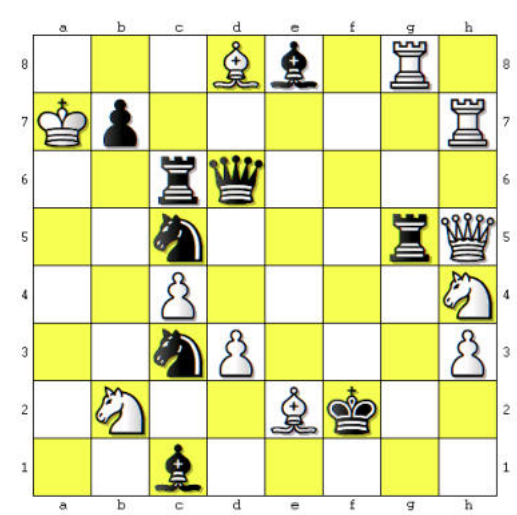




Thomas Niessen

White to move and win

2nd Honorable Mention

This study is built around an unusual compositional challenge rather than around a single tactical idea. Starting from an almost complete set of pieces, apparently placed randomly, the Author gradually and deliberately transforms the position into an elementary pawn endgame while rigorously

avoiding any consecutive captures in the main line. The so-called "bad captures".

Piece after piece leaves the board until Black sacrifices the very last one, almost humorously announcing that the intended pawn ending has finally been reached.

The study therefore possesses a clear narrative character, with every exchange contributing to the same long-term objective. No sidelines, nothing really complex: all you can find here is a manifest of coherence to a witty idea.

The central play inevitably becomes somewhat mechanical, as the thematic constraint governs much of the construction, and the final pawn endgame is more functional than surprising. Nevertheless, the originality of the underlying concept, together with its remarkably consistent execution, makes the study memorable and gives it an artistic identity of its own.

I'm afraid I smiled a second too long, when watching it. And probably the reason is the explanation the Author gives in his accompanying e-mail:

"Do you remember that you asked on chessstudy.art something like "what is a bad capture?". I read that discussion many times. I even dropped some of my studies, because they contained a bad capture. That old discussion ended with a question by Steffen, how consecutive captures are considered. Are they bad, too? Probably not. Nevertheless I transferred the idea almost one year ago on my website into a fun task: "Compose a study that begins with all pieces (i.e., queen, two rooks, two bishops, and two knights for each side) and a legal number of pawns, and ends with a pawn endgame. [...] The mainline of the solution must not have any consecutive captures."

Here it is!

Solution: 1. Nd1+! Ke1 2. Nf3+ Kxe2 3. Nd4+ Ke1 4. Rxe8+ Be3 5. Rxe3+ Kd2 6. Re2+ Kxd1 7. Re1+ Kxe1 8. Re7+ Qxe7 9. Qh4+ Kd2 10. Nxc6 Qd6 11. Bxg5+ Kc2 12. Qf2+ Kxd3 13. Qd2+ Kxc4 14. Na5+ Kb4 15. Qxd6 Nb5+ 16. Kb6 Nxd6 17. Bd2+ Ka4 18. Kxc5 Ne4+ 19. Kd4 Nxd2 20. Ke3 Nf1+ 21. Kf4 \$1 Kxa5 22. h4 Ng3 !? 23. Kxg3 {and White wins by} b5 24. h5 b4 25. h6 b3 26. h7 b2 27. h8=Q b1=Q 28. Qa8+ Kb4 29. Qb7+ Kc3 30. Qxb1 **1-0**