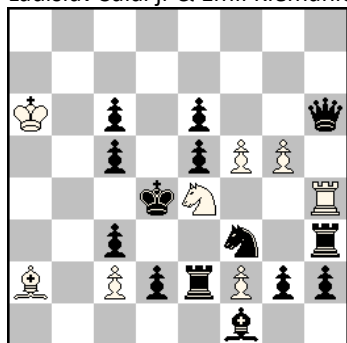


Dom Springaren h#2 2016

The h#2 original entries of 2016 number 56, including 20 from the “Småaker & Hugskott” column; two were excluded beforehand (13569—illegal; 13699—anticipated), leaving a total of 54 for consideration. As expected, they vary a great deal in style and quality, from the complex and ambitious, typically found in the top segment of the award, to the more elementary, which will perhaps not have made it at all—through a middle ground of worthwhile ideas with some technical shortcomings, whose placement has been determined by weighing the merits of the former against the severity of the latter. Three Prizes, six Honourable Mentions and nine Mentions have been distributed as follows:

1 Pr 13645

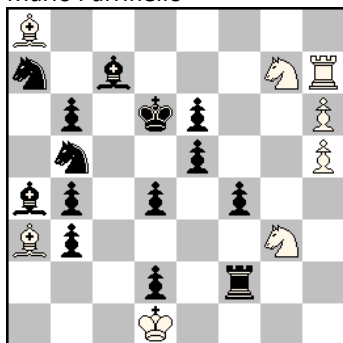
Ladislav Salai jr & Emil Klemanić



h#2 4 lösön

2 Pr 13570

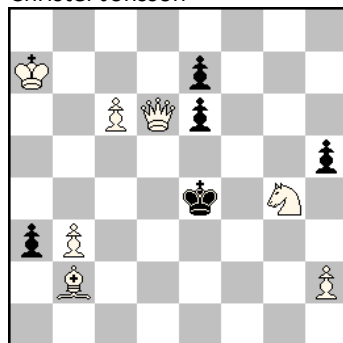
Mario Parrinello



h#2 2 lösön

3 Pr 13755

Christer Jonsson



h#2 3 lösön

1st Prize 13645 (Ladislav Salai Jr & Emil Klemanić)

An ambitious HOTF scheme: The battery is destroyed by either White or Black, and instead four different black pieces self-block on e4. The system of mutual captures is quite intricate: either bQ or bR captures the wR, in which case the wS captures the Pe6 or the Sf3 with mate; or the wR in turn captures the Q or R, and Pe6 and Sf3 respectively capture the wS (having first moved to clear new lines for the Rook to deliver mate—a nice little detail that does a lot to enhance the play). To put it simpler, White's two mating pieces capture each of the four black self-blocking pieces, and are in turn captured by all of them, which, almost as if by accident, means that we are treated to a double Zilahi as well. The construction is heavy, but not clumsy, and apparently optimal—at least I see no obvious way of improving on it.

1.Dxh4 Sxc5 2.De4 Sxe6#, 1.Txh4 Sxd2 2.The4 Sxf3#
1.exf5 Txh6 2.fxe4 Td6#, 1.Sxg5 Txh3 2.Sxe4 Td3#

2nd Prize 13570 (Mario Parrinello)

Also a complex and interesting strategic concept: White needs to open the line for Rh7, but this involves harmful checks; Black therefore captures either of the two mating pieces, Ba3 or Sg3 (Zilahi), in order to open defensive lines for himself to eliminate the offending white piece. The material cost has been substantial, and one reason for this is the choice of letting Black's first move captures open pre-existing black battery lines, instead of the black line-piece making the capture directly, which would allow a considerably lighter construction. I think there could be room for improvement here, but I ultimately agree that the combination of black and white direct line openings represents the most pregnant realisation of the idea.

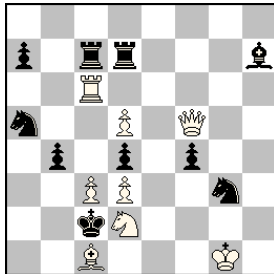
1.Sxa3 Se8+ 2.Lxe8 Se4#, 1.fxg3 Sf5+ 2.Txf5 Lxb4#

3rd Prize 13765 (Christer Jonsson)

The “odd one out” of the Prize problems. The content is obvious from the diagram — but by no means trivial. This is, in fact, one of only six Meredith cyclic Zilahis found in the PDB (which is why this original version is objectively preferable to the one suggested in the comments, sacrificing economy to achieve the last model mate), and the only one with a white Queen (which, considering her proximity to the black King in an open position, is no small technical feat). Of course, one may dream of clever ways of putting the Black material to better use — say, a black Bishop on blocking on e6 and capturing on g4 — but any such attempt inevitably and unsurprisingly produces cooks. Instead, I would point out that the wPh2, seemingly put there just to awkwardly guard g3, actually also prevents the sneaky 1.e5 Sh2 2.Kf4 Qxe5#.

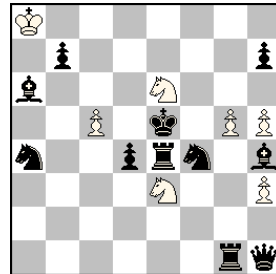
1.exd6 Kb6 2.Kd5 Sf6#, 1.hxg4 Dd5+ 2.Kf4 Lc1#, 1.axb2 Dxe6+ 2.Kd4 Dc4#

1 HM 13701
Abdelaziz Onkoud



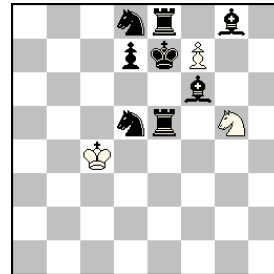
h#2 4 lösn

2 HM 13567
Christer Jonsson



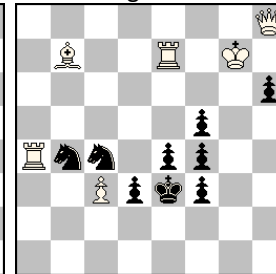
h#2 6 lösn

3 HM 13561
Vladislav Buňka



h#2 3 lösn

4 HM 13637
Horst Böttger



h#2 B: Ke3<>Bf3

1st H.M. 13701 (Abdelaziz Onkoud)

Discussing this problem is effectively comparing it to 13702 by the same author, to which it is closely related. They share one pair of solutions (where Black interposes a piece on the battery line, which is then captured with mate), but differ in the other. The Pawn battery mates add variation to 13702, whereas the bK captures are repeated in 13701; on the other hand, the black and white Knights moving to the same squares gives 13701 a strong sense of unity. Also, the Bc1+Sd2 setup of 13701 is effective and aesthetically pleasing, and the position more economical overall. What ultimately tips the scale against 13702 for me are the self-blocks Qc2/Rd2: since the Q and R guarding the battery lines is inconsequential to the soundness of the problem, these could just as well be assigned to a single piece, e.g. BRh2 (C+), especially as the Re2 disturbs the purity of mate.

1.Tb7 Sc4 2.Kxc3 Sxa5#, 1.Lg8 Se4 2.Kxd3 Sxg3#

1.Sc4 Txc7 2.Kxc3 Txc4#, 1.Se4 Dxh7 2.Kxd3 Dxe4#

2nd H.M.

13567 (Christer Jonsson)

Six Knight model mates (determined by which square has become available to the black King, either by unblocking or removing a white guard) following four different self-blocks on e6, one on f5, and one distant self-block on g5. The first part is clearly the thematic core; the second, removing White's guard of f6, follows very organically from the position since the black Rook serves to stop ...Sg4 cooks anyway; the last deviates from the rest in that the black King moves, but it too feels quite natural (and comes with the dual avoidance point that Rxc5 disallows ...Sg7#). The 1.Bxc5 solution could be “surgically removed” by omitting Bh4 and Ph3, and then Rg1>h4 further eliminates the

1.Rxg5 solution, but I won't argue with the author's choice to include them — after all, “Are we not entertained?”

1.Lc4 Sxf4 2.Le6 Sd3#, 1.Dxh3 Sxd4 2.De6 Sf3#
 1.h6 Sf8 2.Se6 Sg6#, 1.Sxc5 Sd8 2.Sce6 Sf7#
 1.Txg5 Sc7 2.Tf5 Sg4#, 1.Lxg5 Sg4+ 2.Kf5 Sg7#

3rd H.M. 13561 (Vladislav Buňka)

Knight promotions by the same pawn on three different squares, in a reasonably pleasant and economical setting. In two of the solutions, the white King plays an active part and the Bf6 interferes with either of the black Rooks; the third solution is inferior in that it lacks these elements, but the overall impression is nevertheless one of harmony. Clearly, the idea of three S promotions has been presented before, but I am happy to give the author the benefit of doubt when it comes to very close anticipations.

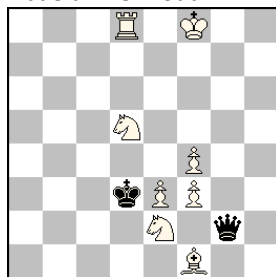
1.Kd6 Kb5 2.Le7 fxe8=S#, 1.Te6 f8=S 2.Td6 Sg6#, 1.Lg7 Kc5 2.Lf8 fxg8=S#

4th H.M. 13637 (Horst Böttger)

A very appealing and natural idea — and one that I would have been willing to bet has been shown before. A quick scan turned up a couple of similar schemes, but I haven't found this particular combination of active white sacrifices and double (SS) pin mates. The position is pretty clean and economical, too; the white configuration can be toyed around with, but not in a way that saves any material, as far as I can see. Well crafted!

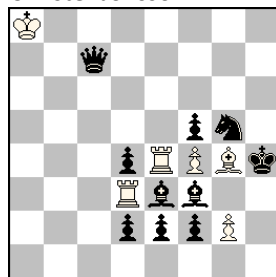
a) 1.Sd5 Txe4+ 2.Kxe4 De8#, b) 1.Se5 Lxe4+ 2.Kxe4 Da8#

5 HM 13640
Abdelaziz Onkoud



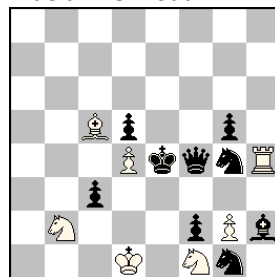
h#2 2 lösn

6 HM 13766
Christer Jonsson



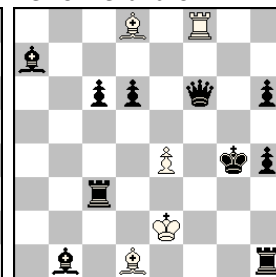
h#2 2 lösn

1 Comm 13767
Abdelaziz Onkoud



h#2 3 lösn

2 Comm 13763
Velko Alexandrov



h#2 B: Bd6>g5

5th H.M. 13640 (Abdelaziz Onkoud)

A charming light-weight take on white diagonal/orthogonal batteries, with non-battery mates following self-blocks by the black Queen. The Pf4, which has the main function of blocking the dual route of the Knights, conveniently also guards e5. A nice find.

1.Df2 Sb4+ 2.Kxe3 Td3#, 1.Dxf3 Sc1+ 2.Ke4 Ld3#

6th H.M. 13766 (Christer Jonsson)

The white half-battery on the fourth rank is transformed into different pins, while the third rank is cleared for the mates on g3 and h3. A rather complex arrangement, with a lot of moving parts that need to be kept under control. Consequently, the position is perhaps a little too crowded to be called beautiful, although I'm sure it's as economical as it can be.

1.Lxf4 Lxf5 2.Lh5 g3#, 1.Lxg4 fxg5 2.Lxg5 Th3#

1st Comm. 13767 (Abdelaziz Onkoud)

Different self-blocks by the half-pinned black Knight leave the black Queen pinned for different white Knight mates. I agree with the solver comment that 2.Bg3 is not the most exciting option. There are ways of tinkering with the scheme to add a layer of content to

Black's second move here—let's say, an interference—but then again, I'm not sure how much of a difference it would really make, since such an effect could not be doubled or tripled anyway.

1.Se5 Sc4 2.Sd3 Sd6#, 1.Se3+ Kc1 2.Lg3 Sxg3#, 1.Sh6 Sd3 2.Sf5 Sxf2#

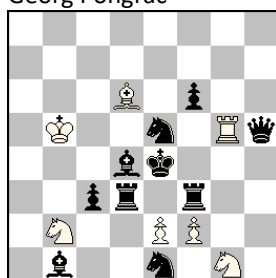
2nd Comm. 13763 (Velko Aleksandrov)

Black interferences allow the K battery to open the d1—h5 diagonal, guarding white squares around the black King, who steps into a self-pin with mate to follow. An attractive and open position—however, it would seem that the author has “clocked out” a little too early. Using the twinning Ph6>g5 (which is more natural anyway, since the bP will be participating in both mates) reveals that the bPd6 is altogether unnecessary—and, if Bd8>e7, so is the Pc6 (C+).

a) 1.Tc5 Ke3+ 2.Kg5 Tg8#, b) 1.Tc2+ Kd3+ 2.Kf4 Lc7#

3 Comm 13644

Georg Pongrac



h#2 2 lösn

4 Comm 13565

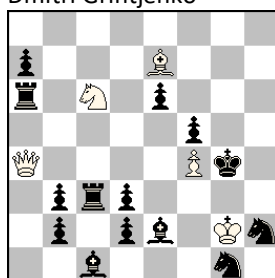
Walter Alejandro Diaz



h#2 B: Bc6>c5

5 Comm 13566

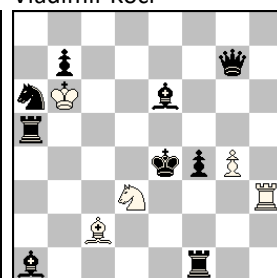
Dmitri Grintjenko



h#2 4 lösn

6 Comm 13568

Vladimir Koči



h#2 B-C: Th1>d1, d3

3rd Comm. 13644 (Georg Pongrac)

Each mating square is guarded four times, but the wP twice prevails following a combination of interferences and annihilations. The Se5 needs to open one white line, but two?—the white Rook seemed at first to be a peculiar and unnecessary technical device, but in fact, getting rid of it hurts rather than helps the overall economy.

1.Sc2 Sxf3 2.Sxf3 exd3#, 1.Sg4 Sxd3 2.Sxd3 exf3#

4th Comm. 13565 (Walter Alejandro Diaz)

Two white pieces are blocking lines; the black Rook annihilates one on the first move, and the other after it had to self-obstruct the mating square. A neat mechanism.

a) 1.Txe3 Le5 2.Txe5 Txe5#, b) 1.Txf4 e4+ 2.Txe4 Dxe4#

5th Comm. 13566 (Dmitri Grinchenko)

A nice assortment of mates on the fourth rank, where the Rook moves 1.Raxc6! (Rb6?) and 1.Rc2! (Rc5?), clearing one white line and avoiding to close another, add depth to the scheme. The repetition of 2.Kxf4 does not bother me in this context. It is unfortunate, however, that so much black material was invested in preventing the cook Qf3#, when it could have been done far more easily: if a wPg5 is added, providing a flight square on h4, we can remove Be2, Sg1 and Sh2, and also Bc1 and Pd2 (since 1.Rc1! would now be the only correct move instead of Rc2+?), for a total of four pieces saved (C+). Technique matters!

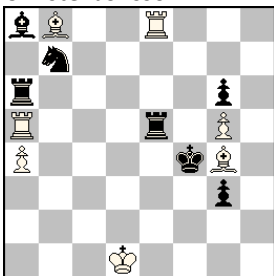
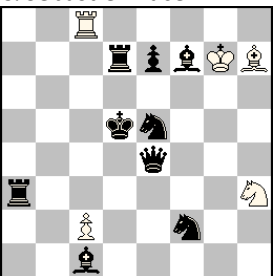
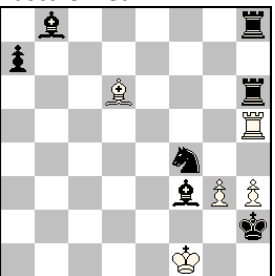
1.Taxc6 (Tb6?) Dxa7 2.Kxf4 Dd4#, 1.Tc4 Kf2 2.Kxf4 Dxc4#

1.Tc2 (Tc5?) Lb4 2.Kxf4 Lxd2#, 1.e5 Sb4 2.Kxf4 Sd5#

6th Comm. 13568 (Vladimir Koči)

The three black self-blocks on e5 on the first move tie the solutions together, but the twinning is problematic—not necessarily because it's “ugly”, but because it compromises the coherence of White's play. Since White spends time on “technical” moves (...Kxb7, ...Rd2, and ...g5), there would be room instead for three white Rook moves and three Knight battery mates, but on the other hand this would make it more difficult to control the black move order, so that the thematic self-blocks likely could not all still happen on the first move. Which of these elements to prioritize is to some extent a matter of taste, of course.

a) 1.De5 Kxb7 2.Ld4 Sb4#, b) 1.Te5 Td2 2.Kd5 Sb2#, c) 1.Le5 g5 2.Kf5 Tg3#

7 Comm 1544 Christer Jonsson	8 Comm 13574 Pierre Tritten & Sébastien Luce	9 Comm 13643 Pascale Piet
		
h#2 2 lös	h#2 B: vTh3	h#2

7th Comm. S&H 1544 (Christer Jonsson)

Change of black pin, self-blocks and dual avoidance in a nice, open position. The S & H entries generally tend to be more “light-weight”, but there were several fine problems among them; this was perhaps the most well-balanced combination of form and content.
1.Sd6 Lf3 2.Te3 Tf8#, 1.Td6+ Td5 2.Txg5 Td4#

8th Comm. 13574 (Pierre Tritten & Sebastien Luce)

The black King opens lines for Rd7 and Bf7, and indirectly for White's Rook and Bishop, which exert their effect from behind as Black moves along the lines to interfere with the pieces guarding the mating squares. An interesting concept, but there are some issues: the twinning is not bad, but also not ideal; the wP, giving mate in one solution, is idle in the other; and Ng5# is far from pure. Neither of these in isolation is necessarily a serious defect, but together they create the distinct impression that the idea could have been given a more cohesive form.

a) 1.Ke6 Td8 2.Td2 Sg5#, b) 1.Kd4 Lg8 2.Lb3 c3#

9th Comm. 13643 (Pascale Piet)

Seems not to have generated much enthusiasm among the solvers, but I quite like it, simple as it is—the black interferences are a nice touch. As regards the construction, the Pa7 is a sad necessity; from a purely aesthetic perspective I would almost prefer adding a bQ on the diagonal, matching the Rooks on the 'h' file.

1.Lh1 Lxf4 2.Td6 g4#, 1.Lg4 Th4 2.Sh5 hxg4#

Lennart Werner

Stockholm, May 2023