

## **Schach 2018-2019**

### Judgement report and award

Thanks to the **editorial staff of Schach** for choosing me as a judge. Special thanks to **Franz Pachi**.

#### **Statistics**

The **29** entries are the work of **18** authors of **11** countries. The studies included **8** joint compositions. The average level of the competition was high.

I see the authors' intention to go back to pre-computer times. The solver friendly studies give intellectual pleasure. This aspiration was partly successful on this tournament. Unfortunately some high quality works have been based on **EGTB**, in addition in the main line or in thematic try. This spoils the overall effect of the work.

I not gave place to any work in which:

1. The game is rough or violent
2. at the end of the thematic part unnecessary figures remain on the board
3. There are difficult sidelines

So I only preferred **clean elaboration**.

The complex structure give a well-known advantage to study, but not always. Subtle, topic-related discrepancies also inspire the solvers to think about study. And finally: I only like the **task** if the content explicitly problem-like. So my ranking is:

#### **Prizes**

##### **1.p Steffen Slumstrup Nielsen**

The initial position is natural. A fine and interesting introductory play leads to the key position. After 6.Rh1! the black figures cannot move because Nd7, g7, Nf7 + and g8Q and mate. This is the plan of white, that doesn't possible right away. Black's counterplay start with 6... e6, this move opens the b7-f7 line, but closes the b7-f7 diagonal. In the next move 7... e5 opens the b3-f7 diagonal, but closes c7-h2 diagonal. The rook try to prevent the Queen's check on b7 and b3 and the Bc7-f4-h6 defense. Finally, 8... e4 closes the diagonal h1-a8, therefore the returning of rook to h1 wins. There is no Qb7 check. Excellent construction, with very fine strategic content.

##### **2.p Martin Minski**

In the initial position the white king is in danger. It is easy to see that, white can't escape by perpetual check. A surprising and beautiful motif will help save the game. The queen's sacrifice gives a chance to draw, when the black king is in the first row. Then the castling gives a check, and the black rook will be lost. We need to see this motif to find the keymove. In the second move another question arises: where should be sacrifice the queen, on g6 or on h7? In the first case the king moves from check to f2 and gets too close to the pawn, and black wins. 2.Qg8!! leads to position draw, because the castling gives check when the king is on h1 black. "The study is a simple position with extraordinary content" (Richard Reti).

##### **3.p Árpád Ruzs**

The keyposition occurs after 5.Rxc3. First black, then white refuses the immediately capture of the rook. White's tempo sacrifice is really surprising. It is based on the white pawn on d3 obstructing the queen check on e4 and therefore white wins. Great, but not easy to see without EGTB. The introductory play is interesting, but there are few sidelines what not easy to analyze.

#### **4.p Günter Sonntag**

The short but fine introductory play game leads to two main lines. After 2... Qxb6, white save the game by a knight-promotion and after then a Phoenix. Unfortunately not easy to evaluate the 2K vs. Q position without EGTB. In the 2... Nd7 line black avoids the knight sacrifice, but the white defends all threat by knight promotion, and the position is draw. The relationship between the contents of the two main lines is given by the knight promotions.

### **Honourable mentions**

#### **1.hm Günter Sonntag**

Black try to stop dangerous passed pawns by mate threats. Black sacrifices first his bishop, this is followed the passive sacrifice of the rook. The the culmination of the study is the bishop promotion after the knight promotion. There the queen promotion leads to stalemate, and the other knight promotion is just draw. The game is enriched by two interesting practical versions: 1.Kg7? and 2... Kf5.

#### **2.hm Amatzia Avni**

White is trying to force stalemate position in the main line and in the sidelines also. Black's creative counterattack is even more interesting. First the Nd6-f7 threatens, and then the queen creates a battery on the diagonal a1-h8. Finally, the queen want make a battery on the eighth line. In the try (9.Qe6?) The queen returns to the a1-h8 diagonal efficiently. The good move is 9.Qc4! sacrifice, followed by 10.h6 and stalemate indefensible. I think, this study would be better if it were a "win" work, reversed colors.

#### **3.hm Lubos Kekely – Michal Hlinka**

Position draw with perpetual threat or with the material equalization. In the main line black is in zugzwang, but in thematic try white. Systematic movements enrich the game. The authors used minimal material. Too bad the a4B doesn't play at all.

#### **4.hm Siegfried Hornecker – Martin Minski**

White sacrifices three figures to force the black figures into the wrong place. After then surprising perpetual check is the end of game in the main version and in the sideline too. The movement of the white queen is really spectacular. The sideline variations clearly justify the need for sacrifices. The idea is from a practical game (Anand - Navara, 2019). All my appreciation is that the authors described it.

#### **5.hm Martin Minski**

Perpetual check or stalemate is the theme. The content is very rich, with logical try, and many echo positions. I couldn't solve it and had to use EGTB. Of course, I was remember of the opinion of Harold van der Heijden: "The study is an exhibition piece."

### **Commendations**

#### **1.c Pavel Arestov**

A two-phase study with nice motifs. In the first phase, in addition to the main version, there are several sidelines and a try, these remind me of practical play. The second phase is based on well-known motifs, but is enriched by thematic try and zugzwang positions. I think, the practical players will like this study.

**2.c Lubos Kekely**

The main line shows a positional draw with perpetual threat. Especially pleasing is the way the black rook is trapped. The introductory play prepares the thematic part nicely. White three times can't capture the rook, but stops the passed pawn, then is forced the knight to d8, and so the cage door will be closed.

**3.c Dennis Eschbach**

The end of the game is a stalemate position, but that is not the point, but the play that leads to here. We see nice figure sacrifices, especially 6...Bd4! and 10.Qxc6! super. The natural positions and practical-inspired motifs are not surprising, as the author is a strong FIDE master. I miss that the game only takes place in the main version.

**4.c Michal Hlinka – Mario Guido Garcia**

White eliminates two stalemate traps of black. The rook sacrifice of black (3... Ra6!) is nice, instead of queen promotion avoids the mate attack.

**5.c Martin Minski – Helmut Waelzel**

The theme is the race run of passed pawns and then ideal stalemate. The authors refer to a practical game, in which they were seen this stalemate picture (A. Alavkin - E. Sapunov, 2000). They added to the main theme several nice little side variations have been, but I don't feel these are very significant in terms of content.

Budapest-Zalaegerszeg, 3rd May 2020.

Peter Gyarmati  
judge