

Provisional Study Award of Phenix 2022

There were 23 studies published in the Phenix magazine for the year 2022 in numbers 335 (studies from no. 9354 to no. 9362), 336-337 (from no. 9431 to no. 9436) and 329-330 (from no. 9274 to no. 9281). I obtained the journals and the studies in PGN format from the editor, Daniel Capron. In my opinion, the quality of the studies is solid, and I decided as follows:

1st prize - study no. 9357 S. Osintsev

A mutually interesting and inventive game. Black's key moves are 1...e5! which starts the idea of dragging the white rook from the "a" line and 5...Kg5!! after which he seemingly triumphantly realizes that idea because he manages to bring both free pawns one step closer to promotion. However, the real drama follows just then with the spectacular sacrifice of white's rook, by taking which black simultaneously promotes the queen (!) but still loses because the second rook captures the queen after only two moves and at the same time prevents the promotion of the "a" pawn.

Excellent study.

2nd prize - study no. 9362 S.S. Nielsen

This study is like a small game of chess. First, the infantry is on the scene, which is sacrificed to enable the activity of the officers and artillery and for the black officer to be directed to the square "f3" ("opening").

Then, with 6.Bc4: the dramatic "middle" begins - a passive sacrifice of the white rook, a counter sacrifice of the black bishop and a double sacrifice of the same "surviving" rook! Finally, when it looks like White has spectacularly finished his job, Black finds new motives for the fight with 7...g5!. Then, after an interesting and precise game, only the pawn "g" remains on the board, barely sufficient for the victory.

3rd prize of study no. 9434 M. Pasman

Because of the tempting possibilities that White and Black avoid, almost all moves seem paradoxical. This is especially impressive for 4.Ra2!! and for a series of black moves: 7...Rc1 - the sacrifice of the rook, the promotion of the knight and the promotion of the queen which seem to help white to draw with an interesting eternal chess, but in fact it is the only way to avoid checkmate. A very good and interesting study.

1st honorable mention - no. 9358 V. Tarssyuk and V. Samilo

An interesting study with several thematic tries, inventive counterplay and an interesting duel of the black knight against the threat of the white bishop on the "a8-h1" diagonal.

2nd honorable mention - no. 9276 S.S. Nielsen and M. Minski

A study with an unexpectedly dynamic and attractive game considering the initial very economical and seemingly simple position.

3rd - 4th honorable mention no. 9359 S. Diduckh

3rd - 4th honorable mention no. 9275 P. Arestov and D. Keith

Both studies show a logical try in an extremely economical form and with a clear and interesting game. The difference is that the final of no. 9359 is more attractive but the logical try is shorter, and study no. 9275 is the other way around.

Special honorable mention - study no. 9280 R. Becker

Attractive mate images in both main variants, the play of all three promoted knights and their position first on the 8th horizontal after 13.Nf8' and then on the 5th vertical in the final mate image are reason enough for this study to be noticed, even though all black moves are played by the king. I decided to give her a special recognition, whatever that means.

1st commendation study no. 9355 J. Sprenger

A significant improvement of H. Rinck's study, which the author mentions in his commentary, because of the nice opening game and especially because of the minor promotion of the white rook - 7.h8R! (Rinck's position appears after the 10th move).

2nd commendation study no. 9361 B. Ilincić and B. Djurasević

In their comment, the authors nicely explained the solid content and a certain flaw of the initial position. In my opinion the quality of the content outweighs the initial position flaw. It was difficult to weigh this out and I am afraid that I might have been too strict in this case.

3rd - 5th commendation no. 9360 M. Pasman

3rd - 5th commendation no. 9356 P. Arestov and M. Hlinka

3rd - 5th commendation no. 9277 D. Gurgenzidze

These three studies have a certain quality and content, but without enough exciting moments.

The awards don't include studies that are reduced to simple endings with the necessary precise playing (No. 9274, 9433, 9431, 9354, 9432, 9278, 9435 and 9436). Study no. 9279 was largely anticipated by the studies of Dobrescu hhdB 36280 and Bondar hhdB 96190. Study no. 9281 is given in the form of twins, taking over the content of the other study of the author himself (co-author Kovalenko) from 2012 (hhdB 2355).

Note: I have accepted the author's solutions with the diagrams of the award-winning studies in their entirety, with the fact that it is necessary to correct the obvious mistake in writing the moves in study no. 9434 M. Pasman. Instead of 1...Kb1 we need 1...Nc2 (1...Kb1 2.Rb4-Ka2 3.Ra4+)=) therefore 4.Nd3+ becomes 2.Nd3+ therefore the main variant is shorter by 2 moves. (*Note from Phenix: the formulation of the solution has been modified, black moves 1 and 2 have become a variation*)

Judge: Mirko Miljanic, Serbia,
September 6th 2023