



8th YCCC 2024
Announcement



**WCCC
2024
JURMALA**



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FUJAIRAH

8th Youth Chess Composing Challenge 2024

The Youth Chess Composing Challenge (YCCC) is an individual competition for young from all countries. Established in 2016 by the Serbian Chess Problem Society it became a part of the program of the yearly World Congress of Chess Composition (WCCC). In 2018 the Youth Committee of the World Federation for Chess Composition (WFCC) was established with one of the priorities being the YCCC. The Youth Committee is also a body to help composers and trainers with information and advice.

The contact address is yccc@wfcc.ch

Rules & Themes

The 8th YCCC 2024 is open to the U23 generation (born 2001 or later), matching the age limit for juniors in the WFCC solving competitions (WCSC, ECSC, ISC). This year YCCC has one section with strict thematic condition (A - #2) and two sections without set themes (B – endgame studies and C - all kinds of compositions). **Each participant may send one entry per section. Joint works are not accepted.**

Overall standings and prizes

According to the overall standings, the five most successful composers from five different countries (the best one from each country) will be rewarded with 500 Euros vouchers for the expenses of taking part in the World Congress of Chess Composition 2025, or in the European Chess Solving Championship 2025.

The overall standings of the YCCC-8 will be based on the sum of the points earned in all three sections. The section points will be distributed as follows:

1st Place – 17 points, 2nd Place – 13 points, 3rd Place – 10 points, 4th Place – 8 points, 5th Place – 7 points, 6th Place – 6 points, 7th Place – 5 points, 8th Place – 4 points, 9th Place – 3 points, 10th Place – 2 points, any other placement in the award – 1 point.

In the case of ties in the overall standings, the first tiebreak will be the highest number of points in one of the sections, and if results remain equal, then the 2nd highest number of points will decide. If all three results are the same, the younger participants will have advantage.

The vouchers for 2025 are donated by the Fujairah Government. If some of the vouchers can't be used by a rewarded participant, it will be offered to the next most successful composer in the overall standings, and so on.

At the closing ceremony during the Jurmala WCCC 2024, on 2nd August 2024, the three winners of each section will receive medals and certificates.

How to prepare and send the entries

You should send your original compositions (previously not published somewhere else) with complete solutions and possible comments **no later than June 10 2024** to the email of the tournament director Julia Vysotska yccc@wfcc.ch. If possible, **add FEN for diagram positions and send your endgames in pgn format**. It is very much preferable that you **check the soundness of your entries with computer programs**, and indicate the name of the program you had used. For most genres except endgames you may use a free open source Olive graphical front-end for Popeye chess software (<https://www.yacpdb.org/#static/olive>), developed by **Dmitry Turevski**. Since half a year ago, you may have on your phone all of that and endgames too, using the FEN Tool (<https://mutsuntsai.github.io/fen-tool/>), developed by **Mu-Tsun Tsai**.

Please, **send your date of birth, place of residence, and a recent photo of good quality**, together with the entries.

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Workshop

The YCCC Organizing Team consists of some of the best composers and judges in the world, highly enthusiastic in mentoring younger colleagues. You are encouraged to contact them through the email address yccc@wfcc.ch, preferably before May 30, with possible questions about the content, construction and originality of your entries. Please, use the title "YCCC Questions" in the Subject field.

Results

The results will be announced during the closing ceremony of the 66th World Congress of Chess Composition in Jurmala, on 2nd August 2024, when the three winners of each section will receive medals and certificates. Complete awards will be published on the WFCC website, in the [YCCC Project](#) Section.

Section A – Mate in two moves (#2)

Thematic condition: There are three adjacent black pawns on the same rank, and the black King is at least three ranks below the pawns. In the solution, each thematic black pawn makes at least one move, and each thematic move results in a different mate. The main goal is to present the greatest number of different thematic variations (defences + mates) in the solution, but the overall quality of compositions will be equally important.

Judge: David Shire

The total number of thematic variations may be extended using virtual play: with new mates following the same black moves in the initial position (set-play) or in the tries (see Example A4). Thematic tries should have unique refutations.

The first move of White may not be a capture of a Black officer (a piece other than pawn). If the first move takes away a flight square from black King without compensation (giving away another flight square) it will reduce the overall quality of composition, the same as if the first move provides a mate for a check to white King (without an already provided mate in the initial position).

The Albrecht database with close to 300.000 two-movers from more than 15.000 composers contains only five examples of the set thematic condition. However, each of them adds some interesting feature to the overall quality:

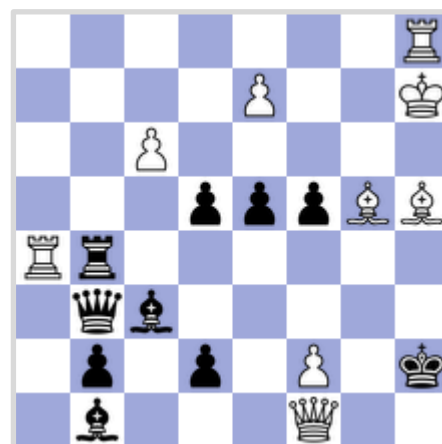
Thematic example A1

1.Kg8! threat: 2.Bg4#
1...d4+ 2.Bf7# 1...e4 2.Bf4# 1...f4 2.Bg6#
1...Bd4 2.Bf3# 1...Rb8+ 2.Be8#
(1...Rh4 2.Rxh4#)

Here the three thematic pawns execute a part of the broader thematic content centred around the role of bRb4. The Rook's line b4-h4 is closed five times: three times by bPs, once by bB and once by wBh5 (in the threat 2.Bg4#). White side of the play is unified too, using five

Thematic example A1

Hugo Knuppert
Skakbladet 1943



#2

9+10

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different battery mates by wBh5, three of them with cross-checks. The prepared cross-check variation 1...f4+ 2.Bg6# makes the exposure of wK to two other checks even more attractive and goes well with two tries facing checking refutations: 1.Kg6? f4+! or 1.Kg7? e4+!

Thematic example A2

Herbert Nikolussi
Schweizerische Schachzeitung 1948

#2 9+8

Thematic example A2

1.Bd2! threat: 2.Sc3#
1...c5 2.Sb6# 1...d5 2.Sbxc7# 1...e5 2.Qb4#
(1...Rxc2 2.Ra3# 1...Sh4+ 2.Rxh4# 1...Sf4+ 2.Qxf4#)

The whole play is based on subtle defensive motivation of the thematic black moves. Each defence against the threat closes white line that is yet to be open (h5-a5) and anticipates closing of another white line (d2-a5) by the threatening move 2.Sc3#. This strategy of Black defence is called Theme A in the theory of chess composition. Do note also the nice withdrawing key-move.

Thematic example A3

Albert Servais
Problem 1954 (v)

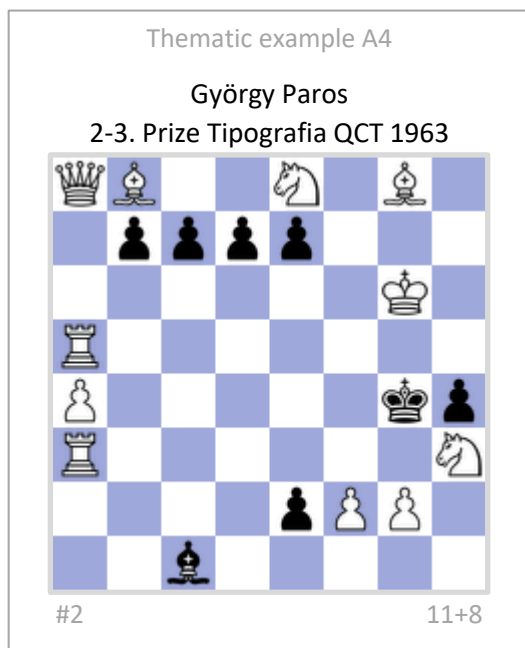
#2 11+6

Thematic example A3

1.g3! threat: 2.e5#
1...d5 2.exd5# 1...e5 2.b5# 1...f5 2.exf5#

This is a striking example of artistic freedom and imagination. The composer wanted (and managed) to present a “pawn-only” play in all phases of the solution. Not only all three moves of black pawns are met by white pawns moves, but the executors of the key-move (1.g3!) and the threat (2.e5#) are pawns too! The composer was so persistent in achieving his aim that he didn’t mind using white Queen only to have a pawn-key (with wBh1 position would be illegal!). And he was right. It is exactly the

“pawn-only” play that makes the concept memorable. Some little tries refuted by thematic pawns add to the overall quality: 1.Ra5? e5! 1.Qh2? d6! When original position of wRh4 is switched to g4 (as we did for this version), f-pawn becomes active in two more tries: 1.Qh5? f5! 1.Qh8? f6!



Thematic example A4

setplay:
1...c5 2.f3#
1.f4! threat: 2.Rg5#
1...c5 2.Sf2# 1...b5 2.Qf3# 1...d5 2.Be6# 1...e5 2.Sf6#
(1...Bxf4 2.Sf2#)

How else may the YCCC theme of three pawns be expanded? By activating the 4th adjacent bP on the same rank, as demonstrated here! All defences are based on closing the line of wR, though the motivation of line closing is much less subtle than in Example 2.

This #2 took part in a quick composing tourney, where the set condition asked for double steps of both White and Black. That's why some additional material was added to have the double-step key 1.f4!

Otherwise the YCCC-8 thematic condition could have been achieved using much less material. On the other hand, this particular key has brought one more thematic effect: the changed mate after 1...c5 in the set-play (1...c5 2.f3#) and solution (1...c5 2.Sf2#).

As stressed in introduction, this method of extending the total number of thematic variations (3+1 when solution and set-play are combined) will be welcome in the YCCC-8.



Thematic example A5

1.h8=Q!
1...c5 2.Rd3# 1...c6 2.Qxd7# 1...d5 2.Sc6# 1...d6 2.Se6# 1...e5 2.Bf2# 1...e6 2.Rxd7#
(1...h4 2.Qxh4# 1...Sc2/Sxb3 2.Sxc2# 1...Sh3/Sf3/Se2 2.Sf3#)

Finally, here we have the current task record for the YCCC-8 theme: not less than six different thematic variations in the solution. The differentiation of some mates is based on unpinning of the two diagonally pinned Rooks: 1...c5 2.Rd3 # but not 2.Qxd7? Rd6! and 1...e5 2.Bf2# but not 2.Rxd7? Rd6!

To achieve such a rich and harmonious thematic content, the composer needed one additional piece: the new Queen promoted by the key-move. This is, of course, a huge help and a blemish that reduces the overall impression: a method not advised to participants. With the single box material the same matrix may be adopted to present five YCCC-8 variations:

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Thematic example A5 (version)

#2 9+7

1.Bb7? c6! 1.Ba8!

So, the record numbers by now are **six** with the use of promoted white piece and **five** without such a help (Example 5 and 5v), in the Matrix 1 where bK is three squares below the central bP:

Matrix 1

The new records for this particular matrix would be to achieve six or more thematic variations without promotion key.

The other 4 examples from the Albrecht collection present only the minimal YCCC requirement of three variations in the solutions. Examples 1, 2 & 4 use the Matrix 2, where bK is two files away and three ranks down from the nearest bP.

Matrix 2

Matrix 3

Finally, Example 3 uses Matrix 3, with bK one file away and three ranks down from the nearest bP:

These are the current records from the Albrecht collection. For any other positions of bK (there are 28 different matrices in total) even the minimal requirement of three thematic variations would be the new record.

Highest numbers are by far not the only goals of YCCC-8. In the final ranking of entries many details will be evaluated: quality of key-move, tactical content of defences and mates, economy and optimal use of force, beauty of position, and possible additional features.

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Section B – Endgame studies (+, =)

No set thematic condition

To understand better the content and form that distinguishes an artistic endgame study from usual chess combinations and similar puzzles in the Internet, we warmly recommend to check the following articles:

1. Johan Hellsten: [Composing endgame studies](#)
2. John Nunn: [Composing a study](#)
3. Steffen Slumstrup Nielsen: [Strip or massage? Two ways of creating studies from games](#)

These three articles are ordered here by complexity of the topics. Going through them you may feel why any chess ending or a long sequence of unique moves (no matter how hard is to find these moves) doesn't automatically qualify for an artistic chess composition.

The judges will put emphasis on original ideas and clarity.

Judges: Steffen Slumstrup Nielsen & Gady Costeff

Section C – All genres

No set thematic condition

This section is open to problems of any kind, length and content (endgames excluded).

Judges: a group of experts in different genres.

Marjan Kovačević - YCCC coordinator