

I received 16 studies for evaluation from tournament director Daniel Capron.

I excluded two studies due to indirect predecessors:

Robinson (e.g. Matouš, Šachová skladba 2005, f2/f4),

Sprenger (e.g. Katsnelson 1. hm Hildebrand JT 1996, a1/e7).

After careful consideration, I selected eight studies and ranked them according to my personal preferences.

I apologize to the authors who were not recognized; I did not want to award more than 50% of the entries.

1st prize Ejlazjan

The best study of the tournament, a thrilling battle from start to finish. After 4.Kd7, it seems that White's battery will decide the game, but Black finds a counterplay. The study culminates in an unexpected manoeuvre (10.Qf5+ and 11.Qc2+), which forces the Black bishop back to e2, where White checkmates in a few moves.

2nd prize Hlinka+Arestov+Kekely

The stalemate with three pins, all pieces reach the final position during the game. I appreciate that the starting position looks almost natural.

In a practical game, however, White would have drawn even after the weaker 7.Nxh4, because according to EGTB, more than 125 moves without capturing are needed to win (see pgn). Fortunately, the 50-move rule does not apply in the study.

1st h.m. Hlinka + Kekely

White saves himself with one piece less thanks to an unexpected mutual zugzwang.

2nd h.m. Nielsen

A triple sacrifice on the d4 square in the author's style – twice Black defers check with a discovered check. The third sacrifice prevents double pin stalemate. A witty study suitable for yourself solving. It's a pity that the final mate position is prepared from the start.

Comm. García + Mikitovics

A very comprehensive ending in which Black only needs to sacrifice his knight for the last white pawn to achieve a draw. However, he fails to do so. White forces a knight ending with precise play and several unexpected moves – even this ending captivates with several beautiful moments. However, the study cannot be solved without a computer (e.g. Syzygy).

I took the liberty of deleting six moves from the introduction that were completely irrelevant to this study (otherwise I would not have awarded it). This is reminiscent of the famous study by the Sarychev brothers (Shakhmatnyj Listok 1928, d7/f3), which would have been completely overlooked without the deleted introduction.

Comm. Syzonenko

A nice miniature that will appeal to practical players. The consequences of the first move must be calculated precisely. Sacrifices of knight on both sides.

Comm. Ulrichsen

A nice fight between the bishop and two connected pawns. White saves himself with a somewhat unexpected manoeuvre. The bishop's switchback is repeated three times (the last time on the f1 square).

Comm. Samilo

A theoretically interesting draw RBxQPP. The key to solving the study is the paradoxical move 8.Kf2!! (the king does not come to the aid of his pieces). Black must force the move b4 to win, but White prevents this with a precise defence. It is not enough to cover the b4 square twice (9.Rf4?), but proving the win is very difficult.

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