

WCCC 2024 Jūrmala, Quick Composing Tourney, Group A: Helpmates

Theme: Helpmates in 2,5 to 3 moves are required. In each line of play, a white piece moves and pins (directly) a black unit. There is a thematic constraint: The black unit that is pinned must make at least one move before or after the pin occurs and/or the black king must move to the pin-line.

Fairy pieces are allowed, but no conditions.

Deadline: Sunday 28 July, 18:00 hrs.

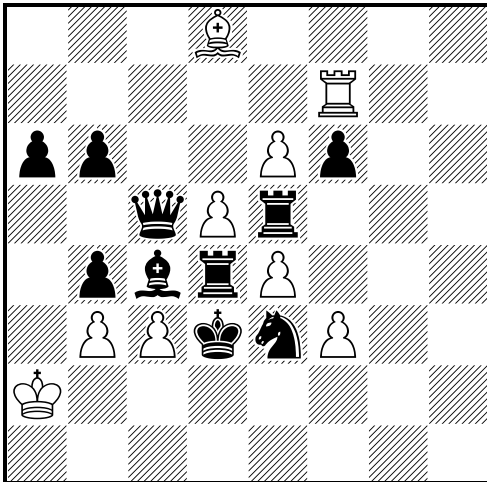
Judge: Harry Fougiaxis

Director: Mihail Croitor

I received from the director 11 helpmates (six in 3 moves and five in 2,5 moves) without authors' names. It is a great pity that the most ambitious composition (and the single one featuring fairy pieces) is unthematic, as the white pinning piece does not move in the solutions.

I propose the following ranking:

No. 3 - Menachem Witztum & Ricardo de Mattos Vieira
Quick Composing Tourney, Jūrmala 2024
1st Place



h±3 (9+10) C+

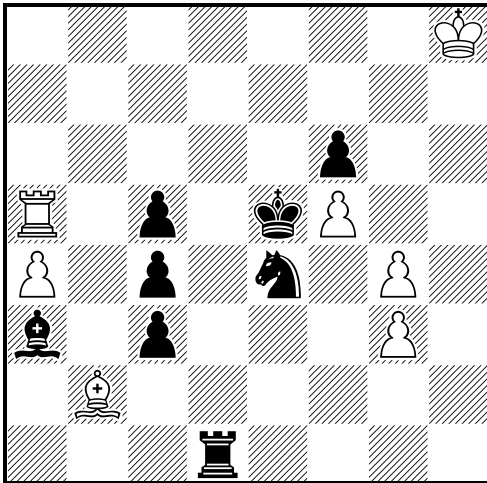
b) ♖d8→c8

a) 1.Re×d5 c×d4 2.K×d4 Rd7 3.Bd3 B×f6‡

b) 1.Qb5 b×c4 2.K×c4 B×a6 3.Rd3 Rc7‡

Well-crafted diagonal-orthogonal echo play with Kniest captures to let the bK get trapped into the mating net, pins of the black units initially standing on the mating lines and exchange of black roles (Rd4 and Bc4 are alternately captured and block the king's departure square). There is a slight imbalance in that whereas 1.Re×d5 in (a) is a pure (self-pin) hideaway move, 1.Qb5 in (b) is actually an anticipatory block & check-avoidance, as White has no other way to guard effectively the b5 square [1.Q- off the board (Qc7) b×c4 2.K×c4 Bd7? / B×a6+? cannot work anyway.] A clear winner.

No. 1 - Ofer Comay
 Quick Composing Ty, Jūrmala 2024
 2nd Place

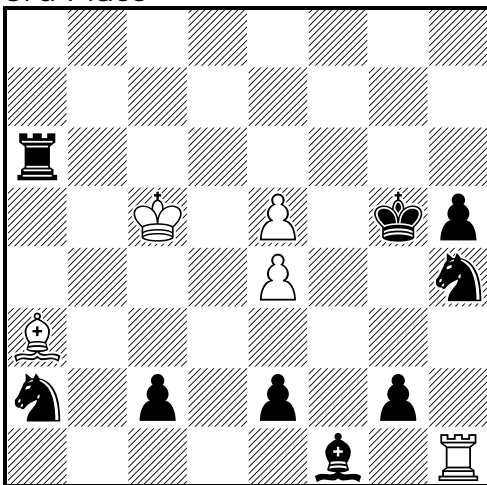


h‡3 (7+8) C+
 2.1.1...

1.Rd5 R×c5 2.B×c5 Bc1 3.Bd4 Bf4‡
 1.Rd4 B×c3 2.S×c3 Ra6 3.Sd5 Re6‡

Smart and original rendering of the theme with virtual pins (no pin-mates!), as the white pinning moves are actually sacrifices to enable the black pieces block a flight. Zilahi comes as a straightforward bonus.

No. 10 - Michel Caillaud
 Quick Composing Tourney, Jūrmala 2024
 3rd Place

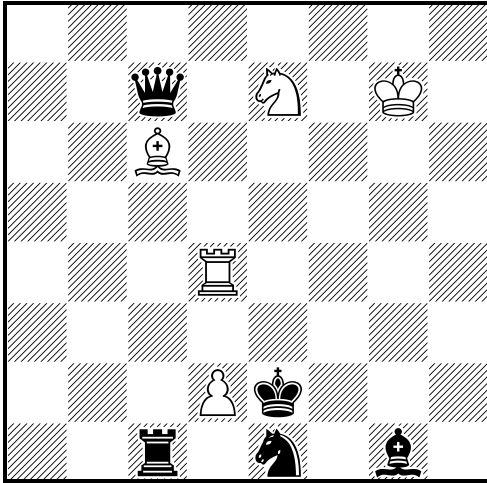


h‡3 (5+9) C+
 2.1.1...

1.c1=B Rh3 2.Bf4 Bc1 3.Rh6 Rg3‡
 1.g1=R Bb4 2.Rg4 Rg1 3.Rg6 Bd2‡

Nice diagonal-orthogonal play: the promoted black pieces that block the flights must be pinned as they would otherwise interfere with the mates, black-white FML, blocks of the "rear" flights and models. Sadly, not so original (compare to Gennady Chumakov & Fadil Abdurahmanović, Prize Shakhmatnaya Kompozitsiya 2010, <https://yacpdb.org/#321228>)

No. 5 - Abdelaziz Onkoud
 Quick Composing Tourney, Jūrmala 2024
 4th Place

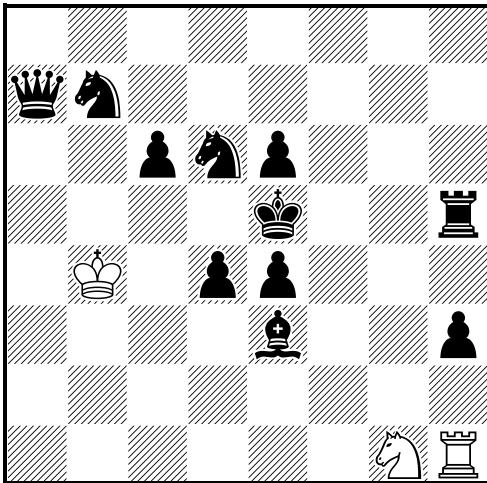


h†2,5 (5+5) C+
 b) ♔c7→a7

- a) 1...Ba4 2.Qc2 Sd5 3.Kd1 Sc3†
 b) 1...Rf4 2.Qf2 Sf5 3.Kf1 Sg3†

The openings of the bQ lines dictate the move order. Cute and economic, but twinning slightly detracts.

No. 4 - Rainer Kuhn
 Quick Composing Tourney, Jūrmala 2024
 5th Place



h†2,5 (3+11) C+
 b) ♜d4→d3

- a) 1...Se2 2.Kd5 Rd1 3.Re5 Sc3†
 b) 1...R×h3 2.Kd4 Rh4 3.Rd5 Sf3†

Clear presentation, but the move 1...R×h3 is rather weak and the cook-stopping bQ somewhat expensive.