.Sxf3 Kxh5! 6.Ka8!

Here it is! Avoiding the capture in the second move leaves now Black in zugzwang however deprived of the waiting move 6...e6.

6...e5

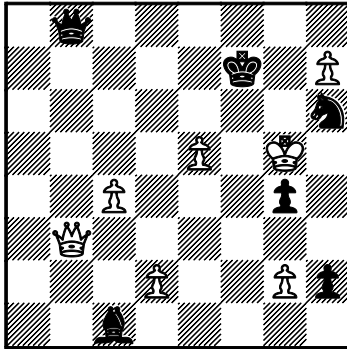
What else? A king's waiting move also fails: 6...Kh6 (Kg4? 7.Se5+!) 7.Se5! h2 8.Sg4+ draws.

7.Sxe5 h2 8.Sxd7 h1Q 9.Ka7! Qa1+

We have arrived at a positional draw e.g. 9...Qd5 10.b8Q Qxd7+ 11.Kb6! Qd4+ 12.Kc6! Kxh4 13.Qh2+! =

10.Kb6! Qd4+ 11.Kc7 Qd6+ 12.Kd8!

And Black can make no progress. Draw.



– 2 –

Nikolai Ryabinin

1st prize

Moscow Tourney, 2006

Win

The same theme is used in No. 2 however in a different context somewhat easier for the solver:

Black threatens to have a second queen while the original one is taboo: 1.Qxb8? Bxd2+ 2.Kh4 h1Q+ mates quickly. Who is supposed to win here? The white strategy is to lock the black king in the corner.

1.e6+! Kg7! 2.h8Q+! Qxh8 3.Qb7+ Kg8 4.Kg6! Ba3

The moment of truth: 5.Qc8+? Bf8 6.Qd7 Qg7+ 7.Qxg7+ Bxg7 8.e7 h1Q 9.e8Q+ Bf8 10.Qe6+ Kh8 11.Qe5+ Kg8 12.Qd5+ Kh8 and now 13.Qd7? will be met by Qb1+ 14.d3 Qb6+ thus White should settle for a draw by perpetual check (13.Qd4+ Kg8=) which suggests that the white queen on b7 might do the trick. But how would she get there?

5.c5!

That's it! By getting rid of his own pawn, White paves the way for his queen to descend further along the staircase right to its destination.

5...Bxc5 6.Qc8+! Bf8 7.Qd7! Qg7+

Or 7...Qf6+ 8.Kxf6 h1Q 9.Kg6 Qb1+ 10.d3! Be7 11.Qxe7 Qxd3+ 12.Kxh6 Qe3+ 13.Qg5+ trading queens to a winning pawn ending.

8.Qxg7+ Bxg7 9.e7 h1Q 10.e8Q+ Bf8 11.Qe6+ Kh8 12.Qe5+ Kg8 13.Qd5+ Kh8

14.Qd4+ Kg8 15.Qc4+!

Enabled by the right choice in move five

15...Kh8 16.Qc3+ Kg8 17.Qb3+ Kh8 18.Qb2+! Kg8 19.Qb7! Sf5 20.Qf7+ Kh8

21.Qxf8 mate.

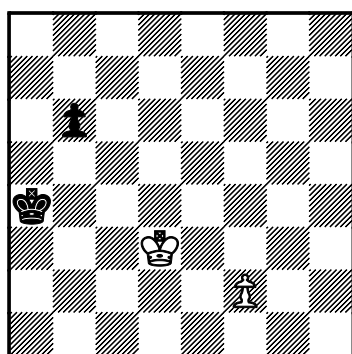
Nowadays it is not that easy for composers to find new themes and original positions. Logical studies, however difficult to execute, seem to offer plenty of room for creativity and originality.

EG No. 168, Vol. XIII, April 2007, p. 36-37.

Two for the price of one!

It is common knowledge that finding an entirely new idea is far from easy these days. Our column would like to offer some possible new horizons in the tough search for originality. One such direction is to try to synthesise two old studies into one. I have already introduced this task to my readers in *The Problemist* (“The whole is more than ...” May 2005) yet I would like to share the only two clear-cut examples I can think of with you dear *EG* readers too.

The grand virtuoso of the pawns endings, Nikolay Dimitrievich Grigoriev, showed the following manoeuvre:



– 3 –

N.D. Grigoriev

Izvestia, 1928

Win

1.Kd4!

Creating a barrier while an early pawn march 1.f4? Kb5 2.f5 Kc6 leads to an easy draw.

1...b5 2.f4 b4 3.f5 b3 4.Kc3 Ka3 5.f6 b2 6.f7 b1Q 7.f8Q+ Ka4

Or 7...Ka2 8.Qa8 mate, an active self-block.

8.Qa8+

and the Black queen is lost.

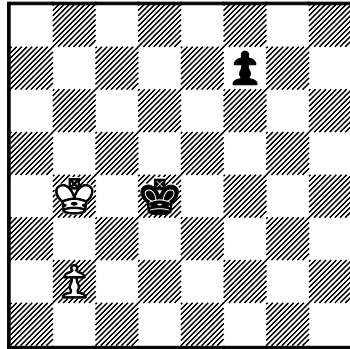
This position, like a great deal of Grigoriev’s work, appears in almost all manuals for practical endings, but at least in one over the board grandmaster game (in reversed colours: Ljubojevic–Browne, Amsterdam 1972) Black failed to apply the very same idea and only drew.

13 years later a Czech composer discovered that moving the defending pawn just one rank down enables a narrow escape: (*see diagram 4*)

1.Kb3!

The vacant square enables a subtle retreat while avoiding the winning manoeuvre of the previous study.

1...Kd3



– 4 –

J. Moravec

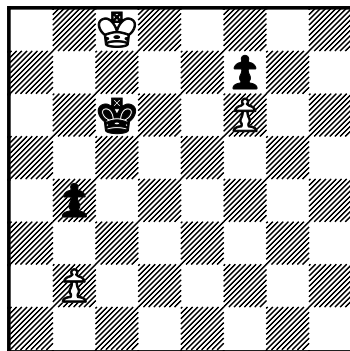
Ceské Slovo, 1941

Draw

1...f5 2.Kc2 Ke3 3.b4 draws.

2.Ka2! f5 3.b4 Kc4 4.b5! Kxb5 5.Kb3 draw.

Discussing these pawn endings with the Israeli grandmaster Alon Greenfeld, my co-author in articles about the linkage between over the board chess and chess composition, he wondered if it would be possible to combine both ideas in one setting. The outcome of my extensive efforts uses a thematic try to show the subtle difference.



– 5 –

Yochanan Afek

2nd Prize

EBUR, 2003

Draw

White cannot avoid loss of the pf6 and consequently the run of its unleashed counterpart. The only counter-play White can hope for, is to do the same on the other side of the board. Therefore he just needs to choose a precise waiting move: The natural 1.b3? would lead, following Kd6 2.Kb7 Ke6 3.Kc6 Kxf6 4.Kc5 Ke5! 5. Kxb4 Kd4! 6.Ka5 f5 7.b4 f4 8.b5 Kc5 9.b6 Kc6! to Grigoriev's win because of the deadly eventual obstruction on b3, while after the correct

1.Kb8! Kd6 2.Kb7 Ke6 3.Kc6 Kxf6 4.Kc5 Ke5 5.Kxb4 Kd4 6.Kb3! Kd3

6...f5 7.Kc2 draws.

7.Ka2!

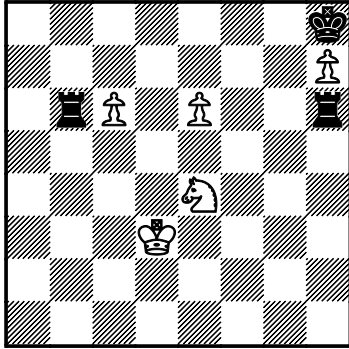
– 6 –

7.Ka4? f5 8.b4 f4 9.b5 f3 10.b6 f2 11.b7 f1Q 12.b8Q Qa1+ wins.

7...f5 8.b4

it is Moravec draw.

Let us take another pair of classics:



– 6 –

F. Sackman

Academisches Monatsheft für Schach,
1910

Correction: André Chéron *Journal de*
Genève, 20 April 1965

Draw

1.c7 Rc6 2.e7 Rhe6 3.Sd6!

An amazing sacrifice to gain a vital tempo that saves one pawn in either of the echo variations while covering the promotion squares in case of a pawn capture.

3...Rcxd6+ 4.Kc4 Rc6+ 5.Kd5 Kxh7 6.e8Q Rxe8 7.Kxc6

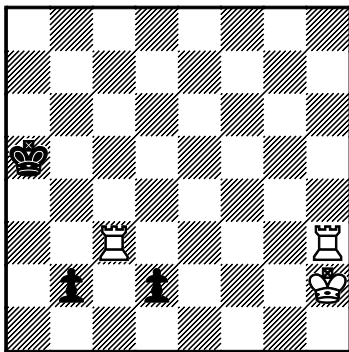
or

3...Rexd6+ 4.Ke4 Re6+ 5. Kd5 Kxh7 6.c8Q Rxc8 7.Kxe6 draw.

Likewise

3...Kxh7 4.Kd4!

And any capture would lead to the inevitable draw result.



– 7 –

L. Olmutski

1st Prize

Socialist Karkivitsnya, 1964

Win

The pair of rooks cannot stop Black from promoting one of his advanced pawns; however they can still masterfully dominate both newly born queens!

1.Ra3+ Kb4 2.Rab3+ Kc4

2...Ka4 3.Rbg3! d1Q 4.Rh4+ Kb5 5.Rg5+ Kc6 6.Rh6+ Kd7 7.Rg7+

3.Rhc3+ Kd4 4.Rd3+ Kc4 5.Rbc3+! Kb4

5...Kb5 6.Rd8

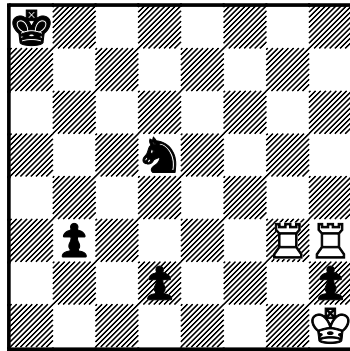
6.Rc7! b1Q 7.Rd8! Qe4

7...d1Q 8.Rb8+ Ka3 9.Ra7+ Qa4 10.Rxa4+ Kxa4 11.Rxb1 wins.

8.Rb8+ Ka3 9.Ra7+ and wins.

No doubt, it is one of the finest miniatures of all time. Can one improve on that?

The resemblance between the two memorable studies did not escape the eagle-eyed Israeli composer who managed in one of his rare appearances these days (away from the PCCC congresses, of course) to synthesize them into a miraculous study!



– 8 –

Ofer Comay

special prize

The Problemist, 2004-2005

Win

1.Rd3 b2 2.Ra3+ Kb7 3.Rab3+ Kc6 4.Rhd3 Sc3! 5. Kxh2! Kc5 6.Raxc3+ Kb4

7.Rc7! b1Q 8.Rd8! and wins.

Ofer Comay (50) was, in his younger years, a fine study composer. Like Amatzia Avni (who as the tourney judge awarded him with the above well deserved special prize), Gady Costeff and yours truly, he was captivated by the charm of the genre when, in the 1970s, he was still an active strong youth player in the municipal club of Tel-Aviv under the guidance of the late international master Moshe Czerniak, a great fan of our beloved art.

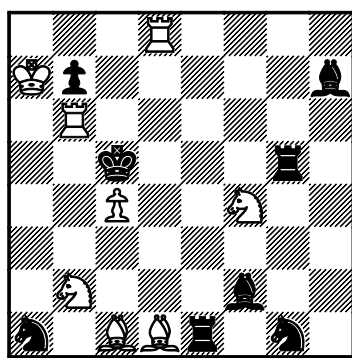
Since those days Ofer has won the world individual solving title three times but is hardly active as a studies composer these days. The above recent prize-winner demonstrates what a waste that is.

EG No. 169, Vol. XIII, July 2007, p. 80-82

Action at the crossroads

The realm of over the board chess usually serves as a dynamic and continuous source of ideas for endgame study composers. Nevertheless, we should also seek inspiration in the backyards of our own neighbourhood: that of chess composition. Several themes and motives, initially born in various direct mate problems, have been gradually transferred to our noble genre and, although it seems not too easy to insert fresh blood into the worn veins of those classical themes, time and again we are still stunned by surprisingly new interpretations occasionally given to them.

Before examining, as usual, a pair of recent such efforts, let us intensively study a handful of classical themes by enjoying once again one of the finest threemovers ever created. Its Russian author is at least as well known as one of the greatest study composers of all time:



– 9 –

Leonid Kubbel

1928

Mate in three moves

The key **1.Bg4!** introduces a *Novotny* threat (named after the Czech composer Antonin Novotny (1827-1871) who first used the theme in a threemover published in 1854): **2.Bf5!** – an active sacrifice at the crossroad of two unlike moving pieces to mutually disrupt their play: **2...Rxf5 3.Sfd3#; 2...Bxf5 3.Rd5#.**

Against the threat Black has six different defending moves:

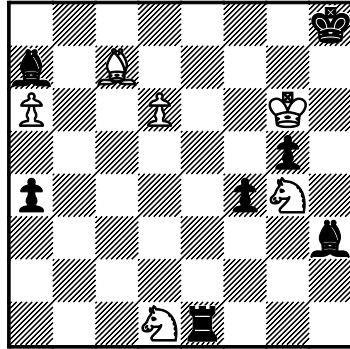
1...Sh3 (to meet the threat with **2...Sxf4** which covers both mating squares) enables **2.Bf3!** (threatening **3.Rb5#**) and now: **2...Re4 3.Sfd3#** and **2...Be4 3.Se6#** are 2 *Grimshaw* defences: Mutual interferences of unlike moving pieces. Englishman Walter Grimshaw (1832-1890), who was the first to demonstrate this idea in a five mover in 1850, was also the winner of the first solving contest ever (London 1854).

The next pair of defences shows the *Wurzburg-Plachutta* (mutual interferences of like moving pieces): **1...Rge5 2.Se6+! Rxe6 3.Rd5#; 1...Ree5 2.Rd5+! Rxd5 3.Se6#.** Next we have a pair of *mutual obstructions* between a Bishop and a Knight: **1...Bc2 2.Bd2** and **3.Bb4#** (**2...Sc2?**); **1...Sc2 2.Be6** and **3.Sa4#.** (**2...Bc2?**). Finally, the critical **1...Bb1** moves beyond

the critical square f5 however proves a bit too critical enabling again **2.Bd2 Sc2 3.Sfd3#**. Amazing contents in a magnificent form!

Equipped with this basic terminology, let us now have a close look at two recent prizewinners.

Here is a delicious starter: an elegant realization of a *Double Novotny*:



– 10 –

Mirko Markovich

2nd Place

2nd Serbian and Montenegrin championship, 2004-2005

Win

1.Sdf2!

To decoy the bB to the other side of the critical square d4; 1.d7? Rxd1 2.Be5+ Kg8 3.Bd4 Rxd4 and Black wins.

1...Bxf2

Following 1...Re6+ 2.Kxg5 Rxd6 3.Bxd6 Bf1 4.Se4 Bxa6 Black manages to obtain material balance but finds himself in a deadly mate net: 5.Kh6! Bd4 6.Sef6!

2.d7 Rd1 3.Be5+

All is now set for the first Novotny blow.

3...Kg8 4.Bd4! Rxd4

Or 4...Bxd4 5.d8Q mate.

5.a7

5.Sf6+? Kf8 6.a7 Bxd7 7.a8Q+ Ke7 8.Kg7 Kd6 would lead White nowhere.

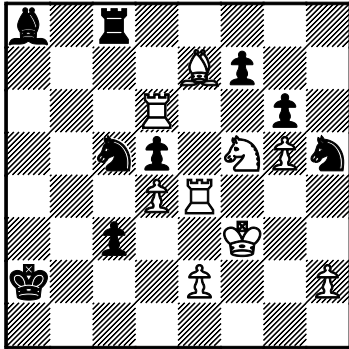
5...Bg2 6.Sf6+ Kf8

Now all is set for a second Novotny.

7.Sd5! Be4+ 8.Kf6 wins.

The *Double Novotny* has disrupted the total black control of the eighth rank thus the lethal promotion has been finally secured.

The main dish is the highly original combination of *Mutual Grimshaw* by Dr. Jan Rusinek, a Polish grandmaster and mathematician (57) who was a mega-star in the seventies and eighties



– 11 –

Jan Rusinek

1st prize

The Problemist, 2004-2005

Draw

and who has regrettably slowed down his composing activity of late. Nevertheless his rather rare appearances these days still suggest that he has never lost Midas' golden touch:

The advanced "c"-pawn would cost White his rook.

1.Re3 c2 2.Rc3 Kb2 3.Rxc2+ Kxc2 4.Se3+ Kc3 5.dxc5 d4+

5...Rxc5 6.Rd8 Ra5 7.Rc8+ Kb2 8.Kf2 draws.

6.Sd5+ Kc4

Now the battle is over the wS.

7.c6!

Novotny! White employs the old device to gain a critical tempo. 7.Ke4? Rxc5 wins.

7...Bxc6

Whereas 7...Rxc6 8.Rd8 Bb7 9.e4! draws.

8.Ke4 Ba8

As 8...Rc5 has just been obstructed. This switchback resumes the threat 9...Rc5.

9.Rd7 Rc6

With the idea 10...Re6+ however at the same time interferes his own bishop (Grimshaw) which allows

10.Bd6!

White Grimshaw! 10.Rd6?? Rxd6! wins a piece and the game. 10...Bxd5 has just been prevented.

10...Rc8 11.Be7

Against both Bxd5+ and Re8+.

11...Bc6 12.Rd6!

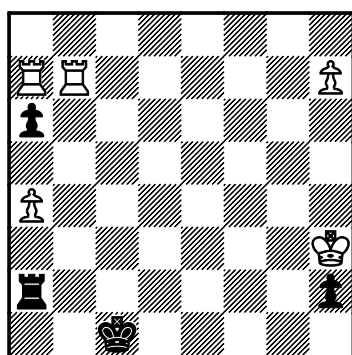
Again this only move against the double attack affords interfering the wB thanks to Blacks own interference (12...Rc5??) An amazingly original mechanism of positional draw by mutual Grimshaw!

Shortage of fresh composing ideas? Quite a few of them might be found in the blooming garden of our neighbours the problemists. Pick up a couple of classical themes and try to figure a scheme which might suit the game-like nature of an endgame study. It is by no means an easy task. Yet it might prove highly rewarding as in my view there must be still plenty of room out there for originality. And if you are still waiting for the desert, here is your challenge – to prepare one yourself!

EG No. 170, Vol. XIII, October 2007, p. 128-129

His Excellency... The Rook!

Modern rook endings are almost instinctively associated with the Georgian school of chess composition. Previously, this type of ending was considered rather technical, a necessary dry piece of knowledge which every player needed to acquire just because it happened to be the most frequent one in tournament practice. The Georgian composers who learned to appreciate the unique qualities of the mighty piece have radically changed this traditional approach proving that rook endings can be as lively, as tactical, and as full of surprises as others. The rook is a powerful piece but, unlike the queen, can be restrained and controlled even with minimal additional material. Moreover, a well-coordinated pair of rooks, even on an almost empty board, is capable of creating miracles, namely those amazing systematic manoeuvres that somehow never occur in the realm of competitive chess.



– 12 –

Velimir Kalandadze

1st-3rd prize

Gurgenidze JT, 2004

Win

A representative *par excellence* of this rook cult is Velimir Kalandadze (born 1935) who has successfully created dozens of such harmonious rook tangos, occasionally collaborating with compatriot composers, notably David Gurgenidze. Here is one of his such recent efforts.

The beautiful thing about this type of study is that there is not too much to explain. The moves usually speak for themselves:

1.Rc7+ Kd1 2.Rd7+ Ke1

The king cannot yet look back: 2...Kc1 3.Rac7+ with a consequent invasion of the first rank.

3.Re7+ Kf1 4.Rf7+ Kg1 5.Rg7+ Kf1!

Time to return home. The pawn that should not be blocked also guards the first rank.

6.Raf7+ Ke1 7.Re7+ Kd1 8.Rd7+ Kc1 9.Rc7+ Kb1 10.Rb7+ Ka1 11.Rg1+!

hxg1S+!

– 13 –

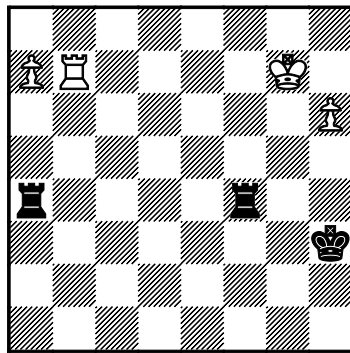
A vital tempo-check or else the black king is facing a deadly check since the lethal diagonal has just opened.

12.Kg3 Se2+ 13.Kg4 Rxa4+ 14.Kg5

Caution is still required: 14.Kh5? Sg3+! 15.Kg5 Ra5+ 16.Kh4 Rh5+ 17.Kxg3 a5 18.Kg4 Rh2! 19.Ra7 Kb2 drawing.

14...Ra5+ 15.Kh6 wins.

A jubilee tourney was organized to celebrate Kalandadze's 70th birthday, with a special section for rook endings (what else?). It appeared that the level here was even higher than in the general section which probably did not upset the jubilant too much. He was especially delighted with the following charming miniature:



– 13 –

V. Kartvelishvili

1st prize

Kalandadze 70 JT, 2006, special section

Win

1.h7 Rh4 2.Kg8 Rhg4+ 3.Kf8 Rgf4+ 4.Ke8 Rfe4+

Here and later 4...Rh4 would allow 5.Rg7 followed by a king march back to g8.

5.Kd8 Red4+

Again 5...Rh4 6.Rg7 Rh6 7.Ke8 winning.

6.Kc8 Rdc4+ 7.Kb8 Rh4 8.Rg7! Raf4 9.Rg8 Rb4+ 10.Kc8 Rbc4+ 11.Kd8 Rcd4+

12.Ke8 Rde4+ 13.Kf8 Ref4+ 14.Kg7 Rfg4+ 15.Kh8 Ra4 16.a8Q wins.

On top of the systematic movement, the theme of return is also demonstrated in the simplest and most comprehensible form.

Much more original and sophisticated was this interpretation of the young Ukrainian composer: (see diagram 14)

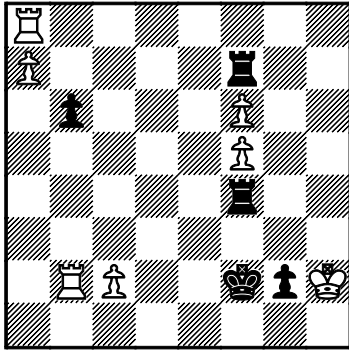
1.c3+!

Festina Lente! The reason to postpone the natural 1.c4+ is clarified as late as on move 14!

1...Kf1 2.Rxg2

While 2.Kg3? g1Q+ 3.Kxf4 Qc5 4.Rb1+ Kf2 5.Rb2+ Kf1 6.Rh8 Qc7+ 7.Kg4 Rg7+! is just a draw.

– 14 –



– 14 –

Sergiy Didukh

4th Prize

Kalandadze 70 JT, 2006, Special section

Win

2...Rf2 3.Rxf2+ Kxf2 4.Kh3!

Another long term plan, to become apparent on move 12! Instead following 4.Rh8? Rxa7 5.Rh4 Kf3 6.Rb4 Rc7 7.c4 Rc6 8.f7 Rf6 9.Rxb6 Rxf7 10.f6 Kf4 the draw is once again inevitable.

4...Kf3 5.Kh4 Kf4 6.Kh5! Kxf5 7.Kh4 Kf4

Not 7...Rc7 8.f7! Rxf7 9.Kg3 wins.

8.Kh3 Kf3 9.Kh2 Kf2

Losing faster is 9...Rh7+ 10.Kg1 b5 11.f7 Rxf7 12.Kf1 and wins.

10.Rh8 Rxa7 11.Rh5 Rf7 12.Rf5+!

Here it is! The king's tango was aimed at vacating this square for this vital rook check.

12...Ke3 13.Kg3(h3) Kd3 14.Rf3+!

And now the first move choice becomes apparent as White can defend his pawn now. If 1.c4? then now after 13...Kd4 14. Rf4+ Ke5 the f6 pawn is lost. Alternatively 14.Kg4? Kxc3 15.Kg5 Kc4 16.Kg6 Rf8 17.Kg7 Rb8 18.f7 b5 19.f8Q Rxf8 would also lead to a mere draw.

14...Ke4 15.Kg4 b5 16.Rf5! Kd3 17.Kg5 wins.

Let us conclude this selection with another lovely miniature demonstrating a duel between two pairs of rooks: (*see diagram 15*)

Here too there is no need for commentary except that one should select the right rook to start with: 1.Rh8+? Kb7 2.Rd7+ Kb6 3.Rb8+ Ka5 4.Rd1 Re4+ 5.Kd3 Ra4 draws.

1.Rd8+! Kb7 2.Rh7+ Kb6 3.Rb8+ Ka5 4.Rh1! Re4+ 5.Kd3! Rf4

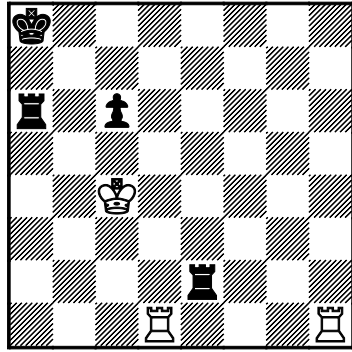
6...Ra4 6.Rh5+ c5 7.Rxc5 mate.

6.Ra1+ Ra4 7.Rxa4+ Kxa4 8.Rb1! Ka5 9.Kc4! Ra7

9...Rb6 10.Ra1 mate.

10.Kc5! Ka6 11.Kxc6 wins.

– 15 –



– 15 –

Yury Bazlov

1st prize

Uralsky Problemist 10 AT, 2003

Win

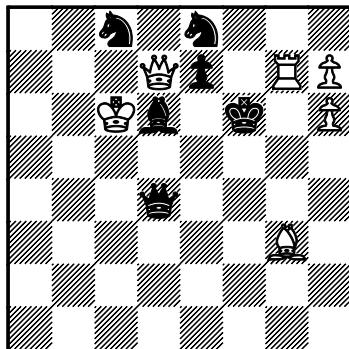
EG No. 171, Vol. XIV, January 2008, p. 37-38

Ideal final pictures

To celebrate the 70th staging of the Corus tournament, the world's most prestigious chess festival, the organizing committee sought a series of special accompanying events to decorate the rich competitive program in an original and stimulating manner. Since players of all levels occasionally enjoy the fine art of chess composition and often even find it instrumental for active training, it seemed natural to organize an international tourney for composing endgame studies with a decent prize-fund. It was a unique opportunity to introduce the best of our art to its most natural 'market' – the general chess public. Harold van der Heijden acted as the tournament director, checking all entries for soundness and originality with his customary efficiency and competence, while yours truly acted as the judge but was also in charge of coordinating and promoting the entire project.

The response was tremendous. The postmen in Deventer, Harold's home town, are very busy all year long since he is regularly the man behind a big number of similar projects; however this one was massive. No fewer than 151 entries by 90 composers from 29 countries were submitted before the closing date. There have been just a handful of precedents of an event that exceeded a turnout of 100 entries, which makes this tourney one of the biggest ever.

Fortunately quantity remarkably yielded high quality and those studies that survived the correctness check displayed plenty of surprisingly original ideas, masterfully presented. This persuaded us to establish a whole new category of special prizes courtesy of the Corus board. The judging process thus proved especially tough and was accompanied by a considerable inner struggle. It was hard to decide the fate of the top honours which were eventually shared by the following superb accomplishments:



– 16 –

Yury Bazlov

1st-2nd prize

Corus, 2008

Win

This is a highly charged position where both kings are exposed to immediate sharp threats. Consequently there is no time for greed: 1.Qxc8? Qa4+ 2.Kd5 Sc7+ 3.Qxc7 Qd1+ 4.Kc6 Qc2+ 5.Kb5 Qb3+ 6.Ka6 Bxc7 etc. Vigorous and forceful sacrificial play is therefore called for.

Nevertheless precision is required in selecting the right order of actions as black has sufficient defensive resources following: 1.Rf7+? Kxf7 2.Qf5+ Sf6 3.h8S+ Kf8 4.Qxc8+ Se8 5.Sg6+ Kf7 6.Qf5+ Qf6 which leads nowhere.

1.Bh4+! Qxh4 2.Rf7+! Kxf7 3.Qf5+ Qf6

3...Sf6 4.h8S+ Kf8 5.Sg6+.

4.Qxf6+ exf6

Creating the first active self-block. The alternative 4...Sxf6 5.h8Q Bf4 6.Qg7+ Ke6 7.h7 Sxh7 8.Qxh7 Sd6 9.Qg6+ Ke5 10.Kd7 wins rather prosaically.

5.h8Q Bf8!

Clever counter-play, yet at the same time a second active self-block. 5...Bf4 6.h7 Se7+ 7.Kd7 Sg7 8.Qd8 is winning all the same.

6.h7

Not 6.Qh7+? Bg7 7.hxg7 Sxg7 8.Qe4 Se7+ and White emerges empty handed.

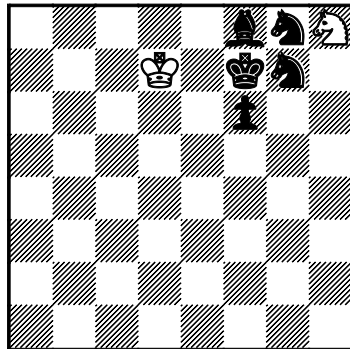
6...Se7+ 7.Kd7 Sg7

The third active self-block and finally...

8.Qg8+! Sxg8

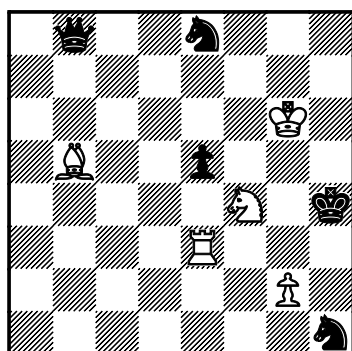
A fourth active self-block that enables the astounding...

9.h8S mate!



We are witnessing an ideal mate where all units take part and every square around the mated king is covered just once. The mate is enabled by no less than four active self blocks and is inflicted by the last white pawn promoted to ... a knight! The successful Yuri Bazlov improves here on his recent Study of the Year task adding the underpromotion to the fourfold smothered mate. Yuri also won third prize with another superb study and owing to his remarkable recent achievements he will be invited next January as a guest of honour to the 71st stag-

ing of the Corus tournament. It will be a rare opportunity to meet this fine composer in person (HH: who lives in Vladivostok!).



– 17 –

Sergey Rummyantsev

1st-2nd prize

Corus, 2008

Draw

Quite amazingly the presence of an unleashed queen in the open cannot prevent White from committing a whole sequence of quiet moves which are difficult to spot and even more difficult to meet. The final ideal pin stalemate comes as a complete surprise. Highly original!

Here again both kings are in danger. White's main concern is the opponent's unleashed queen. His main efforts will therefore be directed at restraining the monster.

1.Kh6!

Creating the mate threat 2.Sg6+ Kg4 3.Bd7 mate.

1...Kg4!

The king can defend himself, while a little friendly help would prove a bear hug: 1...Qxb5 2.Sg6+ Kg4 3.Rxe5! or 1...exf4 2.Rh3+ Kg4 3.Bd7 mate are a pair of lovely side-lines.

2.Sg6 Sg3!

The only effective defence against the double mate threat by the Bishop since 2...Qxb5 is again well met by 3.Rxe5!

3.Bd7+ Sf5+ 4.Bxf5+ Kxf5 5.Rxe5+ Kf6

This vigorous king-hunt is the only way to keep the queen away. Beware: 5...Kg4 6.Rg5 mate.

6.g4! Kf7!

6...Qa8 7.Re1! leads to the main line in a different order of moves.

7.g5! Kg8! 8.Se7+ Kf8 9.Sg6+ Kf7!

The triangulation king manoeuvre passes the move to White who in his turn should look for the only waiting move that also covers a deadly check on h2. The careless 10.Re7+? Kg8 11.Re2 would enable the desired liberating move 11...Sg7. Therefore...

10.Re2! Qa8!

– 19 –

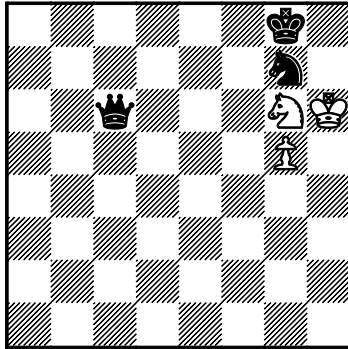
The queen is tamed in the open! 10...Qd8 allows 11.Re5 Kg8 12.Rf5! while 10...Kg8 is replied by 11.Rf2! in either case the mate threat costs black his queen.

11. Re1! Qc6!

What else? 11...Qb8 12.Re2 (but also 12.Re5), or 11...Qc8 12.Re7+ (but also 12.Re3) 12...Kg8 13.Rg7+ Sxg7 14.Se7+. Leaving the eighth rank without watching the knight allows 12.Re7+ Kg8 13.Rxe8+ however Black's last move pins the knight which enables the final surprising finale!

12.Re7+ Kg8 13.Rg7+! Sxg7

An ideal stalemate! All units take part in the final model picture.

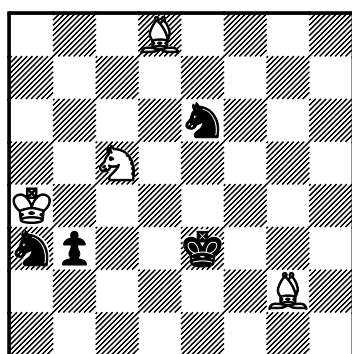


EG No. 172, Vol. XIV, April 2008, p. 127-129

Corners revisited

Exactly a year ago Oleg Pervakov published here his first thematic article “Let’s go to the corner” introducing a selection of stunning and somewhat paradoxical moves to one or more of the four remotest squares on the chessboard. Oleg himself was meanwhile involved in a major event whose mighty award displays, among others, two more brilliancies with the maximal form of the same motive.

The well known Russian trainer Mark Dvoretzky is a great fan of our art which has regularly provided him with innumerable lively free items for his famous card-index and many books as well as for his training sessions at all levels. That is why he chose to give something in return and to celebrate his own 60th birthday by organizing a composition tourney with a generous prize fund. Mark was assisted by Oleg with whom he collaborated in judging this both quantitatively and qualitatively outstanding event.



– 18 –

N. Rezvov & S.N. Tkachenko

1st prize

Dvoretzky 60 JT, 2007

Win

1.Bf6

The pawn must be stopped since after 1.Sxe6? b2 2.Bg5+ Kf2 a drawish queen vs. three minor pieces ending pops up.

1...b2!

Knight tempo moves are the only hope to maintain minimal material damage.

2.Bxb2 Sc4 3.Bh8!

The bishops will in fact seek shelter at the corners as it will soon become apparent that these are the best squares to avoid an intermediate knight’s tempo move. However laziness wouldn’t pay as choosing the closer corner fails: 3.Ba1? Sxc5+ 4.Kb5 Sb3 draws; equally wrong is 3.Bc1+? Kf2 4.Ba8 Sxc5+ 5.Kb5 Sd3 draws.

3...Kf2! 4.Bh1!

This time laziness does pay! Why not all the way to the opposite corner at once? Let's try: 4.Ba8? Sxc5+ 5.Kb5 Sd7! 6.Bd4+ Se3 and Black rescues both his knights.

4...Kg1!

Since a direct attempt to trade the knight would prove futile following: 4...Sxc5 5.Kb5 Se3 6.Kxc5 Sg2 7.Bd4+! The king nonetheless is driven away from his knights.

5.Ba8! Sxc5+

Or 5...Sb6+ 6.Kb5 Sxa8 7.Sxe6+-

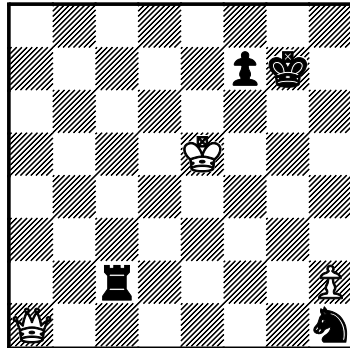
6.Kb5!

An amazing position: the desired fork has been finally achieved and the bishops are beyond the reach of a sudden knight assault.

6...Sd7 7.Bd4 wins.

Thanks to his far sighted fourth move Black is unable to cover this check by his knight and following its fall there is a theoretical win which in this particular case would last just 36 more moves. It is hard to imagine that less than four decades ago this ending was still considered a draw thus hindering the creation of such a masterpiece and at the same time enabling quite a few unfortunate incorrect ones.

David Gurgenidze has always been not just one of the most successful composers of all time but also a distinguished endgame theoretician who devoted a great deal of research to the queen vs. rook and pawn endings. Nowadays you may get it all in a mouse-click yet David still manages to add special artistic flavour to a dry looking piece of chess theory.



– 19 –

David Gurgenidze

special prize

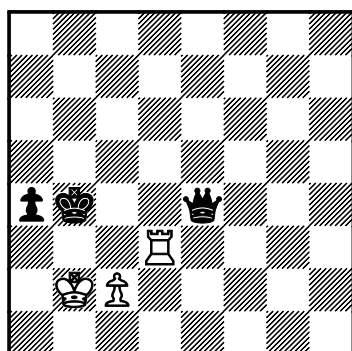
Dvoretzky 60 JT, 2007

Win

1.Kf4+!

What exactly the struggle is about might be explained by the following try: 1.Kd6+? Kg8 2.Qxh1 Rd2+ 3.Kc5 Rc2+ 4.Kd4 Rd2+ 5.Ke3 Rd6 6.Qa8+ Kg7 7.Qa1+ Kg8 with a theoretical draw as White cannot crack this rock-solid fortress despite his huge material advantage.

The black Rook strolls from e6 to h6 avoiding zugzwang. This ending has already appeared more than once in top over the board events and curiously even between two *EG* readers:



– 20 –

Jan Timman – John Nunn

Wijk aan Zee 1982

White to move

John writes: “1.**Ra3!** is the only move to draw. After 1...**Qe5** 2.**Ka2** Black cannot make progress. White should keep his king on b2 except when checked, and otherwise keep his rook posted on a3 or d3. Jan however went wrong with 1.**Ka2??** and resigned after 1...**a3!** as now Black can force the exchange of pawns by 2.**Rb3+** (2.**Kb1** **Qe1** 3.**Ka2** **Qc1** 4.**Rb3+** **Ka4** is even worse) 2...**Kc4** 3.**Kxa3** **Qxc2** leading to a winning ending of Q vs R in 23 moves”. “However”, concludes John, “I was happy that Timman did not require me to demonstrate it!”

In our study White’s task would be to prevent black from achieving this goal. A queen on f8 or h8 would do the trick but not before an intensive journey through all four corners of the board takes place!

1...Kf8! 2.Qa8+

Not immediately 2.**Qxh1?** **Re2** 3.**h4** **Re6** draws.

2...Kg7 3.Qxh1 Rf2+

Black opts for the above explained plan. An alternative attempt would prove no better: 3...**Re2** 4.**Qg1+** **Kh7** 5.**Qc5** **Rxh2** (5...**Re6** 6.**Qf8** wins; 5...**Kg7** 6.**Qg5+** **Kf8** 7.**h4** wins) 6.**Qa7!** **Kh8!?** (6...**Kg7** 7.**Qg1+**) 7.**Kf5** wins.

4.Ke3 Rf6 5.Qa1! Kg6 6.Kd3!

So that the rook will not get to e6 with a check tempo.

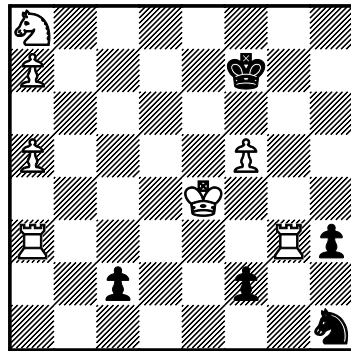
6...Rd6+ 7.Kc4! Re6

Or 7...**Kh7** 8.**Qa3!** **Re6** 9.**Qf8!** and wins.

8.Qh8!

Mission accomplished! The all round tour as a natural part of a technical process reminds us of the one which is displayed in Pervakov & Sumbatyan (1st-2nd prize Nona 2005) to be found in Pervakov’s article.

The Dvoretsky 60 JT was a powerful demonstration of fine art and might also serve as a great source of potential candidates for Study of the Year. An English version would also be welcome in order to enjoy in full the thorough analysis and the instructive comments of the jury.



– 21 –

Gady Costeff

1st hon. ment.

Stoffelen 70 JT, 2008

Win

A non prizewinner explained. We conclude this corner revisit with a non prizewinner, for a change, from yet another recent jubilee tourney. In fact it is not too difficult to understand this unique creation. The plan is rather prosaic: annihilate the advanced pawns even at the price of the pair of rooks and win the remaining knight ending thanks to the extra pawns.

1.Rg7+!

Attempts to let Black promote do not look very promising: 1.Rgc3!? f1Q 2.Rxc2 Sf2+ 3.Rxf2 Qxf2 draws; 1.Rgf3!? c1Q 2.Sb6 Sg3+ 3.Kd4 Se2+ 4.Ke4 Sg3+ draws. But why not 1.Ra1? Be patient as the reason for the outstanding key becomes apparent as late as on move 10th!

1...Kxg7 2.Ra1 f1Q 3.Rxf1 Sg3+ 4.Kd3 Sxf1 5.Kxc2 Se3+

A technical win is obtained following 5...h2 6.Sb6 h1Q 7.a8Q Qh2+ 8.Kb3 Qg3+ 9.Ka4 Qf4+ 10.Kb5 Qxf5+ 11.Qd5 Qb1+ 12.Kc6 Qa1 13.Kb7 wins.

6.Kd3

6.Kb3? leads to the main variation where White will have no better than 12.Kc4?

6...Sd5 7.Sb6 Sc7 8.Sd5 Sa8 9.Sf4 h2 10.Sh5+

What could we do now if not for that far sighted key?!

10...Kh6 11.Sg3 Kg5 12.Ke4

12.Kc4? Kf4 13.Sh1 Kxf5 14.Kd5 Kf4 15.Kc6 Ke5! 16.Kb7 Kd6 17.Kxa8 Kc7 18.Sg3 Kc8.

12...Kg4 13.Sh1

And the rest is not too complicated.

Prosaic? Not quite! It is most probably the first time that two slow walking creatures such as the knights exchange their initial squares at the opposite corners in such a natural fashion.

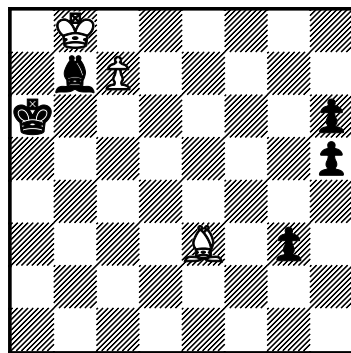
What cannot be easily explained is why this highly original and daring concept did not find its worthy place among the prizewinners.

EG No. 173, Vol. XIV, July 2008, p. 165-167

Tough nuts

I would like to offer another look at two of the most prominent events of recent years, this time from a different angle. As long as the art of chess composition expresses various forms of chess struggle, difficulty should by definition be one of the criteria to assess the value of an endgame study. Certainly not a major one, as some judges-solvers might suggest, yet still of certain importance. That is not to advocate difficulty for the sake of difficulty alone as often demonstrated in some computer-generated senseless sequence of moves, but rather to intensify an artful piece of chess fight with an original idea that gradually strives to reach a dramatic climax.

What both selected studies have in common is that in addition to being awarded with special prizes in those mega tourneys they seem considerably tough nuts to crack. In the first tourney I acted as the judge and I was especially impressed by “the deliberate loss of two tempi and the sacrifice of the only white pawn to gain time”. Naturally I did not ignore the complexity and the difficulty of the solution which turn this harmonious piece of art into a decent challenge for keen solvers.



– 22 –

Nikolai Kralin & Oleg Pervakov

1st-2nd special prize

Corus 70 JT, 2008

Draw

The opposite-coloured bishops might offer considerable survival prospects but great precision is called for in view of the massive pawn thrust threatening to roll down the kingside.

1.Bf4!

Winning the black bishop is the most serious try which would almost do the trick: 1.c8Q? Bxc8 2.Kxc8 Kb5 3.Kd7 Kc4 4.Ke6 Kd3 5.Bf4 g2 6.Bh2 Ke4 7.Kf6 Kf3 8.Kf5 h4! 9.Kg6 Kg4! (but not 9...h3? 10.Kh5 g1Q 11.Bxg1 Kg2 12.Kg4! h5+ 13.Kh4 Reciprocal zugzwang with Black to move!) 10.Kxh6 Kh3 11.Bg1 Kg3 where the pawns are unstoppable. 1.Bxh6? even proves to be worse after 1...h4 2.Bf4 Kb6! 3.c8Q Bxc8 4.Kxc8 Kc6 5.Bb8 Kd5 6.Kd7 Ke4 7.Ke6 Kf3.

1...g2!

– 26 –

1...h4 2.c8Q Bxc8 3.Kxc8 Kb5 4.Kd7 Kc4 5.Ke6 Kd3 6.Kf5.

2.Be3!

The only way to obtain full control of the running pawns by the bishop is, paradoxically, to lose a pair of vital tempi! Even when this concept is fully grasped, precision is still required: 2.Bh2? Kb6! 3.c8Q (3.Bg1+ Kc6) 3...Bxc8 4.Kxc8 Kc6 5.Kd8 Kd5 6.Ke7 Ke4 7.Kf6 Kf3 8.Kg6 Kg4 9.Kxh6 h4 10.Kg6 Kh3 11.Bg1 Kg3 etc.

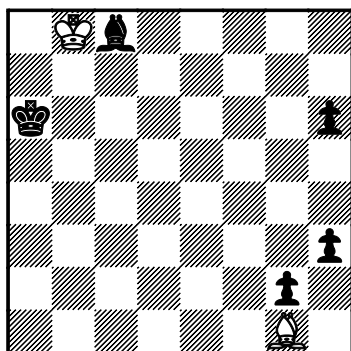
2...h4 3.Bg1!

Again, the only move: 3.Bf2? h3 4.Bg1 h5 5.c8Q Bxc8 6.Kc7 Kb5 7.Kd6 Kc4 8.Ke5 Kd3 9.Kf4 h2! 10.Bxh2 Ke2 11.Kg3 Kf1 12.Kh4 Bg4!

3...h3

3...h5 4.Bf2 h3 5.Bg1 h4 6.c8Q Bxc8 7.Kxc8 Kb5 8.Kd7 Kc4 9.Ke6 Kd3 10.Kf5 Ke2 11.Kg4 Kf1 12.Bh2 g1Q+ 13.Bxg1 Kg2 14.Kxh4.

4.c8Q! Bxc8



5.Kc7!

The cherry on the cake! 5.Kxc8? is the thematic try: 5...Kb5 6.Kd7 Kc4 7.Ke6 Kd3 8.Kf5 Ke2 9.Kg4 Kf1 10.Bh2 g1Q+ 11.Bxg1 Kg2! 12.Kh4 h5! again with an amazing position of reciprocal zugzwang. Instead White is ready to avoid recapturing the bishop for just a single tempo which he so desperately needs in order to get to the key square g3 in time.

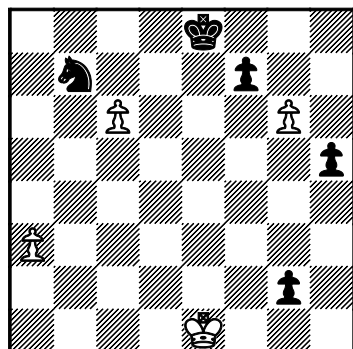
5...Kb5 6.Kd6 Kc4 7.Ke5 Kd3 8.Kf4 h2!

8...Ke2 9.Kg3 Kf1 10.Kh2.

9.Bxh2 Ke2 10.Kg3 Kf1 11.Kh4!

Mission accomplished!

In the second event I was one of the participants. I chose to give it a try with one of the most difficult studies (mainly for composing!) I have ever created. I kept it on standby for a couple of years awaiting an appropriate opportunity which indeed popped up when my friend Mark



– 23 –

Yochanan Afek

2nd special prize

Dvoretsky 60 JT, 2007

Draw

Dvoretsky turned 60. I was asked by a couple of people to explain it with the help of some more digestible text so here it is:

1.Kf2

Not 1.gxf7+? Kxf7 2.Kf2 Sd6 3.Kxg2 Ke7 4.Kh3 Sf5 wins.

1...Sd6 2.g7 Se4+ 3.Kxg2 Sf6 4.Kh3!

The right way! The alternative plan, to advance the both passed pawns, would fail because of the lack of a single tempo: 4.a4? Kd8 5.Kg3 Kc7 6.Kh4 Kxc6 7.Kg5 Sg8 8.Kxh5 Kb6 9.Kg5 Ka5 10.Kf5 Kxa4 11.Ke5 Kb3! (But not 11...Kb4? 12.Kd4 Kb3 13.Kd3 Kb2 14.Kd2 Kb1 15.Kd1 Se7 16.Kd2 positional draw!) 12.Kd5 Kc3 13.Kc5 Kd3 14.Kd5 Ke3 15.Ke5 Kf3 16.Kf5 Kg3 17.Kg5 Kh2! 18.Kh4 f6! 19.Kg4 Se7 wins. In the long process of composing this study I used a couple of its by-products to create two smaller scaled miniatures which eventually won prizes in earlier tourneys. On this line, for example, my 2nd special prize in Gurgenedze 50 JT 2004 was based. In fact we have here a study within a study! The question: why not 4.Kg3? will soon become clear following the fifth move.

4...Sg8!

Black for his part must also choose the right plan. Rushing to the running passed pawns would prove hasty and premature: 4...Kd8 5.Kh4 Kc7 6.Kg5 Sg8 7.Kxh5 Kxc6 8.Kg5 Kb5 9.Kf5 Ka4 10.Ke5 Kxa3 11.Kd6 Kb4 12.Kd7 f5 13.Ke6 f4 14.Kf7 Sh6+ 15.Kg6 Sg8 16.Kf7=; Or 4...Ke7 5.Kh4 Kd6 6.Kg5 Sg8 7.Kxh5 Kxc6 8.Kg5=. Instead Black should patiently build up a fortress. The term “fortress” usually refers to a positional draw where the other player is deprived of any further progress. Here, however, the fortress is simply aimed at stopping the white king from penetrating the promoting area.

5.a4!

Time for action on the other wing! 5.Kh4? f6! 6.Kxh5 Se7! 7.a4 Kf7! 8.Kh6 Ke6! wins.

5...Kd8

– 28 –

If White had played earlier 4.Kg3? then now 5...Se7! 6.a5 Sf5+! 7.Kf4 Sxg7 8.a6 Se6! wins!

6.Kh4 f6!

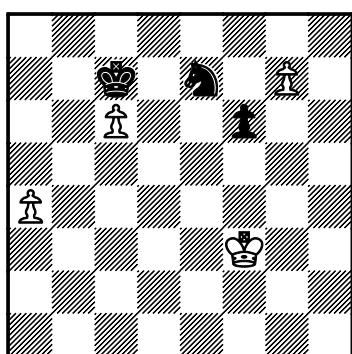
Patience is still required in view of 6...Kc7 7.Kxh5 Kxc6 8.Kg5 Kc5 9.Kf5 Kb4 10.Ke5 Kxa4 11.Kd6 Kb5 12.Kd7 f5 13.Ke6 f4 14.Kf7 Sh6+ 15.Kg6 Sg8 16.Kf7 and Black is again late by just one tempo.

7.Kxh5 Se7!

The “No Entry” manoeuvre has been successfully completed forcing the white king to seek his luck on the other side of the board.

8.Kg4 Kc7 9.Kf3!

The natural choice 9.Kf4? is met by Kxc6 10.Ke4 Kc5 11.Kd3 Kb4.



The key reciprocal zugzwang position with White to play!

9...Kxc6 10.Ke2!

There are (hopefully) no minor duals in this study. Even a waiting move is unique 10.Kf2!? allows 10...Kb6! 11.Ke2 Ka5 12.Kd3 Kb4 and we have again reached the critical position with White to play... and lose!

10...Kc5

The alternative 10...Kd5 11.Kd3 Ke6 12.Kc4 Kf7 13.a5 Kxg7 14.a6 Sc8 15.Kc5 ends up in a prosaic draw.

11.Kd2! Kb4 12.Kd3!

Here we are again in the key position this time with Black to play!

12...Kxa4 13.Kc4 Ka5 14.Kc5 Ka6 15.Kd6

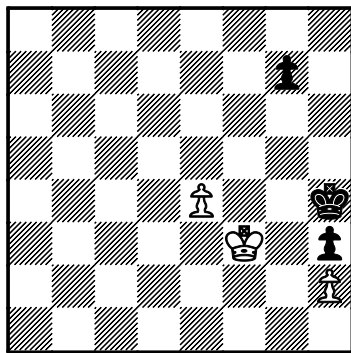
The white king has finally managed to get behind the enemy lines to secure the draw.

The judges found it “a study with strategic depth constructed on opposing plans and mutual counterplay”. At the same time they considered its complexity as a relative drawback, “As just a few grandmasters will be able to fathom the variations while at the board, threading their way through the artful stratagems conjured up by the study composer “. Usually I try to avoid arguing with judges, as our art is to a large extent a matter of personal taste. I am not even unhappy with my ranking in this important event. I just feel that this argument against over-complexity is at least in this particular case wrong and misleading. Had the solution been piled up with mountains of supporting computer output that has very little to do with the main idea and making it impossible to solve or grasp, then I would be the first one to join the judges’ critics. Here, however, that is definitely not the case. All tries and side-lines are comprehensive and essential thematic steps in building up the solution towards its peak. That was the task I was trying so hard to achieve! Dvoretzky’s excellent *Endgame Manual* is full of highly instructive tragic-comic episodes where grandmasters failed to find over the board basic as well as complex ideas. What does it have to do with evaluating a piece of art? Thematic complexity should be welcomed and not condemned!

EG No. 174, Vol. XIV, October 2008, p. 256-258

Still marching on

For decades it seemed that the Russian grand maestro of the pawn endings, N.D. Grigoryev, had showed us all about pawn endings. I have regularly used many of his fine creations to explain the basics and more complex motives to my chess pupils and they appreciated them for their clarity and purity. We had to wait quite a long time until the Ukrainian wizard Mikhail Zinar opened our eyes to new horizons in an endless series of shining masterpieces. And then, all of a sudden, Zinar's poetry ceased too and even the personal fate of this legendary composer remained mysterious and worrisome for some years. The pawn ending seemed to have sunk into a long and lasting sleep again. However, good and old genres never die and in recent years more and more composers have shown an increasing interest in discovering new ideas and combining old ones with and without the help of legitimate computer utilities. I have witnessed this positive trend in the steady stream of pawn endings which I receive for publication in my column in *The Problemist*. One of the persons to thank for this revival is the Frenchman Alain Pallier. Here is one of his more surprising recent discoveries:



– 24 –

Alain Pallier

4th prize

Husak MT, 2006

Win

In this simple looking position of material equality, white still has the edge thanks to his passed pawn and space advantage. First he should block his opponent's route to the center.

1.Kf4 g6!

Typical pawn strategy: No rush! Try to avoid running out of spare moves as demonstrated by the alternative: 1...g5+ 2.Kf5 g4 3.Kf4 Kh5 4.e5 Kg6 5.Kxg4 wins.

2.Ke5!

The sting! If 2.e5? g5+ 3.Kf5 g4 4.Kf4 Kb5 we have reached the key position of reciprocal zugzwang with White to play (and consequently a draw), while following 4.e6 g3 5.e7 gxh2 6.e8Q h1Q 7.Qe7+ Kg3 8.Qd6+ Kg2 it is draw again.

2...g5

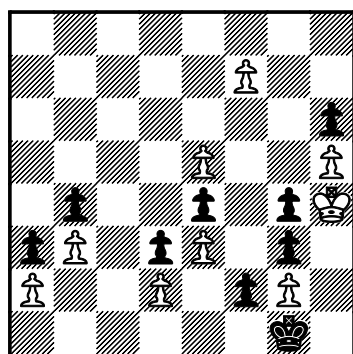
2...Kg4 3.Kf6 Kf3 4.e5 Kg2 5.e6 Kxh2 6.e7 Kg2 7.e8Q h2 8.Qe4+ wins.

3.Kf5! g4 4.Kf4

An exemplary triangulation manoeuvre has cleverly lost a tempo and passed the move to the other player so after 4...Kh5 5.e5 it is again the same reciprocal zugzwang key position yet this time it is Black to play!

4...g3 5.hxg3+ Kh5 6.Kf3 Kg5 7.Kf2! Kg4 8.Kg1! wins.

Mikhail Zinar was happily rediscovered last year and his memorable life story was masterfully told here by his countrymen Sergey Tkachenko and Sergiy Didukh (*EG* 173) He hasn't yet made a full comeback as a composer but acted as the judge of a theme tourney which was organized by the highly attractive magazine *The Ukrainian Problemist* and dedicated to ... you guessed correctly, pawn endings. The event proved considerably successful with 109 entries of 32 composers from 15 countries. Especially successful was Ukraine's mega-star Sergiy Didukh with 2 prizes and an honourable mention. He managed to meet the judge's special affection for pawn endings that display various or consecutive underpromotions and the more the better!



– 25 –

Sergiy Didukh

1st-2nd prize

The Ukrainian Problemist, 2008

Win

The diagrammed position is already special with all 16 pawns wisely used. The composer extended a known position and created a multiphase study that synthesizes, on one chess board, three different underpromotions, starting from the kingside and ending up on the queenside. The solution however needs not too many comments:

1.f8R!

1.f8Q? Kh2! and next 2...f1Q! 3.Qxf1 stalemate!

1...f1Q 2.Rxf1+ Kxf1 3.Kxg3 Ke2 4.e6 Kxd2 5.e7 Kxe3 6.e8R!

6.e8Q? d2 7.Qd7 d1Q! 8.Qxd1 and another stalemate!

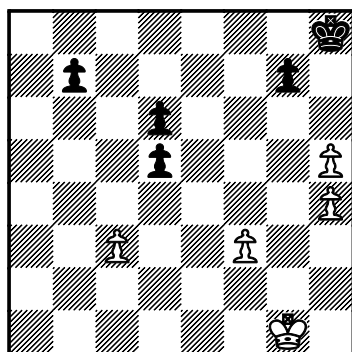
6...d2 7.Rd8 Ke2 8.Kxg4 d1Q 9.Rxd1 Kxd1 10.Kf4 Kc2 11.Kxe4 Kb2 12.Kd3

Kxa2 13.Kc2 Ka1 14.g4 Ka2 15.g5 hxg5 16.h6 g4 17.h7 g3 18.h8B!

18.h8Q? g2 19.Qg7 g1Q 20.Qxg1 and a third stalemate.

18...g2 19.Bd4 wins.

Didukh also shared the third prize with the Russian Nikolay Ryabinin who managed to insert in a pawn ending his most favourite logical contents: selecting a correct plan based on a slight detail which makes the only yet the whole difference between the long thematic try and the actual equally lengthy solution.



– 26 –

Nikolai Ryabinin

3rd-4th prize

The Ukrainian Problemist, 2008

Draw

The thematic try is the most natural and direct attempt: 1.Kf2? seems to work perfectly following 1...Kh7 2.Ke3 Kh6 3.Kd4 Kxh5 4.Kxd5 Kxh4 5.Kxd6 Kg3 6.Kc7 Kxf3 7.Kxb7 Ke4 8.Kc6! (not 8.c4 Kd4 9.Kc6 Kxc4 wins) 8...g5 9.c4 g4 10.c5 g3 11.Kb7 g2 12.c6 g1Q 13.c7 with the desired draw, however black has a much more forceful continuation at his disposal: 1...d4! 2.c4 Kh7 3.Ke2 Kh6 4.Kd3 Kxh5 5.Kxd4 Kxh4 6.Kd5 Kg3 7.Kxd6 Kxf3 8.Kc7 Ke4 9.Kxb7 Kd4 10. Kc6 Kxc4 11.Kd6 Kd4 12.Ke6 Ke4 and wins. This final position should give the crucial clue to the right way.

1.h6!

What is the difference? If you haven't found yet go patiently along the very same route:

1...g6 2.Kf2 d4! 3.c4! Kh7 4.Ke2 Kxh6 5.Kd3 Kh5 6.Kxd4 Kxh4 7.Kd5 Kg3 8.Kxd6 Kxf3 9.Kc7 Ke4 10.Kxb7 Kd4 11.Kc6 Kxc4 12.Kd6 Kd4 13.Ke6 Ke4

Here it is!

14.Kf6

Draw!

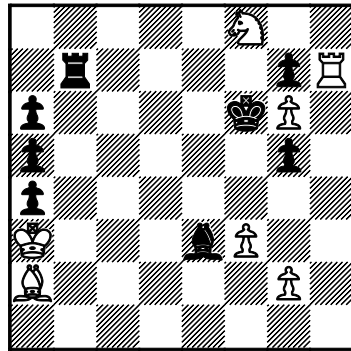
Vive la petite difference!

EG No. 175, Vol. xv, January 2009, p. 29-30

The Olympic Spirit

Last year I was invited to act as the judge in the special composing tourney organized on the occasion of the chess Olympiad in Dresden, Germany. This leading event is usually a great opportunity to promote our art among general chess enthusiasts. However it seems that time and time again we fail to exploit such opportunities in full and at the end of the day the minimal response of the chess community to such a magnificent demonstration of chess spirit is rather disappointing.

41 composers from 17 countries took part in this tourney. Even the analytical standard was rather unusual since just a handful of the entries were found to be unsound. The refreshing phenomenon which seemed to dominate the final award was the tremendous success of local composers. German study composition has made considerable progress over the last decade highlighted by its extraordinary performance in the recent WCCT. We therefore chose this time to salute its achievements with two of the most interesting prizewinners in the Olympic tourney.



– 27 –

Wieland Bruch & Martin Minski

1st prize

Olympic Tourney Dresden, 2008

Win

One of the engines behind this success is the rising star Martin Minski, who combines an impressive composing career with various activities as a busy editor, organizer and judge. Wieland Bruch, his co-author for this Olympic victory, has been a renowned two-mover composer who seems to have found even better possibilities to channel his versatile skills in the study world.

Their co-production is “an astounding and daring concept displaying an exceptional pivot role of the white king in creating a series of zugzwang positions aimed to set his tied up pieces free...”

The very first step on the long road to victory is to meet the immediate black threat to create a deadly battery (as indeed occurs already after his third move). White’s best chance to guard his entire property is to concentrate his forces at the upper right corner where the pieces can protect each other.

1.Rh8!

The only way: 1.Bd5? Bc1+! and 2.Ka2 Rb2+ 3.Ka1 Rxc2, or 2.Kxa4 Rb4+ 3.Kxa5 Rb5+ 4.Kxa6 Rxd5 draw.

1...Bc1+

1...Ke7 2.Sh7 Rb4 3.Rc8, or Rb4 2.Rh1 Bc5 3.Sd7+ wins.

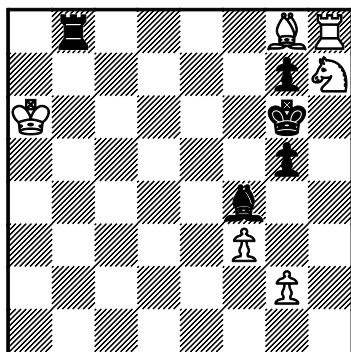
2.Kxa4 Rb4+ 3.Kxa5 Bd2! 4.Sh7+ Kxg6

4...Kf5 e.g. 5.g4+!, and Rxc4+ 6.Kb6! Rb4+ 7.Kc5 a5 8.Bc4 a4 9.Kd5 a3 10.Ra8 Kxg6 11.Bd3+ Kh6 12.Rxa3 wins, or Kxg6 6.Sf8+ Kf6 7.Rh2! Rb2+ 8.Ka4 Rxa2+ 9.Kb3 Ra1 10.Rxd2 wins.

5.Bg8! Rb8+ 6.Kxa6

Idea 7.Bf7+.

6...Bf4!



The first mission has been successfully accomplished as all white officers have been brought to safety but at what a price: A monstrous black battery has turned into a paralyzing black pin! The only active white piece left is therefore his majesty who tries to release the embarrassing stalemate of his army with the assistance of the zugzwang weapon. Some other alternative king moves along the main line might also prove efficient, however they would just prolong the solution for no use, loss of time duals.

7.g4!

7.Ka7? g4! 8.fxc4 Bg3 or 8.Bf7+ Kxf7 9.Rxb8 Bxb8+ 10.Kxb8 Kg6! draws.

7...Bc7!

7...Bd6 8.Ka7 Re8 9.Kb6 (Kb7) Rb8+ 10.Kc6 Bg3 11.Kc5! Bc7 12.Kd5 Bg3 13.Kc6 zz.

8.Ka7

Idea 9.Lf7+!

8...Re8!

8...Rd8 9.Kb7 Ba5 10.Kc6! zz.

9.Kb7 Ba5!

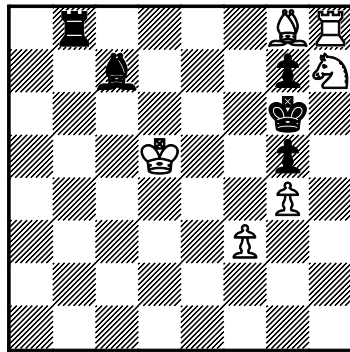
9...Bg3 10.Kb6! (10.Kc6? Rb8) 10...Rb8+ 11.Kc6! zz, or 9...Be5 10.Kc6 (Kb6) Bf6 11.Kc7! zz Rxd8 12.Rxd8 wins.

10.Kc6! Rd8 11.Kb5 Bc7 12.Kc5! zz Rb8!?

12...Ba5 13.Kc6! zz Re8 14.Kd7 Rxd8 15.Rxd8 wins.

13.Kd5!

Idea 14.Ke6.



The sting of this ingenious double-edged structure is that while white seems totally tied up he might himself release at any moment one of his potentially harmful batteries: either against the Rook on the eighth rank or along the “h” file had the black bishop been forced to h2. A sort of “passive activity” which leaves black with only two Bishop moves:

Main line A:

13...Bg3 14.Kc6! zz Bh2

Bf4 15.Sxd5! see main line B after 17.Sxd5! This last move by Black enables White to open a second battery.

15.Kd7!

Not immediately 15.Sf8+? Rxf8 16.Bh7+ Kf7 17.Bg6+ Ke7! 18.Rxd8 Rf6+! draws.

15...Rb7+ 16.Ke6 Rb6+ 17.Kd5! Rb8 18.Sf8+! Rxf8 19.Bh7+ Kf7 20.Bg6+! Kxd6 21.Rxf8 wins.

Main line B:

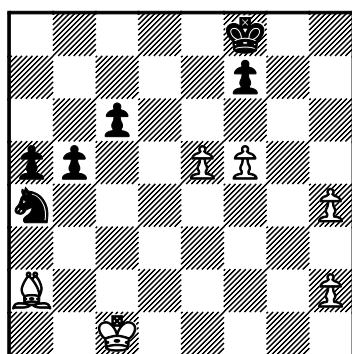
13...Bf4! 14.Ke6!

Not immediately 14.Sxd5? Rb5+! 15.Ke4 Bxd5 draws.

14...Rb6+ 15.Kd7 Rb7+ 16.Kc6! Rb8 17.Sxg5! Kxg5 18.Rh5+ Kf6 19.Rf5+ Ke7 20.Rf7+ Ke6 21.Rxg7+ Kf6 22.Rf7+ Kg5 23.Rf5+ Kh4 24.Rxf4 wins.

It is worthwhile making the effort to dive into the depth of this masterpiece and grasp its magic zugzwang mechanism in full. No doubt one of the most original concepts I have ever seen.

More and more over the board grandmasters have made a serious try to create an endgame study of their own. Michael Prusikin, a German grandmaster of Russian origin, last month shared first place in the national championship together with the young grandmaster Arik Brown (who has himself been captivated by the charm of studies partly thanks to yours truly in various training sessions). Michael entered the olympic tourney with three studies of which I was especially impressed by the following one:



– 28 –

Michael Prusikin

special prize

Olympic Tourney Dresden, 2008

Win

Actually we are witnessing here a drama with two acts. A lovely (though not really unexpected) sacrificial key triggers a breathtaking race of a knight against speedy passed pawns.

1.Bxf7! Kxf7

1...Sc5 2.e6 a4 3.Kb1 b4 4.h5 Se4 5.h6 Sf6 6.Bg6 c5 7.h7 Sxh7 8.Bxh7 Ke7 9.h4 and wins.

2.e6+ Kf6 3.h5 Sc3 4.h6 Sd5 5.e7! Sxe7 6.h7 Sg6

Black is finally forced to return the piece since 6...Kg7 is met by 7.f6+! Kxf6 (7...Kxh7 8.fxe7) 8.h8Q+. That in fact points to the second phase – an independent pawn ending.

7.fxg6 Kg7 8.Kb2! c5

Or 8...a4 9.Ka3! (9.h3? b4) c5 10.h3! Kh8 11.h4 Kg7 12.h5 c4 13.Kb4 wins.

9.h3!

The *Festina Lente* theme: 9.h4? Kh8 10. h5 Kg7 draws. Also 9.Kb3? Kh8 and now 10.h3 a4+ 11.Ka3 c4 12.Kb4 Kg7 13.h4 Kh8 14.h5 Kg7 or here 10.h4 Kg7 11.h5 b4! 12.h6+ Kh8 13.Kb2 a4 draws.

9...Kh8 10.h4 Kg7 11.h5 Kh8 12.h6 b4

Likewise 12...c4 13.Kc3 a4 14. Kb4 or 12...a4 13. Ka3 c4 14. Kb4 and Black will run out of useful moves.

13.Kb3 c4+ 14.Kxc4

wins, e.g. 14...b3 15.Kxb3 a4+ 16.Ka2 a3 17.g7+ Kxh7 18.Kxa3.

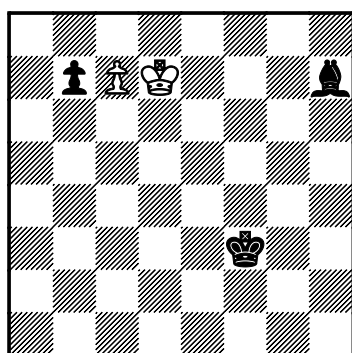
The main drawback of this otherwise perfect concept is that the pawn ending has already been shown before (Guy c2f8 1995) which prevented the study from being awarded a “normal” prize. “However the introductory play still turns it into an exemplary multi-phase masterpiece which every chess player would love to solve or at least to play through the solution”.

One noticeable characteristic of several successful German entries in the Olympic tourney of last year is their highly daring approach introducing an eventful plot of broad scope with more than one phase. This might suggest another possible trend for those who still seek new horizons in a well trodden genre that never ceases to surprise.

EG No. 176, Vol. xv, April 2009, p. 73-75

The positional draws of Sarychev

This column usually selects a couple of recent prizewinners and tries to make their contents as transparent as possible. This time I permit myself to deviate and to pay tribute to a deceased composer whose 100th anniversary is commemorated this year. We don't know too much about the private life of Aleksandr Vasilievich Sarychev (1909-1987), only that he was a Russian living in Baku, studying oil technology in its national oil academy. That is the institute in which the problemist Professor Mejnun Vahidov was among the victims of a terror-attack on April 30th. Alexander had also a twin brother, Kiril Vasilievich (1909-1950) with whom he collaborated in creating some 14 of a total output of roughly 80 studies. The brothers published their first study as early as in 1927 and in the following year, when they were merely 19, they came up with their most renowned creation:



– 29 –

Aleksandr & Kiril Sarychev

commendation

Shakhmatny Listok 1928/II

(version)

Draw

Most of the readers are likely to be familiar with this classical baby-study yet it is always a pleasure to witness one of the most amazing paradoxes chess can offer:

Apparently there is no obvious way to trade pawns: 1.Ke6? Ke4! Or 1.Kd6? Bf5 2.Kc5 Ke4 3.Kb6 Bc8 4.Ka7 b5 etc. The only way is the stunning

1.Kc8!

where White not only blocks his own pawn but also loses two tempi letting the black pawn proceed to promotion undisturbed.

1...b5 2.Kd7!

This stunning switch-back is the only move doing the trick. It is essential to prevent the protection of the black pawn while blocking its counterpart on the key post c8.

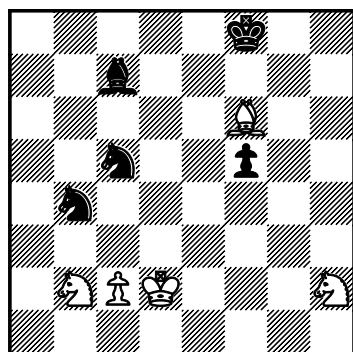
2...b4 3.Kd6 Bf5 4.Ke5!

That is the point! By attacking the Bishop White wins back the invested tempi in a Réti-like manner and gets to the pawn just in time.

4...Bc8 5.Kd4

Mission accomplished!

The collaboration between the two brothers ceased in 1930 and Kiril probably did not publish any studies thereafter. That was also the first break Alexander took from his artistic activity (the second one, for 6 years, occurred following Kiril's premature death). It was not until five years later that he published his next study for the first time on his own. From then on throughout the rest of his career the dominant theme in his studies were mainly mechanisms of positional draws. In this modern era when numerous obscure positional draws are often presented on endless pages of computer output, I sometimes badly miss the clarity and purity of classicists such as Kasparian, Gurvich, Liburkin, Sarychev and others who managed to create complex draw mechanisms as true pieces of art, accessible to the average human consumer and offering pleasure rather than torture. Here is a selection of first prize winners by the late master for your enjoyment. Actually there is nothing much to explain, as all three of them are crystal clear.



– 30 –

Aleksandr Sarychev

1st prize

Sakbmaty v SSSR 40 JT, 1966

Draw

White is facing a double threat: a direct one on his knight and a fork against his Bishop.

1.Sf3! Se4+ 2.Kc1! Sxf6 3.Sd4 Be5 4.Sxf5

4.c3? Bxd4 5.cxd4 Sbd5.

4...Sa2+ 5.Kb1 Sc3+ 6.Ka1!

As 6.Kc1 allows mate in two.

6...Sa4

6...Sd1 7.c3! Bxc3 8.Kb1 Sxb2 9.Kc2.

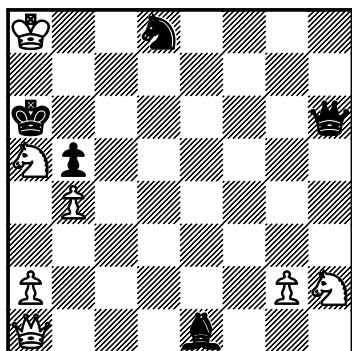
7.c3! Bxc3 8.Ka2 Sxb2 9.Kb3 Be5

9...Se4 10.Sd6; 9...Sd5 10.Se3.

10.Sh4!

Threatening 11.Sf3.

10...Bg3 11.Sf5 Be5 12.Sh4 positional draw!



– 31 –

Aleksandr Sarychev

1st prize

Gorgiev MT, 1977

Draw

In view of the heavy threats on the eighth rank White's only chance is to centralize his queen.

1.Qe5!

whereas now after 1...Qf8 2.Qb8! Qe7 3.Qc8+ Kb6 4.Qb8+ it is perpetual check.

1...Qg6 2.a4! Qxg2+

Not 2...bxa4?? 3.Qe2+ Kb6 4.Sc4+ Kc7 5.Qe7+ and wins.

3.Sf3!

This Knight will just disturb the great defensive idea.

3...Qxf3+ 4.Kb8 Sc6+! 5.Sxc6 Bg3

Black has finally managed to set the deadly pin however...

6.axb5+ Kb6 7.Ka8!

The point becomes apparent: 7...Bxe5 is stalemate!

7...Qa3+ 8.Sa5!

Again, following 8...Bxe5 and the white knight is pinned with a stalemate on a different line

8...Qf3+ 9.Sc6 Qf8+ 10.Sb8! Qf3+

10...Bxe5, a third stalemate with pin and again on a new line!

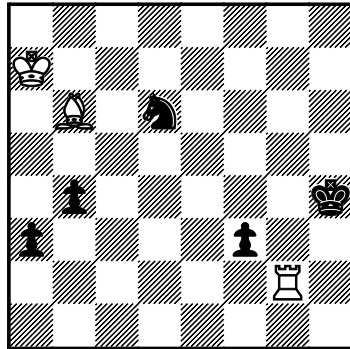
11.Sc6

And so on: positional Draw or stalemate!

EG No. 177, Vol. xv, July 2009, p. 176-177

Postponing satisfaction

The three selected masterpieces this time show seemingly different types of battles but they have a lot in common: they all won top honours in leading Russian competitions, they all seek merely a draw but, above all, they all display original concepts of pure logic based on a long range consideration which sets up the tiny looking yet decisive difference between the virtual play and the real one.



– 32 –

Leonard Katsnelson & Alexei Sochnev

1st prize *Zadachi i Etiudy* 2007

Draw

White's material advantage is clearly outweighed by the pair of connected passed pawns in view of the remoteness of the white king. Vigorous action is urgently required.

1.Bf2+ Kh5 2.Rh2+ Kg5 3.Bc5! Sb5+ 4.Kb8!

This is a great concept of anticipating the future! In the later stage of the battle White will have to leave his king as far as possible in order not to obstruct the complete domination of his rook over the black monarch along the entire board. Why then not play immediately 4.Ka8 and help reach that goal with no delay? The reason is that, on the seventh move, a reciprocal zugzwang position will arise in which White badly needs a good waiting move and then any attempt for a neutral one would spoil the eventual domination set-up as demonstrated by the main thematic try: 4.Ka8? b3 5.Bxa3 Sxa3 6.Rb2 (Rf2 Kf4!;) Kg4! 7.Kb8 Sc2 8.Rxb3 f2 9.Rb1 Se1 10.Rb4+ Kg5 11.Rb5+ Kg6 12.Rb6+ Kg7 13.Rb7+ Kf8 wins. White therefore wisely chooses "to postpone satisfaction" and go to the corner at that critical moment yet to come. And why not use the other square for the very same purpose? The secondary thematic try shows that such an attempt spoils the zugzwang: 4.Kb7? b3 5.Bxa3 Sxa3 6.Rb2 Sc4! 7.Rxb3 Sa5 wins.

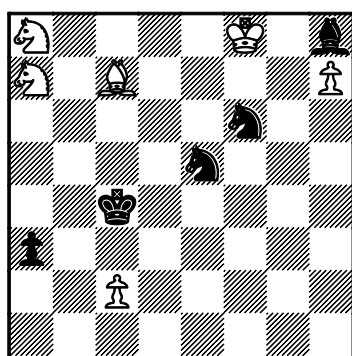
4...b3 5.Bxa3 Sxa3 6.Rb2 Kg4

This is the critical moment where either side would gladly pass over the move to his counterpart and White's wise patience pays off!

7.Ka8! Sc2 8.Rxb3 f2 9.Rb1 Se1

And now with the white king in the corner, the board has been cleared up in perfect timing for the perfect domination and consequently a positional draw by repetition.

10.Rb4+ Kg5 11.Rb5+ Kg6 12.Rb6+ Kg7 13.Rb7+ Kf8 14.Rb8+ Ke7 15.Rb7+ Ke6 16.Rb6+ Ke5 17.Rb5+ Ke4 18.Rb4+ Ke3 19.Rb3+ Kd2 20.Rb2+ Sc2 21.Rb1 Se1 22.Rb2+ draw.



– 33 –

S. Osintsev

1st prize

64, 2006

Draw

Stopping the black pawn is about to cost White both his knights and then Black will have the sufficient material advantage of a bishop and two knights vs. bishop to secure a rather easy win. White's only chance to survive is to swap bishops but that would be feasible in one circumstance: he should first get rid of his own "c" pawn to avoid a Troitzky win and to leave his counterpart with a useless pair of knights. Let us follow the course of events one by one:

1.Sb6+

Capturing the knight proves futile: 1.Bxe5? Sxh7+ 2.Kg8 Bxe5 3.Sb6+ Kb4 4.Sc6+ Kb5 5.Sxe5 Sf6+ 6.Kf7 a2 etc.

1...Kc5 2.Sa4+ Kb4 3.Sc3! Sed7+ 4.Ke7!

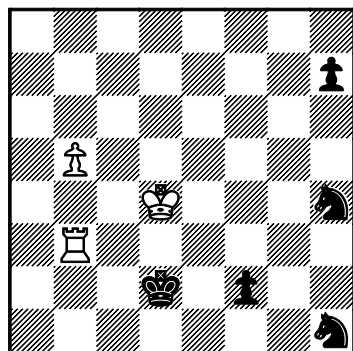
White faces a very difficult choice which is demonstrated with a long thematic try: 4.Kf7? Kxc3 5.Sb5+ Kb4 6.Sxa3 Kxa3 7.Bd6+ Ka4 8.c4 Ka5 9.c5 Kb5, reciprocal zugzwang followed and explained by an immediate second one. 10.Bf4 (10.c6? Kxc6 11.Bf4 Kd5 12.Bh6 Se5+ 13.Kf8 Ke6 and now 14.Bg7 is met by a mate in one.) 10...Kc6 This is the second decisive reciprocal zugzwang that prevents White of sacrificing his "c" pawn. If the white bishop tries "to wait", for example with 11.Bc1, then Se5+ and Seg4 would hinder his initial plan to trade the bishops. 11.Bh6 Se5+ (Sh5; Kg8) 12.Kf8 Kd7! 13.Bg7 (13.c6+? Ke6!) 13...Sxh7+ 14.Kg8 Sf6+ 15.Kf8 Bxg7+! 16.Kxg7 Se8+ 17.Kf8 Sc6! with a Troitzky win.

4...Kxc3 5.Sb5+ Kb4 6.Sxa3 Kxa3 7.Bd6+ Ka4 8.c4 Ka5 9.c5 Kb5 10.Kf7! zz
10...Kc6 11.Bf4 zz

Vive la petite difference! An incredible domination again! Now Black lacks a proper waiting move and the only movable piece-his majesty- unleashes the white pawn!

11...Kd5 12.c6! Kxc6 13.Bh6 Se5+ 14.Kf8 Kd6 15.Bg7 Sxh7+ 16.Kg8 Sf6+ 17.Kf8 Sfd7+ 18.Kg8 Sf6+ 19.Kf8!

Positional draw!



– 34 –

Sergiy Didukh

1st prize

Shakhmatnaya Poezia, 2007-2008

Draw

Last but not least is a brilliant first prizewinner by my successor in *The Problemist*, which is not only the most economical piece in terms of matter but requires almost no words to explain the logical process as here for a change no reciprocal zugzwang is involved.

1.Rb2+!

1.Rb1? Sf3+ 2.Ke4 Se1 3.Rb2+ Kc3 4.Rxf2 Sxf2+ wins.

1...Kc1 2.Ra2!

As early as that pops up the thematic try. Why not 2.Rxf2? will become apparent in the most crystal-clear manner “just” 15 moves further! So patience, dear readers, and you won’t regret it!

2...Kb1 3.Rxf2 Sxf2 4.Ke3!

And not immediately 4.b6? Sf5+! 5.Ke5 Se7 6.Kf6 Sc6 7.Kg5 Se4+ 8.Kh6 Sf6 9.Kg7 h5 10.Kxf6 h4 wins.

4...Sh3 5.b6 Sf5+ 6.Kf3 Sd6

Or 6...Sd4+ 7.Kg4 Sf2+ 8.Kg5 Se4+ 9.Kh6 Sf6 10.Kg7 h5 11.Kxf6 h4 12.Ke5 with a Réti-like double weakness. 12...h3.

7.Kg4 Sf2+ 8.Kh5! Sfe4 9.Kh6 Sf6 10.Kg7 Sde8+ 11.Kh6 Sd6 12.Kg7 h5 13.Kxf6 h4 14.Ke5 h3 15.Kxd6 h2 16.b7 h1Q 17.b8Q+

Check! If, much earlier, White had hastily played 2.Rxf2? the black king would now be on c1 and the non-check promotion would allow the skewer 17...Qh2+! It's all about postponing satisfaction, isn't it?

EG No. 178, Vol. xv, October 2009, p. 273-274

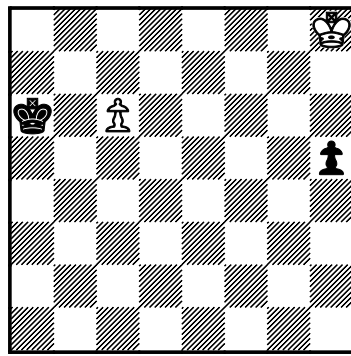
In the footsteps of Réti

To commemorate the 120th birthday (and eighty years since his death) of the great player, thinker and study composer grandmaster Richard Réti (28v1889-6vi1929), a composing tourney was announced by the Czech association of chess problemists in two sections:

1) Composing introductory play to one of Réti's studies published in the book of Arthur Mandler: *Richard Réti: Sämtliche Studien*.

2) Composing an original study in which the author exploits one of Réti's themes.

The best known among Réti's creative ideas (also to many over the board novices) is naturally the following ever-green quartet:



– 35 –

Richard Réti

Deutsch-Österreichische Tageszeitung,
1921

Draw

1.Kg7 h4 2.Kf6 Kb6 3.Ke5 h3

3...Kxc6 4.Kf4.

4.Kd6 h2 5.c7 Kb7 6.Kd7 draws.

1...Kb6 2.Kf6 h4 transposes.

This study is often used by chess teachers to demonstrate a multi-purpose plan in the mid-game- selecting a plan that meets your own goals while diminishing those of your opponents.

No wonder that the basic manoeuvre was the main source of inspiration to many of the entries in both sections including the winners of the top honours.

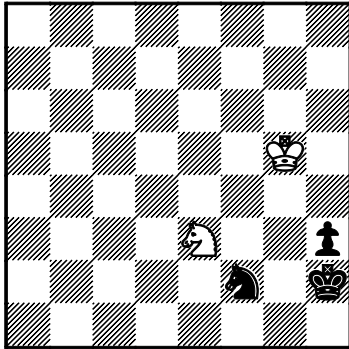
Another classic of Réti is this Knight ending: (*see diagram 36*)

1.Kh4 Kg1 2.Sg4 Kg2 3.Se3+ Kh4 4.Sc2!

This remote control drawing manoeuvre is very aesthetic and the only one securing the draw. Not 4.Sf1 +? Kg1 5.Sg3 Kg2 6.Sf5 h2 7.Sg4 Se4! queening.

4...Kg1

– 46 –



– 36 –

Richard Réti

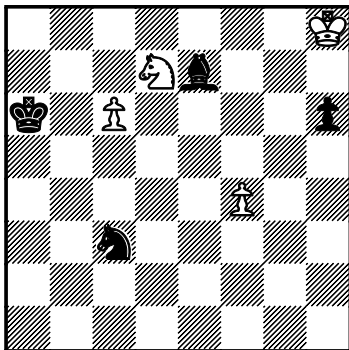
Sämtliche Studien, 1931

Draw

The original source has 4...Sd3 5.Kg4 Se5+ 6.Kh4 Sf3+ 7.Kg4 Sg5 8.Se1 Kg1 9.Sg3+ Kg2 10.Sh4+ Kf2 11.Sf3, but it 5.Sd4 Kg2 6.Sf3! Se5 7.Se1+ Kh2 8.Sc2 is a dual.

5.Se1 draws.

The Spanish composer combined both studies as natural separate main lines resulting from the same introductory play:



– 37 –

L.M. Gonzales

1st prize

Réti MT, 2009

Draw

1.f5

and:

1...Se4 2.f6 Sxf6 3.Sxf6 Bxf6+ 4.Kh7 h5 5.Kg6 h4 6.Kxf6 Kb6 7.Ke5 h3 8.Kd6 h2 9.c7 draws,

or:

1...h5 2.f6 Bd6 3.f7 h4 4.Sf6 h3 5.Sg4 Kb6 6.Kg8 (Kg7) 6...Kxc6 7.f8Q Bxf8 8.Kxf8 Kd5 9.Kf7 (Kg7) 9...Sd1 10.Kg6 11.Sh2

is equally good – a minor change in move order, a minor dual perhaps but still an unpleasant one.

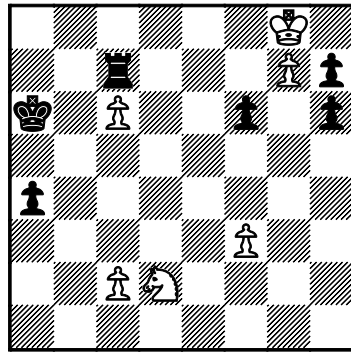
10...Ke4 11.Sh2 Kf4 12.Kh5 Kg3 13.Sf1+ Kf3 14.Kg5! Sf2

– 47 –

And here we are in the second study.

15.Kh4 Kg2 16.Se3+ Kh2 17.Sc2! draws.

The successful Ukrainian composer and current endgame study editor of *The Problemist*, demonstrates a long-run classic Réti manoeuvre (possibly the longest ever) by a modern long-run logical try.



– 38 –

Sergiy Didukh

1st-2nd prize

Réti MT, 2009

Win

1.Kh8!

The logical try 1.Kxh7? h5 2.Kg6 Rxc7+ 3.Kxc7 h4 4.Kxf6 Kb6 5.Ke5 Kxc6 6.Kd4 h3 7.Sf1 a3 8.Kc3 Kd5 9.Kb3 Ke5 10.c4 Kd4 11.Kxa3 Kxc4 12.Kb2 Kd3 13.Kc1 Ke2 14.Sh2 Kf2 15.Kd2 Kg3 16.Ke3 Kxh2 17.Kf2 Kh1 18.f4 h2 19.f5 would obtain no more than a stale-mate! It takes 19 moves to spot the difference!; 1.Sc4? fails too after 1...Kb5 2.Kxh7 h5 3.Kg6 Rxc7+ 4.Kxc7 Kxc6 5.Kxf6 h4)

1...Rc8+ 2.g8Q Rxc8+ 3.Kxc8 Kb6 4.Kf7 (4.Kg7) 4...h5

White wins after: 4...Kxc6 5.Kxf6 a3 6.f4 a2 7.Sb3 h5 8.Kg5 Kd5 9.Kxh5 Ke4 10.Kg4 h5+ 11.Kg3 h4+ 12.Kg4 h3 13.Kxh3 Kxf4 14.Kg2 Ke3 15.Kf1.

5.Kxf6 h4 6.Ke5!

Réti manoeuvre.

6...Kxc6 7.Kd4 h3 8.Sf1 a3 9.Kc3 Kd5 10.Kb3 Ke5 11.c4 Kd4 12.Kxa3!

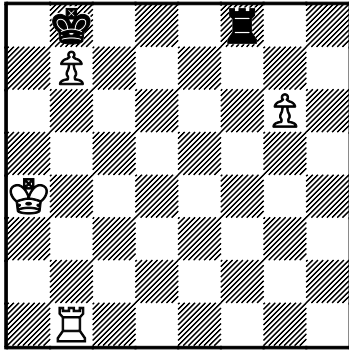
12.Sh2? h5 13.Kxa3 Kxc4 14.Kb2 Kd3 15.Kc1 Ke3 16.Kd1 Kf2 17.f4 Kg3! Réti saves Black.

12...Kxc4 13.Kb2 Kd3 14.Kc1 Ke2 15.Sh2 Kf2 16.Kd2 h5 17.f4 Kg3 18.Ke3 Kxh2 19.Kf2 Kh1 20.f5 h2 21.f6 h4 22.f7

with mate

22...h3 23.Kg3 Kg1 24.f8Q h1Q 25.Qf2 mate.

The third Réti miniature inspired the co-winner of the second section:



– 39 –

Richard Réti

5th hon. mention

Zadachy i Etyudi, 1929

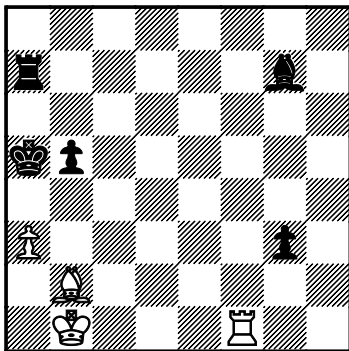
Win

1.Rb5!

1.Ka5? Rf2 2.Rg1 Rf8 3.Ka6 Rg8 4.Kb5 Kxb7 5.Kc5 Kc7 6.Kd5 Kd7 7.Ke5 Ke7 8.Kf5 Rf8+

1...Rf1 2.Rg5 Rf8 3.Kb5! Kxb7 4.Kc5 Kc7 5.Kd5 Kd7 6.Ke5 Ke7 7.Rf5! wins.

The Czech composer turned a modest concept into a true masterpiece:



– 40 –

Emil Vlasak

1st-2nd prize

Réti MT, 2009

Draw

1.a4!

1.Rg1? Bxb2 2.Kxb2 Rg7 3.Rg2! Kb6 4.Kc3 Kc5 5.Kd3 Kd5 zz wins.

1...Rb7! 2.Bxg7 bxa4+! 3.Bb2 a3 4.Rf5+

Réti's winning idea is used here in the thematic try: 4.Ka2? axb2! 5.Kb1 Rb4! 6.Rf3 Rg4 7.Rf1 Kb4! 8.Kxb2 Kc4 9.Kc2 Kd4 10.Kd2 Ke4 11.Ke2 Rf4 wins.

4...Ka4 5.Rf4+ Ka5 6.Rf5+ Ka6 7.Rf6+! Ka7 8.Ka2! axb2 9.Kb1 Rb3!

More challenging than 9...Rb4 10.Rf3 Rg4 11.Rf1 Kb6 12.Kxb2 Kc5 13.Kc3.

10.Rf4!

Not 10.Rc6? Rb6 which is a reciprocal zugzwang position! 11.Rc2 Kb7 12.Rg2 Rb3 wins.

– 49 –

10...Kb6 11.Rc4!

Positional draw as the bK cannot cross the c file.

They tell about Réti that while playing a serious over the board game an artistic idea popped up in his mind and he rushed to his room to work on it. He later returned to the tournament hall just to realize that he had lost his game on time... Whether it's a true story or just a legend, the life-long dedication of the Czech giant to the art of the endgame study remains as an ultimate model to be followed and remembered.

EG No. 180, Vol. XVI, April 2010, p. 124-126

Game-like positions

The Corus chess tournament in Wijk aan Zee (the Netherlands) is probably the world's most famous event which will celebrate its 73rd edition next month. In recent years this mega festival has added a couple of composition contests to its program. The daily two-mover challenge attracts hundreds of entries and a special composing tourney commemorated the 70th edition of the event some three years ago. Last year the first studies solving day was successfully held, introducing a surprising victory by the young Dutchman Twan Burg ahead of an impressive field of leading solvers. The nine studies that were presented to the participants were originals and most have been published subsequently in *The Problemist* to take part in its strong biennial composing tourney. Two of them even won the top honours and we are glad to show them here.

In the introduction to his highly instructive award, the judge grandmaster John Nunn counts three important factors in addition to the well-known criteria of contents, economy and originality.

“1. *Comprehensibility*. Unfortunately, the influence of the computer has caused an undesirable trend towards incomprehensible studies; I can't see the point of a study in which the moves in the main line of the solution are impossible for a human to understand.

2. *Focus*. A study should make its point with the minimum of extraneous detail, and therefore complex and distracting sidelines are a minus. Moreover, a series of accurate moves doesn't necessarily make a good study if the study lacks a clear point.

3. *'Solver pleasure'*. A subjective factor perhaps, but so are many of the other criteria applied to studies. In a way it includes the first two factors, but goes beyond them; for example, a study which rises to a satisfying climax is better than one which tails off limply”.

These words should be carefully read and adopted by all those composers who sometimes tend to forget that our business is a fine art and as such should be first and foremost accessible to human beings in an attempt to evoke their emotions. What kind of art is it when even the composer is losing his way under piles of incomprehensible lengthy variations (often computer output) and can hardly explain the essence of his own creation even to... himself?

Based on these guidelines Nunn has granted the two first prizes to players' friendly settings:

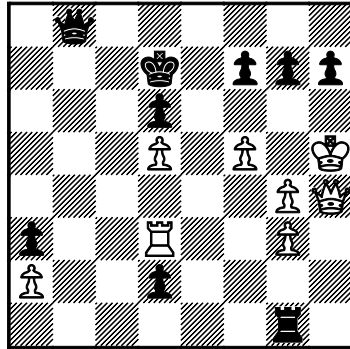
In fact both prize-winners need little commentary as the moves speak for themselves, clearly and loudly. (see *diagram 41*)

1.g5

1.Rxd2? Qe8 2.f6 g5 3.Kxg5 Qg8+ 4.Kf4 Rf1+ 5.Ke3 Qe8+ 6.Kd3 Rf3+

1...d1Q+ 2.Rxd1 g6+! 3.Kh6

3.fxg6? hxg6+ 4.Kg4 Rxd1



– 41 –

Gady Costeff

1st prize

The Problemist, 2008-2009

Draw

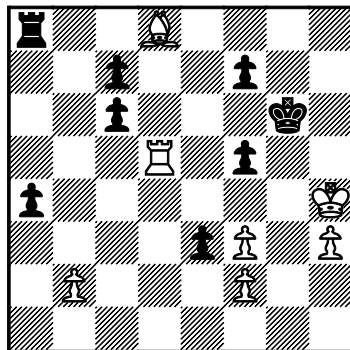
3...Rxd1 4.Qa4+ Ke7 5.Qxd1 Kf8! 6.Qd4!

6.fxg6 hxg6

6...Qb2 7.Qh8+! Qxh8 8.f6! Ke8 9.g4 Qf8+ 10.Kxh7

and the stalemate is amazingly unavoidable but at the price of the extra queen!

“A practically ideal study with plenty of solver appeal. With the exception of wKh5, the position is quite game-like. After some introductory play, White sacrifices his queen to reach an original position in which he draws despite being a queen down and having only pawns left. There are no sidelines at all and the study makes its point with absolute clarity. The only real flaw is that once White has found the queen sacrifice he cannot go wrong, as all his moves are forced.”



– 42 –

Jan Timman

2nd prize

The Problemist, 2008-2009

Win

1.Rd1 a3! 2.bxa3 Ra4+ 3.f4!

The meaning of this sacrifice will be apparent only after the eighth move (3.Kg3? Rd4! 4.Rg1 Rxd8 5.fxe3 Ra8)

3...Rxf4+ 4.Kg3 Rd4! 5.Rxd4 e2 6.Rd6+! Kh7 (Kh5)

6...cxd6 7.Bb6

– 52 –

7.Rh6+! Kxh6

7...Kg8 8.Bf6

8.Bg5+! Kxg5

Or else 9.Bd2.

9.f4+

That's it! On the third move the way was paved.

9...Kh5 10.Kf2

to conclude the heroic battle against Black's promotion. A titanic battle over the dark squares.

“A game-like position leads to some spectacular play in which all three pieces are sacrificed. The preliminary 3.f4! is a delightful finesse clearing the way for the second f-pawn to advance later”.

These two studies and their like would certainly help to deepen the linkage between the realm of over the board chess and the world of chess composition.

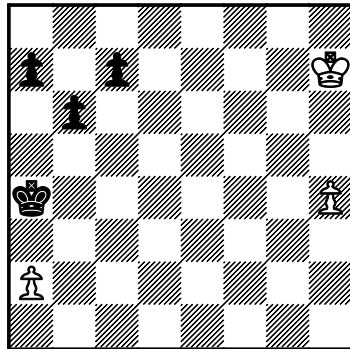
EG 183, Vol. XVII, January 2011, p. 21-22

Exceptional pawn endings

After Grigoriev and Zinar it is far from easy to find exceptional new ideas in the special genre of pawn endings. Even in the theme tourney in the *Problemist Ukraini* a couple of years ago, requiring pawn endings and judged by the great Zinar himself, studies with only pawns could not make it the top honours which were all awarded to ... underpromotion studies.

Nevertheless, I recently came across two highly exceptional pawn endings. They are very different yet they still have something in common. They both failed to be included among the prizewinners perhaps because I was not the judge?

The German composer of No. 1 is also a strong player whom I happened to meet more than once in Bundesliga matches when our teams used to compete in the same division. It's a pity that he has got so little time for composing as his rare appearances display great skill of performing unique ideas.



– 43 –

Jurgen Fleck

special hon. mention

The Problemist, 2008-2009

Draw

In my last year as the sub-editor of studies in the *Problemist*, I received from Jurgen a stunning miniature which is hereby explained in his own words?

This study, apart from being a dead-serious pawn ending with a couple of original points, shows a switchback of a different kind. It will surprise nobody that in the course of the solution the wK has to walk from h7 to d3, but what could drag him all the way back to h7? We'll see...

1.Kg6!

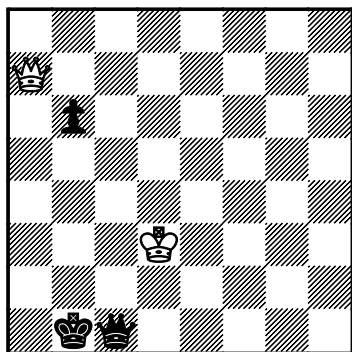
An immediate pawn race leads to a hopeless queen ending: 1.h5? c5 2.h6 c4 3.Kg6 c3 4.h7 c2 5.h8Q c1Q wins.

1...c5 2.Kf5! Ka3!

– 54 –

Black needs the help of his king, as pushing the pawn leads nowhere: 2...c4 3.Ke4 Ka3 4.Kd4 b5 5.Kc3! Kxa2 6.h5 a5 7.h6 b4+ 8.Kxc4 b3 9.h7 b2 10.h8Q b1Q 11.Qh2+ Ka3 12.Qh3+ draws.

3.Ke4 Kxa2! 4.h5 c4 5.h6 c3 6.Kd3 Kb2! 7.h7 c2 8.h8Q+ Kb1 9.Qh7 (Qg7, Qa8, Qb8) c1Q 10.Qxa7



This ending has been thoroughly investigated by Averbakh (my source is his book on queen endings from 1982). The next moves follow the concepts of standard theory, and no mystery is involved. According to Averbakh the king must quickly head to (guess where) ... h7!

10...b5

Cutting off the king doesn't work: 10...Qc5 11.Qa4 Kb2 12.Qc4.

11.Ke4! b4 12.Kf5! b3 13.Qb7!

13.Kg6? Qc6+ 14.Kh7 Qe4+ 15.Kg8 b2 wins.

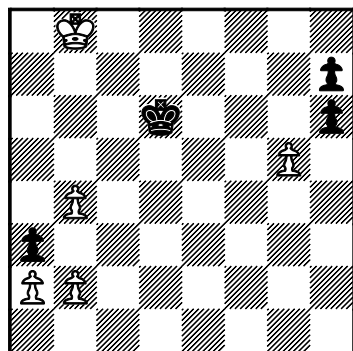
13...b2 14.Kg6! Qf4 15.Kh7! Qe5

15...Qa4 16.Qh1+ Ka2 17.Qd5+ Ka1 18.Qe5

16.Qc6! draw!

The uniqueness of this ultimate switch-back indeed did not escape the eye of the judge grandmaster John Nunn. Referring to a category of incomprehensible entries due to strong computer influence, he wrote that this study "was a marginal case since although the general principle behind the moves is familiar, the concrete details, especially the reasons for 13.Qb7!, are rather complicated. As the content of this study was exceptional, I compromised by giving it a Special HM". Fair enough though I personally feel I would have compromised here to no less than a special prize.

Logical studies have become rather fashionable of late, however inserting a long thematic try in a pawn ending seems extremely difficult and thus rare. The Ukrainian-German co-production manages to display the marvel in a surprisingly natural setting-form and content alike!



– 44 –

Sergiy Didukh
& Siegfried Hornecker

1st hon. mention
Olimpiya dunyasi, 2010

Draw

1.g6!

The thematic try clarifies it all: 1.bxa3? hxg5 2.a4 g4 3.a5 g3 4.a6 g2 5.a7 g1Q 6.a8Q Qg8+ 7.Kb7 Qxa8+ 8.Kxa8 Kc6 9.Ka7 Kb5 10.a4+ Kxa4 11.Kb6 Kxb4 12.Kc6 Kc4 13.Kd6 Kd4 14.Ke6 Ke4 15.Kf6 Kf4 16.Kg7 h5 wins.

1...hxg6 2.bxa3 g5 3.a4 g4 4.a5 g3 5.a6 g2 6.a7 g1Q 7.a8Q Qg8+ 8.Kb7!

8.Ka7? Qxa2+

8...Qxa8+ 9.Kxa8 Kc6

9...h5 10.Ka7 h4 11.b5

10.Ka7!

A Réti manoeuvre with another excellent try: 10.a4? Kb6 11.a5+ Ka6 12.Kb8 h5 13.Kc7 h4 14.Kc6 h3 15.b5+ Kxa5 16.b6 h2 17.b7 h1Q+ wins.

10...Kb5 11.a4+! Kxa4

11...Kxb4 14.Kb6.

12.Kb6! Kxb4 13.Kc6 Kc4 14.Kd6 Kd4 15.Ke6 Ke4 16.Kf6 Kf4 17.Kg6 draw!

As compared to the try the pawn has by now moved one crucial square forward thanks to the astounding key and thus has enabled White to make his very last move!

I don't know who the judge was (HH: M. Muradov) but his comment shows that he had grasped the entire essence of this brilliancy: "Done in good time effect in a pawn study. The purpose of the first move becomes apparent only by the end. Despite the fact that, in the main line, after the 10th move, the Réti manoeuvre is well-known, the synthesis is very good".

In my non-humble opinion this was by far the most original and enjoyable entry in the field and therefore I had once again to present here a pair of "non-prizewinners explained".

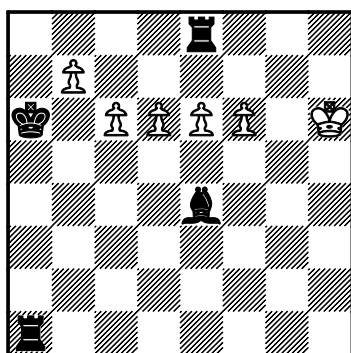
EG 184, Vol. xvii, April 2011, p. 124-125

– 56 –

Multiple knight promotions

Good themes never die and multiple underpromotions still manage to fascinate our imagination time and time again. The St Petersburg resident Alexey Sochnev has been busy for years implementing double knight promotions in numerous successful miniatures to which we might dedicate an article sometime soon. Our present selection deals with recent performances displaying three white knight underpromotions.

Richard Becker seems to have already become the most prolific and successful American composer ever. His occasional outings to the world beyond reciprocal zugzwangs usually provide us (at least yours truly) with real refreshing experiences demonstrating Richard's distinguished skills:



– 45 –

Richard Becker

1st prize

AN & YB, 2010

Draw

1.f7

1.d7? Rg8 and mate follows.

1...Rxe6+

1...Rh1+ 2.Kg5 Rg1+ 3.Kf4 Rxe6 4.b8Q Rf1+ 5.Ke3 Bg6+ 6.Kd2 Rf2+ 7.Kc3 Re3+ 8.Kd4 Re4+ 9.Kd5 Rd2+ 10.Kc5 Re5+ 11.Kc4 Rc2+ 12.Kd4 Re4+ 13.Kd5 Rd2+ 14.Kc5 Re5+ 15.Kc4 Bxf7+ 16.Kc3 draws.

2.Kg7 Rg1+ 3.Kf8 Rh1

A skewer would not stop the pawn march: 3...Rh6 4.b8Q Rh8+ 5.Ke7 Rxb8 6.c7 draws.

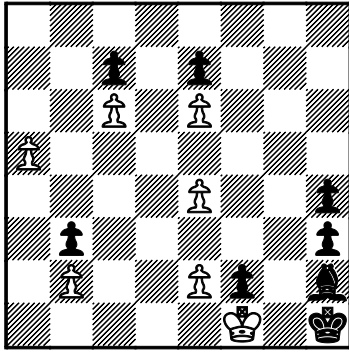
4.d7

4.b8Q? Rh8+

4...Bxc6 5.b8S+

The first fork. 5.b8Q? Rh8+ wins.

5...Kb5 6.Sxc6 Kxc6



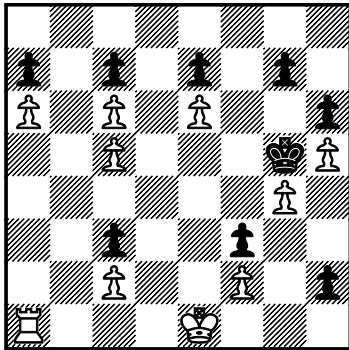
– 47 –

Sigmund Herland

Deutsches Wochensachb, 1913

Win

Timman has recently done remarkable research of the prototype scheme and I am sure that we will hear of it soon. The most daring concept is probably displayed in the following masterpiece by the grand maestro of the modern pawn ending:



– 48 –

Mikhail Zinar

special prize

Osintsev 50 JT, 2011

Win

1.0–0–0 Kh4

A clever device to make it much more difficult for White since the natural: 1...Kxg4 is met by 2.Rh1 Kh3 3.Kd1 Kg2 4.Ke1 Kxh1 5.Kf1 g5 6.hxg6 h5 7.g7 h4 8.g8S h3 9.Sf6 exf6 10.e7 f5 11.e8Q, after which the shortest winning way would be f4 12.Ke1 Kg2 13.Qg6+ Kh1 14.Qd3 Kg1 15.Qf1 mate.

2.Rh1 Kh3

The castled king must hurry up back to the other side to lock in his counterpart.

3.Kd1 Kg2 4.Ke1 Kxh1 5.Kf1 g5 6.hxg6 h5 7.g7 h4 8.g8S

8...h3? and White will be one tempo short to avoid stalemate after 8...h3.

8...h3 9.Sf6 exf6 10.e7 f5 11.e8S f4 12.Sd6 cxd6 13.c7 dxc5 14.c8S c4 15.Sb6 axb6 16.a7 b5

And the pawn, free at last, promotes to mate. White just needs not to fall by force of the habit to a fourth knight promotion... A queen or even a modest bishop would do the obvious trick.

Here we have a unique combination of the theme with the Valladolid Task. All three unusual chess moves: castling, en-passant and 3 underpromotions in one line of play! In his most instructive column Spotlight from our previous issue Jarl Ulrichsen expresses an interesting viewpoint regarding this controversial theme. "The great majority of endgame studies showing this theme are terrible", he complains and warns us that strong nerves are needed to look at them. I wonder what has Jarl to say about this one.

EG 185, Vol. xvii, July 2011, p. 213-214

A key move slacking up the bK. Insufficient is 4.Rg1!? Bh5 5.Kd4 d1Q 6.Rxd1 Bxd1 7.Kxd3 Bb3 8.Kc3 Kc7 9.Kb4 Kb6 zz wins.

4...Kc8!

4...Ke6 5.Rg1 Bh5 6.b6 Bf3 7.b7 Bxb7 8.Rd1 draws.

5.Rg1 Bh5 6.Kd4 (Kc4) d1Q 7.Rxd1 Bxd1 8.Kxd3 Kb7

Black has reached the planned goal with a small delay. 9.Kd4! A fantastic saving move. Else White would be blown off with the zugzwangs' twister. 9.Kc4?! Kb6 zz 10.Kb4 Bb3 zz 11.Ka3 Ka5; 9.Kc3?! Bb3 10.Kb4 Kb6 zz; 9.Kd2? Bb3 10.Kc3 Kc7 11.Kb4 Kb6 win.

9...Kb6 10.Kc4! zz.

The wind slowly hauls.

10...Bc2! 11.Kc3!

Preparing another zugzwang.

11...Bd1

This forced move leads to a repetition. Again 11...Bb3 12.Kb4 zz draws.

12.Kc4!

12.Kb4? Bb3

12...Ka5 13.Kc5 Be2 14.b6 Bf3

White is finally trapped?

15.b7!

No, the pawn's sac crowns the precise defence. 15.Kc4? Kxb6 16.Kb4 Bd1 17.Ka3 Bb3 wins.

15...Bxb7 16.Kc4!

The bishop doesn't control d1, time to transfer the king to the stalemate corner.

16...Bd5+!

A last try. 16...Bc8 17.b4+.

17.Kxd5 Kb4 18.Kc6!

And Black's win has definitely become only a illusion. But not 18.Kd4? Kb3 19.Kc5 Kxb2 wins.

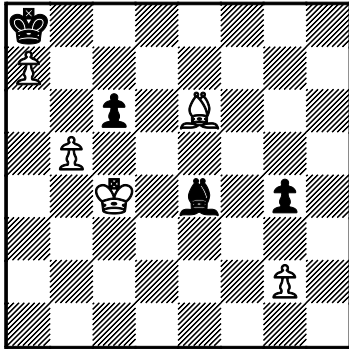
18..Kb3 19.Kb5

Draw.

The study is dedicated to Marco Campioli. A memorable study for zugzwang lovers, but also for all chess-players. (*see diagram 50*)

1.b6

1.g3? cxb5+ 2.Kc5 Kxa7 draws.



– 50 –

Lubos Kekely, Ladislav Salai, Matej Vyparina & Jan Hlas

3rd prize

Ceskoslovensky sach, 2009-2010

Win

1...g3

1...Bg2? 2.Bxg4 Kb7 3.Kc5 Bh1 4.Bc8+ wins.

2.Bh3 c5!

The bB needs some space immediately. 2...Bd5+ 3.Kc5 Be4 4.Kd6 c5 5.Bd7 Bxg2 6.Bc6+ Bxc6 7.Kxc6 g2 8.Kc7 g1Q 9.b7+ Kxa7 10.b8Q+ Ka6 11.b6 mate.

3.Kb5!

A tempo battle begins. 3.Kxc5? Kb7 4.Kd4 Bc6 draws.

3...Bb7!

Bad is Kb7 4.Kxc5 Ka8 5.Kd4 Bc6 6.Ke3 Kb7 7.Bg4 Kxb6 8.Bf3 wins.

4.Kxc5

4.Bd7? c4 5.Kc5 Bxg2.

4...Bc8!

The battle is moved to another diagonal. 4...Be4 5.Kd4.

5.Kc6!

5.Bxc8? stalemate, after 5.Kd6? Bxh3 6.gxh3 g2 7.Kc7 g1Q 8.b7+ Ka7 9.b8Q+ Ka6 the critical square b6 is guarded.

5...Bb7+ 6.Kd6!

Controlling the central squares e6 and e5 and in this way limiting the bishop's movement. 6.Kc7 Be4 7.Kd6 Bc6 8.Kc5 transposes to the main line.

6...Bc6!

6...Bc8? 7.Be6 Be4? 7.Ke5 win.

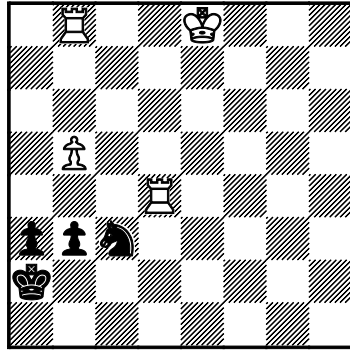
7.Kc5!

Tempo!

7...Bb7 8.Kd4 Bc8 9.Ke3!

Wins.

The composers found a maximum form in a simple same-colour bishop ending. A nice study for o.t.b. players!



– 51 –

Emil Vlasak

4th/5th prize

Ceskoslovensky sach, 2009-2010

Win

1.b6 b2 2.Rb4!

2.Rd2 Kb3.

2...Sd5!

Introduction to strong stalemate counter play. 2...Se4? 3.Ra8 Sd6+ 4.Kd7 wins.

3.Rxb2+!

3.Rb5? Sxb6 4.R5xb6 b1Q 5.Rxb1 stalemate.

3...Kxb2!

3...axb2 4.Ra8+ Kb3 5.b7 Sc7+ 6.Kd7 Sxa8 7.b8Q+ wins.

4.b7 Sc7+!

Closing the c-file with a tempo. 4...a2 5.Rc8.

5.Ke7!

5.Kd7 (Kf7)? a2 6.Ra8 Sxa8 7.b8Q+ Sb6 draws.

5...a2 6.Ra8! Sxa8 7.b8Q+! Sb6 8.Qe5+ Kb3 9.Qe3+ Kb2 10.Qd4+ Kb3!

The threat is Sc4-a3-c2.

11.Kd6! Sc4+

11...Sa4 12.Qa1 Ka3 13.Kd5 wins.

12.Kc5!

In this way White creates a mating net.

12...Sa3

Too late. After 5.Kf7? the wK would be on d5 and Black would keep the position.

13.Qb4+ Kc2 14.Qxa3

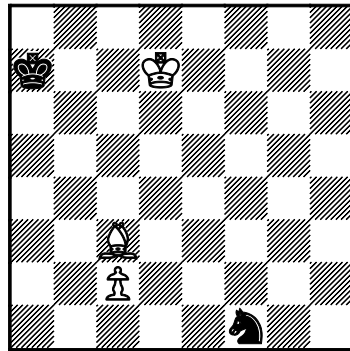
Wins.

White's win seems to be optically questionable in the setting. The king is moving in a real-time and although the chessboard is not curved like space, he still reaches in time. Einstein would have liked this study, too.

EG 186, Vol. xvii, October 2011, p. 331-332

Ever higher: Excelsior Plus

Back in the late sixties and early seventies, when I made my first steps in the minefield of chess composition, one of my favourite books was *FIDE Album 1945-55* where I first got acquainted, among many classics, with the following 'malyutka'



– 52 –

Hugh Blandford

1st prize

Springaren, 1949

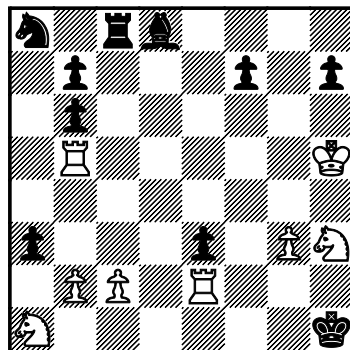
Win

1.Bd4+ Ka8! 2.c4 Sd2 3.c5 Sb3 4.c6 Sa5 5.c7 Sc6! 6.c8R+!

6.Kxc6? stalemate, or 6.c8Q+? Sb8+ and stalemate.

This series of obvious (in fact forced) moves shows in the purest form the old theme known also from other genres as the Excelsior: A pawn moves all the way from its initial square to promotion.

The first excelsior belongs to the one and only Sam Loyd (1841-1911), the American wizard who was just 20 when he published this moreover:



– 53 –

Samuel Loyd

London Era, 1861

#5

According to the Wikipedia, Loyd had a friend who was willing to wager that he could always find the piece which delivered the principal mate of a chess problem. Loyd composed this problem as a joke and bet his friend that he could not pick a piece that *doesn't* give mate in

the main line (his friend immediately identified the pawn on b2 as being the least likely to deliver mate), and when the problem was published it was with the stipulation that White mates with “the least likely piece or pawn”.

The solution:

1.b4!

Threatening 2.Rf5 and 3.Rf1 mate, or 2.Rd5 and 3.Rd1 mate.

1...Rc5+ 2.bxc5!

Threatening 3.Rb1 mate.

2...a2 3.c6!

Resuming the threats as on move one.

3...Bc7 4.cxb7 and 5.bxa8Q (bxa8B) mate.

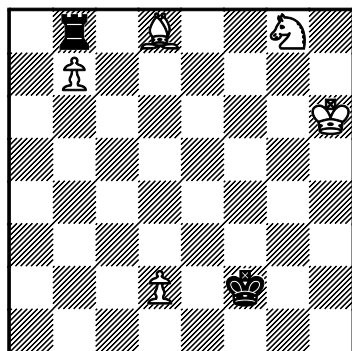
The mate is delivered with the pawn which starts on b2.

The theme was named after the poem “Excelsior” by the famous American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. The word means in Latin and in archaic English “ever higher”.

The Excelsior alone is not too exciting any more. After all as over the board players we happened to demonstrate it more than once running a single pawn or more all the way to the eighth rank.

However, combined with other motifs it might intensify the impression and contribute to the study’s thematic unity. This is best displayed in two recent prize winners.

The prolific Hungarian composer won the studies section in the big and successful tourney that celebrated (a couple of years too late but who cares?) the first jubilee of the Permanent Commission for Chess Composition.



– 54 –

Janos Mikitovics

1st prize

PCCC 50 AT, 2010

Win

1.Ba5! Rxb7 2.Sf6 Ke2 3.d4 Ra7

3...Kd3 4.d5 Kc4 5.d6 Kb5 6.Bd8 Kc6 7.Be7 Rb1 8.d7 Rd1 9.d8Q wins, Excelsior.

4.Bd8!

Thematic try 4.Bb6!? Ra6 5.Sd5 (5.Sd7 Kd2 6.Kg5 Kc3 7.Bc5 Ra4 8.d5 Kc4) Kf3 6.Kg6 Ke4 7.Sf6+ Kd3 8.Bc5 Kc4 9.Kf5 Ra5 10.Sd7 Kd5 11.Sf6+ Kc4 12.Sd7 Kd5 positional draw.

4...Ke3 5.d5 Ra6! Pin 6.Be7! Kf4 7.d6 Ke5 8.d7!

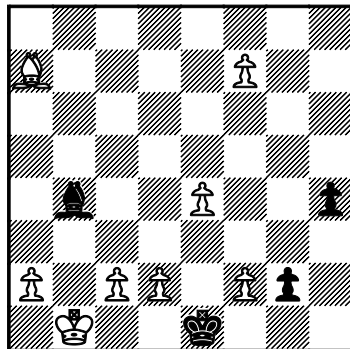
8.Se8? Rb6 (Rc6)!

9.Kg6 Ke6! Ke6 9.d8Q

Wins.

The formal theme in all sections of the event required pins and here indeed we witness a festival of pinning, unpinning, halfpinning and selfpinning. Quite a lot of them indeed are indicated in the course of the solution either in the main line or in thematic tries. Nevertheless, my personal view is that most of it is in fact just a matter of formality since, in particular, the unpinning and half-pinning are barely exploited to create real effect on the events. On the other hand, I was more impressed by the surprisingly natural and precise Excelsior as well as by the beautiful switchback, despite the absence of any tactics:

A special tourney commemorated the centenary of the late Russian grandmaster Alexander Tolush. The St. Petersburg duo realized the Excelsior in a bishop ending. The advanced black pawns look pretty dangerous while their white counterpart is under control. Which of the other white pawns is going to give it a try?



– 55 –

Leonard Katsnelson
& Alexei Sochnev

1st prize
Tolush 100 MT, 2011

Draw

1.f3!

Thematic try 1.f4? Ke2 2.Bg1 Kf1 3.Bh2 h3 4.a4 g1Q 5.Bxg1 Kxg1 6.c3 Bc5 7.a5 h2 8.a6 h1Q 9.f8Q Qxe4+.

1...Ke2 2.Bg1! Kf1 3.Bh2 h3 4.a4! g1Q 5.Bxg1 Kxg1 6.c3!

Thematic try 6.a5? h2 7.a6 h1Q 8.f8Q Bxf8 9.a7 Kf2+ 10.Ka2 Qc1 11.a8Q Qxc2+ 12.Ka1 Bg7+.

6...Bc5 7.a5!

– 68 –

7.d4? Be7 8.a5 h2 9.a6 h1Q 10.f8Q Bxf8 11.a7 Kf2+ 12.Ka2 Qc1 13.a8Q Qc2+ 14.Ka1
Qxc3+ 15.Ka2 Qc2+ 16.Ka1 Bb4.

7...h2 8.a6 h1Q 9.f8Q Bxf8 10.a7 Kf2+ 11.Ka2! Qc1 12.a8Q

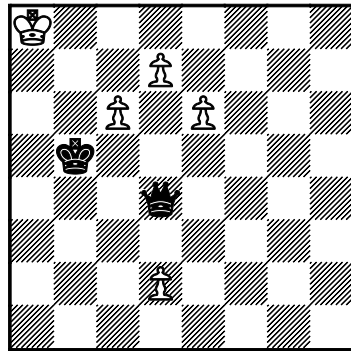
Draw!

Similar to Loyd's problem here also the "unlikely pawn" did it at last.

EG 187, Vol. XVIII, January 2012, p. 19-20

Kings and pawns awaiting guests

Displaying original multiple underpromotions is usually special, however doing it from a position of kings and pawns only might create even greater impression. The leading expert in this magic is Mikhail Zinar who would probably gladly approve of the following miniature:



– 56 –

Richard Becker

special prize

Chessstar, 2010

Draw

1.e7

1.c7? Kb6 2.Kb8 Qb4 3.Kc8 Kc6 4.d4 (4.d8S+ Kb6) Qd6 5.d5+ Qxd5 6.d8S+ Kb6 7.e7 Qb5 wins.

1...Qa1+ 2.Kb8 Qe5+ 3.c7 Kc6 4.d8S+! Kb6

4...Kd7 leads to a unique EGTB draw: 5.e8Q+ Kxe8 6.d4 Qh2 7.Kc8.

5.e8S! Qxe8 6.c8S+! Kc5 7.d4+ Kd5 8.Kc7 Kxd4 9.Nb7 Qf7+ 10.Kc6 Qe6+ 11.Kc7 Kd5 12.Sb6+ Kd4 13.Sc8 Qc4+ 14.Kd7 Qb5+ 15.Kc7 Kd5 16.Sb6+ Kd4 17.Sc8 Qc4+ 18.Kd7 Qd5+ 19.Kc7 Qf7+ 20.Kc6 Qe8+ 21.Kc7 Kd5 22.Sb6+

Draws.

No fewer than three knights result from underpromotions of which the remaining two create a fortress.

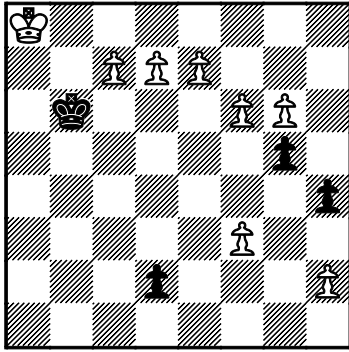
Siegfried Hornecker is especially fond of king and pawn positions in all genres thus it is no wonder that his own first jubilee tourney was partly dedicated to pawn endings. Here again the American prolific maestro showed his skill with a fourfold knight promotion: (*see diagram 57*)

1...d1Q 2.c8S+! Ka6 3.d8S! Qxf3+ 4.Kb8 Qf4+ 5.Sd6!

5.Ka8? Qc7

Qxd6+ 6.Kc8 Kb6 7.e8S! Qd3 8.f7 Qf5+ 9.Se6! Qxe6+ 10.Kd8 Kc6 11.f8S! Qa2 12.Ke7 Qa3+ 13.Kf7 Qa7+ 14.Kf6 Qf2+ 15.Ke7 Qc5+ 16.Kf7 Qd5+ 17.Ke7 g4 18.g7 g3 19.hxg3 hxg3 20.Sf6

– 70 –



– 57 –

Richard Becker

3rd prize

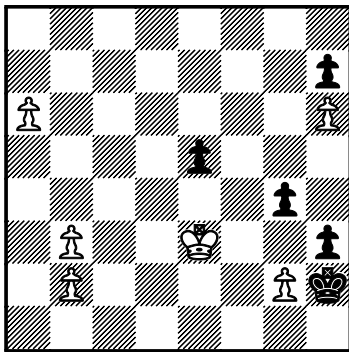
Hornecker 25 JT, 2011

BTM, Draw

Draws.

The jubilant judge however considered this study as partly anticipated by the author's own previous one. In our opinion the systematic double knight sacrifice seems highly original and makes this one fully independent.

A different scenario appears in the special prize winner of the same event.



– 58 –

Yochanan Afek

special prize

Hornecker 25 JT, 2010

Win

1.g3 Kxg3 2.a7 e4

2...h2 3.a8B! Kh3 4.Kf2 g3+ 5.Kf1.

3.a8R!

3.a8Q? h2 4.Qxe4 h1Q 5.Qxh1 stalemate.

3...Kh2 4.Ra7 Kg2 5.Kxe4 g3 6.Kf4 h2 7.Ra1 Kh3

7...Kf2 8.Rh1 Kg2 9.Rc1! wins.

8.Kf3 g2 9.Ra5 g1S+ 10.Kf2 Sf3 11.Ra1 Se5! 12.Rd1!

To stop Sd3+?

12...Sg4+ 13.Kf3 Sxh6 14.b4 Sg4 15.b5 Se5+ 16.Kf4 Sc4 17.b3!

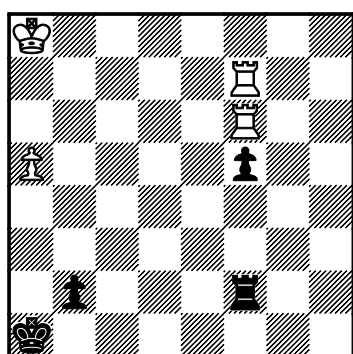
Wins.

In the course of the solution and the main sideline all four promoted pieces take an active part. Furthermore, the promoted rook and knight create a new phase. This could all be achieved by adding just a single pawn on b3 to an older study of yours truly published in Poland 38 years ago!

EG 188, Vol. XVIII, April 2012, p. 114-115

More logical gems

Logical tries have become a hot compositional topic in recent years and personally I am always thrilled (and even a bit envious) by a new and original effort of a logical nature. It takes a long sequence of moves in the thematic try to find out that the stipulated goal cannot be achieved since a minor detail is still missing somewhere along the route or even at its very end. The solution just slightly differs from the try, introducing a tiny element which in fact makes the entire difference to be discovered only after making again the long and winding way up to the happy end. In the past it was mainly the Russian maestro Nikolay Ryabinin who has practically built up a brilliant career with his logical masterpieces. The last decade however has witnessed quite a few capable followers:



– 59 –

Iuri Akobia & Sergiy Didukh

1st prize

Ural Problemist, 2010

Win

Which of the white Rooks would efficiently stop the advanced Black pawn?

Let us try: 1.Rb7!? b1Q 2.Rxb1+ Kxb1 3.a6 f4 4.a7 f3 a surprising reciprocal zugzwang position with WTM: 5.Rf7 Kc1! (Kc2; Kb7) 6.Rc7+ Rc2 7.Kb8 Rxc7 8.a8Q Rf7! 9.Qa1+ Kd2 10.Qa2+ Ke1 11.Qxf7 f2 and it is a well-known theoretical draw.

Will the alternative prove better?

1.Rb6! b1Q

1...f4 2.Rfb7 f3 3.a6 Re2 4.a7 f2 5.Ra6+ Kb1 6.Rf7 Kc2 7.Rb6 b1Q 8.Rc7+ wins.

2.Rxb1+ Kxb1 3.a6 f4 4.a7

4Ka7? f3

4...f3 5.Rf6!!

We have reached the same position, however it is BTM now! Not 5.Rf5? Kc1 6.Rc5+ Rc2 7.Kb7 Rxc5 8.a8Q Kd2 (Kd1) or 5.Rb7+? Rb2.

5...Kc1 6.Rc6+ Rc2

6...Kd1 7.Rc3+; 6...Kd2 7.Kb7 win.

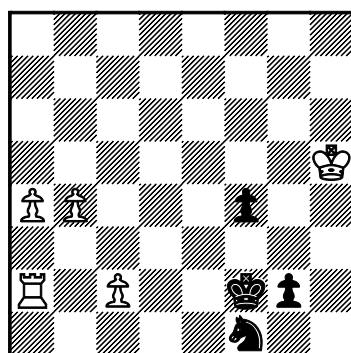
7.Kb7 Rxc6 8.a8Q Rf6

Curiously, a third rook appears on f6! 8...f2 9.Qf8! Rc2 10.Qf3; 8...Rc2 9.Qa1+ Kd2 10.Qd4+ Ke2 11.Qe4+; 8...Kd1 9.Qa2! Rf6 10.Qf2 win) the slight yet crucial difference: following

9.Qa1+! Kd2 10. Qxf6

Wins. Black is just one tempo away of the try's final drawing position!

For his 80th birthday, the French composer Marcel Doré announces a study tourney (see elsewhere in this issue) where one of the sections requires a strong 'logical' thematic try. Here is one of the examples:



– 60 –

Alexei Sochnev

2nd prize

Problemist Ukraini 2009

Draw

In view of the immediate promotion threat a discovered check along the second rank is urgently called for. However the natural double pawn move would prove hasty and premature: 1.c4+? Kf3 2.Rxg2 Kxg2 3.b5 Sg3+ 4.Kg6 Sf5 5.a5 f3 6.b6 Se7+ 7.Kg7 f2 8.b7 Sc6 9.a6 f1Q 10.b8Q Sxb8 11.a7 Qa1+! This last decisive check could be avoided if White foresaw it in advance and restrained the key pawn already on move one:

1.c3+! Kf3 2.Rxg2 Kxg2 3.b5!

3.a5? Se3 4.b5 Sc4

3...Sg3+ 4.Kg6 Sf5!

4...Se4 5.a5 Sd6 6.b6 f3 7.a6

5.a5!

5.b6? Se7+ 6.Kg7 Sc6 7.b7 f3 8.a5 Sb8!

5...f3 6.b6! Se7+ 7.Kg7! f2 8.b7 Sc6 9.a6 f1Q 10.b8Q!

10.a7? Se5! 11.a8Q Qf7+

10...Sxb8 11.a7

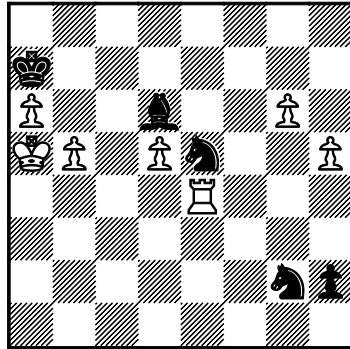
The game went along the same path as the try but the closure of the long diagonal in advance has eventually enabled white's narrow escape!

This new anniversary tourney might provide you with the incentive to give the logical study a decent try. Although it's far from easy to make it work, the good news is that the range of themes and motives involved is in fact unlimited as the point is in the logical process and almost any synthesis of ideas, even the simplest and most basic ones, might serve as the trigger to the logical process. I strongly feel that it allows a wide field of action but furthermore would pave the way to the hearts of over the board players who are after all the potential consumers of our beloved art.

EG 189, Vol. xviii, July 2012, p. 206-207

The cherry: Qg5!!

Exactly 20 years ago, on 26xi1992 to be precise, the great Russian composer Leopold Mitrofanov passed away in St. Petersburg. He was just 60 but left us some 250 player-friendly studies and dozens of tourney victories. His most memorable one is no doubt the following diamond:



– 61 –

Leopold Mitrofanov

1st prize

Rustaveli MT, 1967

Correction:

Vecherni Leningrad 1971

Win

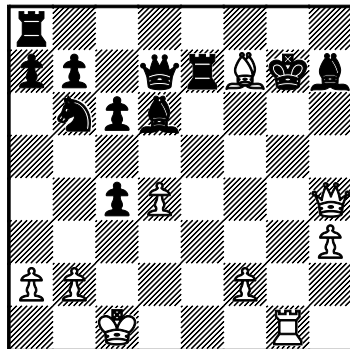
1.b6+ Ka8! 2.Re1! Sxe1 3.g7 h1Q 4.g8Q+ Bb8 5.a7! Sc6+! 6.dxc6 Qxh5+ 7.Qg5!!

7...Ka6? Qe2+

7...Qxg5+ 8.Ka6 Bxa7 9.c7!

And e.g. Qa5+ 10.Kxa5 Kb7 11.bxa7 Kxa7 12.c8Q wins.

The astounding 7.Qg5!! has become known ever since as the *Mitrofanov Deflection*. In the 113th issue of the well-known Serbian chess periodical *Šabovski Informator*, Garry Kasparov praises this motive commenting the following game:



– 62 –

Mark Paragua – Das Debashis

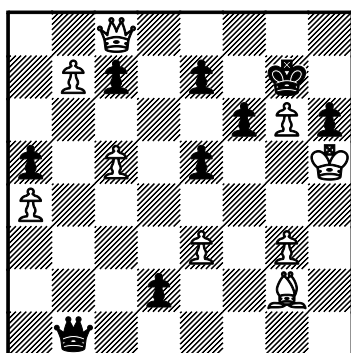
New Delhi 2012

Position after 24.Rg1+

At the conclusion of some highly sacrificial play the Indian IM played what seemed the only move 24...Kf8?? and was duly mated by the Philippine GM. Had he been familiar with

Mitrofanov's evergreen he would have possibly saved the day and established his name for eternity with 24...Qg4!!

Milu Milescu (1911-1981) was a highly respected Israeli chess author and editor who dedicated his long and successful writing career to explore the linkage between over the board chess and the art of chess composition. Publishing his pieces in the Romanian *Revista Romana de Sab*, the German *Deutsche Schachzeitung*, the French *Europe Echecs* and in his last twenty years, also in the Israeli monthly *Shabmat*, Milescu had become a great populariser of chess art to generations of chess enthusiasts. To commemorate his centenary an international composing tourney was organized last year. The judge Amatzia Avni was looking for especially combative studies and the top prize winners indeed provided plenty of action. Though not thematically related still they have one important detail in common: they are both highlighted by a stunningly neat queen sacrifice on g5 just out of the blue.



– 63 –

Sergiy Didukh

1st prize

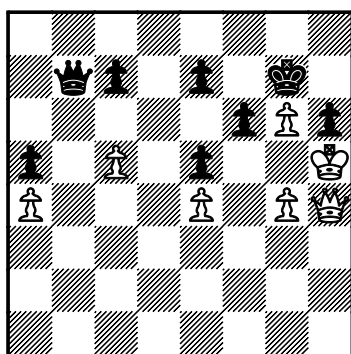
Milescu 100 MT, 2012

Draw

1.Bf3 Qf1 2.Qg4 d1Q 3.Bxd1 Qh1+ 4.Qh4 Qxd1+ 5.g4

5.Qg4? Qh1+ 6.Qh4 Qxb7 wins.

5...Qb1 6.e4! Qxb7



7.Qg5!! hxg5 8.c6 Qb5 9.axb5 a4 10.b6 a3 11.b7

11.bxc7? a2 12.c8Q a1Q mates.

11...a2 12.b8Q a1Q 13.Qb1 Qa8 14.Qb8 Qa2 15.Qb2 Qg8 16.Qb8 Qh8+

A black queen appears in all four corners during the solution!

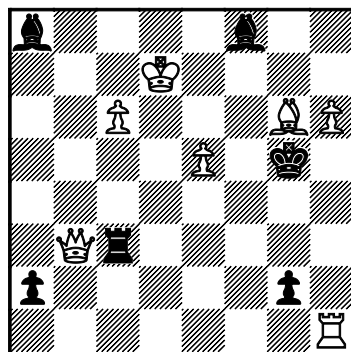
17.Qxh8+ Kxh8 18.g7+ Kh7

18...Kxg7 stalemate.

19.g8Q+! Kxg8 20.Kg6 Kf8 21.Kf5 Kf7

Stalemate!

The judge: "Excellent sacrificial tussle, with high tension and surprising blows in abundance. White must constantly defend against mighty threats. 7.Qg5!! is a great move; a black queen (albeit not the same queen) visits all four corners during the solution, yet this proves insufficient to escape from white's stalemate nets".



– 64 –

Yochanan Afek

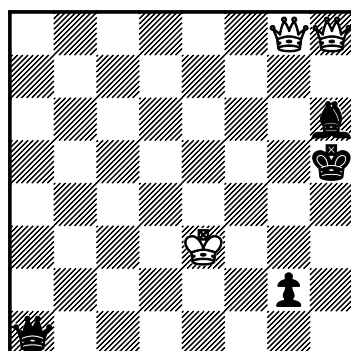
2nd prize

Milescu 100 MT, 2012

Win

1.Rh5+! Kxg6 2.Qg8+! Kxh5 3.h7 Bxc6+ 4.Ke6 Bd5+! 5.Kxd5 Rc5+ 6.Ke4!

Rxe5+! 7.Kd3 Re3+! 8.Kxe3 a1Q 9.h8Q+ Bh6+



10.Qg5+!! Kxg5 11.Qxa1 wins.

– 78 –

“Black forces the white king to the diagonal c1-h6, so that a promotion with check (9.h8Q+) will be met by a counter-check (9...Bh6+). At this very juncture, when we are led to believe that Black is saved, comes the astounding rejoinder 10.Qg5+!!, settling the issue in White's favour”.

Both prizewinners resemble their great predecessor in just one detail and don't pretend to belong to the same league. Nevertheless we dare to hope that the deceased composer would have still released a smile of approval ...

EG 190, Vol. XVIII, October 2012, p. 309-310

List of composers and players

A

Afek, Yochanan: 5, 23, 58, 64
Akobia, Iuri: 59

B

Bazlov, Yury: 15, 16
Becker, Richard: 45, 56, 57
Blandford, Hugh: 52
Bruch, Wieland: 27

C

Comay, Ofer: 8
Costeff, Gady: 21, 41

D

Debashis, Das: 62
Didukh, Sergiy: 14, 25, 34, 38, 44, 59, 63

F

Fleck, Jurgen: 43

G

Gonzales, L.M.: 37
Grigoriev, Nikolay: 3
Gurgenidze, David: 19

H

Herland, Sigmund: 47
Hlinka, Michal: 49
Hornecker, Siegfried: 44, 46

K

Kalandadze, Velimir: 12
Kartvelishvili, V.: 13

Katsnelson, Leonard: 32, 55
Kralin, Nikolai: 22
Kubbel, Leonid: 9

L

Loyd, Samuel: 53

M

Markovich, Mirko: 10
Mikitovics, Janos: 54
Minski, Martin: 27
Mitrofanov, Leopold: 61
Moravec, J.: 4

N

Nunn, John: 20

O

Olmutski, L.: 7
Osintsev, S.: 33

P

Pallier, Alain: 24
Paragua, Mark: 62
Pervakov, Oleg: 22
Polasek, Jaroslav: 49
Prusikin, Michael: 28

R

Réti, Richard: 35, 36, 39
Rezvov, N.: 18
Rumyantsev, Sergey: 17
Rusinek, Jan: 11
Ryabinin, Nikolai: 2, 26

S

Sackman, F.: 6

Sarychev , Kiril: 29
Sarychev, Aleksandr: 29, 30, 31
Sochnev, Alexei: 32, 55, 60

T

Timman, Jan: 20, 42
Tkachenko, Sergey N.: 18

V

Visokosov, Andrei: 1
Vlasak, Emil: 40, 51

Z

Zinar, Mikhail: 48

Table of contents

1	Vive la petite différence
5	Two for the price of one!
9	Action at the crossroads
13	His Excellency... The Rook!
17	Ideal final pictures
21	Corners revisited
26	Tough nuts
31	Still marching on
34	The Olympic Spirit
39	The positional draws of Sarychev
42	Postponing satisfaction
46	In the footsteps of Réti
51	Game-like positions
54	Exceptional pawn endings
57	Multiple knight promotions
61	Czech and Slovak highlights
66	Ever higher: Excelsior Plus
70	Kings and pawns awaiting guests
73	More logical gems
76	The cherry: Qg5!!
81	List of composers and players
85	Table of contents

