

8th YCCC – Section C – Award

Introduction

This YCCC-8 section was for all the genres except endgames. The final order in the award is based on average of marks given by the eight eminent judges and chess composers (on the 0-4 scale), after excluding the lowest and the highest marks. The judges didn't mark entries composed by their countrymen.

Before marking, all judges took part in a month-long email discussion and a devoted exchange of thoughts. During this process some partial predecessors (earlier problems with similar thematic contents) were discovered by the judges and by another esteemed chess composer Udo Degener. Mr. Degener kindly helped check originality of all YCCC twomovers in the [Albrecht database](#) he is running (with over 300.000 #2s from more than 15.000 composers). Some positions for comparison, mentioned in this award, were found in the [Yet Another Chess Problem Database \(YACPDB\)](#), created and maintained by Dmitri Turevski. Others were found in the paid WinChloe database by Christian Poisson.

The same as the Albrecht database, the YACPDB is a free online database, another generous gift to the lovers of chess composition around the world. When you find the names **Albrecht** and **YACPDB** in this award, followed by certain numbers, you may use those ID numbers and the hyperlinks given above to find the relevant problems in several seconds. WID followed by a number refers to the WinChloe database.

Out of 30 received entries, only one had to be eliminated from the award, since it was incidentally sent to another tourney and published the same year. As you may see from the comments, the 2024 participants deserve applause for one of the best ever YCCC sets of original compositions!

Some general comments

Vlaicu Crişan: Compared to previous year(s), one could have expected there would be 3-4 good quality compositions, but not 8 original masterpieces of FIDE Album level!

Paz Einat: A very enjoyable tourney, the highest level so far. I opted to give 4 points to the highest problems and score the rest accordingly.

Hans Gruber: Indeed, some quite good entries!

Andrey Selivanov: I am glad that the tournament turned out to be so interesting and many top-class compositions have a great chance to get into the FIDE Album!

Kjell Widlert: As this is a tourney for less experienced (but young) people, I have tried to a) say something about every entry, b) say something positive about every entry, c) explain something about the contents of some entries, d) suggest some possible simple improvements.

Do keep in mind that you are free to use the versions of your problems suggested by the judges, in future reproductions.

Ranking

1. Place No.15**Ural Khasanov**

4b3/8/4pR2/4p1rq/P3k3/KSp1Sp2/2P5/2B5



#12

7+8

1.Sc5+ Kd4 2.Se6+ Ke4 3.Sc5+ Kd4 4.Sb3+ Ke4 5.Sd1 Kd5
6.Sc3+ Kc4 7.Sd1 Kd5 8.Se3+ Ke4 9.Sc5+ Kd4 10.Kb4 e4 11.Sb3+
Ke5 12.Bb2#

KW: Two logically connected S pendulums: the main plan 1.Sc5+ 2.Kb4 only works when Pc3 and Pe6 are gone; Pe6 can be eliminated with the pendulum Sb3-c5xe6-c5-b3; Pc3 can be eliminated with the pendulum Se3-d1xc3-d1-e3. As the second pendulum also needs Pe6 to be gone, we must start with the first pendulum. All very neatly done in an excellent logical moremove.
VC: One needs lots of experience to compose a wonderful logical moremove with several preparatory plans. The economy is outstanding! Mircea Manolescu (YACPD 67631) used a similar matrix in WCCT-6, but his entry was later cooked. The youngster not only made it work properly but significantly improved the content!

MC: there are a lot of similar moremoves (also selfmate moremoves) in the top of awards and in FIDE Albums under the

label "Pendulum in order to...". Sometimes, I miss the nuances that makes one special compared to the others... This one is excellently produced with great economy and quiet moves (5,7.Sd1 and 10.Kb4). The entry that impressed me as the more demanding from the technical point of view.

PE: Wonderful strategy, opening wRf6 control and removing bPc3 for c3 threat and the Bb2 mate. Excellent control of the bQ & bR not to interfere with the solution!

HG: After 4.- Ke4, diagram position without e6, and after 8.- Ke4 further without c3. Good mastery.

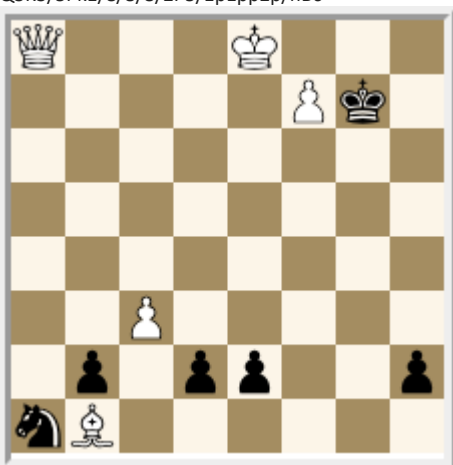
OC: A very nice logical more-mover.

AS: implementation of a complex logical design in a light form.

MMD: Reminiscent of many moremoves, but very well done.

2. Place No.28**Joachim Hambros**

Q3K3/5Pk1/8/8/8/2P5/1p1pp2p/nB6



ser-h=13

Isardam

5+6

1. d1S 2. Sxc3 3. Sd5 4. h1Q 5. Qh8 6. Se7 7. e1R 8. Rxb1 9. Rg1
10. b1B 11. Bh7 12. Kg8 13. Rg7 13... Qxa1=

KW: A wonderful and very natural idea: all possible promotions of Pf7 are Isardam-illegal as they would produce an observation of a black piece of the same type, so the bK can occupy g8 and the four black pieces must keep g8 under observation - which is the basis of the stalemate. The wonderful new idea is that these four black pieces all arise from promotion, so we have an AUW!

VC: Ask me to guess the author and I would instantly say with no hesitation: "Michel Caillaud"! This has the full package: clear theme, attractive solution, fairy specificity and solver's appeal. Perhaps the best entry from an artistic point of view.

MC: The white virtual AUW in Isardam is known from a proofgame by Manfred Rittirsch (WID111503, 1999), Completing it with a black AUW is a bold idea, clearly designed for the top of the award.

PE: Fantastic!! The final position is top class.

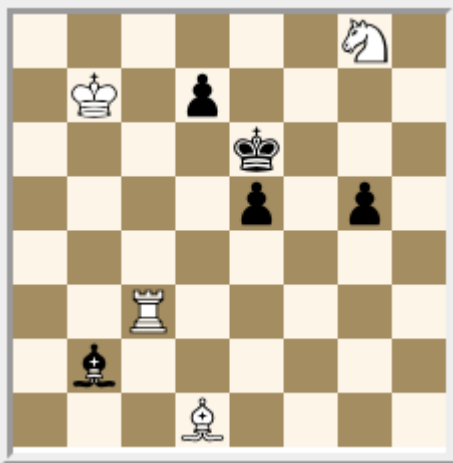
MMD: clearly the best problem of the set.

AS: Another decoration of the YCCC.

OC: A brilliant idea of an Isardam stalemate. Unfortunately, bSa1 was added just to avoid cooks.

3. Place No.27**Anton Nasyrov**

6S1/1K1p4/4k3/4p1p1/8/2R5/1b6/3B4



h#2

6 Sol.

4+5

- 1.Kf7 Bb3+ (A) 2.Ke8 Rc8# (B) ; 1.d6 Rc8 (B) 2.Kd7 Bg4# (C)
 1.d5 Bg4+ (C) 2.Kd6 Rc6# (D) ; 1.Kd5 Rc6 (D) 2.Bd4 Sf6# (E)
 1.Kf5 Sf6 (E) 2.Kf4 Rf3# (F) ; 1.Ba3 Rf3 (F) 2.Bd6 Bb3# (A)

KW: A sensational cycle of six white moves, in extremely economical form. It is a pity that Bd1 is idle in the Sf6# solution, but the thematic content can carry this weakness.

MC: I searched in the Winchloé database for other examples of a 6-fold cycle of white moves in h#2 without twins (it can be interesting with twins, but the real technical challenge is without twins) and found only one (WID682801, YACPDB 438728):

- 1.axb3 gxf3 2.Kc4 Se3#
 1.Ke6 Se3 2.Qf4 Rxe8#
 1.Bxe5 Rxe8 2.Bf4 e4#
 1.Rcc3 e4+ 2.Kc6 Sd4#
 1.Sxb4 Sd4 2.Kc5 Rb5#
 1.Kxe5 Rb5+ 2.Ke4 gxf3#

A great technical achievement..but...there are 3 black Rooks in the diagram! Hence the special award. So this theme is challenging not only for youngsters. A flaw such as idle wBd1 in a solution is certainly less important when no flawless realization of the idea exists.

VC: It made me envy: I think the six-fold cycle in H#2s without twinning was shown before only once, but never in such a superb position. I would gladly forgive the unused wBd1 from the 4th solution – such a daring attempt must be immediately recognised.

HG: Fantastic & economical 6-chain cycle with ONLY the minor weakness that in 1 solution the Bd1 is idle.

OC: A difficult 6 white-move cycle. A great achievement.

MK: Two thematic white pieces in the partial predecessor are idle in some solutions: wPe2 doesn't take part in three solutions & wPg2 in four. The fact that these are „only“ pawns makes these weaknesses less visible.

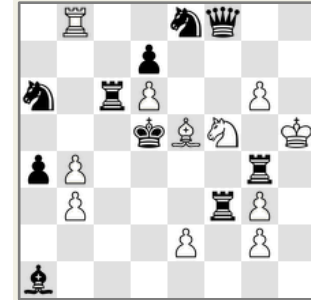
AS: A great record!

PE: Highly commendable achievement!!

MMD: Though not quite perfect it is still impressive.

Emil Klemanič, Ján Kovalič
 Special Prize The Problemist 2015

1R2nq2/3p4/n1rP2P1/3kBN1K/pP4r1/1P3rP1/4P1P1/b7



h#2

6 sol.

11+10

4. Place No.32**Anirudh Daga**

8/3R3P/prb5/k6K/2pp4/P3rB2/1P6/2b5



hs#3.5

b) Add black Sd4

6+8

- a) 1...Ka4 2.Rd5 Bd7 3.Kg5 Rh6 4.Bd1+ Rb3#
 b) 1...Kb5 2.Bd1 Rh3+ 3.Kg6 Bh6 4.Rd5+ Bxd5 #

KW: Two solutions with almost complete analogy, based on Black's two indirect batteries in the diagram. The white K walks into one of them, turning it into a direct battery, while the other one opens to let both battery pieces guard flights (the rear piece does this by occupying h6 behind the white K, a strong link between the solutions). Three pairs of pieces exchange their functions. This is a high-quality modern hs#.

VC: I could have composed this helpselfmate! OK, only Anirudh Daga can create such a composition. Last year he submitted an HS# in YCCC and participated in the Romanian Tzuica Tournament. Please pay attention to how he ensured the interplay. A true masterpiece!

HG: Remarkable play by both Black & White in a very open position, excellent twinning.

PE: Great HS problem!

MC: Echo at every move! Repeated Bd1 and Rd5 are parts of the scheme (exchange of white moves).

OC: Intensive and analogical solutions, in a high standard help-selfmate.

AS: Excellent design of mates.

5. Place No.29

Ilija Serafimović

3s4/4p3/2PkP3/rp4QK/pSp3ps/B1p1p3/2Pr2Bq/7b



h#2

2 Sol.

8+14

1.Rd5 (pinning WQ) Sa6+ 2.Rc5 Qd5#

1.Qe5 (pinning WQ) Sd3+ 2.Qc5 Qe5#

try: 1.Sxc6 Sxc6+ 2.b4 Qxe7#?(WQ is pinned!)

KW: Two mates on a pin-line (by Pelle moves), with the special feature that both this pin and the necessary pin of the pinner are created during the play. The reason that Black must make it harder for White by pinning Qg5 is that a check from the Ba3-Sb4 battery must be parried by interposition on c5. A nice extra touch is the fact that the possible cook by 1.Sxc6 Sxc6+ is stopped by another pin of Qg5! The position is necessarily fairly heavy.

VC: It will surely get in the FIDE Album. The idea is difficult: mating Pelle movements with FML effects. Eric Huber told me he tried to improve the economy but miserably failed. Every single detail from the construction is important. This will receive by far the best technical merit and standing ovations.

OC: A very dynamic, beautiful and difficult idea. The mating move is a Pelle move and the pin is created during the play.

HG: Extremely ambitious and original.

AS: A complex set of ideas, perfectly implemented.

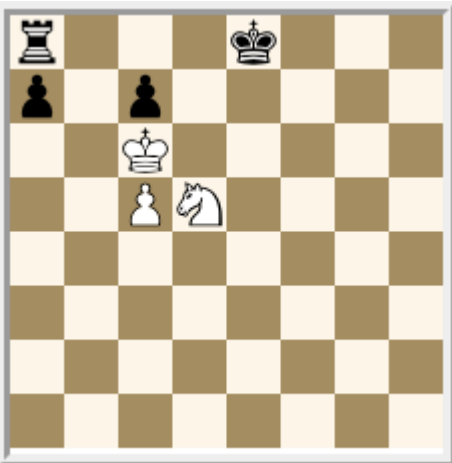
PE: A very nice idea, especially in light of the Umnov. 2nd best H#2 (behind the 6-fold cycle).

MMD: Is it not a serious defect that the pins of the wQ are purely cosmetic? It can easily be reset to keep the solutions without the pins.

6. Place No.24

Dylan Schenker

r3k3/p1p5/2K5/2PN4/8/8/8/8



h#3.5

SetPlay

3+4

setplay: 1... ...2. 0-0-0 Kb5 3. Kb7 Sb6 4. Rb8 c6#

If Black moves first, then Black may still have castling rights

try: 1... Sb6 2. cxb6 cxb6 3. 0-0-0?? bxa7 4. R~ a8=Q/R#

If White moves first, then Black cannot have castling rights

1... Kb7 2. Rd8 Kxa7 3. Kd7 c6+ 4. Kc8 Se7#

KW: A real find. In the set-play, Black castles - in the solution, castling would work but is illegal as Black must have moved K or R last. The challenge when composing such a problem is to devise another solution without castling, and this was done in the best possible way here: Black performs a fake castling instead, moving K and R separately. I hope that detail is new.

VC: This tricky can't castler features a theme I have never seen before in previous YCCC editions. Sam Loyd's famous ideas might have inspired the composer to show the same theme in helpmates! It will surely become a classic.

AS: I like the realization of such a retro idea in a miniature.

PE: Nice "slow castling" idea in the solution to counter the real one in the set play.

MC: Many helpmates with setplay based on the trick in the pioneer problem by Sam Loyd have been published. The standard try with waiting move+illegal setplay is missing and it is good that instead another try with illegal 0-0-0 exists, even if dualistic. The point that makes this problem a very rare case among the many others is that castling is decomposed in the solution. And this is done with an economical position and attractive solutions!

MMD: Nicely done in miniature

HG: A very nice find. A pity that the castling try is not unique.

OC: A set play with a castle and a solution with three black moves which create a “long castle” manoeuvre. Very clever.

7. Place No.5

Itay Richardson

6b1/8/8/1pp2P2/1pR5/3pp1PP/K3B2r/1N1rq1k1



h#3 b) Move Kg1 to d6 7+10

- a) 1.Kf2 Bh5 2.Bh7 Rg4 3.Ke2 Rf4#
 b) 1.Kd5 Rh4 2.Rh1 Bg4 3.Kc4 Bf3#

KW: In both solutions, Rc4 and Be2 are unpinned (one by the black K, the other by a move by the pinning piece) to form a mating battery. That the black K is mated on the square the white piece left in the first move (a delayed Umnov) follows naturally from the setup. An unusual treatment of the well-known theme of reciprocal Indian manoeuvres.

VC: To compose two mutual Indian batteries with the thematic white pieces initially pinned and discovery mates (no double check) is out of the ordinary. I loved the author's imagination!

HG: Two unpins to support battery creation. A bit clumsy, and I don't like the twinning (move by BK), but the problem is ambitious and harmonic.

MC: I too am not a fan of this kind of twins, but in the case of this strong and excellent geometric display, there is hardly another choice.

PE: Refreshing reciprocal wR/wB batteries with the bK taking the place of the white rear battery piece. The unpins by the bK, coupled with the direct unpin of the 2nd white piece, make for a very good combination.

OC: Harmonious play. Although the Indian+Grimshaw theme was done many times in such helpmates, there are other motives like the mates without double checks, and the arrival of the black king to the original white piece square.

MMD: Somewhat familiar, but ambitious.

8. Place No.34

Andrii Sergiienko

rnb1k1Br/pppp2pp/4p3/8/1q3P2/5N2/PPP1n1PP/RNnb3BK



PG12

12+15

1. e4 f5 2. Bc4 fe 3. Bg8 e6 4. f4 Qe7 5. Nf3 Qb4 6. 0-0 Bc5+
 7. d4 ed+ e. p. 8. Be3 d2 9. Qc1 c1N 10. Kh1 Ne2 11. Bg1 Be3
 12. Rc1 Bc1

KW: Valladao = castling, en-passant and P promotion. One interesting feature (common in proofgames) is that Se2 did not come from g8 in four moves, but instead from Pf7 in six moves. Another amusing feature is the double capture on c1.

OC: A Valladao with additional themes. I liked the en-passant which works naturally and perfectly. Another feature that I liked is that all the pieces that hint the Valladao, move after they demonstrate the thematic content, and therefore the Valladao is hidden from the solver: Kg1 move to h1 (and therefore the en-passant mechanism is hidden), the white rook that participates in the castling is sacrificed, and the promoted black knight moves from the promotion square. This makes the task of solving this problem very enjoyable, and the Valladao is a great surprise for the solver.

VC: Just a nice combination of known motifs - including the not-mentioned black Bristol. The author must be praised for the attempt to remove all visible traces of his idea.

HG: Two (invisible) captures on c1, well-done thematic proof game.

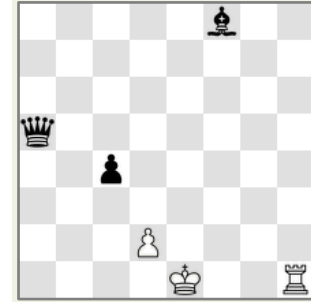
MC: Having en passant in the course of the solution is challenging for the proofgame composer (having it as the last move is easy). However, finding a new mechanism is difficult. The one here :

1.0-0 (or Kf2) Bc5+ 2.d4 cxd3 e.p.+ with pin of the wP used to avoid the interversion 1.d3,d4 has been shown for the first time by Unto Heinonen (WID93992, 1993) (doubling it for a double Valladao!) and since then in a number of other PGs.

No. 34 is not so original but well done with disappearance of the thematic Pawn and Bc1 as a false track of a promoted piece, on the same square as the real promotion (same-square captures as indicated by the composer).

PE: A very good and complex proof game!!

5b2/8/8/q7/2p5/8/3P4/4K2R



9. Place No.13

Samat Galyaviev

4Q3/8/1K5n/3kP3/1p6/5PR1/2N1PB2/7q



#2

8+4

1.Sd4? threat: 2.Qb5#/Qe6# 1...Kc4 2.Qc6# but: 1...Qxf3!

1.f4? threat: 2.Qc6# 1...Kc4 2.Qb5# but: 1...Ke4!

1.Bd4! threat: 2.Qc6# 1...Kc4 2.Qe6#

KW: The content is modern and complex: the thematic defence Kc4 once (1.Sd4?) defends against the two threats Qb5/Qe6# but lets in the new mate Qc6#, once (1.f4?) conversely defends against the threat Qc6# but lets in the new mate Qb5# (not Qe6), and finally (1.Bd4!) again defends against the threat Qc6# but lets in the new mate Qe6# (not Qb5). This is technically known as a double-threat le Grand, or a Burmistrov combination. The position is very elegant but has the weakness that Rg3 is only needed for one try and is superfluous in the real solution. It could have been given at least a passive function by moving Rg3->h3 and Sh6->h8. Essentially the same matrix was used by Murashev/Chernyavskiy in 2021 (Albrecht 280444), without unused pieces in the solution.

OC: There are 3 possible mates/threats: Qc6/b5/e6. Each one of them guards the original bK square (d5) and the bK square after the

variation (c4). The two tries and the solution provide different combinations of these mates.

HG: Clear idea, but K flight as a refutation is very coarse.

MC: The composer chose an ambitious and difficult theme and has to be praised for that. A flaw is wRg3.

PE: It is a commendable achievement to show the Burmistrov combination in Meredith form, but the unused wR and poor refutation are weak points.

MMD: Good idea but basically anticipated.

10. Place No.3

Taras Rudenko

6q1/5B2/8/b3R3/1r4p1/1P2NkPp/5P2/5K2



#2

7+6

1.Sc4? threat: 2.Re3#/Sd2# 1...Qg5 2.Bd5# but: 1...Rxb3!

1.Sc2? threat: 2.Re3#/Se1# 1...Rxb3 2.Sd4# but: 1...Re4!

1.Sf5? threat: 2.Re3#/Sh4# but: 1...Qg5!

1.Sxg4! threat: 2.Sh2# 1...Rxc4/Qxc4 2.Re3# 1...Kxc4 2.Bh5#

KW: The tries all threaten 2.Re3# plus one wS mate, which determines how Black should defend e3. The solution is a nice double sacrifice of the wS, with just a single threat but with the old main threat Re3# returning if bQ or bR accepts the sacrifice. I like it that Bf7, which is essential in the solution, also has a function in one of the tries.

HG: Nice play with double threats, good key (with single threat).

OC: Very interesting tries with double threats and solution with a single threat.

11-12. Place No.25**Nikita Ushakov**

2K5/p1B5/k7/P2P1pN1/2N2n2/7B/6b1/3r2R1



#2

3 Sol.

8+6

1.Rxd5 (1.Ra1?) Ra1 2.Rxa5 Rxa5#

1.Bxd5 (1.Bf1?) Bf1 2.Bxc4 Bxc4#

1.Sxd5 (1.Se6?) Se6 2.Sxc7 Sxc7#

KW: There is good news and bad news here. The good news is in the thematic content: a black piece uses two moves to capture a white one, so that a white piece of the same type can recapture with mate while guarding b5. As an extra goodie, Black can always choose between two routes but must avoid the one that White needs (which would result in White capturing Black one move too early). So far, so good, but the bad news is that two of the white thematic pieces are idle in each solution. I think the content compensates for this flaw.

VC: It is impossible to resist the temptation of composing a Balbo when you are a junior! Yes, 2-3 white pieces are idle in each mating position.

OC: Three nice pairs of tries/solutions. Some white officers work in one solution only. I wonder if this can be fixed.

AS: I like the well unified anti-duals.

HG: The author must learn that this is not a good way to use white officers. The idea itself is good. Authors (also senior ones!) should learn NOT to use Helpmate Analyzer as a tool to "describe the theme" - and then just list effects and attributes. This is dangerous because authors must learn what is essential in their problems and focus on the theme(s). Effects how to achieve the intended contents are something different.

MMD: The mark is for the high degree of unity, but unity of theme must be allied to economy of means!

11-12. Place No.33**Idan David**

3B4/6K1/7p/7k/8/1pp4P/2pppp2/1BQ1RRb1



#2

7+9

setplay: 1...dxe1~ 2.Qxh6# 1...exf1~ 2.Re5#

1.Qd1! threat: 2.Qxe2# 1...dxe1Q/dxe1S/dxe1R 2.Qd5#

Changed mate

1...c1S/cxd1~ 2.Bg6# 1...exd1~ 2.Re5# Transferred mate

1...fxe1Q/fxe1S/fxe1R 2.Rf5#

KW: Spectacular openings of white lines by capturing and promoting black pawns. Similar ideas have been shown before, of course, but the changed and transferred mates add interest.

HG: Pawns open lines, some changes. The author obviously knows what constitutes a theme.

OC: 4 black pawns open white lines, and a nice sacrificial key.

PE: With the flaws of No. 13 this closely contests as the best of the #2 problems.

13. Place No.2**Ivan Belonozhko**

2Br1Q1b/1P1pN2p/R3P1pK/4kpPP/2R5/3n1P2/3P4/8



#2

12+8

1.b8S! (~) 1...d5 2.Sec6# 1...d6 2.Sbc6# 1...dxe6 2.Rxe6# 1...R~
 2.Sxd7# 1...S~ 2.f4# 1...Sf4 2.d4# 1...f4 2.Re4# 1...Bf6 2.Qxf6#
 1...Bg7+ 2.Qxg7# 1...gxh5 2.Qxf5#

KW: Rich play where the main interest is in the separation of the two mates following 1...d6/d5. Both moves unguard c6 and open Bc8-e6, so both white knights might mate on c6. 1...d6 blocks d6, allowing 2.Sbc6# closing Ra6-d6. 1...d5 blocks d5, allowing 2.Sec6# but not 2.Sbc6+? as the line Qf8-d6 must be opened. The other variations are much simpler.

VC: A single-line twomover, with the subtle minor promotion key closing the zugzwang. The wealth of variations is impressive - old good English school at its best.

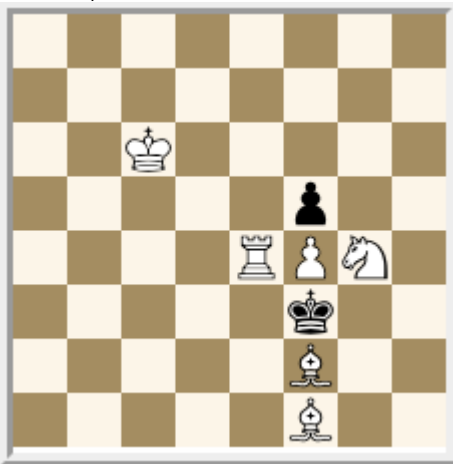
HG: Nice variations of BPd7 with two different knight mates c6. Clever black correction Sf4. Good demonstration of a classic (=old-fashioned) idea.

MMD: 19th century style!

OC: Beautiful separation of mates after bPd7 moves, and nice black correction of bSd3.

14. Place No.22**Mikhail Shalashov**

8/8/2K5/5p2/4RPS1/5k2/5B2/5B2



h#2

2 Sol.

6+2

1.Kxg4 Re6 2.Kh5 Be2#
 1.Kxe4 Kd7 2.Kd5 Sf6#

KW: The black K walks to the northeast or northwest, eliminating one unneeded white piece in the process, ending with pretty model mates. A very tasteful problem.

OC: The undesired white officers are removed during the solution, and the final positions are model mates. A cute problem.

HG: Captures are forced, but a nice arrangement.

MMD: Really needs a feature like Zilahi to be interesting.

15. Place No.12**Timur Doronin**

8/3K4/1p6/RpNk1p/3B4/1PPb2nB/8/5R2



#2

8+7

1.Se4! threat: 2.Sf6# 1...Bxe4 2.Rxb5# 1...Sxe4 2.Rxf5# 1...Kxe4
 2.Bg2# 1...fxe4 2.Be6#

KW: The white S is sacrificed to four black pieces, with good economy (Rf1 and Bh3 both have two functions).

OC: Very nice sacrifice with 4 different variations, each variation has a different motif (line opening, line closure, unguard, and moving to the flight square).

HG: Good key, sacrifices continue to provide fun. The author will learn that this is no more state-of-the-art (Deplore role of Ra5, etc.). Compare to Wright Wood, 1944/45 (Albrecht 66235).

MMD: Moving the Ra5 to b4 allows the Pb6 to be removed and the key piece is no longer en prise.

MC: Strong move b6xc5 before the key lessens the beauty of the key; happily, this is avoided in the version by Michael.

16. Place No.11**Ruslan Stetsenko**

8/K7/3R4/2kp4/PNB1nq2/8/8/8



h#2

2 Sol.

5+4

1.Sxd6 Bb5 2.Qd4 Sa6# ; 1.Qxd6 Sa6+ 2.Kc6 Bb5#

KW: Rd6 can be removed without changing the solutions, but should it be? Interesting question - the position becomes more economical, but the main point of the problem is in the sacrifices of White's strongest piece in a fairly light position.

MC: (also for 29): In France, we have the label "licence poétique" (poetic license?) for the cases of "offenses" to the strict rules of economy in order to produce more beauty (this "beauty" being of course a matter of subjectivity).

OC: Two captures of wRd6 in the first black move. It reminds me a problem that I composed when I was a kid, with two white queens on the board, one of them is captured in the first move and the other is sacrificed and captured in the second move. Therefore, like in this problem, one queen was "artificial". I think it is OK to put a white officer which is removed from the board just to provide a paradoxical capture in the first move.

VC: The passive sacrifices of the wR recall another classic – [Pal](#)

[Benko's immortal](#) (YACPDB 409377) with the unexpected passive sacrifices of the wQ on the same thematic square.

AS: Black play on the same square and the alternation of white moves.

HG: Reciprocal white moves with blocks d6, but the author should learn to find better reasons for the capture of a white officer.

MMD: On the question of the strictly unnecessary rook, I would refer you to Chris Feather's comment on a Benko problem (YACPDB 44725, The Problemist Sept. 1973 p.373-4): "If the useless WR be removed, the whole thing is trivial; with it, the problem has wit and charm. Did it deserve a first prize?"

17-20. Place No.6**Egor Malanin**

3R4/Kp3B1p/pPp5/Rbk1P1P1/P1p1pPp1/P6r/N1N1 P3/6b1



#3

13+11

1.e3! ~ 2.Rd4 ~ 3.Rxc4# 1...Bxe3/Rh2/Rh6 2.Sc3 ~ 3.Sxe4#
1...Rxe3 2.Sd4 ~ 3.Se6# 2...c3 3.Sb3#

KW: The idea is good: the key-move closes two black lines (Nowotny) and the threat uses both interferences; when Black captures on e3, the threat doesn't work but White can use the remaining single interference. The question that makes the whole thing interesting is: why don't the two continuations using the interference of one black piece work already after the key, when both black pieces are interfered?? The answer is that the captures on e3 have additional weaknesses that are needed for mate - Bxe3 blocks e3 so that 2.Sc3 Rxe3?? is impossible, and Rxe3 loses access to h6 so that 2.Sd4 Rh6?? is impossible. The position is very heavy, however. Most of all, it is a pity that one white S is unused in each variation - it looks like the unmoving S should always guard b4, but Pa3 spoils this idea. That problem can be easily fixed by removing Pa3 and moving Pg4 to g2 in order to stop the defence 1...Rh2. The pin of Bb5 by Ra5 is only used in the threat and doesn't add anything worthwhile, so the

position can be further lightened by removing Ra5, Bb5, Pb6, Pb7 and moving Pa6 to a5.

VC: An atypical long and quiet threat after the Novotny key is followed by quiet continuations in the thematic variations. However, I would have loved to see more variations after W2 moves, like in Schiff's 1st prizewinner. (YACPDB 48371).

OC: Novotny with a threat which uses the closure of both Novotny lines. Therefore, each capture of the Novotny piece prevents the threat. A difficult and nice idea.

HG: Quiet threat. Coarse key. Quiet second moves. (Too) Clumsy. Very traditional content. Good sub-variation 2.- c3.

MMD: Again ambitious, but too many flaws to be given a higher mark.

17-20. Place No.10**Georgie Eruslanov**

Nr6/2npP3/8/1pp4b/p1k5/P1NpP1R1/KP1P2B1/8



#2

10+9

1.e8=S! threat: 2.Sd6# 1...Bxe8 2.Rg4# 1...Sxe8 2.Bd5# 1...Rxe8/Rb6 2.Sxb6#

KW: The problem has a very clear idea: three black pieces capture the newly promoted white S, leading to different mates. Pb2 serves no purpose and can be removed together with Pa4, saving two pieces. Another, completely different, weakness of the matrix is the fact that Sa8, Rg3, and Bg2 are only used in one mate each and have no other function. This can be improved by moving Rg3 to g5 and removing Sc3, so that the white R and B take turns guarding d5 (it is then a good idea to move Bg2 to c6 so that 1...b4 isn't such a strong move in the diagram position).

MC: The proposal by Kjell with Bc6 is also a good thing as it prevents the black dual 1...Rb6.

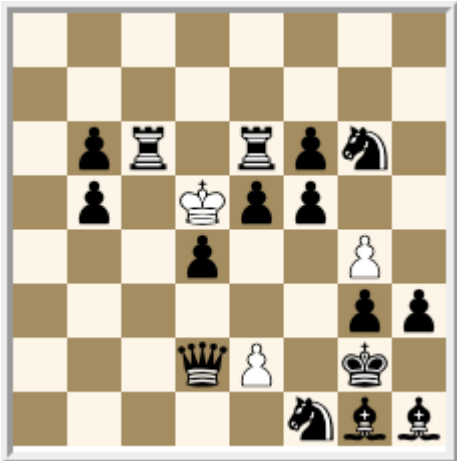
OC: A clean problem with a clear thematic content.

HG: Knight & sacrifice fun, but only a collection of mates.

MMD: Unity in the variations, but some constructional weakness.

17-20. Place No.23**Iancu-Ioan Sandea**

8/8/1pr1rpn1/1p1Kpp2/3p2P1/6pp/3qP1k1/5nbb



The last 2 moves of b & w?

2+16

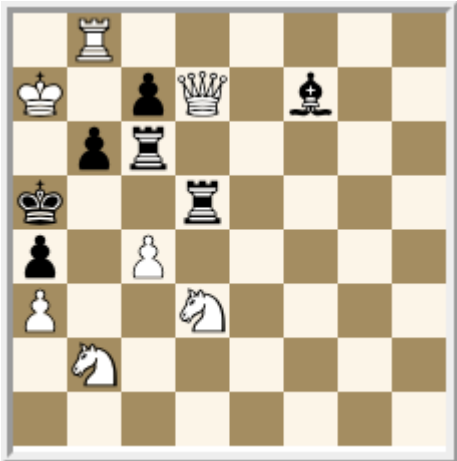
1.Sf3-h2 Kg2-xh2+ 2.e2-e4 d4-xe3 (en passant)

KW: A good idea: the last move must have been an en-passant capture, and before that Black must have captured a white Sh2 so that White has a previous move.

OC: A well-known en-passant idea, with an additional retro move. The material price for adding this extra move seems quite big.

17-20. Place No.26**Luka Tyrtshnikov**

1R6/K1pQ1b2/1pr5/k2r4/p1P5/P2N4/1N6/8



#2

7+7

setplay: 1...Rc~ 2.Qa4# 1...Rxc4 2.Sxc4#

1.Se5? threat: 2.Sc6# 1...Rxe5/Rdc5 2.Qd2#1...Rc~ 2.Qa4# 1...Rxc4 2.Sexc4/Sbxc4 but: 1...Rdd6!

1.Kb7? threat 2.Ra8 but:1... b5!

1.Qc8? threat 2.Qa6 but:1...b5!

1.Ra8 ? threat 2.Kb8/Kb7# but: 1...b5!

1.Sc5! threat 2.Sb7# 1...Rdc5 2.Qd2 1...bc5 2.Rb5 1...Rcc5 2.Qa4

1.Qc6? 1...Be8!

KW: White sacrifices an S to three black pieces. All the tries have no thematic significance but make the problem more dynamic: White has several promising routes of attack.

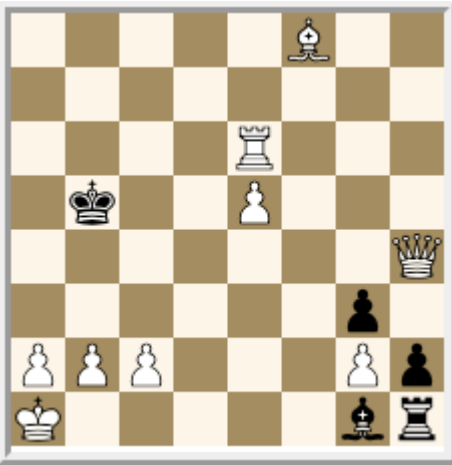
OC: After the sacrifice in the key, capturing this piece opens three different white lines.

AS: Various attempts and a sacrifice, with three variations.

HG: The tries with the Ra8 threat are not essential.

21. Place No.8**Alexandru Mihălcescu**

5B2/8/4R3/1k2P3/7Q/6p1/PPP3Pp/K5br



#2

9+5

1.Qe7! (-) 1...Ka4 2.Qc5 B~# 1...Kc4 2.Qc5+ Bxc5# 1...Ka5 2.Qe8 B~#

KW: The key-move grants the black K two new flight-squares, in addition to the one (a5) he has already in the diagram. One would like to see three different second moves, but 2.Qc5 occurs twice (forcing selfmate in different ways, however).

VC: The unprovided initial flight is more than compensated by the double flight giving key. Surely the author would have loved to show three quiet variations.

OC: A nice key which provides two flight squares and a zugzwang.

HG: One phase seems to be too little.

MMD: Attractive setting, but otherwise slight.

22-24. Place No.9**Azat Khakimov**

b7/4K1p1/5p1b/3pk3/3R3P/B1PP3P/1PP2P1N/5B2



#3

12+6

1.Rf4! ~ 2.Bd6# 1...d4 2.Bd6+ Kd5 3.Bg2# 1...Kxf4 2.Ke6 ~ 3.Bd6# 1...Bxf4 2.d4+ 2...Ke4/Kf5 3.Bd3#

KW: The white R is sacrificed on f4 to two black pieces, with different continuations. This is one kind of problem I liked to make when I was a beginner. It is possible to save Pb2 by simply moving Ba3 to b4, but better yet is to save four pieces by moving Bh6 to c1 and Ba3 to c5, removing Pb2, Pc3, Pg7, and Ba8, and then moving the whole position one step to the left (to avoid the defence 1...Ba3). It is then possible to replace Pg3 in the new position with a black Ph4.

HG: Short threat, a pity. Joy of sacrifice, but old-fashioned (and in old times they did such things more economically).

MMD: Like Kjell, this reminds me of my early efforts!

OC: A nice sacrificial key.

22-24. Place No.14**Veronica Slepenschuk**

8/3N4/3np3/4p3/K1k3r1/3p4/5bR1/8



h#2

2 Sol.

3+8

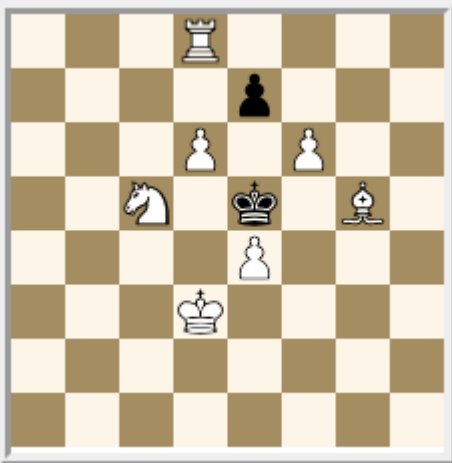
1.Bd4 Rc2+ 2.Kd5 Sf6#
1.Rd4 Rg5 2.e4 Rc5#

KW: Mutual interferences of black R and B (a Grimshaw) on d4. It is a pity that b5 is doubly guarded in one mate, but moving Ka4 to a3 would spoil the Grimshaw theme. There are two reasons why Black must play Bd4 before Kd5, so the play will be more subtle if Bf2 is moved to g1: only the Grimshaw interference determines why 1.Bd4! is the correct move order.

OC: Varied black Grimshaw with line opening of wR.

22-24. Place No.19**Daniyar Farzaleev**

3R4/4p3/3P1P2/2N1k1B1/4P3/3K4/8/8



#2

7+2

1.Ke3! 1...e6 2.Sd3# 1...exf6 2.Bf4# 1...exd6 2.Re8#

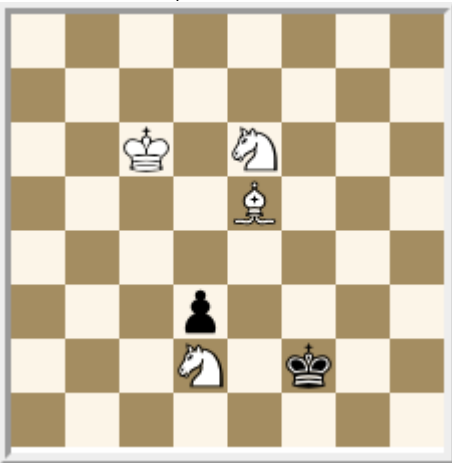
KW: Three selfblocks by a black P in a very clear and economical setting. Similar things have been done before, of course: Blaauw 1963 (Albrecht 230736), Schmidt 1999 (Albrecht 45323).

OC: A clear and neat idea with minimal material.

MMD: A bit too simple for my taste.

25. Place No.30**Benjamin Defromont**

8/8/2K1N3/4B3/8/3p4/3N1k2/8



h#3

4+2

1.Ke2 1...Bh8 2.Ke3 Sg7 3.Kd4 Sf5# 1...Sc7 2.Ke3 Bf4+ 3.Kd4 Sb5#

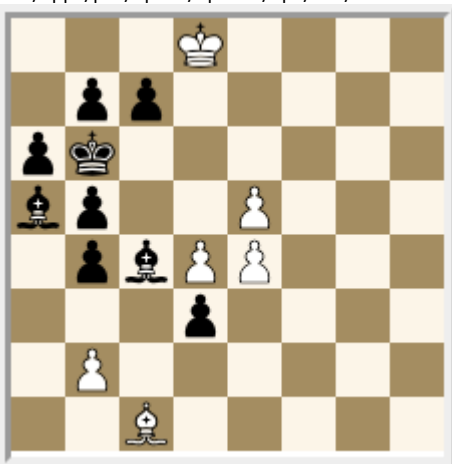
KW: Beautiful ideal mates, but the identical black play in both solutions is a serious weakness.

HG: 2nd solution (variation) is much weaker.

OC: One very nice solution and the other is technical. I wonder if it is better to move wB to a1 and get rid of the technical solution.

26. Place No.7**Yaroslav Utkin**

3K4/1pp5/pk6/bp2P3/1pbPP3/3p4/1P6/2B5



h#2

2 Sol.

6+9

1.Bd5 Be3 2.Bc6 d5#

1.Kc6 d5+ 2.Kc5 Be3#

KW: Both solutions have an interesting move to c6: Bc6 interferes with Pc7, and Kc6 is a tempo move. But this tempo situation has cost many black pawns.

HG: Reciprocal white moves with tempo by BK, but too clumsy and tiny.

MC: There seems to be some effort by the composer around the lack of tempo (except Kc6) for the set 1...d5.

OC: A block and line interference of the bPc7 in one solution, and tempo move in the other.

MMD: Rather simple play.

27. Place No.16**Yaroslav Popov**

8/1p1N4/1bkp4/3p4/1K4B1/8/8/8



h#2 2 Sol. 3+5

1.Bd8 Be2 2.Bc7 Bb5#
 1.Bc7 Sc5 2.b6 Bd7#

KW: The black B goes to c7 directly or with a delay. With such a simple idea, model mates are very desirable. Both mates are impure now, but that could be fixed by moving the wK to e1 and adding a white Pa4 with a twin b) Pa4->b4. I think the prettier mates are worth an extra wP and a twin.

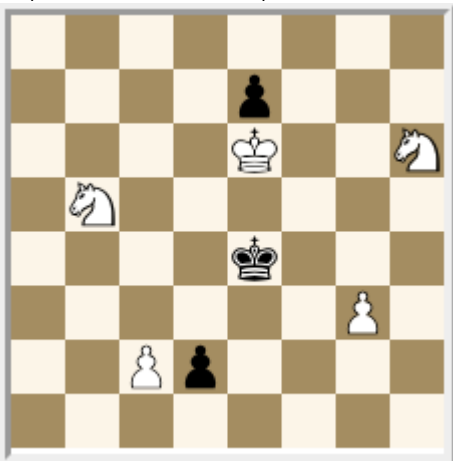
OC: One tempo solution and the other solution is simpler. It is desirable to find richer content for the other moves in the solution.

HG: 1.Bd8 is a good tempo move, but the 1.Bc7 solution is much weaker.

MMD: A bit too simple for my taste.

28. Place No.4**Renārs Mūzis**

8/4p3/4K2N/1N6/4k3/6P1/2Pp4/8



h#2 2 Sol. b) Move Pd2 to e2 5+3

a) 1.d1S Sf7 2.Se3 Sg5#
 1.d1B Sf5 2.Bf3 Sc3#
 b) 1.e1S Sf5 2.Sf3 Sc3#
 1.e1R Sf7 2.Re3 Sg5#

KW: White's play is the same in parts a) and b), but Black must choose other promotions to match the wS moves. Similar play with promotions + selfblocks has been shown often before.

HG: Very tiny, but 4 promotions. 2x same white play - probably intentional.

OC: Similar mates after different promotions.

29. Place No.20**Alexander Poruchikov**

1R6/8/3p3r/pN1pp2B/Kpk1P3/3pB2b/3P4/8



#2 7+9

1.Bf7! threat: 2.Bxd5# 1...Be6 2.Sxd6# 1...Re6 2.Rc8#

KW: The idea is clear: mutual interferences between black R and B on e6 = Grimshaw. This sensible but limited idea can naturally be shown with fewer pieces; the composer should try to do that.

Judges: Michel Caillaud, Ofer Comay, Vlaicu Crişan, Paz Einat, Hans Gruber, Michael McDowell, Andrey Selivanov, and Kjell Widlert.

Coordinator: Marjan Kovačević.