9th ARVES Tourney 2016 - Award

The proposed theme of this study tourney was a smothered mate with a promoted knight. Although several composers feared that it would be difficult to improve on already existing schemes, I still received 21 entries. Of those, one was incorrect, and several others non-thematic. For the award, I selected six.

    1st prize: Darko Hlebec (Serbia)

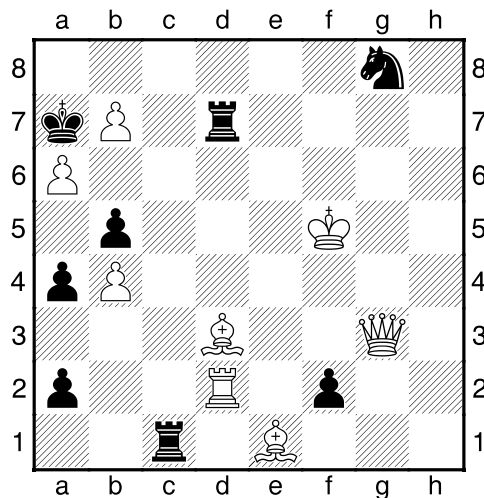   1st honourable mention Evgeny Kopylov & Oleg Pervakov (Russia)

    2nd honourable mention David Gurgenidze (Georgia) & Martin Minski (Germany)

    1st commendation Mirko Miljanic (Serbia)

    2nd commendation Branislav Djurasevic (Serbia)

    3rd commendation Jan Timman (the Netherlands)

1st prize
Darko Hlebec

Black to play, White wins

1...♖d5+ 2.♔g4 [2.♔g6? ♖c6+ 3.♔f7 ♘h6+ 4.♔e7 ♘g8+ 5.♔f7 ♘h6+=] **2...♘f6+ 3.♔f3 fxe1♘+! 4.♔e2!** [4.♔e3? ♖e5+ 5.♕xe5 ♘g4+-+] **4...♘d7 5.♕e3+!** [5.♕g1+? ♔xa6 6.♗xb5+ ♖xb5 7.♖d6+ *(7.♖xa2 ♖e5+-+)* 7...♔xb7 8.♖xd7+ ♔c8 9.♕d4 ♖e5+! 10.♕xe5 ♔xd7=] **5...♔xa6 6.♗xb5+! ♖xb5 7.♖xa2** [7.♖d6+? ♖c6 8.♖xc6+ ♔xb7 9.♕c1 ♖e5+ 10.♔f1 ♖f5+ 11.♔xe1 a1♕ 12.♖c7+ ♔b6 13.♕xa1 ♔xc7=] **7...♖c2+ 8.♖xc2 ♘xc2 9.♕e6+ ♘b6 10.♕c8!** [10.b8♕? ♘d4+-+] **10...♘xb4 11.b8♘+!** [11.♕e8? ♔xb7!=; 11.b8♕+? ♘xc8=] **11...♔a5** [11...♔a7 12.♕c7+ ♔a8 13.♘c6 ♘xc6 14.♕xc6++-] **12.♕a6+!! ♘xa6 13.♘c6#**

Who would expect a smothered mate from the starting position? After lively play and clever defensive manoeuvres, the mate is achieved by several selfblocks. The composer could not avoid that Black moves first, but this is only a small blemish.

Marcel Van Herck