

**Prizewinners  
explained**

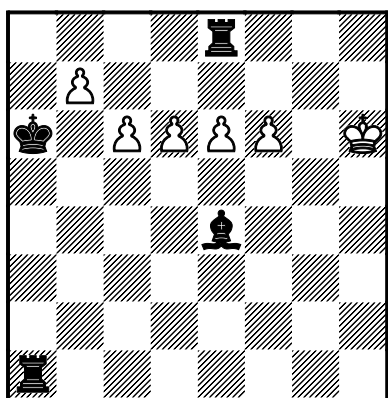
# Multiple Knight Promotions

**YOCHANAN AFEK**

Good themes never die and multiple under-promotions still manage to fascinate our imagination time and time again. The St Petersburg resident Alexey Sochnev has been busy for years implementing double knight promotions in numerous successful miniatures to which we might dedicate an article sometime soon. Our present selection deals with recent performances displaying three white knight underpromotions.

Richard Becker seems to have already become the most prolific and successful American composer ever. His occasional outings to the world beyond reciprocal zugzwangs usually provide us (at least yours truly) with real refreshing experiences demonstrating Richard's distinguished skills:

## A.1. Richard Becker 1st prize AN & YB tourney 2010



h6a6 0630.50 6/4 Draw

1.f7/i Rxe6+/ii 2.Kg7 Rg1+ 3.Kf8 Rh1/iii 4.d7 (b8Q? Rh8+;) Bxc6 5.b8S+/iv Kb5 6.Sxc6 Kxc6 (Rxc6; d8Q) 7.d8S+/v Kd7 8.Sxe6 Kxe6 9.Ke8 Ra1 10.f8S+ and peace has been finally restored.

i) 1.d7? Rg8 and mate follows.

ii) Rh1+ 2.Kg5 Rg1+ 3.Kf4 Rxe6 4.b8Q Rf1+ 5.Ke3 Bg6+ 6.Kd2 Rf2+ 7.Kc3 Re3+ 8.Kd4 Re4+ 9.Kd5 Rd2+ 10.Kc5 Re5+ 11.Kc4 Rc2+ 12.Kd4 Re4+ 13.Kd5 Rd2+ 14.Kc5 Re5+ 15.Kc4 Bxf7+ 16.Kc3 draws.

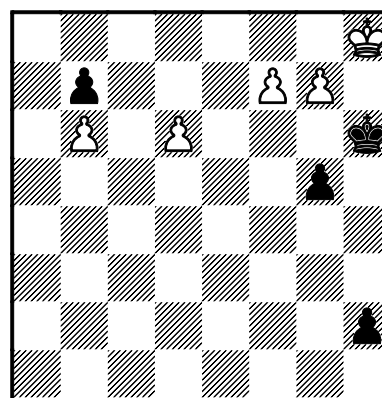
iii) A skewer would not stop the pawn march: Rh6 4.b8Q Rh8+ 5.Ke7 Rxb8 6.c7 draws.

iv) The first fork. 5.b8Q? Rh8+ wins.

v) and a second one.

Siegfried Hornecker is a young German composer who is extremely active in keeping the public discussion in all genres alive. He is especially fond of positions containing just kings and pawns which in fact was one of the themes of his own jubilee tourney currently in process to celebrate such an advanced age of 25.

## A.2. Siegfried Hornecker Prize Europa Rochade 2007-2008



h8h6 0000.43 5/4 BTM, Draw

1...h1Q 2.f8S/i Qa1 3.Se6 Kg6 4.d7 Kf7 5.d8S+ (d8Q? Qh1mate;) Ke7 6.Kh7 Qb1+ 7.Kh6 Kf6 8.g8S+ draws.

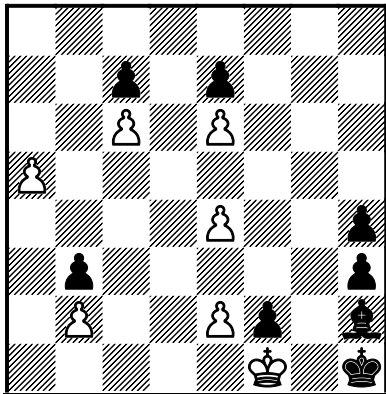
i) 2.f8Q? Kg6+ 3.Kg8 Qh7 mate.

It should be added that both Becker and Hornecker have recently managed to show 3

knight underpromotions in miniatures (!) and once they will be awarded as deserved we will be glad to pay this theme a revisit.

Sigmund Herland (1865-1954) was a Rumanian chess master and composer of problems and a studies.

**A.3. Sigmund Herland**  
*Deutsches Wochenschach* 1913



flh1 0030.66 7+8 Win

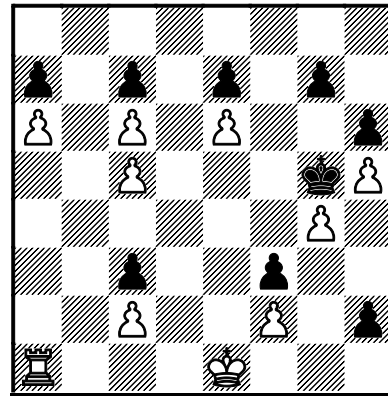
1.a6 Bg1 2.a7 h2 3.a8S/i h3 4.Sb6 cxb6 5.c7 b5 6.c8S b4 7.Sd6 exd6 8.e7 d5 9.e8Q wins.

i) 3.a8Q? h3 and stalemate is unavoidable.

This study proved to have been Herland's most important one triggering quite a few subsequent efforts to improve on the number of consecutive sacrificed underpromoted knights. Jan Timman has recently done remarkable research of the prototype scheme and I am sure that we will hear of it soon. The most daring concept is probably displayed in the following masterpiece by the grand maestro of the modern pawn ending:

1.0-0-0 Kh4/i 2.Rh1 Kh3/ii 3.Kd1 Kg2 4.Ke1 Kxh1 5.Kf1 g5 6.hxg6 h5 7.g7 h4 8.g8S/iii h3 9.Sf6 exf6 10.e7 f5 11.e8S f4 12.Sd6 cxd6 13.c7 dxc5 14.c8S c4 15.Sb6 axb6 16.a7 b5 And the pawn, free at last, promotes to mate. White just needs not to fall by

**A.4. Mikhail Zinar**  
Special prize Osintsev-50 JT 2011



e1g5 0100.88 10/9 Win

force of the habit to a fourth knight promotion.... A queen or even a modest bishop would do the obvious trick.

i) A clever device to make it much more difficult for White since the natural: 1...Kxg4 is met by 2.Rh1 Kh3 3.Kd1 Kg2 4.Ke1 Kxh1 5.Kf1 g5 6.hxg6 h5 7.g7 h4 8.g8S h3 9.Sf6 exf6 10.e7 f5 11.e8Q, after which the shortest winning way would be f4 12.Ke1 Kg2 13.Qg6+ Kh1 14.Qd3 Kg1 15.Qf1 mate.

ii) The castled king must hurry up back to the other side to lock in his counterpart.

iii) 8.g8Q? and White will be one tempo short to avoid stalemate after 8...h3.

Here we have a unique combination of the theme with the Valladão Task. All three unusual chess moves: castling, en-passant and 3 underpromotions in one line of play! In his most instructive column Spotlight from our previous issue Jarl Ulrichssen expresses an interesting viewpoint regarding this controversial theme. "The great majority of endgame studies showing this theme are terrible", he complains and warns us that strong nerves are needed to look at them. I wonder what has Jarl to say about this one.