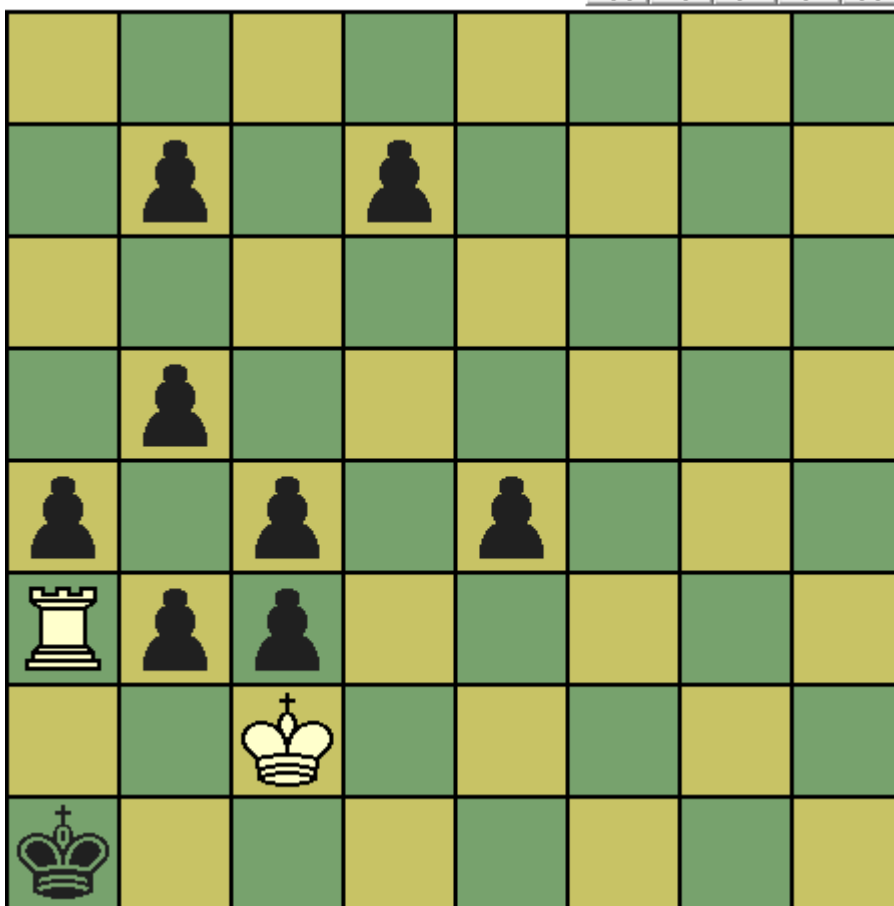


CHESST' MINIT puzzle – May 2014

This month's puzzle was composed by Alexander Yarosh in 2007. The position as given is clearly impossible as both white and black are in check simultaneously. How can one piece be placed to give a legal position?



Solution The position as set is illegal, of course (both kings in check) so it must be made legal, and the stipulation means you must place one piece so that the position then becomes legal. If you count all the captures made by the black pawns, you will note that every missing white piece had to be captured by black pawns, else the position would be illegal even beyond the missing piece. Since both kings cannot be in check, and black pawn b3 has to stay, it must be a black piece on a2 that completes the problem, giving a legal position. A black rook or queen would shield the black king from check but place white in an illegal double check from pawn and heavy piece. So the piece must be a black knight or a black bishop, but it can be only one of those. Which one?

All black pawns are still on the board, and we have black pawns on b7 and d7. This means that the black bishop on c8 never got out of the starting position, and with all black pawns on the board, he could never have promoted to a bishop, so the answer must be that there is a black knight on a2!