

Benko 90 JT

The provisional award

In the tournament invitation we wrote **Pal Benko** as judge. Unfortunately he had to hand over this role to someone else. Benko GM had temporary problems with his sight. Benko chose **Richard Becker** instead of himself.

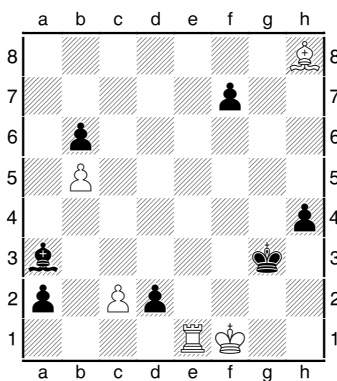
Richard Becker's judgment report and the award, that I published in the 6/2019 issue of **Magyar Sakkvilag**.

(**Peter Gyarmati**, tournament director)

"To my mind, **Pal Benko** straddled the chess world like a Colossus; one foot in the world of OTB chess and the other reaching to all the genres of chess composition. His endgame studies are at the highest level of our art. They are filled with novel and counter-intuitive ideas expressed with grandmasterly technique and a degree of economy that truly is pre-computer wizardry.

In judging the Pal Benko-90 JT, I tried to reward deep plans and surprise moves, good technique and economy, and anything with a thematic ring to it. From among the **65 studies** in anonymous form I received from Peter, I found eleven that satisfied. Upon further review, four studies fell out of competition due to serious duals. These seven remaining studies I recommend as the winners.

1st Prize Jan Timman

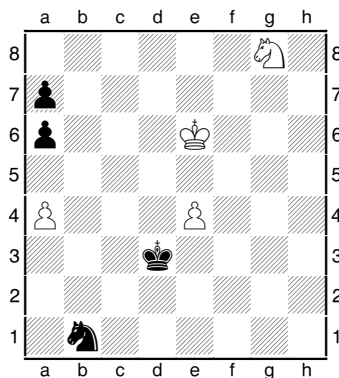


win

1.♞d1 [The reasonable looking 1.♞c3+? ♜g4 2.♞d3 fails to 2... 2...f6! 3.♞xf6 ♞c7 4.♞a1 ♞g5=] **1...♞c1 2.♜e2 h3** [2...♜g2 3.♞d4+-] **3.♞g1+** [Not 3.c4? ♜g2 4.c5 ♞a3! draw] **3...♜h2 4.♜f2** [4.♞f1? ♜g2=] **4...f6! 5.♞xf6 ♞b2 6.c3!!** [The logical try: 6.♞xb2 d1♞+! 7.♞xd1 a1♞! 8.♞h1+ ♜xh1 9.♞xa1 h2 10.♜g3 ♜g1 11.♞d4+ ♜h1 12.♞c5 bxc5 13.♜f2 c4 14.b6 c3 and stalemate can no longer be avoided] **6...♞xc3 7.♞xc3 d1♞+** [2nd main line: 7...a1♞ 8.♞xa1 (8.♞xa1? d1♞+! 9.♜f1 ♞e3+ 10.♜f2 ♞d1+=) 8...d1♞+ 9.♜f1 ♞xc3 10.♞a5!! zz 10...♞d5 11.♞a3 ♞c7 12.♞b3 ♞d5 13.♜f2 and wins] **8.♞xd1 a1♞ 9.♞h1+! ♜xh1** [9...♞xh1 10.♞c5#] **10.♞xa1 h2 11.♜g3 ♜g1 12.♞d4+ ♜h1 13.♞c5! bxc5 14.♜f2 c4 15.b6 c3 16.b7** and mates in three.

After a few natural and economical moves, Black signals his stalemate intentions with a pawn sacrifice. White answers with a very subtle reciprocal pawn sacrifice. The future sacrifices of both the white Rook and Bishop will not be enough to prevent stalemate; a pawn must go, too! The plan and counter plan with all their satisfying sacrifices and counter sacrifices are expertly arranged, but there is more! The composer has also furnished a second main line that thematically complements the first. When Black tries to dash all plans by reversing the order of pawn promotions, White reveals the surprising echo sacrifice **10.Ra5!**

2nd Prize Mario Micaloni-Árpád Rusz

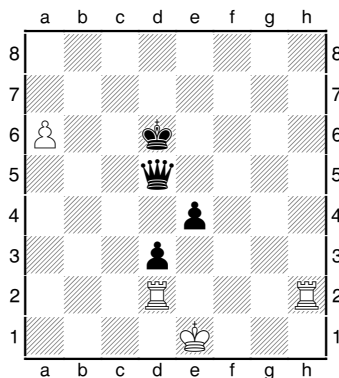


win

1.e5 ♖c3 [1...♗d2 2.♗d5] **2.♗f6!** [1st knight opposition.] [2.♗d7? ♗c4! (2...♗xa4? 3.♗c6+-) 3.♗c6 ♗g5=] **2...♗c4 3.♗d6 ♗e2 4.♗h5!** [2nd knight opposition.] [4.e6 ♗d4=] **4...♗d4 5.♗g7!** [3rd knight opposition.] **5...♗b4** [5...a5 6.e6 ♗xc6 7.♗xc6 ♗b4 8.♗c5+-] **6.♗d5 ♗e2 7.♗h5!** ♗c3+ **8.♗c6 ♗e2 9.♗d6 ♗d4** [9...a5 10.♗d5 ♗c3+ 11.♗c6 etc.] **10.♗g7!** [White has managed a first cycle to transfer the move to black.] **10...a5 11.♗d5 ♗e2** [11...♗b5 12.axb5 a4 13.e6 a3 14.e7 a2 15.e8♖ a1♗ 16.♖c7+! ♗xb5 17.♖b7+-] **12.♗h5 ♗c3+ 13.♗c6 ♗e2 14.♗d6 ♗d4 15.♗g7!** [White ends the second cycle] **15...a6** [15...♗b5+ 16.axb5 a4 17.♗f5 a3 18.♗d4 ♗c3 19.b6! a6 (19...a2 20.♗b5+ ♗d2 21.b7 a1♗ 22.b8♖+-) 20.b7 a2 21.♗b3!+-; 15...♗xa4 16.♗c5 ♗b3 17.♗xd4 a4 18.♗f5 a3 19.♗d3 a2 20.♗d4+ ♗b4 21.♗c2+ ♗c5 22.♗c4+-] **16.♗d5 ♗e2 17.♗h5 ♗c3+ 18.♗c6 ♗e2 19.♗d6 ♗d4 20.♗g7!** [The third cycle finishes. Black has no more tempo moves.] **20...♗xa4** [20...♗c4 21.e6 ♗xc6 22.♗xc6 ♗b4 23.♗c5+-] **21.♗c5 ♗b3+ 22.♗c4 ♗d2+ 23.♗d5** and wins.

The type of play demonstrated in this study, an extended triangulation maneuver, is sometimes referred to as "cyclic zugzwang", though, technically, there are no zugzwang positions in the study's solution. White loses a tempo repeatedly with a maneuver of five moves to Black's four. This is not an especially long cycle, but it is an attractive one with the white Knight twice imitating the moves of the black Knight to maintain diagonal opposition. The beginning play cleverly increases this Knight opposition effect to a third pair of squares.

1st Honourable mention Pavel Arestov - Alexander Zhukov



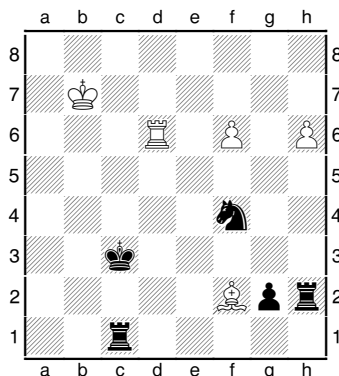
win

1.a7! [1.♖h6+? ♗c5 2.a7 e3 3.♖h5 exd2+ 4.♗xd2 ♖xh5 5.a8♖ ♖e2+ 6.♗c3 ♖c2# mate!] **1...♖b7** [1...♖a5 2.♖h6+ ♗d7 3.♖h7+ ♗e6 4.♗f1!=] **2.♖h7!** [2.♖h6+? ♗c5 3.♖a2 ♖b1+-] **2...♖xh7 3.♖xd3+!** [3.a8♖? ♖h1+ 4.♗f2 e3+-] **3...♗c7!** [3...cxd3 4.a8♖=] **4.♖d7+!** [Try: 4.a8♖? ♖h1+ 5.♗c2 exd3+-] **4...♗xd7 5.a8♖ ♖h1+ 6.♗e2** [6.♗f2? e3+-] **6...♖f3+ 7.♗e1** draws. [7.♗d2? e3+-]

The short solution is punctuated with white Rook sacrifices, the most interesting of which is 4.Rd7+! This sacrifice is termed "annihilation" because it removes the annihilated piece from the board without making any other changes. (The position of the black King is changed slightly, but the change is nearly irrelevant in this case.) The try 1.Rh6+?, ending in a neat mate, is a nice bonus.

2nd Honourable mention

Jan Timman



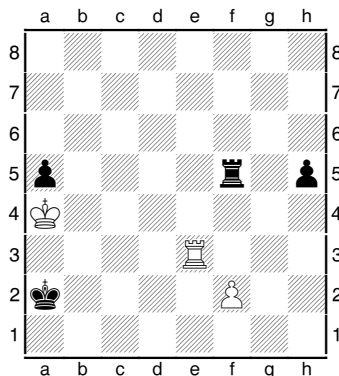
win

1.f7 g1♚! 2.♙xg1 ♖b2+ 3.♙c8! [3.♙b6 ♗c6=; 3.♙c7 ♖b5! (3...♖b3) 4.f8♗ ♙b2+=; 3.♙c6 ♙b4+ 4.♙d7 ♙a5!]=] **3...♙b4+** [3...♗c6 4.♖c6+ ♙d2 5.♙c3+! ♙xc3 6.♖xc1 ♙f4 7.♖e1 ♖c2+ 8.♙d7 ♗f8+ 9.♙c7 ♗h7 10.f8♗+ ♗xf8 11.♙xf8+-; 3...♙b3+ 4.♙d7+-] **4.♙b8!** [4.♙d7 ♙a5! 5.♖d5+ ♗xd5 6.f8♗ ♖b7+ 7.♙d6 ♖xg1=] **4...♙c4+ 5.♙b6 ♗g6** [5...♗c6 6.♖xc6 ♖f1 7.h7 ♖h2 8.♙f2!! ♖xf2 9.♖c2+-] **6.♖xg6 ♖f1 7.h7 ♖h2 8.♙f2!! ♖xf2 9.♖g2! ♖fxg2** [Main- 9...♖hxg2 10.h8♗ ♖xf7 11.♗h4+! ♙d5 12.♗h5+ ♙c6 13.♗h3+-] **10.f8♗ ♖b2+ 11.♙c8! ♖a2 12.♗g8+!** [12.♗f7+ ♙d3!]=] **12...♙c5** [12...♙d3 13.♙b8+- (13.♙b7+-)] **13.♖e6!** [zz] **13...♖a8+** [13...♙d4 14.♗xa2+-] **14.♙b7** wins.

This study has many good features, but it has no unifying theme. The style is best described as "multi-phase". In the first phase, at the cost of pawn and Knight, the pieces are brought into position for the startling sacrifices of the white Bishop and Rook. These sacrifices are the high point of the study, but they also introduce two thematic lines that are badly out of balance. One is simple, just a few checks, and the other has quiet moves and a difficult but interesting zugzwang.

1st Commendation

Árpád Rusz

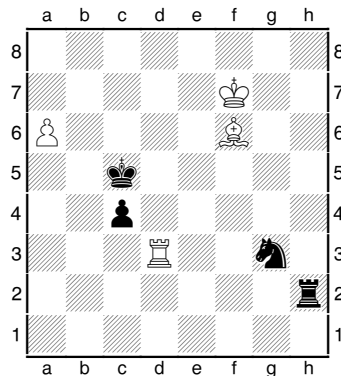


win

1.♖c3! [1.♖c4? ♙b1! 2.♙b3 (2.♖c4 ♙b2+- zz) 2...♖f3+ 3.♙a4 ♙c2 4.♙xa5 ♙d3 5.♖h4 ♖f5+ 6.♙b4 ♙c2 7.♙c3 ♙xf2 8.♙d3 ♙g3 9.♖h1 h4-+] **1...♙b2** [1...♙b1 2.♙b3 ♖xf2 3.♖h3=] **2.♖c4!** [zz] **2...♖g5** [2...♖xf2 3.♖h4 (or 3.♙xa5) 3...♖f5 4.♖xh5! ♖xh5 stalemate] **3.♖c6!** [zz] [3.♖c7 h4] **3...♖d5** [3...h4 4.♖h6 ♖g4+ 5.♙xa5 ♙c3 6.♙b6! ♙d4 7.♖f6 ♙c5 8.♖f3 ♙e4 9.♖h3=] **4.♖c8!** [zz] [4.♖c7? ♖e5! zz 5.♖c6 ♖g5! zz 6.♖c7 h4 7.♖h7 ♖g4+ 8.♙xa5 ♙c2 (8...♙c3) 9.♙b6 ♙d3 10.♙c7 ♙e4! The e4 square was clear! 11.♖f7 ♖f4 12.♖h7 ♙f3-+] **4...♖e5 5.♖c7!** [zz] **5...h4** [5...♖f5 6.♖c4 positional draw on 4 pairs of corresponding squares] **6.♖h7 ♖e4+ 7.♙xa5 ♙c3 8.♙b6! ♙d3 9.♙c7!** [The white King is hiding from lateral checks.] [9.♙c5? ♙c2 10.♖f7 ♖e5+ 11.♙d4 ♖h5-+] **9...♙e2** [The e4 square was blocked!] **10.♖f7 h3 11.♖h7** and the pawn cannot be defended, draws.

This Rook study has very interesting and subtle play. The dueling Rooks can reach four positions of zugzwang on four pairs of corresponding squares. This feat has been achieved before (Akobia-Becker, 4p, Tamkov MT 2008), but perhaps not with the same degree of subtlety.

2nd Commendation Martin Minski – Yochanan Afek

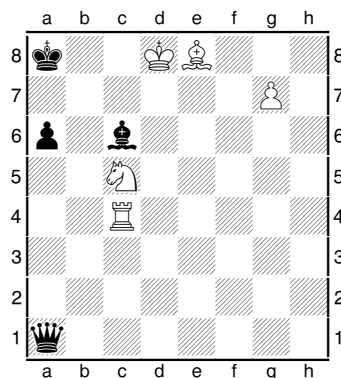


win

1.a7! [1.♖a3? ♖h7+ 2.♔g6 ♖a7=; 1.♖xg3? ♖a2=; 1.♔d4+? ♔d5 2.a7 cxd3 3.a8♖+ ♔xd4=] **1...♖a2** [1...♖h7+ 2.♔g7+-; 1...cxd3 2.a8♖+-] **2.♔d4+ ♔d5** [2...♔c6 3.♖xg3+-] **3.♖d2!** [3.♖d1? c3 4.♔xc3+ ♔c6 5.♔d4 ♖f5 6.♔g1 ♖d6+=] **3...♖xd2 4.♔b2!** [4.a8♖+? ♔xd4=] **4...♖f2+** [4...♖xb2 5.a8♖+ ♔d4 (5...♔c5 6.♖a3+ ♖b4 7.♖xg3+-) 6.♖h8+ skewer 6...♔d3 7.♖xb2 c3 8.♖b5+ ♔d2 9.♖g5+ ♔d1 10.♖d8+ (10.♖xg3? c2=) 10...♔c1 11.♔e6 c2 12.♔d5 ♖e2 13.♔c4+-] **5.♔e7** [5.♔g8? ♖xb2 6.a8♖+ ♔d4 /Ke5= no skewer] **5...♖f5+ 6.♔d7 ♖xb2 7.a8♖+ ♔d4** [7...♔c5 8.♖f8+ (8.♖a3+? ♖b4=) 8...♔b5 9.♖b8+ skewer 9...♔a4 10.♖xb2+-] **8.♖h8+ ♔d3 9.♖xb2 c3 10.♖b5+ ♔d2 11.♖a5** [11.♖b4? ♔d3 12.♖b5+ ♔d2 repeating; 11.♖xf5? c2=] **11...♔d4** [11...♔d3 12.♖xf5+-] **12.♔d6 ♔d1!** [12...♔d3 13.♔d5 (13.♖a6+? ♔d2 14.♖a5 ♔d3) 13...c2 14.♖a3+ ♔d2 15.♖b4+ ♔d1 16.♖xd4+-] **13.♖a1+** [13.♖xc3? ♖b5+=] **13...♔d2 14.♔d5 c2 15.♖xd4+ ♔c1 16.♔c4** wins.

This study is similar to the 2nd HM study. The beginning play shows the sparkling sacrifices of white Rook and Bishop, and this play introduces two thematic lines. Here the two lines are very much alike, diverging briefly near the end.

3rd Commendation David Gurgendize – Martin Minski



win, BTM

1...♖f6+ 2.♔c7 ♔d5 [2...♖xg7+ 3.♔xc6=] **3.g8♖!** [3.♖d7? ♖xg7+-] **3...♔xg8** [3...♖c5+ 4.♔b6 ♖b8+ 5.♔xa6=; 3...♖c7+ 4.♖d7 ♔xg8 5.♔f7! see mainline] **4.♖d7 ♖e7** [4...♖g7 5.♖c6 ♔a7 6.♔c8=] **5.♔f7!** [logical try: 5.♖b4? ♔d5! 6.♖b8+ ♔a7 7.♖b7+ ♔xb7 and no stalemate] **5...♔xf7 6.♖b4!** [mainline A:] **6...♔d5** [mainline B: 6...♖xb4 7.♖b6+ ♔a7 8.♖c8+ ♔a8 9.♖b6+ perpetual check] **7.♖b8+ ♔a7 8.♖b7+! ♔xb7** pin-model stalemate.

The known stalemate and perpetual check motif are combined with annihilation of the white Bishop in a clear and economical way.

Richard Becker
Oregon City
03.2019

*You can send your remarks (cooks, duals, anticipations) to the tournament director until 15th August 2019. The address is: slowpane@gmail.com