SO HELP ME THE DATABASE

L. Falk and
the Editorial Board

1. AN UNCLEAR KRKN ENDGAME POSITION?

Recently in Sweden, a composition study tournament was held in which the judges were confronted with a particular problem. The study in Diagram 1 (WTM, White to draw) was submitted by A. Gillberg. The judges were faced with the task of evaluating this study.

The study’s author had suggested the solution as shown; comments by the Editorial Board are within square brackets:


Although Dr. Falk’s impression was that White indeed could draw after 1. Ka7 Kd7 2. Nf3, no verification was available, not even after invoking the help of Grandmaster Harry Schüssler. Dr. Falk subsequently invoked the help of the databases accessible through the ICCA Journal.

** In one of the main variations a KRKN position arose, marked by *, considered a draw by the composition’s author. However, the senior contributor of this note, though impressed with the analysis, had his lingering doubts.
2. THE KRKN ENDGAME POSITIONS CLASSIFIED

Upon this challenge, the Editors activated the generic database system as constructed by Sito Dekker (1988), reachable easily due to the interface constructed by Patrick Schoo. This procedure provided the following results to the senior author.


Note the continuations as lettered above, which should be self-explanatory:


As a result of this analysis, qualified as "very convincing" by Dr. Falk, the study submitted by Mr. Gillberg was justly disbarred as a composition study for failing its stated purpose viz. White to draw. For the human interest, a few comments by the senior author should be paraphrased below:

"The KRKN endgame seems to be on the borderline between those analyzable as one goes on and those to be entrusted to computers only. It is worth noting that Karpov won this ending from a drawn position in the last round of the Chess Olympiad 1988. He was of course stimulated by his rivalry with Kasparov to achieve a maximum score at whatever cost! Speaking for myself, Gillberg’s position would have remained for ever unclear had it not been for the computer’s help."

[...]

"As I see it, it would be a definite advance in creativity if one were to compose studies using the database and the computer tapping it."

[...]

"Thus, the best of computer and human chess could be optimally combined. It also would provide an ideal proving ground for computers in an artistic domain. This is true because no human being would deny study composition to be an artistic exercise, whereas it is sufficiently definable to make it a well-described test field for programming per se."

3. REFERENCE