

**Prizewinners
explained**

Exceptional Pawn Endings

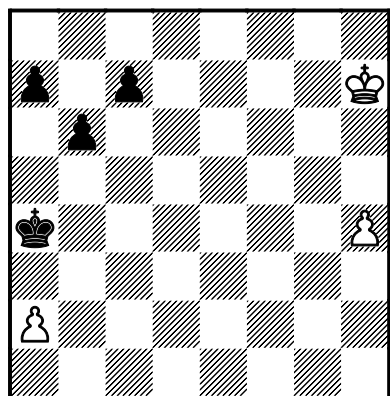
YOCHANAN AFEK

After Grigoriev and Zinar it is far from easy to find exceptional new ideas in the special genre of pawn endings. Even in the theme tourney in the *Problemist Ukraini* a couple of years ago, requiring pawn endings and judged by the great Zinar himself, studies with only pawns could not make it the top honours which were all awarded to ... underpromotion studies.

Nevertheless, I recently came across two highly exceptional pawn endings. They are very different yet they still have something in common. They both failed to be included among the prizewinners perhaps because I was not the judge?

The German composer of No. 1 is also a strong player whom I happened to meet more than once in Bundesliga matches when our teams used to compete in the same division. It's a pity that he has got so little time for composing as his rare appearances display great skill of performing unique ideas.

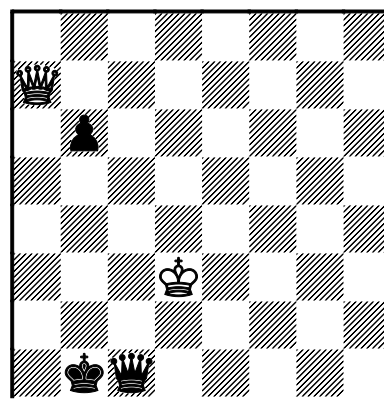
A.1. Jurgen Fleck
special hon. mention
The Problemist 2008-2009



h7a4 0000.23 3/4 Draw

In my last year as the sub-editor of studies in the *Problemist*, I received from Jurgen a stunning miniature which is hereby explained in his own words?

This study, apart from being a dead-serious pawn ending with a couple of original points, shows a switchback of a different kind. It will surprise nobody that in the course of the solution the wK has to walk from h7 to d3, but what could drag him all the way back to h7? We'll see... **1.Kg6!** An immediate pawn race leads to a hopeless queen ending: 1.h5? c5 2.h6 c4 3.Kg6 c3 4.h7 c2 5.h8Q c1Q wins. **1...c5 2.Kf5! Ka3!** Black needs the help of his king, as pushing the pawn leads nowhere: c4 3.Ke4 Ka3 4.Kd4 b5 5.Kc3! Kxa2 6.h5 a5 7.h6 b4+ 8.Kxc4 b3 9.h7 b2 10.h8Q b1Q 11.Qh2+ Ka3 12.Qh3+ draws. **3.Ke4 Kxa2!! 4.h5 c4 5.h6 c3 6.Kd3 Kb2! 7.h7 c2 8.h8Q+ Kb1 9.Qh7 (Qg7, Qa8, Qb8) c1Q 10.Qxa7**



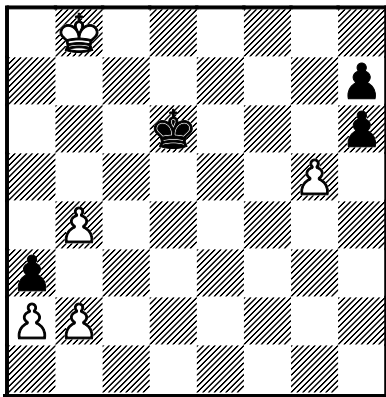
This ending has been thoroughly investigated by Averbakh (my source is his book on queen endings from 1982). The next moves follow the concepts of standard theory, and no mystery is involved. According to Averbakh

the king must quickly head to (guess where) ... h7!

10...b5 Cutting off the king doesn't work: Qc5 11.Qa4 Kb2 12.Qc4. **11.Ke4! b4 12.Kf5! b3 13.Qb7!** (13.Kg6? Qc6+ 14.Kh7 Qe4+ 15.Kg8 b2 wins) **13...b2 14.Kg6! Qf4 15.Kh7! Qe5** (Qa4 16.Qh1+ Ka2 17.Qd5+ Ka1 18.Qe5) **16.Qc6!** draw!

The uniqueness of this ultimate switch-back indeed did not escape the eye of the judge GM John Nunn. Referring to a category of incomprehensible entries due to strong computer influence, he wrote that this study “was a marginal case since although the general principle behind the moves is familiar, the concrete details, especially the reasons for 13.Qb7!, are rather complicated. As the content of this study was exceptional, I compromised by giving it a Special HM”. Fair enough though I personally feel I would have compromised here to no less than a special prize.

A.2. Sergiy Didukh & Siegfried Hornecker
1st hon. mention *Olimpiya dunyasi* 2010



b8d6 0000.43 5/4 Draw

Logical studies have become rather fashionable of late, however inserting a long thematic try in a pawn ending seems extremely

difficult and thus rare. The Ukrainian-German co-production manages to display the marvel in a surprisingly natural setting-form and content alike!

1.g6!! The thematic try clarifies it all: 1.bxa3? hxc5 2.a4 g4 3.a5 g3 4.a6 g2 5.a7 g1Q 6.a8Q Qg8+ 7.Kb7 Qxa8+ 8.Kxa8 Kc6 9.Ka7 Kb5 10.a4+ Kxa4 11.Kb6 Kxb4 12.Kc6 Kc4 13.Kd6 Kd4 14.Ke6 Ke4 15.Kf6 Kf4 16.Kg7 h5 wins. **1...hxc6 2.bxa3 g5 3.a4 g4 4.a5 g3 5.a6 g2 6.a7 g1Q 7.a8Q Qg8+ 8.Kb7!** (Ka7? Qxa2+;) **Qxa8+ 9.Kxa8 Kc6** (h5 10.Ka7 h4 11.b5) **10.Ka7!** A Réti manoeuvre with another excellent try: 10.a4? Kb6 11.a5+ Ka6 12.Kb8 h5 13.Kc7 h4 14.Kc6 h3 15.b5+ Kxa5 16.b6 h2 17.b7 h1Q+ wins. **10...Kb5 11.a4+! Kxa4** (Kxb4; Kb6) **12.Kb6! Kxb4 13.Kc6 Kc4 14.Kd6 Kd4 15.Ke6 Ke4 16.Kf6 Kf4 17.Kg6** draw! As compared to the try the pawn has by now moved one crucial square forward thanks to the astounding key and thus has enabled White to make his very last move!

I don't know who the judge was (HH: M. Muradov) but his comment shows that he had grasped the entire essence of this brilliancy: “Done in good time effect in a pawn study. The purpose of the first move becomes apparent only by the end. Despite the fact that, in the main line, after the 10th move, the Réti manoeuvre is well-known, the synthesis is very good”.

In my non-humble opinion this was by far the most original and enjoyable entry in the field and therefore I had once again to present here a pair of “non-prizewinners explained”.