

NEW ENGLANDER

Chess Club Update – Christmas 2012

Chairman's Chatter

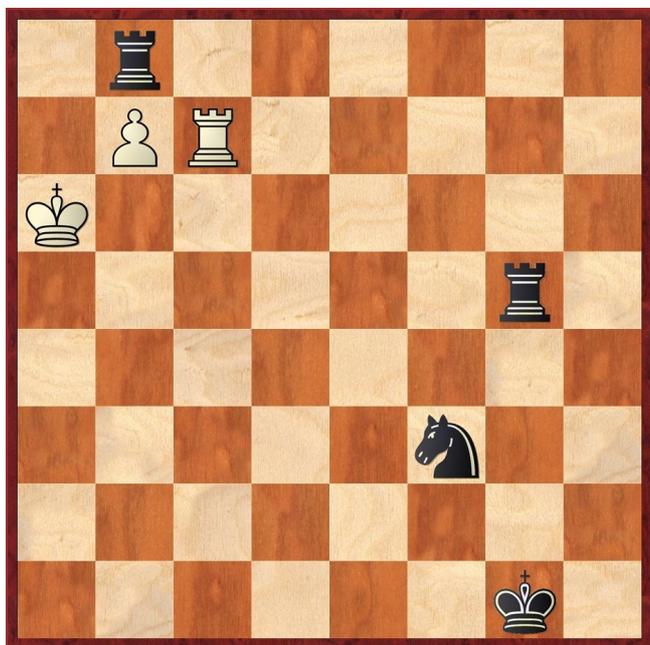
Merry Combinations and a Happy New Year!

Paul Hankes

Puzzle Page

This year, we are going to take a look at chess compositions. This is an undervalued part of the game and probably suffers because of the difficulty of the subject. Many studies are very obscure and can only be understood with a lot of knowledge of endgame theory. Whilst this is true in some cases, I find many are amusing and often highlight some tactical details that might be useful in real games, especially endings.

Here is an example of what I mean by V Vlasenko :



At first sight, it is hard to believe that White can do anything to counteract his material deficit. Indeed, it looks likely that given time, Black can permanently prevent any chance of pawn promotion with Rg5-g8 and then mop up by advancing his king and knight towards b7. As a result, **1 Rc8** immediately seems to be the only hope with the forced variation **1 ... Rg8 2 Rxb8 Rxb8 3 Ka7** when the desired draw is achieved.

But this is where an old dog such as myself starts to learn new tricks. Initially, my analysis went **2 Rxc8 Rxc8 3 Ka7** with the same result but missing **3 ... Ne5 4 b8Q Nc6+** wins for Black. OK, some care is required but White can still escape easily. This motif, however, is quite devilish when used with other facets of the position. **1 Rc8 Ne5! 2 Rxb8 Nc4! 3 Rg8** (forced to avoid mate on a5) **Rxc8 4 Ka7 Na5 5 b8Q Nc6+** refutes my "forced" continuation.

The solution starts **1 Rc1+! Kg2 2 Rc2+! Kg3 3 Rc8!** How is this different from the foregoing? **3 ... Ne5 4 Rxb8** [4 Kb6? Nd7+ 5 Kc7 (5 Ka7 Ra5#) 5 ... Rc5+ 6 Kxd7 Rxb7+] **4 ... Nc4 5 Rg8 Rxc8 6 Ka7 Na5 7 b8Q+!** and the vital check ensures the draw. If Black tries **2 ... Nd2** (2 ... Kg1 3 Rc1+ leads to a draw by repetition) **3 Rxd2+ Kf3 4 Ka7 Rgg8 5 Rb2** leads to a curious impasse in which the black rooks are frozen on the eighth rank and any advance by the king is beaten back by a series of checks.

Now it is your turn. White to move and win.

