

Award of the study tourney - SCHACH 2010-2011

First of all, I thank Udo Degener for asking me to judge this tourney. Thanks also to Harold van der Heijden, for anticipation checking.

First, some figures : during 2010 and 2011, 24 studies were published in *Schach*. This is a rather low figure (compare with 32 studies, from 20 authors in 2008-2009 or 48, from 28 composers in 2006-2007). Surprisingly, there was not a single composer from Russia and only one from Georgia, plus one from Ukraine representing the former URSS. 16 of the entries came from 3 countries : Germany, Austria and (german) Switzerland. And 11 of the entries were submitted by only 2 prolific composers (7 + 4) ! Maybe this explains a certain lack of variety of styles in the studies I had to judge.

I have finally retained ten studies in my award, among which only one prize.

Prize # 17029 S.Hornecker & M. Minski

W : Kd3,Bh7,a6,d5,e2,g6/B : Kd6,Rh4,Ba2,d7

White to play and draw

1.e4! Bb1+ 2.Kd2! Bxe4

2...Rxe4 3.g7

3.a7 Bxd5

3...Rh2+ 4.Ke3 Bxd5 5.g7 Rh3+ 6.Kd2 Ra3 7.Be4 !=

4.g7 Ra4 5.Be4! Rd4+ 6.Bd3 Rg4 7.Bc4 Rd4+ 8.Bd3 positional draw.

An elegant study, without complicated sublimes, featuring 2 Novotnys in main line (and a third one, in 3...Rh2+ variation). Nice symmetry. I had no doubt for ranking it as the best study of the tourney.

Honourable mentions :

1st-2nd hm **G. Amann** # 16973

W : Kg4,Re1,Re8,b6,f5,h3/B : Kg7,Sc6,b2,c3,f4,f7,g6,h7

White to play and draw

1.f6+! Kh6 2.R8e2 Se5+ ! 3.Rxe5 c2 4.b7 b1=Q 5.Rxb1 cxb1=Q

6.b8=Q! Qxb8 7.Rh5+! gxh5 8.Kh4 and stalemate.

A nice stalemate combination. I like the preparatory move 1.f6+ (1.Re8? Se5+ 2.Rxe5 c2 3.f6 Kxf6-+) and the final stalemate, but the central sequence is less interesting.

1st-2nd hm equal **D.Eschbach** #16990

W : Kc6,Bc8,Sa2,b2,c2/B : Ka4,Qh3,Bg4,a5,e6

White to play and draw

1.Bd7! e5 2.Be8 Bh5! 3.Bd7 Be8 4.Bxe8 Qc8+ 5.Kb6+ Qxe8

6.Sc3+ Kb4 7.Sd5+ Kc4 8.Se3+Kd4 9.Sf5+ Kd5 10.c4+ Kxc4

11.Sd6+ Kb3 12.Sxe8 e4 13.Sd6 e3 14.Sf5 e2 15.Sd4 Kb2

16.Se2 a4 17.Sf4 a3 18.Sd3 Kc3 19.Sc1 =

A light position with interesting play in the three phases of solution : first, Black fights against a battery, and succeeds at the cost of the Queen that is captured in second part of the study, leading to the third part (EGTB position). Nothing really complicated but the elements are well devised. Classical, maybe a little bit old-fashioned today, but pleasant.

3rd hm : **I.Akobias** # 17273

W : Ka4,Bh7,a6,c6,g6 :B : Ke8,Rb2,Se4,g5

BTM, White draws

1...Ra2+ 2.Kb5 Kd8 3.g7 Rb2+ 4.Ka4! (4.Ka5? Sf6+ 5.g8=Q Sxg8 6.Bxg8 Kc7! 7.a7 Rb1 8.Bd5 Ra1+ -+) **4...Sf6 5.g8=Q Sxg8 6.Bxg8 Rb6** (now 6...Kc7? 7.a7 +-) **7.a7 Ra6+ 8.Kb6 Rxa7 9.Kb6 Re7 10.Bc4!** (10.Bd5? g4 zz ; 10.Bb3? Re4 11.Bd5 Rb4+ -+) **10...g4 11.Bd5 zz g3 12.Bf3 Kc8 13.Bg4+ Kd8 14.Bf3= or 12...Rf7 13.Bg2! Kc8 14.Bh3+ Kd8 15.Bg2 =**

A complex study in which a 6-men position is reached after 8 moves. In the first part of the study 4.Ka4! is the nicest (and paradoxical) move. In the EGTB position, White is saved by a subtle bishop-move (10.Bc4!) leading to a reciprocal zugzwang after 10...g4 11.Bd5!. Two echoed positional draws follow.

4th hm **J. Mikitovics** #17315

W : Kf8,Re8,Sa5,c3,f5/B : Kg5,Bh1,f4,g3

White to play and win

1.Ke7 Kxf5 2.Sb3 f3 3.Sd4+ Ke4 4.Kd6+ Kd3 5.Rg8 f2 6.Rxg3+ Kd2 7.Sf3 Kxc3 8.Sh2+! Kc2 9.Ke5 Ke2 10.Ra3! (10.Rb3? Bg2 and after 13.Kf4 Black has 13...Kc2! 14.Ra1 Kb2=) **10...Bg2 11.Ra2+ Ke1 12.Ra1+ Ke2 13.Kf4 f1=Q 14.Sxf1 Bxf1 15.Kg3 +-**

A natural position with fluid play from the beginning to the end of the study. A good try in second phase with 10.Rb3?, but nothing really surprising.

Special honourable mention : **R.Becker** #17093

W : Kb2,Ra2,Rb1,Ba1/Kg2,Qh3, Sd5,b5,g5

White to play and win

1.Kc1+ Kf1 2.Kd2+ Kg2 3.Ke1+ Kh1 4.Kf2+ Kh2 5.Be5+ Sf4 6.Ke1+ Kh1 7.Kd2+ Kg2 8.Kc1+ Kf1 9.Kb2+ Kf2 10.Ka1+ Ke3 11.Re1+ Kf3 12.Ra3+ +-

The composer has found how to save a brilliant conception by N.Kralin, that was cooked in two successive versions (1972 and 1988 : see annex). But in Kralin's first setting, the black queen was promoted and position was less static, with a longer solution.

Commendations

1st com **G.Amann** #17231

W : Kg3,Qc5,Ba2,d4,d5/B : Kh5,Qa6,Bf6,d7,g7,h6

White to play and win

A short solution, with a sharp tactical central sequence adorned by Q-sacs.

1.d6+ Bg5 2.Bf7+ g6 3.Bc4! (3.Bd5? Bh4+ 4.Kh3 Qf1+ 5 .Bg2+ Qf5+ =) **3...Qb5! 4.Qf5!! Qe5+ 5.dxe5 gxf5 6.Bf7 mate**

2nd com **R. Becker** #17092

Kg6,Rc7,Rd7,Be8/Kb8,Qf1,Bb5

White to play and win

1.Rb7+ Ka8 2.Ra7+ Kb8 3.Rdb7+ Kc8 4.Bd7+ Bxd7 5.Rc7+ Kb8 6.Rxd7 Qe2 7.Kf6 Qf3+ 8.Kg7 Qg4+ 9.Kf8 Qf5+ 10.Ke8 Qg6+ 11.Kd8 Qb6+ 12.Rac7 Qa5 13.e8=S! Qg5+ 14.Re7 Qd5+ 15.Rcd7 Qa5+ 16.Sc7 +-

A solution with many checks, first by White, then by Black. The reward is for the genuine minor (S)-promotion (Black would give perpetual after 13.e8=Q ?).

3rd com **G.Josten** #17232

W :Kc1,Rb1,Ba6,Sd1,b2,c2,d4,g2,g6,h4/B :

Kb4,Qg7,Rc4,a5,b6,c7,d5,h5,h6

White to plan and win

1.c3+ Kb3 2.Ra1 Ra4 3.Rxa4 Kxa4 4.Kb1 c5 5.Ka2 c4 6.Se3 Qxg6 7.Sxc4! dxc4 8.Bxc4 Qc2 9.g3! +-

No highlights, no memorable move, but a patiently built position, with a black king encaged at the end of solution, evoking the famous Cordes study.

4th com **G.Amann** #17314

W : Ke8,Qc7,Rb6,b5,d3,g5,h3/Kh8,Qb2,Rf2,b7,d7,g6,h7

White to play and win

1.Qd8! Qg7 2.Qf6!! Rxf6 3.Rxf6 Kg8 4.b6 h6 5.h4 d6 6.d4 d5 7.Rf4 h5 8.Rf6 Kh7 9.Rf7 +-

Another study by Gunter Amann, characteristic of his style, with equal material. The reward is for the hidden Q-manoeuvre 1.Qd8! and 2.Qf6 !! The rest of the study recalls a Pogosiants similar construction (Shakhmati Sahs 1962, a4/d8).

Alain Pallier, june 2012.