

British Endgame Study News

Special number 57

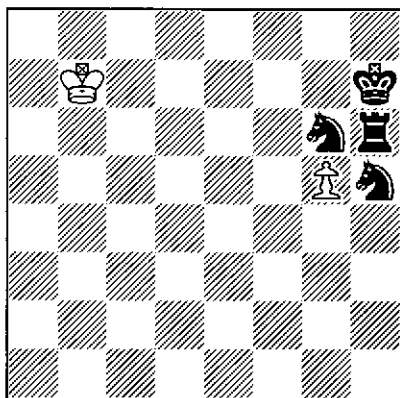
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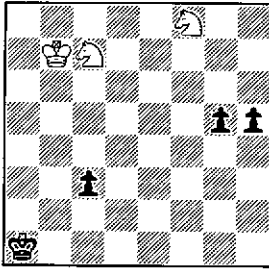
Some foreign studies in *EG* (1)



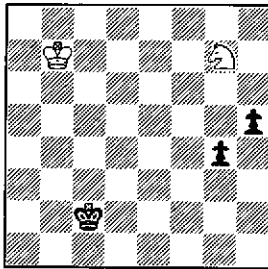
Ouch!

Some foreign studies in *EG* (1)

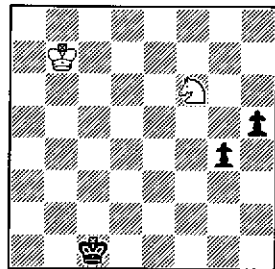
EG is now published by ARVES, but it was founded in 1965 as a personal venture by John Roycroft and it remained his property until 1992. In those days it did not solicit originals, but quite a few crept in under one guise or another, and right from the start it sponsored jubilee tourneys.



1 - draw



1a - 2...Kb2/Kb1, after 5 Ng7



1b - 2...c1Q, after 6 Nf6

The first of these, announced in *EG*'s very first issue, celebrated the 70th birthday of David Joseph. First prize went to the amusingly exotic study by Mike Bent which is in *Endgame Magic*. B. Brieder's 1 took 3rd Prize. 1 Nb5 forces 1...c2, but 2 Nd4 gives Black a choice: does he defend his pawn by 2...Kb1/Kb2 so that his king will be on c2 after the knight has taken the pawn, or does he promote so that it will be on c1?

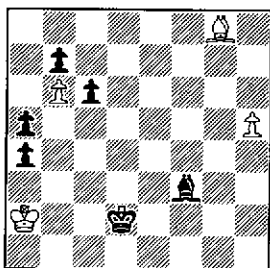
Let's try 2...Kb2 (or Kb1) first. 3 Nxc2 Kxc2 4 Ne6 g4 5 Ng7 gives 1a, with a fork on c3 after both 5...h4 6 Nf5 h3 7 Ne3+ and 5...g3 6 Nf5 (6 Nxf5 loses) g2 7 Ne3+. It doesn't matter whether the Black g-pawn is on g4 or g2, it is forked.

All right, so c2 is a bad square, let's try c1: 2...c1Q 3 Nb3+ Kb2/Kb1 4 Nxc1 Kxc1. Now 5 Nh7 g4 6 Nf6 gives 1b, and with the Black king on c1 White can meet ...g3 with Nxf5 and an echo fork: 6...g3 7 Nxf5 g2 8 Nf4 g1Q 9 Ne2+.

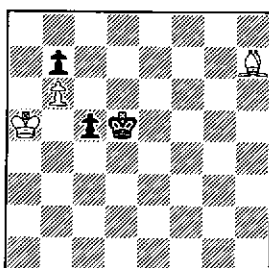
And if White tries to do things the other way round, playing to f6 with the Black king on c2 and to g7 with it on c1, we soon see what goes wrong. With the king on c2, 5 Nf6? g3 6 Nd5 (still aiming for e3, but now there is no attack on the h-pawn to distract Black) Kd2 (simplest) and wins in comfort; on c1, 6 Ng7? h4 7 Nf5 h3 8 Kc6 h2 (or ...Kd2 at once) 9 Ng3 Kd2 (simplest) and Black's king will see a pawn through.

There are some editorial questions here, because in the tourney award 2...c1Q is given as the main line and 2...Kb1 merely as "The echo-variation", while the natural move 5...h4 in the latter is not mentioned at all and nor is the "wrong" line 4-5 Nf6. Is my presentation, with the play up to all three forks highlighted in bold and both the "wrong" lines 4-5 Nf6 (bKc2) and 5-6 Ng7 (bKc1) spelt out, closer to or at variance with what the composer would have wanted? Be it noted that the award does give analysis of some other wrong White moves, which in those pre-computer days will have been very relevant in assessing the composer's achievement but which I have omitted in order not to distract attention from the elegance of the conception.

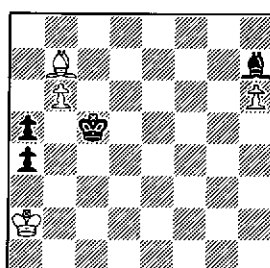
With every respect to Mike, this is my favourite study from the tourney.



2 - win



2a - 2 h7, after 6...c5

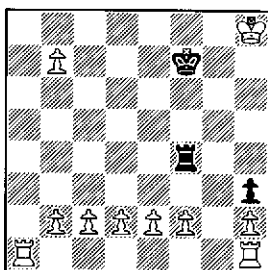


2b - main line, 5...Kc5

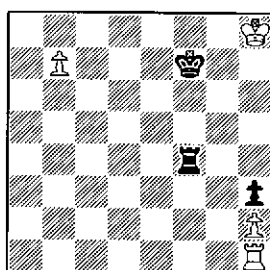
The second jubilee tourney of *EG* celebrated the 65th birthday of Harold Lommer. The computer has killed the first prizewinner, but E. Oñate's 1st HM 2 has survived.

1 h6 Be4 is obvious, and it is natural to continue 2 h7 Bxh7 3 Bxh7. Black can go for the b-pawn, 3...Kc3, but White can defend it, and 4 Ka3 Kc4 5 Kxa4 Kc5 6 Kxa5 is an easy win. But Black can do better: 5...Kd5! Now, after 6 Kxa5, he has 6...c5! (see 2a), and how will White stop this pawn? If he uses his king, his own b-pawn will go, and if he uses his bishop Black will reach the corner (given is a line starting 7 Kb5 c4 8 Bg8+ Kd6 9 Bxc4 Kd7 10 Kc5 Kc8). Eiko Bleicher's 6-man web site confirms.

But with Black's bishop forced to keep an eye on h7, White can use his own bishop to attack the queen's side: 2 Be6 Kc3 3 Bd7 (not 3 Bc8 Kd4 4 Bxb7, when 4...Kc5 takes off the b-pawn) Kd4 4 Bxc6 Bh7 5 Bxb7. But does not 5...Kc5 again win the b-pawn (see 2b)? No, 6 Be4! Bg8+ 7 Bd5!! Kxd5 (7...Bxd5+ 8 Ka3) 8 h7! (not 8 b7, when 8...Kc6+ wins it) Bxh7 9 b7.

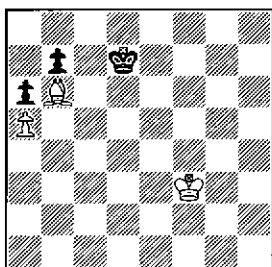


3 - win

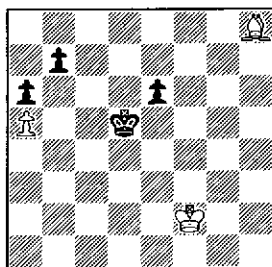


3a - after 6...Rxf4

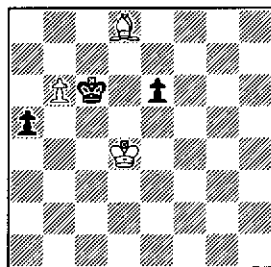
The amusing 3, which appeared as an ordinary original in 1972, was a very early piece by David Gurgenzidze. Black threatens mate, hence 1 Ra4, and after 1...Rxa4 the move 2 b4 blocks the rank and stops ...Ra5. 2...Ra6 can be met by 3 Kh7, hence 2...Rxb4, and the sequel is now obvious: 3 c4 Rxc4 (if 3...Rxb7 then say 4 Rg1, after which the Black h-pawn will go and White will have at least R + 3P v R) 4 d4 Rxd4 5 e4 Rxe4 6 f4 Rxf4. We now have 3a, which is 3 without six White men, and 7 Rf1 wins. Note that trying to short-circuit the procedure by playing to f4 earlier fails (2 f4 Ra5 3 f5 Ra4 and wins). Five fourth-rank pawn sacrifices had been done before, in particular by Korolkov, but with different motivation and not quite so elegantly.



4 - win (Walker, 1841)



5 - win



5a - 1...Kc5, after 5 Kd4

In 1972, *EG* printed an article by G. M. Kasparyan entitled "An Excursion into the Last Century". It briefly discussed George Walker's 4, and then presented an original study based on it. It would be an impertinence for me to try and improve on Kasparyan's own exposition, and John has kindly given me permission to reprint the article in full (I have converted to *BESN* standard notation and added bolding, and have inserted our usual intermediate diagrams). No translator is credited, and Paul Valois (who did several translations from Russian for *EG* at this period) thinks that John did this one himself. Walker's 4 is a version of a study we saw in special number 53, and its solution is given as **1 Ke4 Ke6 2 Kd4 Kd6 3 Kc4 Kc6 4 Bc5 Kc7 5 Kd5 Kb8 6 Kd6 Kc8 7 Bb6 Kb8 8 Kd7 Ka8 9 Bc7** (9 Bc5 Kb8 10 Bd4 b5 11 axb6 also wins) **b5 10 axb6 Kb7 11 Kd6** and wins. Now over to Kasparyan.

"Walker's win position (Diagram 4) is well known to endgame theory. The position has considerable significance as being important for theory and at the same time of value for practical play. It is also interesting that in Walker's position the placing of the kings does not affect the result and that White wins wherever the kings stand. This shows how solidly White, with his great advantage, is placed.

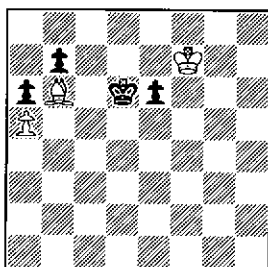
"But would it not be possible to strengthen Black's position a little so as to alter play? Yes, it is! After analysis, I concluded that the addition of a Black pawn on e6 calls for subtleties before White can win. Thus arose Diagram 5, which could be of theoretical significance as well as being a study.

"White has the opportunity of transposing into play as given by Walker, but Black tries to use the strength of his pawns to avoid this.

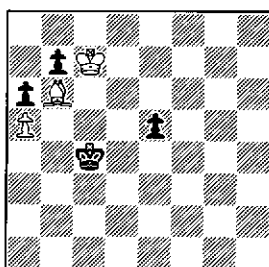
"**1 Bf6** (1 Ke3? e5! 2 Bf6 b6 3 axb6 Kc6 4 Bd8 a5 and Black draws, being a tempo ahead, as the a and e pawns hold up the White king). Now Black has a choice of two variations.

"**I. 1...Kc5** (threatening 2...b5 to draw. Weak would be 1...b5 2 axb6 Kc6 3 Bd4 wins easily. Or 1...e5 2 Bg5! Kc6 3 Be3 wins.) **2 Bd8** (in turn threatening 3 Bb6+ transposing into Walker's position) **b6 3 axb6 Kc6 4 Ke3! a5** (Or 4...e5 5 Ke4 a5 6 Kxe5 wins) **5 Kd4!** [see 5a] **a4** (5...e5+ 6 Kxe5) **6 Kc4 e5 7 Kb4 e4 8 Kxa4 e3 9 Ka5 e2 10 Bh4** wins.

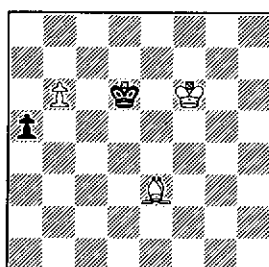
"**II. 1...Kc6** (Doesn't waste time, but then the bishop gets on the better square d4) **2 Bd4 Kb5 3 Bb6** (now we have Walker's position, except with a pawn on e6) **Kc6 4 Ke3 Kd6 5 Kd4** (The shortest route) **Kc6** (If ...Kd7, then 6 Kc5 and White's task is simpler) **6 Ke5 Kd7 7 Kf6 Kd6 8 Kf7!** [sec 5b at the top of the facing page]



5b - 1...Kc6, after 8 Kf7



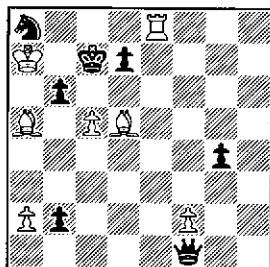
5c - 10...Kc6, after 13...Kc4



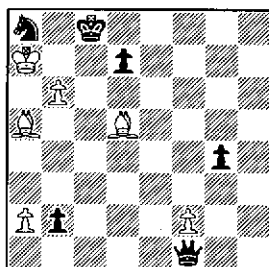
5d - 10...e5, after 14...a5

(White tries to provoke the advance of the e pawn, which would weaken it. Black does not move it yet, as after 8...e5 follows 9 Kf6 etc.) **Kd7 9 Kf8! Kd6 10 Ke8! e5** (At last Black moves the pawn. Also possible was 10...Kc6, but then 11 Ke7 Kd5 12 Kd7! e5 13 Kc7! Kc4! [see 5c] 14 Kd6! (But not 14 Kxb7? Kb5 draws) e4 15 Ke5 Kd3 16 Kf4 wins) **11 Kf7 e4 12 Kf6 e3 13 Bxe3 b6 14 axb6 a5** [see 5d] **15 Bc5+! Kc6 16 Ke5 a4 17 Kd4 a3 18 Kc3 a2 19 Kb2** and wins.

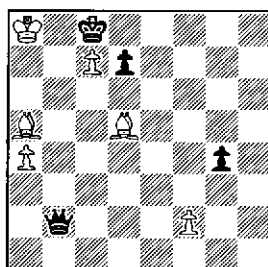
"The White king shows great energy, managing to stop one pawn, then the other."



6 - win



6a - after 2 cxb6

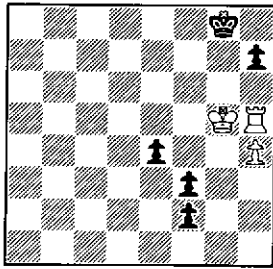


6b - after 7...Qb2

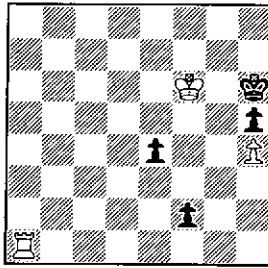
EG's third tourney celebrated the 75th birthday of Assiac ("The Fraenkel Senility Stakes" in his own self-mocking words). Vladimir Bron's 6 took 1st Prize. I rarely admire such positions, but here the play seems sufficiently interesting to compensate.

White must play for mate. **1 Rc8+** (if instead 1 Bb7 then 1...d5 gives the Black king enough air) **Kxc8 2 cxb6** threatens 3 b7 mate (see 6a), with 2...Kd8 3 b7+ Ke7 4 b8Q etc or 2...Nxb6 3 Bxb6 Qa6+ (spectacular, but insufficient) 4 Kxa6 b1Q 5 Ka7 and Black must give up his new queen. But **2...Qa6+!** makes things more difficult, because Black can now meet 3 Kxa6 with 3...Nc7+. There follows **4 Ka7 Nb5+ 5 Ka8! Nc7+ 6 bxc7 b1Q 7 a4! Qb2**, and we have 6b. End of Part 1.

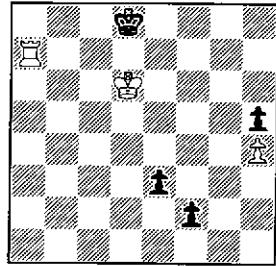
Black's queen is restricted to the b-file, and White can hope to play Ka7 and Bb6 for mate by Bb7. An immediate 8 Ka7 loses to 8...Qd4+, but White can play **8 Bh1** (8 Bg2 g3, 8 Be4 Qb3 9 Ka7 g3 10 fxg3 Qe3+) **Qb1** (8...Qb3 9 Be4 as below) **9 Bg2** (9 Bd5 Qb2 repeating) **Qb3** (9...Qb2 10 Bd5 as below) **10 Be4! Qb2** (no choice now) **11 Bd5** and we are back at 6b but with Black to move. The rest is easy: **11...Qb1 12 Ka7** threatening Bb6 etc, and a queen sacrifice only delays the inevitable.



7 - draw



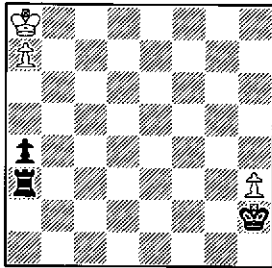
7a - after 6...f2



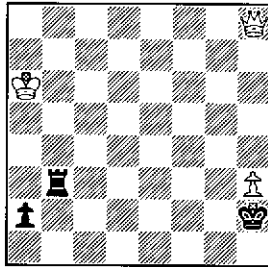
7b - after 12 Kd6

Benjamin Yaacobi was barely 17 at the tourney's closing date, but his 7 took 2nd HM. The basic idea had had many predecessors, but the judge referred to "several new points". **1 Kf6 f1Q** (1...h6 **2 Ra5 f1Q** **3 Ra8+** with perpetual) **2 Ra5 h5** (else perpetual check or worse) **3 Ra8+ Kh7** **4 Ra7+ Kh6** and Black seems to have found a refuge, but **5 Ra8** threatens mate and **5...Qa1+** is the only move to avoid repetition. Now **6 Rxa1 f2** gives **7a**, and **7 Ra8** will be met by **7...f1Q+**.

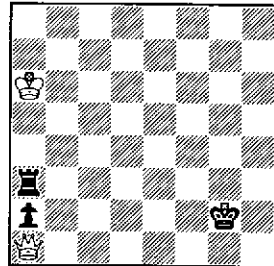
To keep up the pressure, White must play **7 Ke5!** (clearing the sixth rank, attacking the e-pawn, and covering d6), and after **7...e3** we have **8 Ra6+ Kg7** **9 Ra7+ Kf8** **10 Ra8+ Ke7** **11 Ra7+ Kd8** **12 Kd6** (see **7b**). If Black now goes back to the right, **12...Ke8**, we have **13 Ke6 Kf8** **14 Rf7+ Kg8** **15 Ke7** with perpetual check on f6/f7/f8. If he continues left, **12...Kc8**, we have **13 Kc6 Kb8** **14 Rf7 e2** **15 Rf8+ Ka7** **16 Rf7+**, and if he persists with **16...Ka6** then **17 Rxf2** and it is Black who will be glad to escape with a draw.



8 - win

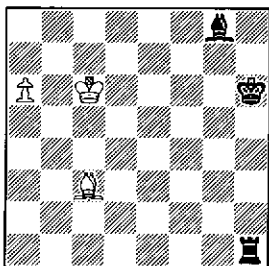


8a - 2 Ka6, after 4 Qh8

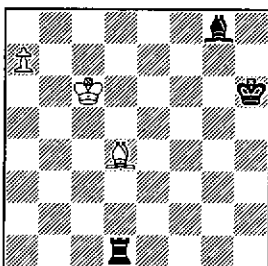


8b - main line, 17...Ra3+

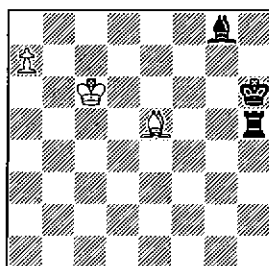
Velimir Kalandadze's across-and-back study **8** received 1st Commendation. **1 Kb7 Rb3+**, and if **2 Ka6** then **2...a3 a8Q a2** **4 Qh8** (see **8a**) and after **4...Ra3+** it is Black who will win. But if that h-pawn were not there, **Qh8** would be check... **2 Kc7/Kc6 Rc3+** **3 Kd7 Rd3+** **4 Ke7 Re3+** **5 Kf7/Kf8 Rf7+** **6 Kg7/8 Rg3+** **7 Kh7/8 Rxb3+** gets rid of it, and after **8 Kg7/8 Rg3+** **9 Kf7/8 Rf3+** **10 Ke7 Re3+** **11 Kd7 Rd3+** **12 Kc7 Rc3+** **13 Kb7 Rb3+** **14 Ka6 a3** **15 a8Q a2** **16 Qh8+** (**8a** without the h-pawn) **Kg2** **17 Qa1 Ra3+** the rook will surely fall (see **8b**)? Indeed it will, but only if White plays **18 Kb5**. Now **Kb4** is threatened as well as **Qb2+**, and once the rook has run to a7 or a8 picking it up will not be difficult.



9 - draw



9a - after 1...Rd1 2 Bb4



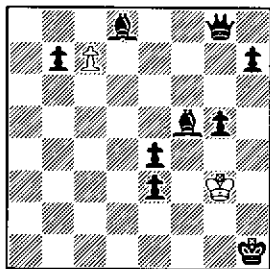
9b - after 1...Rh5 2 Be5

Ignace Vandecasteele's 9 appeared as part of an article "About an Idea" in 1976. He presented a Wotawa study which showed an idea in two variations, a Peckover study which showed it in extended form but in only one variation, a Grin study which showed it in extended form in two variations but at the cost of an idle pawn, his own 9 which got rid of the idle pawn, and a witty tailpiece by Korolkov. All five studies are in *Endgame Magic* (the Grin in notation), but I think we should repeat 9 here.

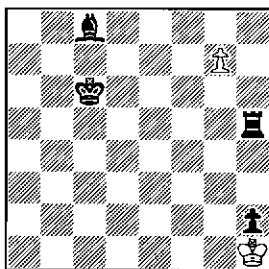
1 a7 threatens 2 a8Q, so let us try 1...Rd1 ready for 2...Bd5+. The reply is 2 Bb4! drawing the rook closer, see 9a, because if 2...Rxd4 then 3 a8Q Bd5+ 4 Kc5 and the rook goes. But Black has 2...Bh7 threatening ...Be4+ instead. No matter: 3 Kd5 Re1 4 Be3+!!, and this time Black has no answer.

All right, try 1...Rh5 with the same idea. Now White plays 2 Be5! (see 9b), and if 2...Bh7 then 3 Kd5 Rh4 4 Bf4+!! with the same finish.

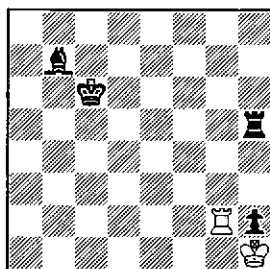
And one final touch: if in 9a Black tries 2...Rc1+, the answer is 3 Kd7 covering c8 and leaving Black no further check, and if 3...Bd5 then 4 Be3+ picking up the rook.



10 - draw by P = R only

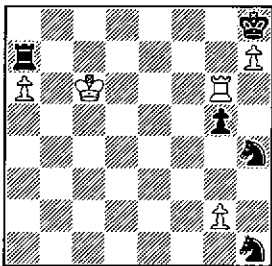


11 - draw

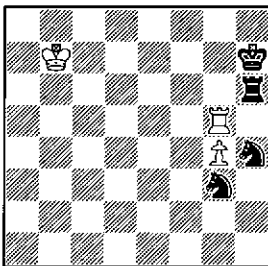


11a - after 2 Rg2

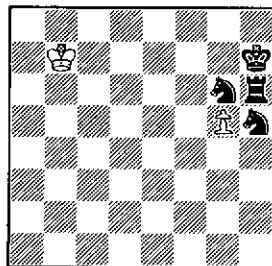
My next example has long been a favourite of mine. In 1976, I wrote an article for *EG* on the subject of promotion tasks with minimum force, and among my examples was the unimpressive 10. This was the most economical setting I could find of the task "White has K + P only and is to draw by P = R only, the promotion not being a capture". The next year, Albert van Tets wrote an article "Rook Promotions in the Defence" in which he displayed some settings with only four Black men, starting with the beautifully simple 11: 1 g8Q? Bb7 and Black will win, 1 g8R! Bb7 2 Rg2!! (see 11a). There are times when it is pleasant to be outdone.



12 - draw



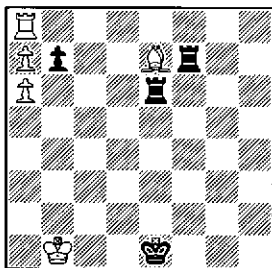
12a - after 4...Ng3



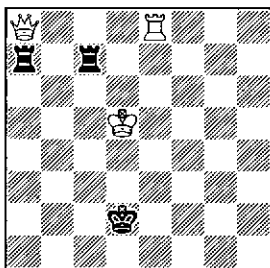
12b - after 7 g5

EG's fourth tourney celebrated the 80th birthday of J. E. Peckover. The winner of the first prize has been killed by the computer, but I think V. Khortov's third prizewinner 12 stands up.

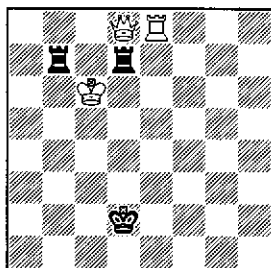
There is no analysis in the tourney award, but it appears that an immediate 1 Rxg5 allows Black eventually to disentangle himself (R + 2N v R is a win and the pawns are no threat) and so 1 Rg8+ Kxh7 2 Rxg5 is necessary. With the h-pawn gone, White threatens Rh5+, hence 2...Rxa6+ (2...Kh6 can be met by 3 Ra5) 3 Kb7! (we shall see why) Rh6. Now 4 g4 threatens Rh5 exchanging rooks (Ph5 v 2N is a draw unless the pawn can be blockaded by a knight), and Black must play 4...Ng3 (see 12a). But 5 Rc5 threatens perpetual check or another exchange of rooks (stationed on b7, the White king guards c7/c8 and stops ...Ra6), so 5...Ng6 is necessary, and now comes the dénouement: 6 Rh5! Nxb5 7 g5!! (see 12b). What a finish!



13 - win



13a - after 8...Ra7



13b - after 11 Kc6

David Gurgenzidze's 13 took 4th Prize. 1 axb7 Rb6+ 2 Bb4+ (else 2...Rxb7) Rxb4+ 3 Kc2 Rc7+ 4 Kd3 Rb3+ (4...Rd7+ 5 Kc3 Rxb7 6 Re8+), and White naturally avoids blocking his potential check from e8. Hence 5 Kd4 Rb4+ 6 Kd5, but after 6...Rxb7 7 Re8+ Kd2 8 a8Q Ra7 it looks as if he has blocked his queen instead (see 13a). Never mind: 9 Qb8 Rab7 10 Qd8 Rd7+ 11 Kc6, and "after the solver has blinked several times he sees that W wins!" (see 13b).

More next time.

As usual, my thanks to Harold van der Heijden's invaluable "Endgame study database III" and to the BCPS Library. - JDB