

MAROC ECHECS - 2011
Studies AWARDS AN&YB
Award by Siegfried Hornecker (Heidenheim / Germany)
Tourney director : Youness Ben Jelloun (Fès / Maroc)

The formal tourney AN&YB was announced on the website Fès Echecs, held in two independently judged sections : Threemovers (judge Dejan Glišić) and studies (this award). In both sections the choice of theme was free. Closing date was 28.x.2010, I received the studies in anonymised form on 16.xi.2010 from tourney director Youness Ben Jelloun. The award was completed on 17.xii.2010.

There were 16 participating studies, of which the quality mostly has been surprisingly good. Study 16 is submitted "after Emilian Dobrescu", and the predecessor by Dobrescu was also included in the file I received.

I have extensively spoken about my judging criteria in earlier awards, especially Schach 2006-2007, so I will refer to there for an extensive analysis. Here I will give only a short explanation on my views.

First, I was always proposing that so-called EGTB studies are judged with the same criteria as other studies. There were heavy debates on whether studies with up to six pieces would still have a right to exist, after EGTB became publically available. Except for the mutual zugzwangs I do not know of any theme that really was published into a database or could easily be mined, although I heard that single underpromotions seem to be minable. And even then, EGTB can, as far as I know, only be used to mine for one position or one move and not for a sequence of moves. This means that for example studies with multiple underpromotions are not minable.

Second, I try to evaluate studies manually by their aesthetical value. This has some faults, of course, but I did not find any fully satisfying mathematical solution yet. There are some developments in this direction, and Professor Azlan Iqbal from Malaysia even develops a mathematical tool called "Chessthetica" for the automatical evaluation of orthodox problems. However, for chess studies there is to my knowledge always a human supervisor necessary to understand human aesthetical values.

I decided to apply the aesthetical theory by Friedgood & Levitt og their book "Secrets of Spectacular Chess" – where it is stated that a study should have flow, depth, geometry and paradox – as a guide for my own evaluation. In some cases, however, it will be necessary to give higher or lower awards than those justified by only following criteria. Yes, a database checkmate with over 500 moves is deep and often paradox. But even through the full fulfillment of those two values, enough for a prize in some cases, a pure database win that is not humanly understandable at all does not show me any aesthetical value at all. This introduces another important criterium : Clarity.

The theme of a study should be clear. There is also economy : A study should be created with the necessary economical means, but not more than this. While this view is quite young – it was only introduced less than 200 years ago – it still is one of the pillars on which modern chess composition is based on. Originality should be self-explaining, with the addition that an incorrect predecessor should in my opinion not count as a predecessor, although proper credit still must be given to the original composer. In such cases, the judge should judge the study and award it, but not award the new composer if his contribution is very small.

Another interesting topic, which however can not be evaluated in detail here, is the connection between studies and problems. I will just say that it helps to know about different kinds of problems to improve the evaluation of studies, since many aesthetical values can directly be applied, mostly those pointed out above.

After the preparation of the award it came to know that two studies by Alain Pallier have never reached the tourney director. It is verified that they were sent in time and therefore are included in the award under the numbers 17 and 18. Note that these could not be judged anonymously.

I will comment on each study, first on studies that did not get awarded. The comments of my chess friend, the first GDR solving master in 1988, Klaus Rubin, are partially included, but the final decision was made by me. Finally, as seen in the text, I'd like to thank Klaus Rubin (Berlin) for giving me his valuable opinions from the viewpoint of an experienced solver on the studies while I, as I think, looked more into the constructional side, being not a good solver of studies.

Iuri Akobia : (Ke1-Ke3) I don't see the point of this study. Yes, the play is correct, but what is the idea behind it ? Furthermore, 2.Sf5+ is forced because of the thread 2...Sc2+ 3.Kf1 Ra5.

Emil Melnichenko : (Kc4-Kc2) A nice checkmate is built, but the introduction deserves an improvement. Of course, there are numerous side variations. All in all, in a formal tourney the author should receive the chance to improve it.

González,L. M : (Kg8-Kg5) This study has a fine idea and a nice knight promotion, but it's technically improvable. In a formal tourney this would be awarded by me, but I feel it appropriate to give the author the possibility to improve the study. The main weaknesses are that few pieces move, the analyses are difficult and there are many captures. If the author manages to improve the study significantly, it has the possibility to earn a high award. As it is, however, it leaves an impression of a not yet completed study with some good ambitions.

Pallier,Alain : (Ke3-Kh2) Unfortunately the play lacks highlights and the idea to lure the queen away from the diagonal is not special. However, it is a good base for an improvement.

Poisson,Christian : (Kb2-Kh2) Maybe I missed something but for me this is not interesting. The whole point of the study is to get the white king in front of the black pawn. Why 3.Qc4 Bd5 4.Qh4+ Kg6 5.Qf4 would be no dual is beyond human imagination. Of course, the judge has an obligation to test studies for correctness and the study is correct according to the tablebases, but I think he also should be able to understand the study. This is not the case at this study. Because I can't understand the study – neither the play nor the final position –, I also can't award it. To me it looks more like a theoretical endgame than a study.

Chandesris Ludovic : (Kc1-Kd5) Dual : 14.Sb2 also wins, for example 14...Kh4 15.Sc4 and the white pawn promotes. Probably the study was aimed at good flow, and it would have this if it were correct. However, even then there are many captures and the diagram has a promoted bishop since b2 and d2 are blocked by white pawns.

Campioli,Marco : (Ke1-Ke4) A kegelproblem study without particular highlights. But at least it has a downlight : 5...d2+ 6.Kd1 f2 7.Sg5+ Kd3 8.Bb5+ Kc3 9.Sxd5+ Kb2 10.Bf1 Ka3 !! 11.Sf3 d3 ! 12.Sxd2 e2+ (with most easily 13.Bxe2 dxe2+ 14.Kxe2 f3+ and 15...f4) draws because all pawns are over the Troitzky line.

Mikitovics,Janos : (Kd8-Kb7) I am far from convinced that 1.Rxa2 Qf6+ 2.Ke8 Qe6+ 3.Kf8 is won for black. The author should have included a proof. White simply threatens to reach a drawn position by sacrificing rook and bishop for the black pawn. Master solver Klaus Rubin and I agree that the position should be a draw.

Alain Pallier : Another play on the famous Réti endgame. While not a bad construction, I see nothing exceptional about the study. It should be published, but can't be awarded here. Note that this study was not judged anonymously.

Participants :

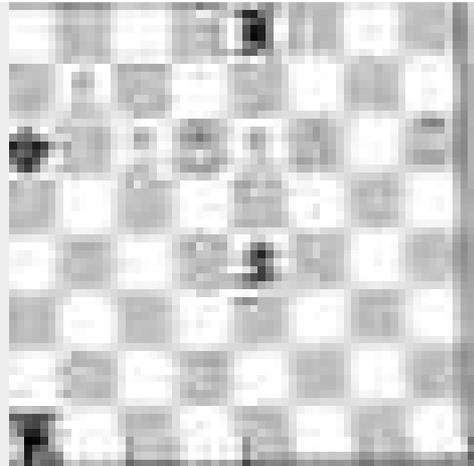
Iuri AKOBIA Georgy , János MIKITOVICS , Hungary, Gerhard JOSTEN , Germany, Emil MELNICHENKO Ukraine , Luis Miguel GONZALES Espagne , Alain PALLIER France, Christian POISSON, France, Ludovic CHANDESRIIS France , Marco CAMPIOLI, Italy and Richard BECKER, USA.

Richard Becker (USA)

Tournoi AN & YB

Maroc-Echecs 2011

Prize



Draw

The position, while having an unusual material balance. The while not fully natural by the material, looks very natural. The position after the fourth move has a certain geometrical charme and of course, the play might not be overly deep but it has great flow and geometry mixed with paradox and humor. The initial position would not let you think that the white pawns, on their way to queening, actually would be knighting. There also is a hidden symmetry in that the pawn who made the first move actually makes the last one. Yes, three knight promotions can be shown more economical, but the overall impression including all factors still makes this an outstanding study if only for the synthesis of a nice construction, good flow, nice position after the fourth move and the good humor it shows. Klaus Rubin calls this an “effectful fireworks”, being as impressed as I am.

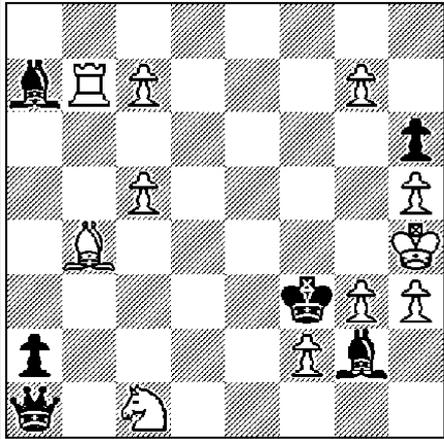
1.f7 Txe6+ [1...Th1+ 2.Rg5 ! (2.Rg7 ? Tg1+ 3.Rf6 Tg6+ 4.Re5 Tgxe6+ →) 2...Tg1+ 3.Rf4 Txe6 4.b8D Tf1+ 5.Re3 Fg6+ 6.Rd2 ! (6.Rd4 ? Td1+ 7.Rc4 Te4+ 8.Rc3 (8.Rc5 Te5+ 9.Rc4 Fxf7+ →) 8...Te3+ 9.Rc4 Fxf7+ →) 6...Tf2+ 7.Rc3 Te3+ (7...Tf3+ 8.Rc4 (Kd4) 8...Te4+ 9.Rd5 Td3+ 10.Rc5 Tc3+ 11.Rd5 = ; 7...Tc2+ 8.Rd4 Te4+ 9.Rd5 Td2+ 10.Rc5 Te5+ 11.Rc4 Tc2+ 12.Rd4 Te4+ 13.Rd5 Td2+ 14.Rc5 Te5+ 15.Rc4 Fxf7+ 16.Rc3 =) 8.Rd4 Td3+ 9.Re5 Tf5+ 10.Re6 Te3+ 11.Rd7 Txf7+ 12.Rd8 Tf8+ (12...Te8+ 13.Rxe8 Tb7+ 14.Rd8 Txb8+ 15.Rc7 =) 13.Rc7 Txb8 14.Rxb8 Rb6 15.d7 =] 2.Rg7 [2.Rg5 ? Tf1 (Rg1+) →] 2...Tg1+ 3.Rf8 Th1 [3...Th6 4.b8D Th8+ 5.Re7 Txb8 6.c7 =] 4.d7 [4.b8D ? Th8+ 5.Rg7 Txb8 →] 4...Bxc6 [4...Th8+ 5.Rg7 Th7+ 6.Rg8 =] 5.b8C+ ! [5.Rg7 ? Tg1+ 6.Rf8 Th6 7.d8D Th8+ 8.Re7 Te1+ →] 5...Rb5 6.Cxc6 Rxc6 7.d8C+ ! Rd7 8.Cxe6 Rxe6 9.Re8 Ta1 10.f8C+ ! Draw

Alain PALLIER (France)

Tournoi AN & YB

Maroc Echecs 2011

Mention d'Honneur spéciale



Win

19 – Special honorable mention : There are of course many predecessors with similar motifs and for this reason I don't think this study can directly compete with other studies. The economical setup – after the bad introduction play – with the thematic try of 5.g8S deserve a high ranking. However, in view of many similar studies as well as the motionless Bg2 a prize can't be awarded. Since I think it deserves more than a commendation I hope to have found the "golden middle" by awarding a special honorable mention. Note that this distinction was not awarded anonymously.

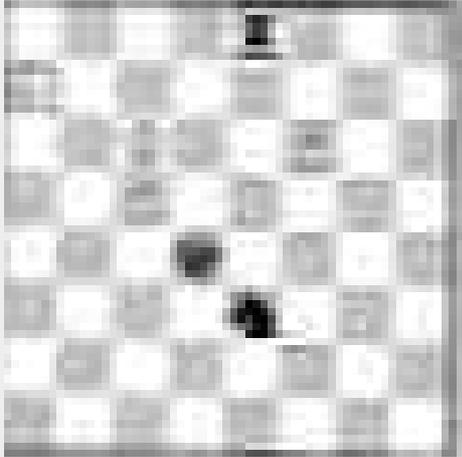
1. Bc3 Qxc3 2.Rb3 Qxb3 3.Sxb3 a1Q 4.Sxa1 Bxc5 5.c8S Bd4 6.g8S Bxa1 7.Sd6 Bd4 8.Sf7 Bxf2 9. Se5
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Janos Mikitovics (Hungary)

Tournoi AN & YB , 2010

Maroc-Echecs 2011

1st honorable mention



Draw

Nice building of a mid-board stalemate. Unfortunately the final stalemate is known by M. Halski, Canadian Chess Chat 1982 (hhdbiv 50312). Klaus Rubin adds that 10.Sd5 !! is a phantastic point.

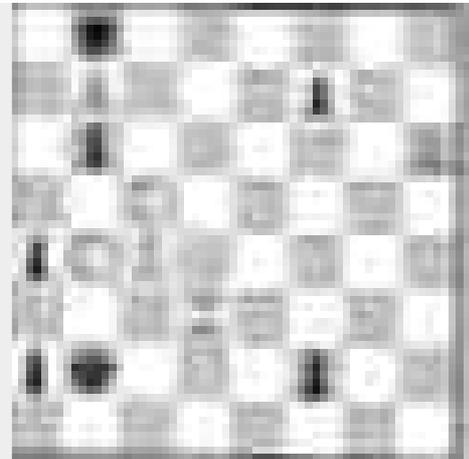
1.Cb5+ [1.Rd7 ? Tf8 2.Cb5+ Rc4 !! a) 2...Rxc5 ? 3.Cd6 Cd5 4.f7 Cf4 5.Ce4+ ! Rd4 6.Re7 Ta8 7.Cg5 Re5 8.Cf3+ Rd5 (8...Re4 9.Cg5+ Re5 10.Cf3+ perpetual check) 9.Ch4 ! Ce6 10.Cg6 Ta7+ 11.Rf6 Ta8 12.Re7 Ta7+ 13.Rf6 positional draw ; b) 2...Re5 ? 3.c6 Rxf6 4.c7= ; 3.Re7 Ta8 !! (3...Th8 ? 4.Cc7 Cf5+ 5.Re6 Ch6 6.Rd6 Cg4 (6...Td8+ 7.Re7 Td1 8.c6 ! Rc5 9.f7 Te1+ 10.Ce6+=) 7.Re6 Th6 8.Ce8 Rxc5 9.Rf5 !! Ce3+ 10.Rg5 Th7 11.Rg6 Th1 12.f7 Tf1 13.Cf6=) 4.Cc7 Ta7 Pin 5.Rd8 (5.Rd6 Cf5+ 6.Rc6 (Kd7) 6...Ch6→) 5...Cd5 6.f7 Cxc7 7.f8D Ce6→→ ; 1.f7 ? Tf8→ (1...Td8 ? 2.Cb5+ Re5 3.Rb7 !! Re6 4.c6=)] 1...Re5 2.Rd7 ! [2.f7 ? Tf8→ (2...Td8 ? 3.Rb7 ! Re6 4.c6=)] 2...Tf8 3.c6 Cd5 4.c7 ! Cb6+ 5.Rc6 Cc8 6.Rd7 Cb6+ 7.Rc6 Cc8 8.Rd7 positional draw, or 8...Rxf6 9.Cc3 ! Re5 [9...Tg8 (Kf5) 10.Cd5+ Re5 11.Ce7=] 10.Cd5 !! Rxd5 stalemate.

Marco Campioli (Italy)

Tourney AN & YB , 2010

Maroc-Echecs

2nd honorable mention



Draw

The study has a nice flow, but black's play is too forced and there is no real surprise in the study. The ending luckily is humanly understandable. This would probably make a nice study for solving. It is still quite a bit away from a prize, for example it would need a good ending. After my first impression I wanted to award a commendation here but a re-evaluation of the flow in connection with the construction that has no useless pieces made it possible to give this much higher ranking instead.

1...b5+ 2.Rxb5 f1D 3.Fg7+ f6 4.Fxf6+ Dxf6 5.Cxa4+ Rc1 6.Cxa2+ Rb1 7.C2c3+ Rc2 8.Td2+ Rc1 9.Td1+ Rc2 10.Td2+ Rxd2 11.Ce4+ Re3 12.Cxf6 Dxb7+ 13.Cb6 Rd4 14.Cfd7 Dc7 15.Ra6 Dc6 16.Cb8 Dc7 17.C8d7 Draw.

Iuri AKOBIA & János MIKITOVICS

Tourney AN & YB , 2010

Maroc-Echecs

3rd honorable mention



Draw

06 – 3rd honorable mention : Good synthesis of two well known motifs. The introduction features two thematic tries that however were difficult to see for your judge. Note that this distinction was not awarded anonymously.

1. Bc3+ (1. Bd5 Kd2 (1... Kf2 2. Bd4) 2. Nc4+ Kd3 (2... Kd1 3. Bc3) 3. Ne5+ Kc2 (3... Ke3 4. Nc4+) 4. Be4+ Kb3 5. Bd5+ Ka3 (5... Ka4 6. Bc3 Rg5 7. Nd7) (5... Kb4 6. Nd3+) 6. Bc3 Rg5 7. Nc4+ (7. Kc6 Rxe5) 7... Kb3) (1. Bd4 Kd2 2. Nc4+ Kd3) (1. Nd5 Kf2 (1... Kd2 2. Bc3+))

1... Kf2 2. Nc2 (Thematic try 2. Nf5 Rc1 (2... Rb1 3. Nd4 main line))

2... Rb1 3. Nd4 Nf3 4. Ka6

(Thematic try 4. Ka7 Ra1+ (4... Nxd4 5. Bxd4+ Kg3 6. Be5+ main line))

4... Nxd4 (4... Ra1+ 5. Kb5 (5. Kb6 Ra3)) (4... Rc1 5. Nxe2 (5. Nc2 Rxc2 6. Bxc2 Ke3 7. Bb4 Nd2 8. Bc5+ Kf3 9. Be4+ Kg3)) (4... Ke3 5. Bc4 (5. Nc2+ Kd3 6. Bd5 Nd2)) 5. Bxd4+ Kg3 (5... Kf1 6. Bc4) 6. Be5+ Kh4 7. Bf6+ Kg3 (7... Kh5 8. Bf7+) 8. Be5+ Kf3 (8... Kg4 9. Be6+ Kf3 10. Bd5+ main line) 9. Bd5+ Ke3 (9... Kf2 10. Bd4+ (10. Bf6 Ra1+ 11. Kb6 Ra3) 10... Kf1 11. Bc4) 10. Bg3 (10. Bc3 Rc1)

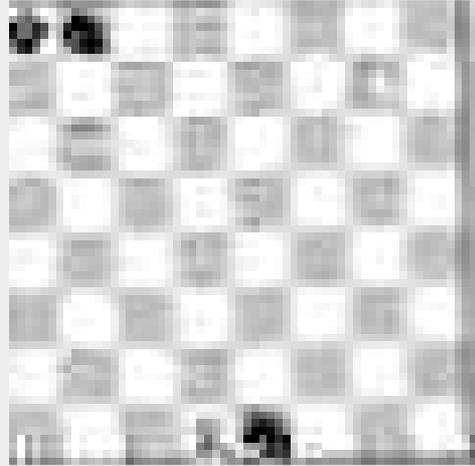
10...Rg1 11. Bh4 Rg4 12. Be1 Rg1 13. Bh4 positional draw.

Poisson,Christian (France)

Tournoi AN & YB

Maroc Echecs 2011

1st commendation



Win

Surprisingly the zugzwang to win the first black knight is original. The commendation, however, would not have been given without the final fork. Of course, after 12...Sg6 the knight survives a few more moves but it is humanly understandable that it also would be captured because it lacks space to flee. My helper Klaus Rubin calls this study impressive and interesting.

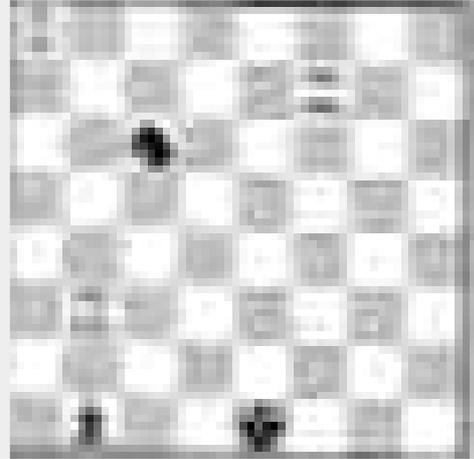
1.Fg4 Cd3 [1...Cc6 2.Rxc6 Cg2 (2...Cd3 3.Ff5 Ce5+ 4.Rc7 Ra7 5.Fc8 Cc4 6.Cf5 Cb6 7.Fb7 Ca8+ 8.Rc6+-) 3.Cf5 Cf4 4.Ce7 Ra7 5.Fc8 Cd3 6.Cg6 Cb4+ 7.Rc5 Ca6+ 8.Rb5 Cc7+ 9.Rc6+-] 2.Ce8 Cc6 3.Cc7+ Rb8 4.Ca6+ Ra8 5.Ff3 Cde5 6.Fd5 Cd7+ 7.Rxc6 Ra7 8.Cb4 Cb8+ 9.Rb5 Cd7 [9...Ca6 10.Cc6+-] 10.Fe6 Ce5 11.Rc5 Rb7 12.Rd6 Cf3 13.Fd5+ 1-0

Poisson,Christian (France)

Tourney AN & YB

Maroc-Echecs 2011

2nd commendation



Win

Triple switchback. Personally I don't like this kind of studies in the style of Henri Rinck's analyses. However, the play is fine and the geometry is okay. My helper Klaus Rubin doesn't like the study at all since, as he says, the key is bad, the rook permanently flee, the switchbacks are unavoidable and the study has an open end.

1...Fa2 2.Te3+ Rd2 3.Tff3 Fd5 4.Td3+ Re2 5.Tfe3+ Rf2 6.Tc3 Cd4+ [6...Fg2 7.Te8 Cd4+ 8.Rb8+-] 7.Rb8 Cb5 8.Tcd3 Fc4 9.Tf3+ Re2 10.Tde3+ Win.

Due to the changes that had to be made the award will be open for full three months after the publication of this revision.

**Heidenheim, 2011
Siegfried Hornecker**