

Award Schach 2016-2017

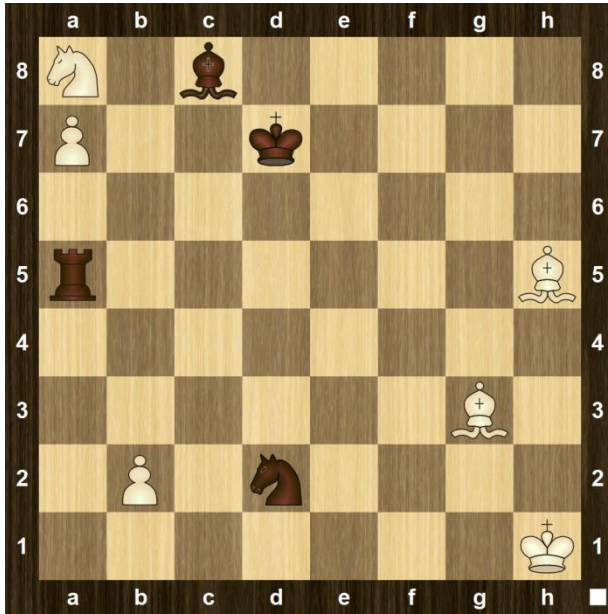
I was proud to be asked to judge the study section of the excellent and diverse magazine Schach. At the end of the two year period I received a total of 28 studies from editor Franz Pachl. The level was average with too many poor and uninteresting studies. Excessive exchanges, uninteresting mutual zugzwangs and unnecessary introductions were general trends shown in the studies.

Fortunately I also found some excellent highlights among the entries. At the end of the day the tourney turned out to be an astounding Heimsieg for the German composers, thus proving that the German 1st place in the study section of the 10th WCCT was no coincidence.

First a few comments about some studies not included in my award.

- Schach #18336 3/2016 Minski/Zimm: The classic unguarded guard on f1. A trademark of Minski. But it has been done in many better settings, both before and after the publication of this study.
- Schach #18709 12/2017 Stavrietsky: Foresight at the cost of way to many captures.
- Schach #18582 5/2017 Aliev: Good move 6. e3 but otherwise no real surprises.
- Schach #18692 11/2017 Hlinka/Kekely: The final domination is pleasant, the exchanges leading up to it are not.
- Schach 9/2017 #18658 Arestov: I don't see the connection between the introduction and the final Maliutka beginning with 9. Re1!!

I decided to include 7 studies in my award.



Win

1st Prize

Helmut Waelzel, Germany

"Schach#18656"

Schach/9/2017

Original systematic manoeuvres are rarities these days. This is a fascinating one. After the first 8 introductory half moves the White knight is trapped in the corner. White has a large material advantage, and it is surprising that White has only a very narrow road to victory. He has to chase down the black knight. This, at first, cannot be done by pinning it on the long diagonal, as black simply covers it by the bishop and then picks up White's knight in the corner. Instead, the poor Black knight is pressed systematically backwards in cooperation by the two bishops. The knight cannot allow the light squared bishop on to the h1-a8 diagonal or the dark squared bishop on to g1-a7 or h2-b8 with tempo, and thus its movements are forced. At the end the pawn on b2, expected to be merely a technical pawn, joins in the fun, sealing the knight's fate. Everything fits in this study.

The study was presented in Schach without variations, so the sidelines below are all added by the judge.

1.Nb6+ Kd8 2.a8Q Rxa8 3.Bh4+
3.Nxa8? Bb7+=

3...Kc7 4.Nxa8+ Kb7 5.Be1 Ne4 6.Bg6
6.Bf3? Bf5=

6...Nf6
6...Nd6 7.Bg3+-; 6...Nc5 7.b4+- (7.Bf2+-); 6...Ng5 7.Bh4+- (7.Bd2+-)]

7.Bh4 Nd5 8.Bf7 (8.Be4? Be6=)

8...Nb4

9.Be1

9.Be7? Nc6 10.Bd5 Bd7 (or 10... .Be6 first) 11.b4 Kxa8 (Black may also delay this capture by for instance 11...Kb8 12.Bd6+) 12.b5 Kb7

9...Nc6

10.Bd5

Bd7

11.b4

Kxa8

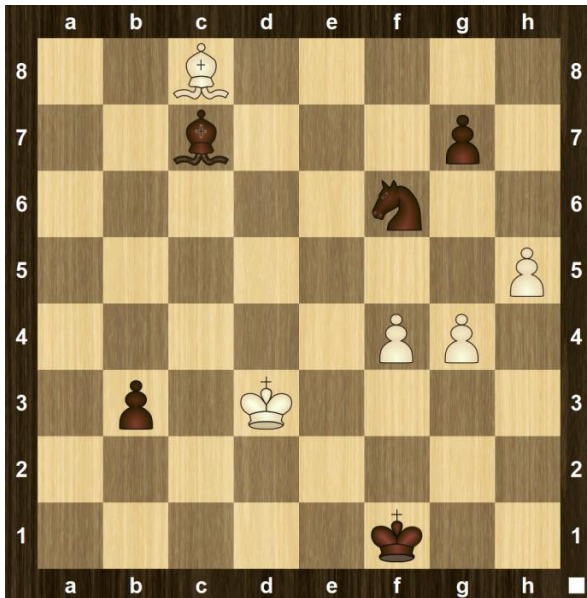
12.b5

Kb7

13.Ba5

+-

Black can now only wait with the bishop on d7/e8. White wins by bringing his king to c5 or d6.



Draw

2nd prize

Dennis Eschbach, Germany

Schach#18412"

Schach 7/2016

The first star move of this study is 5. Ba6!, luring the Black knight to a worse square (a6 instead of b7) in the mainline B. If Black switches tracks to mainline A we have an entirely new race. The final stalemate trick is well known, but the second star move of the study, 12. Bc4, appears to be new.

I would have considered beginning with 4. Bb7, as I am not convinced the first moves add much, but this is a minor point.

1.h6! **gxh6**

1...b2 2.Kc2

2.g5 **hxg5**

2...Nd5 3.gxh6 Bxf4 4.Be6]

3.fxg5 Nd5 4.Bb7!Nb6!

4...Nf4+ 5.Kc3

5.Ba6!!

Thematic try: 5.Kc3? Na4+ ! 6.Kxb3 (6.Kb4 b2 7.Be4 Nb6 ! + -) 6...Nc5+ 7.Kc4 Nxb7 8.Kd5 (8.g6 Be5 + -) 8...Bd8 ! 9.g6 (9.Kc6 Na5+ ! 10.Kd7 Bxg5 - +) 9...Bf6 + -

5...Be5! [Main A]

[Main B] 5...Kf2 6.Kc3 ! 6...Na4+ 7.Kxb3 Nc5+ 8.Kc4 Nxa6 9.g6 ! (9.Kd5 ? 9...Bf4 ! 10.g6 Nc7+ ! 11.Ke4 Bh6 - +) 9...Be5 10.Kd5 ! 10...Bb2 11.Ke6 Nc5+ 12.Kf7 Ne4 13.g7 Ng5+ 14.Kg6]

6.Ke4+ Kf2 7.Kxe5 Ke3 8.g6 Nd7+!

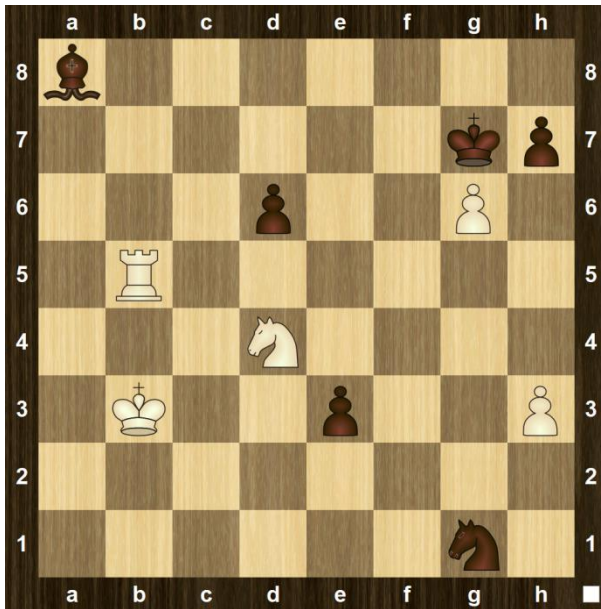
9.Ke6!

9.Kd6 ? 9...b2 10.g7 Nf6 - +

9...b2 10.g7

10.Bd3 Kxd3 11.g7 b1Q 12.g8Q Qb3+ - +

10...b1Q 11.g8Q Qb3+ 12.Bc4!Qxc4+ 13.Kf5 Qe4+ 14.Kg5 Qg2+ 15.Kf5 Qxg8
stalemate $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$



Win

3rd prize

Gunter Sonntag, Germany

Schach#18429

Schach/8/2016

The highlight of this study is undoubtedly the quiet move 4. Kc4!, postponing the obvious knight promotion. The play flows smoothly, with nice little tricks along the way. Unfortunately the final moves are rather random and difficult to understand for a solver.

1. Rg5! Nxh3

1... Nf3 2. Nf5+ Kg8 3. gxh7+ Kxh7 4. Rg7+ Kh8 5. Re7 e2 (5... Be4 6. Nxe3+-)6. Rxe2 Be4 7. Rf2 d5 8. Kc3+-

2. Ne6+

2. Nf5+? Kf6 3. gxh7 Bd5+ 4. Kc3 Nxc5 5. h8=Q+ Kxf5

2... Kh6

2... Kg8 3. Rf5 Bd5+ 4. Rxd5 e2 5. Ra5 hxg6 6. Ra1+-

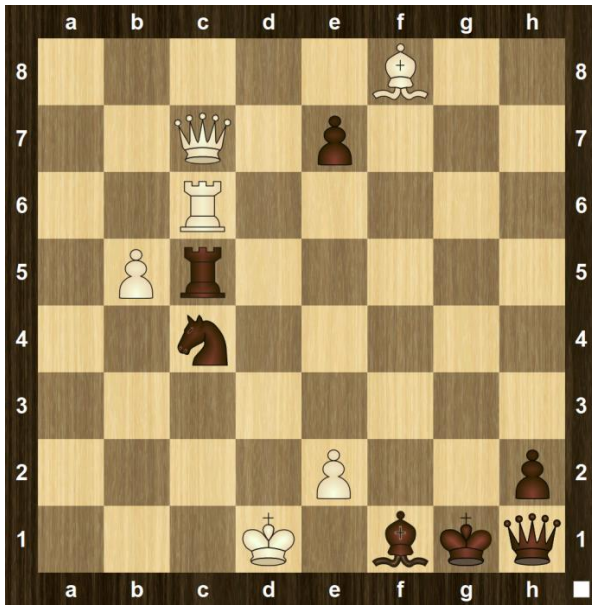
2... Kf6 3. gxh7+-

3. g7 Nxg5 4. Kc4!

4. g8=Q? Bd5+ 5. Kc3 Bxe6 6. Qf8+ Kg6 7. Kd3 Bf5+ 8. Kxe3 Nf7

4... Bd5+ 5. Kxd5 Ne4! 6. Kxe4 e2 7. Kf5! e1=Q 8. g8=N+!Kh5 9. Nf4+ Kh4 10. Ng2+ Kg3

11. Nxe1 h5 12. Nf6 Kf2 13. Nd3+ Ke3 14. Nf4 d5 15. N6xd5+ +-



Win

4th prize

Gunter Sonntag, Germany

Schach#18548"

Schach/3/2017

The introduction is excellent (who expects that the final move of pawn-b5 will be 11. Bf2#!), including the try 5. Bg7 and several sacrifices along the way. Making the Qh1 move to its corner square during the solution seems an impossible constructional hurdle to overcome, but this fact nevertheless makes the scheme a little static.

The study is partly anticipated by a sideline in a FIDE Album study by Bruch, Sonntag and Minski Tel Aviv 100 JT, 2nd prize 2009. In my view, the present study still deserves a prize thanks to its elegant flow.

1. Rg6+ Bg2 2. Qf4

2. Qxc5+? Kf1 3. Bxe7 Bb7 {/Ba8/Bf3} 4. Qxc4 Kf2+ 5. Kd2 Qe1+ 6. Kc2 Qxe2+ 7.

Qxe2+ Kxe2

2... Rf5!

2... Ne3+ 3. Kd2 Rf5 4. Qxe3+ Kf1 5. Ra6 Rd5+ 6. Kc3 Rd1 7. Bxe7

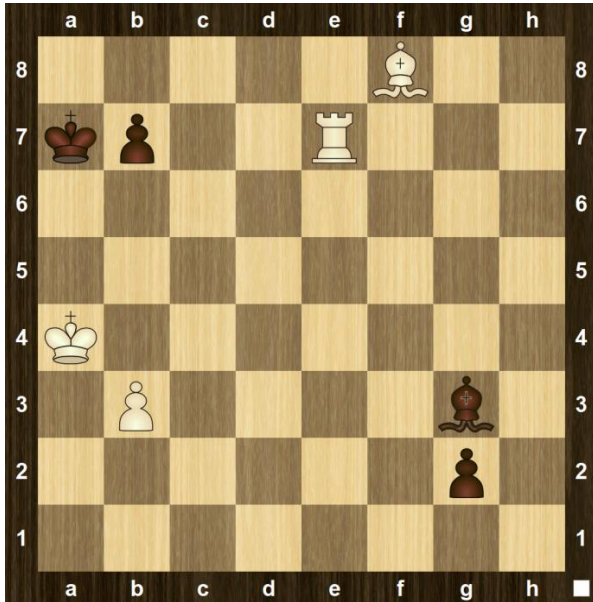
3. Qxf5 Ne3+ 4. Ke1 Nxf5 5. Bh6

5. Bg7? e5 6. Bf8 e4 7. Bc5+ e3 8. b6 Nd4! 9. Bxd4 stalemate

5... Nxh6 6. b6 e5 7. b7 Ng4! 8. Rxc4 e4 9. b8=B!

9. b8=Q? e3 10 Qg3 stalemate

9...e3 10. Bg3 Bh3 11. Bf2# +-



Win

Honourable mention

Siegfried Hornecker & Martin Minski, Germany

Schach#18464"

Schach/10/2016

This study is slightly too light to win a prize, but it is certainly one to remember. The immediate switchback 5 Bc5! is highly pleasing, surprising and aesthetic to me.

1. Re3!

1. Bh6? Bf2!

1... g1=Q 2. Bc5+ b6

2...Ka6 3. Re6+ Bd6 4. Rxd6+ (4. Bxg1 {??} 4... b5#)

2... Ka8 3. Re8+

3. Re7+ Ka6 4. Bxg1 Bd6!

4... b5+ 5. Kb4 (5. Ka3? Bd6+) Be1+ (5... Bd6+ 6. Bc5) 6. Rxe1! (Not 6. Ka3/Kc5? Bb4+! 7. Kxb4 stalemate)

5. Bc5!!

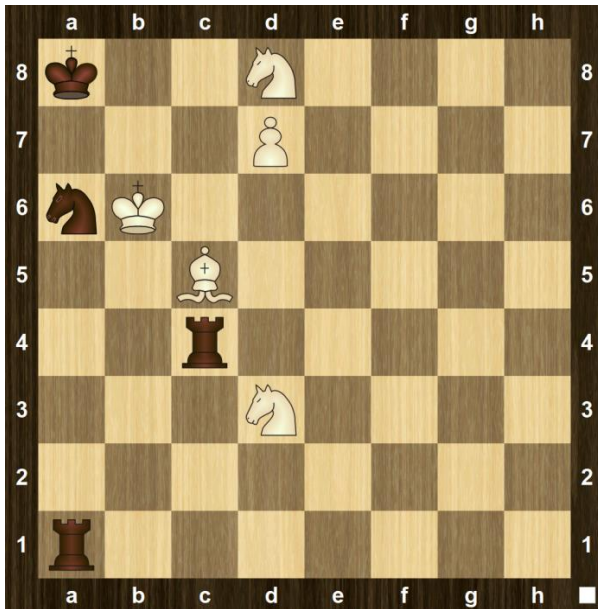
5. Re6?? b5#

5. Bxb6? Bxe7

5... Bxc5

5... b5+ 6. Kb4+-

6. Re6 1-0



Win

1st commendation

Martin Minski, Germany

Schach#18565"

Schach/4/ 2017

In two mainlines White underpromotes to the type of piece that has just been captured: The Phoenix Theme. Constructionally this is no doubt an accomplishment and there are additional subtleties, for instance how the Black rook is allowed to save the day on the d-file in the tries. Nevertheless, I believe the tablebase sidelines (5...Nd7 in both sideline A and sideline B), downgrades this study considerably, though they are, of course, an inherent part of the scheme.

The very same bishop promotion (but no knight promotion) was shown by Arpad Ruzs in Selivanov 50 JT (only difference was the White knight on f5 instead of b4) That study won third prize. Minskis study was published in March 2017, shortly after the announcement of Selivanovs tourney. It appears that both composers had the same idea coincidentally, not knowing about the other study.

1.Nc6!

1.Nb7 ? 1...Rb1+ ! 2.Kxa6 Ra4+ 3.Na5 Rb8 !; 1.Ne6 /1.Nf7? ? 1...Rb1+ ! 2.Kxa6 ??
2...Ra4#

1...Rb1+!2.Ncb4 [mainline A:]

2.Kxa6 ? 2...Ra4+ 3.Na5 Rb8!

2...Rbxb4+

[Mainline B] 2...Rcxb4+ 3.Bxb4 ! (thematic try: 3.Nxb4 ? 3...Rd1 ! (3...Rxb4+ ? 4.Bxb4 Nb8 5.d8N ! + -)) 3...Rxb4+ (3...Nb8 4.d8Q + -) 4.Nxb4 Nb8 5.d8B Phoenix ! (5.d8Q /5.d8R? stalemate ?) 5...Nc6 (5...Nd7+ 6.Kc7 + - #60) 6.Kxc6 + - (6.Nxc6 stalemate ?)]

3.Nxb4!

Thematic try: 3.Bxb4 ? 3...Rd4 ! (3...Rxb4+ ? 4.Nxb4 Nb8 5.d8B ! + -)

3...Rxb4+

3...Nb8 4.d8Q + -

4.Bxb4 Nb8 5.d8N [Phoenix !]

5.d8Q? /5.d8R? stalemate

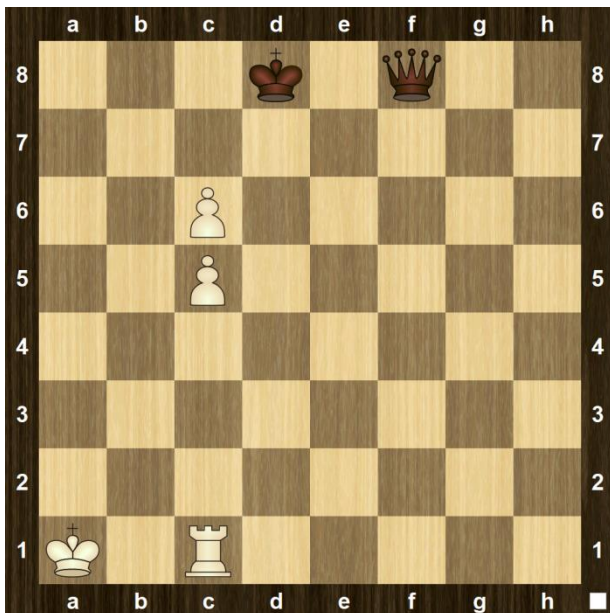
5...Nc6

5...Nd7+ 6.Kc7 + - #76

6.Kxc6+-

6.Nxc6 stalemate

1-0



Draw

2nd commendation

Rainer Staudte

Schach#18318"

Schach 2/2016

A pleasant miniature. Watching the diagram it is hard to imagine that something new will be revealed, but in fact this is a fresh positional draw.

1. c7+! Kc8

1... Kxc7 2. c6 Qa3+ 3. Kb1 Qb3+ 4. Ka1 Kd8 5. c7+ Kc8 6. Rc2! Qxc2

2. c6 Qa3+ 3. Kb1 Qb3+ 4. Ka1 Kxc7 5. Rc2! Kd6 6. Rc1 Qa3+ 7. Kb1 Qb3+ 8. Ka1 Kc7

9. Rc2 Qxc2

Steffen Nielsen, Copenhagen, March 2018