

British Endgame Study News

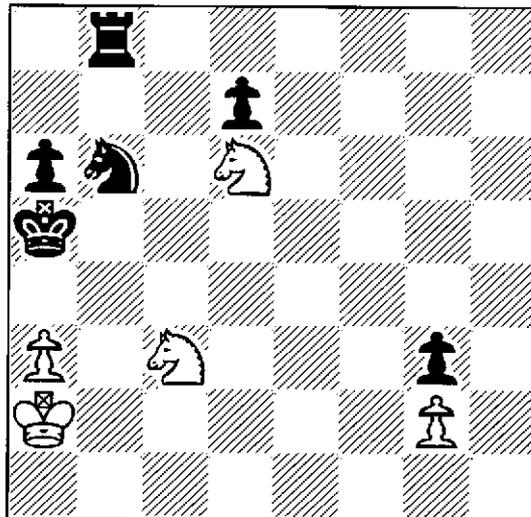
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Fifty Years Ago : The BCF Study Tourney of 1945-6

by Alain Pallier



White clinches the win by 9 Ka1!

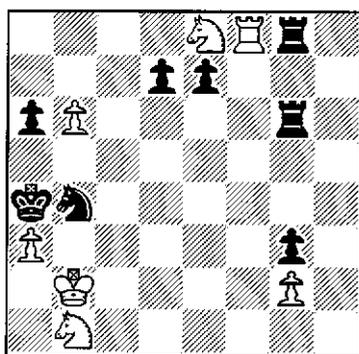
The BCF Study Tourney of 1945-6

England was unquestionably the most active country in the organization of tourneys in the pre-1930 period. When the BCF held its 52nd composition tourney, for studies with White to play and win, she also became the first to organize a formal study tourney after the Second World War. (Informal tourneys, particularly in Scandinavia and in the USSR, were already in progress.) The closing date was 28 February 1946.

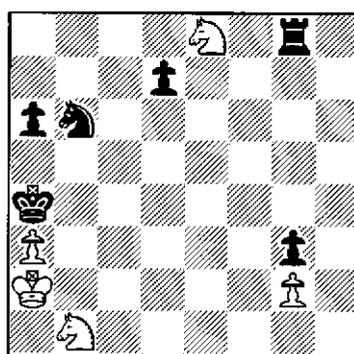
In his award, dated July 1946, the judge, T. R. Dawson substituting for M. W. Paris, says, "I noticed a strong trend in the most interesting positions to decidedly "unnatural" situations, a feature no doubt inevitable in representing such complex lines of winning." He doesn't say how many composers took part nor how many entries he received, but 24 were published, including ten unhonoured studies each of which "well deserves publication". There are no details of the eliminated studies.

There were two curious features in this tourney. The first would pass unnoticed fifty years later: a Soviet composer, A. P. Gulyaev, won first prize. Why is this so remarkable? Just this: you will find *no other study tourney* in a Western country in the ten years that followed the Second World War with a Soviet entry! When they resumed chess activity, Soviet composers entered their work in Soviet tourneys or in tourneys in the newly-created communist bloc. The beginning of the Cold War and the last years of Stalin's reign increased the isolation of the USSR, and no significant change was perceptible until 1955, when Soviet composers came back on the Western scene. To take just one example, Kasparyan published nothing in the West between his *BCM* studies of 1938 and 1955 (numbers 46 and 116 in his 1988 collection). How was Gulyaev told of this tourney, why was he the only one to participate? Probably only he himself can say.

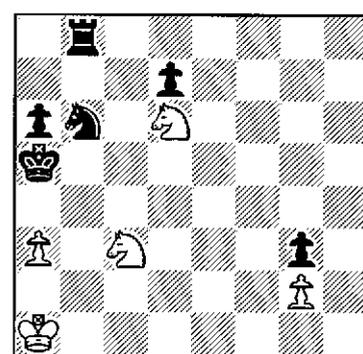
Gulyaev's entry appears as 1. Dawson said that he enjoyed the Black counterplay and the surprising finale.



1 - win



1a - after 6...Nxb6



1b - after 9 Ka1

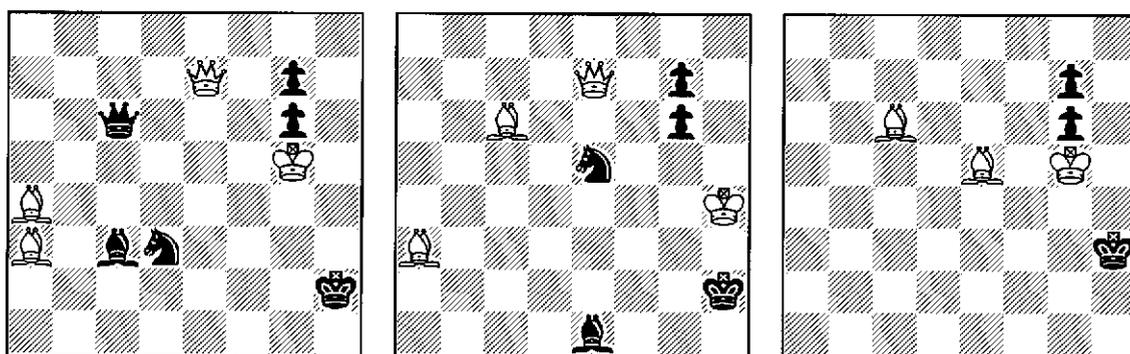
One sees immediately that 1 Rf5 (threat 2 Nc3 mate) is met by 1...d5, hence 1 b7! to force 1...Nc6. Now 2 Rf5! e5, and it is clear that bN is overloaded. There follows a forced tactical combination: 3 Rxe5! Nxe5 4 b8Q Rb6+ 5 Qxb6 Nc4+ 6 Ka2 Nxb6 (see 1a). Well, is White really better? 7 Nc3+ Ka5 8 Nd6! Yes! It is a great pity for Black that his knight prevents his king from fleeing from his prison. 8...Rb8 9 Ka1!

(see **1b**). The squeeze is fatal, and mate is delivered on b7 or c4.

For an autobiographical note about this veteran, now better known as A. P. Grin (born in 1908 and still active), see *The Problemist*, November 1993, p 247, or T. G. Whitworth's book *A. P. Gulyaev - A. P. Grin, Chess Endgame Studies 1926-1991* (ARVES, 1991), a rich collection with 88 diagrammed studies.

The second remarkable feature is not easy to explain: Rinck, then in his seventies, entered two studies that he had already published in 1928 and 1929! How could a man normally so meticulous have done this? He was originally awarded second prize *ex aequo* for both studies (equal with Halberstadt). A supplementary note, dated July 1947, reported the disqualification of the first (no. 70 in the tourney, *Basler Nachrichten*, 16 June 1928, no. 1958); the truth about the second (no. 71 in the tourney, *L'Echiquier*, July 1929) only surfaced later. I do not quote these studies here.

V. Halberstadt (1903-67), the most "British" of French composers, won second prize with a fine study typical of his style. Once you have spotted the "taboo" theme, solving is easy, at least I hope so:



2 - win

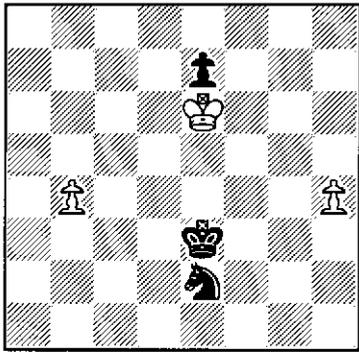
2a - 2 Bxc6, after 3...Be1+

2b - 2 Qxe5+, after 4 Bxc6

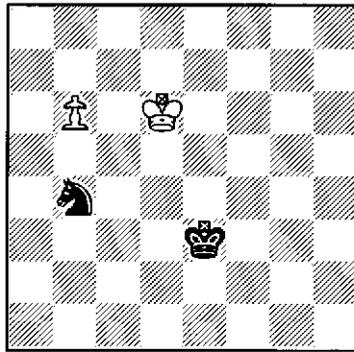
We must avoid precipitate action. 1 Bxc6? Bf6+ and Black draws. Hence **1 Bd6+**, and now Black has a brilliant answer: **1...Ne5!!** (the two exclamation marks are by Halberstadt himself in his 1954 collection). Why? 2 Bxc6? is still premature in view of 2...Bd2+! 3 Kh4 Be1+ with perpetual check (see **2a**), and 2 Qxe5+? leads to stalemate: 2...Bxe5 3 Bxe5+ Kh3 4 Bxc6 (see **2b**). White must play **2 Bxe5+** and after **2...Bxe5**, **3 Qxe5+** since for the third time Bxc6? fails. But after **3...Kh3** we again have stalemate if White captures on c6. Hence **4 Qe3+! Kh2 5 Qf4+ Kg1! 6 Qd4+!** and at last the queen can be captured. Those who have enjoyed this will enjoy Halberstadt's other studies on this theme: 2068, 2074, and 2477 in Kasparian's anthology *2500 finales*, and 49, 54, and 69 in Halberstadt's 1954 collection *Curiosités tactiques des finales* if they are among the fortunate few who own this book.

(Having written this, I showed it to Harold van der Heijden, who pointed out that 1 Bxc6 does win because White gets 2B v N: yet another classic has become invalid because the computer has changed the theory. But one can drop the first move.)

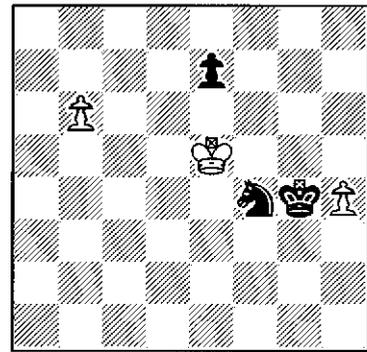
E. E. Zepler (1898-1980), who rarely composed studies but whose few studies were always good, was the first English composer (although German-born) to appear in the award. **3** (overleaf) took 1st honourable mention. I quote Dawson's comments in full: "Here we have the only really new idea, and it is in play that never occurs in



3 - win



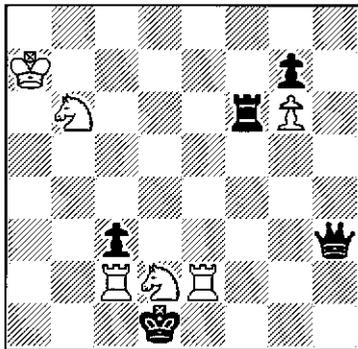
3a - 1 h5, after 5...Nb4



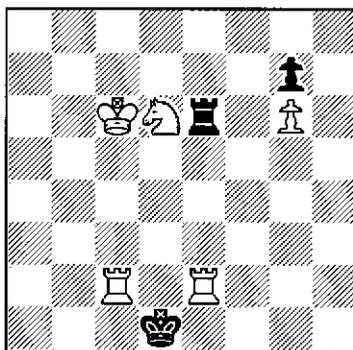
3b - main line, 3...Kg4

the solution - I refer to the two symmetrical tries by 1 b5 and 1 h5 with **asymmetric defences**. To the best of my belief, with a collection of 1,500 asymmetric problems and endings as evidence, this is the first time this highly sophisticated feature has appeared in chess, and it is reasonable to suppose that the "composer" of this miniature discovered it by accident instead of being in the position that he set out to show it. Not that such accident detracts from the pleasure of the result."

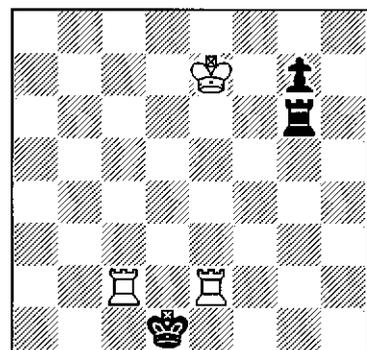
Symmetry is maintained by **1 Ke5!** Neither 1 b5? Nd4+ 2 Kxe7 Kf4 3 b6 Nc6+ not 1 h5? Nf4+ 2 Kxe7 Nxe5! 3 b5 Nf4 4 Kd6 Nd3! 5 b6 Nb4 (see 3a) suffices for the win. Now the best is **1...Nf4** (1...Nd4 2 h5 Nc6+ 3 Ke6 Ke4 4 h6 and White wins) **2 b5 Kf3** (2...Ng6+ 3 Ke6 Ke4 4 b6 Nf4+ 5 Kf7) **3 b6 Kg4** (see 3b) and a little finesse is now necessary: **4 h5!** and White wins, but 4 b7? only leads to a draw since the pawn is caught after 4...Nd3+ and either 5 Ke4 Nc5+ or 5 Kd4 Nb4.



4 - win

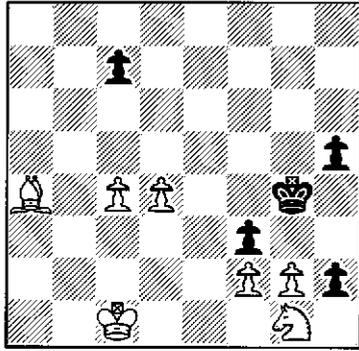


4a - after 27 Nd6

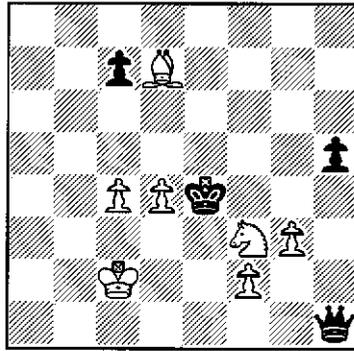


4b - after 39 Ke7

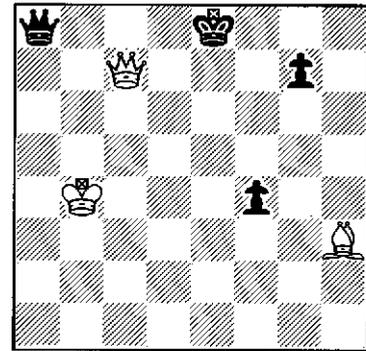
The Swiss veteran from Basel, Moritz Henneberger (1878-1959, not to be confused with the player Walter Henneberger) was the great expert in desperado rooks. His 2nd HM 4 was one of three such studies which he entered. This was rewarded for its "very remarkable White K journey, as brilliant as any I have seen in the 250 examples I know about". Main line only: **1 Ne4 Qd7+!** **2 Nxd7 Ra6+** (all aboard, now the journey begins) **3 Kb7 Rb6+** **4 Kc7 Rc6+** **5 Kd8 Rc8+** **6 Ke7 Re8+** **7 Kd6 Re6+** **8 Kc5 Rc6+** **9 Kb4 Rc4+** **10 Kb3 Rb4+** **11 Kxc3 Rc4+** **12 Kd3 Rd4+** **13 Ke3 Rd3+** **14 Kf4 Rf3+** **15 Ke5 Rf5+** **16 Kd6 Rd5+** **17 Kc7 Rxd7+** **18 Kb6 Rb7+** **19 Kc5 Rb5+** **20 Kd4 Rd5+** **21 Ke3 Rd3+** **22 Kf4 Rf3+** **23 Ke5 Rf5+** **24 Ke6 Re5+** **25 Kd7 Re7+** **26 Kc6 Re6+** **27 Nd6!** (see 4a) **Rxd6+** **28 Kb5 Rb6+** **29 Kc5 Rb5+** **30 Kd4**



5 - win



5a - after 4 Kc2



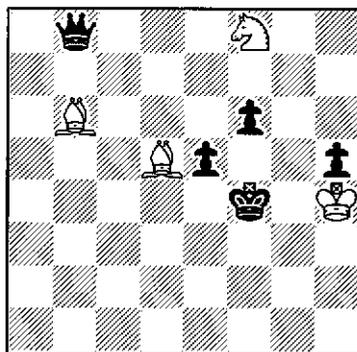
6 - win

Rd5+ 31 Ke3 Rd3+ 32 Kf2 Rf3+ 33 Kg1 Rf1+ 34 Kg2 Rg1+ 35 Kf3 Rg3+ 36 Ke4 Rg4+ 37 Ke5 Rg5+ 38 Ke6 Rxc6+ 39 Ke7 (see 4b) and at last there is no stalemate. Let us hope that Henneberger supplied analysis proving that there is no dual.

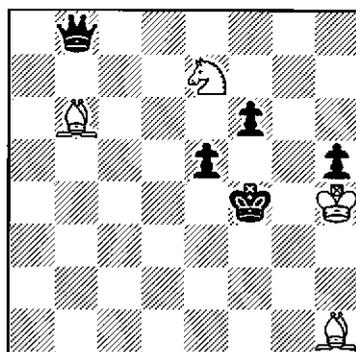
The next two studies are quite simple. Both show domination, and seem to have been inspired by Rinck. José Mandil Pujado (1907-79), from Barcelona, collaborated with Rinck in the production of his monumental *1414 fins de partie*.

5 (3rd/4th HM, J. Mandil). **1 Nxf3? h1Q+** and material advantage is decisive for Black, therefore **1 Bd7+ Kf4 2 g3+! Ke4 3 Nxf3! h1Q+** **4 Kc2** (see 5a - domination of Q by B+N, a Mandil speciality) **Qa1 5 Nd2+ Kxd4 6 Nb3+**.

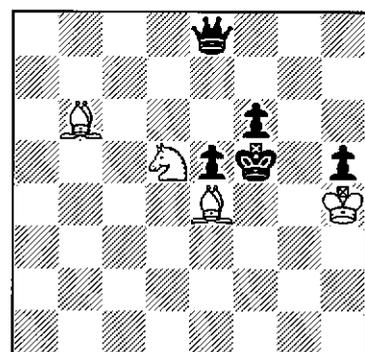
S. Isenegger (1899-1964), also from Basel, entered three studies. Isenegger was a prolific composer, mainly of miniatures, but his work is little known. Dawson found **6** "both natural and exquisitely elegant": **1 Bd7+ Kf8 2 Bc6 Qa1!** (2...Qa6 3 Qd6+ followed by a check by the White bishop). Now the queen on a1 is a good target for a skewer: **3 Qd8 Kf7 4 Be8+ Ke6 5 Qd7+ Kf6! 6 Qf7+ Kg5 7 Qh5+** (now the king must go back) **Kf6 8 Qg6+ Ke7 9 Qf7+ Kd6 10 Qd7+ Ke5 11 Qxg7+**.



7 - win



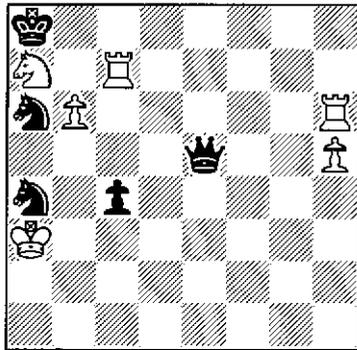
7a - after 3 Bh1



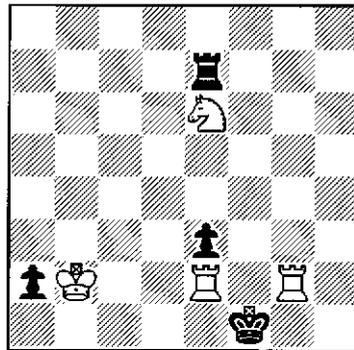
7b - after 5 Be4+

A fifth HM, by the New York composer P. B. van Dalfsen, was demolished, which brings us to the commendations. **7** (J. Mandil) is another domination study. **1 Ng6+ Kf5 2 Ne7+ Kf4 3 Bh1!** with a squeeze (see 7a): **3...Qxb6** is answered by the fork on d5, **3...Qd6** by **4 Bd3+!** and another fork, and a third fork on g6 is the punishment for **3...Qf8** and **3...Qh8**. **3...e4** seems to be the solution to Black's problems, but **4 Bc7+!** is crushing. And **3...Qe8** is no better: **4 Nd5+ Kf5 5 Be4+!** (see 7b) **Kex4 6 Nxf6+** and White wins. One has to admire the thematic unity of this study.

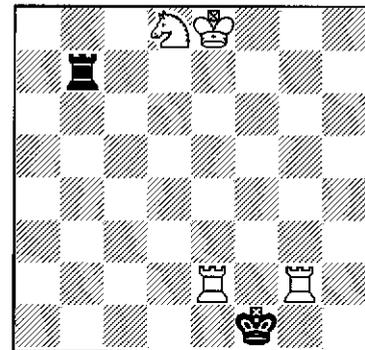
Apart from Zepler, the only British composer in the award was A. W. Daniel. A dual led to the elimination of one of his commended studies, but he was more fortunate with 8. 1 b7+ Kxa7 2 Rxa6+ Kxa6 3 b8N+! (Daniel was the only composer in the tourney to use underpromotion) Kb6 4 Nd7+ Kxc7 5 Nxe5 (now follows the second part of this very simple "ultra-modern" study) Nc3 6 h6 Nb5+ 7 Kb4 Nd6 8 h7 and White wins. Arthur William Daniel (1878-1955) became president of the BCPS in the same year (1945). With 1750 problems to his credit, he was a prolific composer.



8 - win



9 - win



9a - after 23 Ke8

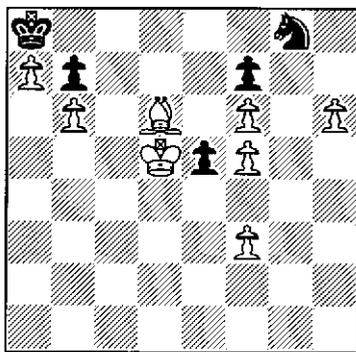
9 (M. Henneberger) was also commended. Did you like 4? Yes? You'll enjoy this one. In the Lamare collection, I have found 48 win or draw studies with a desperado rook composed by Henneberger. Some studies are not in the collection, and Harold van der Heijden has added about ten more from the period before the Second World War. The Lamare collection stops at 1937 and Henneberger composed at least a dozen such studies subsequently, so the total amounts to 70 at least. It is always difficult for the layman to appreciate such highly specialized compositions: what is really new when most features seem identical? There is a similar problem today with the work of J. Vandiest: his Q+N v Q and Q+B v Q studies seem highly repetitive, which is probably why so many judges give his compositions "special" distinctions ...

The solution of 9 runs as follows: 1 Nd8! The White king will need a shelter. Checks begin after 1...Rh7 2 Kxa2 Ra7+, and now, as Dawson remarks, the White king goes on tour: 3 Kb1 Ra1+ 4 Kc2 Rc1+ 5 Kd3 Rc3+ 6 Ke4 Rc4+ 7 Kxe3 Rc3+ 8 Ke4 Rc4+ 9 Ke5 Rc5+ 10 Kf6 Rf5+ 11 Ke6 Rf6+ 12 Kd5 Rd6+ 13 Kc4 Rd4+ 14 Kb3 Rb4+ 15 Kc2 Rb2+ 16 Kd1 Rb1+ 17 Kd2 Rb2+ 18 Kd3 Rb3+ 19 Ke4 Rb4+ 20 Ke5 Rb5+ 21 Ke6 Rb6+ 22 Ke7 Rb7+ 23 Ke8 (see 9a), and having coasted home to his shelter, White wins.

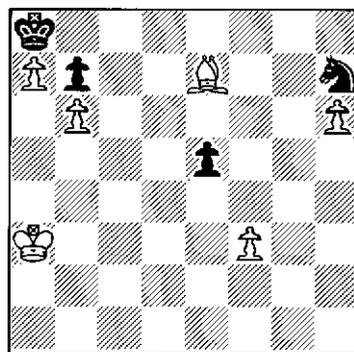
No further study was honoured in the award, but the study that follows, by the Argentine composer José Mugnos, can be found in his book *Finales artísticos razonados* (Madrid, 1976) with the notation "recomendado". I wondered initially whether this might mean that some studies had been elevated to fill gaps caused by the discovery of flaws and anticipations, but John Beasley tells me that there is no evidence of this: some studies were recommended for publication without being honoured, and he thinks that Mugnos mistook this for a normal commendation.

Apparently this category “recommended for publication without being honoured” was a standard BCF tourney practice. But the study is a very interesting one, honoured or not, and I would like to give it here with full notes based on by the analysis given by Mugnos in his book.

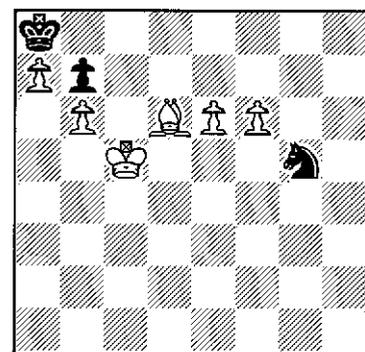
First, some words about the author. Born in 1904, Mugnos, a self-taught man, composed his first study at 36. His most notable feat was his success in the tourney organized by B. H. Wood in *Chess* in 1943-4: with first and second prize equal for two related studies, he was the discovery of those terrible years. Mugnos composed many complex and sometimes heavy studies, with many pawns, like P. Farago: his style was very different from the prevailing aesthetic of the study. His entry in the BCF tourney is typical of his style, and was probably not among Dawson’s favourites.



10 - win



10a - 2...Nxf6, after 5 Ka3



10b - 3 f4, after 5...Ng5

Let us begin with some elementary retrograde analysis. It is White to move and it quickly appears that the previous move could not have been a knight move: therefore the e-pawn has moved, necessarily from e7 otherwise the White king would have been in check, and so 1 fxe6 en passant is possible. 1 h7? fails to 1...Nxf6+, 1 Kxe5? to 1...Nxf6 since 2 Kf4 will be answered by 2...Nxf5! Therefore, 1 fxe6, forcing Black to capture with the pawn since 1...Nxf6 loses quickly (2 Ke5) as does 1...Nxf6 (2 e7). But after 1...fxe6+ the White king is in check, and he has to choose his square with care. Here is the analysis supplied by Mugnos:

2 Kxe6? Nxf6 with a draw.

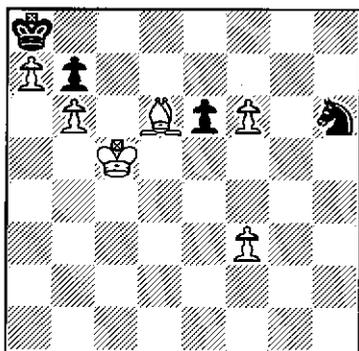
2 Ke5? Nxf6 3 Kf4 e5+.

2 Kd4? e5+.

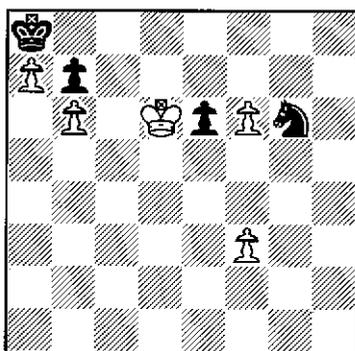
2 Ke4? Nxf6 3 f4 Nf7 4 Be7 e5 5 f5! Nh8 6 Bf8 Nf7 7 Bg7 Nd8.

2 Kc4? Nxf6 3 Bf4 Nf7 4 Be3 e5 5 Kd5 e4 6 f4 Nh8 7 Ke6 Nf7! 8 Ke7 (8 B-- e3) Nh8 9 Kf8 Nf7 10 Kg7/8 Nd8.

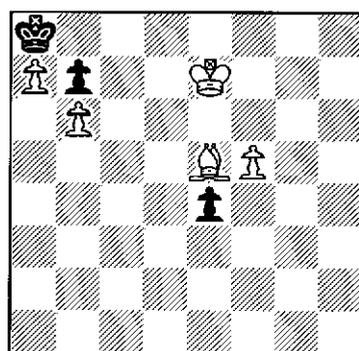
Black’s defence is based on a stalemate that cannot be lifted: White must avoid having to confront a desperado knight. For this reason, Mugnos gives two exclamation marks to the winning move 2 Kc5!! Now White has a curious king manoeuvre if Black tries 2...Nxf6: 3 Be7 Nh7 (3...Ne4+ 4 Kb4 and wins) 4 Kb4! (“tempo”, wrote Mugnos) e5 5 Ka3! (tempo again, see 10a) e4 6 fxe4 and wins. Better is 2...Nxf6. White can now go wrong by playing 3 f4: 3...e5! 4 fxe5 Nf7 5 e6 Ng5!! (see 10b) 6 e7 Ne4+ 7 K-- Nxf6 with a draw. 3 Bf4? and 3 Bf8? would also be



10c - main line, 2...Nxb6

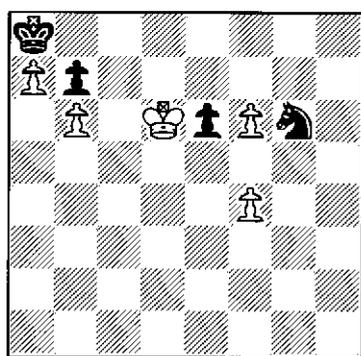


10d - 3 Bf4, after 5...Ng6

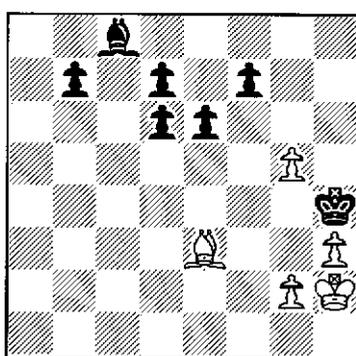


10e - 4...Ng5, after 9 Be5

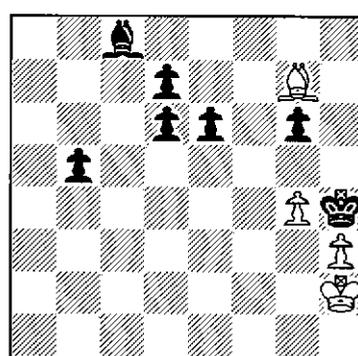
wrong moves (see 10c for the current position): 3 Bf4 Nf7 4 Be5 Nxe5 5 Kd6 Ng6! (see 10d) and either 6 f4 e5! 7 f5 Nh8 or 6 f7 e5 and White cannot win. But there is a better move, of course: **3 Be5!** blocking the Black e-pawn. Now there is no choice for Black, **3...Nf7** is forced, but he seems to be safe after **4 f4 Nxe5!** since 5 fxe5 is stalemate. There are also nice variations after 4...Ng5 5 Kd6 Ne4+ (or 5...Nf7+ 6 Ke7 Nxe5 7 f7) 6 Ke7 Nxf6 (6...Ng5 7 Ke8! and either 7...Nf7 8 Bc7 N-- 9 f7 or 7...Nh7 8 f7 Nf8 9 Bg7 and 10 f8Q) 7 Bxf6 e5 8 f5 e4 9 Be5!! (see 10e) and White will mate with his king protected from check. But White refuses to capture and plays **5 Kd6!** Why does this work now? Suppose that Black plays 5...Ng6 (see 10f), and compare this position with 10d. In 10f, 6 f7 is not well answered by 6...e5, since White has 7 f5! which leads to a win: 7...Nf8 8 Ke7 Nh7 9 f8Q Nxf8 10 Kxf8 e4 11-12 f7 e2 13 Kg7 e1Q 14 f8Q+ and mates. In 10d, after 6 f7 e5, White cannot make any progress: 7 Ke6 Nf8 8 Kxe5 and stalemate is inevitable when the Black knight sacrifices on e8. Back to the main line: **5...Nf7 6 Ke7 Ne5** - a last trick - **7 f7! Ng6+** (7...Nxf7 8 Kxf7 e5 9 f5!) **8 Ke8!** and White wins (8...e5 9 f5).



10f - 5...Ng6



11 - win



11a - after 5 Bg7

Among the other nine studies that were published without being honoured, we find two by Daniel, two by Isenegger, one by Henneberger, one by Halberstadt, one by A. E. Blatte (Zürich), one by Vane Bor (Oxford), and one by F. Weber (Tel-Aviv). From these, I select Isenegger's 11, which I find quite witty: **1 g6! fxg6 2 g3+ Kh5 3 g4+ Kh4** (thanks to 1 g6, Black's king is now imprisoned) **4 Bh6! b5 5 Bg7** (see 11a) **e5** (5...Kg5 6 Kg3 followed by mate) **6 Bf6+ g5 7 Bd8** (7 Be7? Bb7 8 Bxd6 Bf3 9 Bxe5 Bxg4!) **Bb7 8 Bb6** and **9 Bf2 mate**.