

Dom Springaren h#2,5-3 2023

I was honoured to be asked by Kenneth Solja to judge these 2023 helpmates. This proved to be a pleasant task, with agreeable problems to enjoy, albeit few possessing the kind of exceptional quality for which one would look for a high place in an informal tourney award. Nevertheless, all the problems, including those that I have not mentioned in this award, gave pleasure. My award is as follows.

Prize 15415 – Michal Dragoun

An excellent HOTF: two convincing pairs of solutions. In the first pair, with its Zilahi theme, the perfect reciprocity is cemented by the W1-W3 interchange of moves. In the second pair, also perfectly reciprocal play has a kinship with the first pair by virtue of the alternating sacrifices of the white knights – this time providing guards in the solution in which they are not captured. All four mates are attractive models. There are no merely technical pieces. Very fine work indeed!

1. – Sxd4 2.Kxd4 Td1+ 3.Kc3 Sxd5#

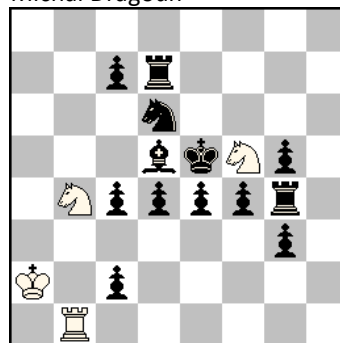
1. – Sxd5 2.Kxd5 Tb5+ 3.Kc6 Sxd4#

1. – Se3 2.fxe3 Sc6+ 3.Kf4 Tf1#

1. – Sd3+ 2.exd3 Sh4 3.Ke4 Te1#

Pr 15415

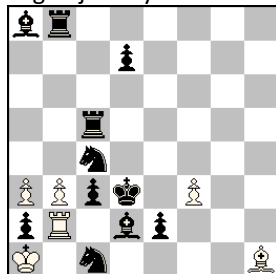
Michal Dragoun



h#2,5 4 lösn

HO 15227

Evgenij Gavryliv

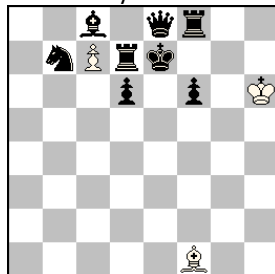


h#3 2 lösn

1 Omn 15275v

Indrek Aunver

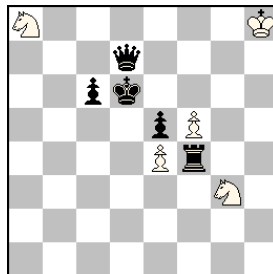
after Gavryliv



h#2,5 3 lösn

2 Omn 1870

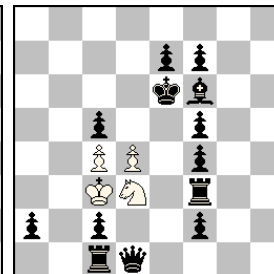
Christer Jonsson



h#3 2 lösn

3 Omn 15226

János Csák



h#3 B: Ba2>d6

Honourable Mention 15227 – Evgenij Gavryliv

Two well-matched solutions making excellent use of the geometry of the board. The a8B and b8R both make sweeping moves down the board to eliminate the f3/b3 wPs before withdrawing to intercepting duty on b7. The b3/f3 wPs each on move W1 clear a path for the wB to e4 or for the wR to b4. The moves ...Be4 and ...Rb4 then both feature once as W2 and once as W3. In this scheme, there is an inherent imperfection in that the move ...bxc4 is not a pure clearance (it must also make c4 available to the bK) but that is a small price to pay to realize such a nice scheme.

1.Txb3 f4 2.Tb7 Tb4 3.Se3 Le4#

1.Lxf3 bxc4 2.Lb7 Le4+ 3.Kxc4 Tb4#

1st Commendation 15275v – Indrek Aunver, after Gavryliv

A very ingenious way to extract the maximum play from this matrix. The mates are not beautiful, but to construct solutions in which a preparatory wB move sets the scene for three differentiated promotions is highly commendable. The tempo move 3.Ba6 is among the incidental pleasures.

1. – Lc4 2.Sd8 cxd8=S 3.La6 Sc6#
 1. – Lb5 2.Td8 cxd8=T 3.Tf7 Txe8#
 1. – Lg2 2.Dd8 cxd8=D+ 3.Kf7 Ld5#

2nd Commendation 1870 – Christer Jonsson

Euclidean geometry (as noted at the time) indeed! Although not strong on white/black interplay, this problem features rather unusual ponderous play by the bR which serves both to clear the mating square and to replace the guard of e6/d5 by a block on that square. The surviving pawn continues its guard duties, so there is a nice reciprocity in the fates of the two white pawns. I usually don't like too great an impression of symmetry, but here there are enough diverse elements to keep me happy!

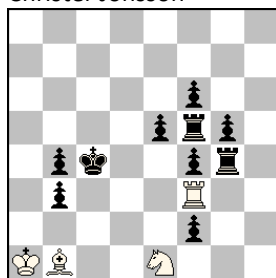
- 1.Txe4 Kg8 2.Td4 Kf8 3.Td5 Se4#
 1.Txf5 Sc7 2.Tf6 Sa6 3.Te6 Sf5#

3rd Commendation 15226 – János Csák

All the white pieces are already in position for the mating moves, save for the pinning of the d3S and d4P. The only mobile piece is the wK, which must therefore make a tempo move (...Kb3; ...Kb2) before reaching its desired square (b2; b3). These tempo moves on W1 both have the paradoxical effect of maintaining the pin that is preventing the eventual mate while releasing the pin that is irrelevant to the mate. This is deep, witty strategy, typical of its composer, but has necessitated a heavy position and a twinning device that is more disruptive than one would ideally like. But the construction is a highly ingenious way to surmount considerable difficulties.

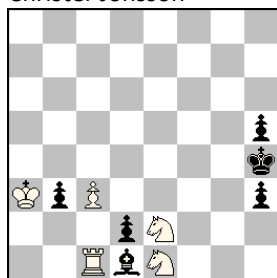
- A 1.a1=T Kb3 2.Ta6 Kb2 3.Td6 Sxc5#
 B 1.Ta1 Kb2 2.Ta7 Kb3 3.Td7 d5#

4 Omn 1845
Christer Jonsson



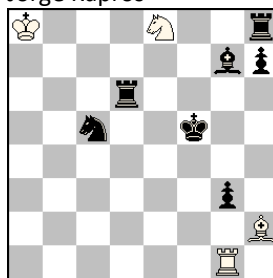
h#2,5 B: Kc4>e6

5 Omn 1835
Christer Jonsson



h#3 2 lösn

6 Omn 1832
Jorge Kapros



h#2,5 2 lösn

4th Commendation 1845 – Christer Jonsson

The wB and wR must sacrifice themselves to make (a) b3 and (b) f5 available to the bK (one drawback of this scheme is that one sacrifice is on a vacant square, the other not) before R/S and B/S batteries are created and fired. (Perhaps another, very minor, drawback is that one mate is by double check, the other not.)

- A 1. – Lc2 2.bxc2 Sd3 3.Kb3 Sb2#
 B 1. – Txf4 2.Txf4 Sc2 3.Kf5 Sd4#

5th Commendation 1835 – Christer Jonsson

Christer is so skilled at constructing schemes such as this, for bicolour Phoenix promotions combined with Zilahi, in economical settings, that one is in danger of taking them for granted! The only weak move in this setting is W1 – 1...c4 is neatly motivated, but 1...Rxd1 is rather a 'filler' (albeit the bB has to be on the board in the other solution to exclude 2...Kxb3 – very neat!).

1.dxe1=S Txd1 2.Sf3 Tf1 3.Sg5 Tf4#
1.dxc1=T c4 2.Txc4 Kb2 3.Tg4 Sf3#

6th Commendation 1832 – Jorge Kapros

Excellent geometry, as wB/wR are enabled to traverse the doubly masked lines to b8/g8, unpinning the wS, which administers attractive mates. The incidental capturing of black officers on the mating moves is hardly a detraction at all in view of the reciprocity in roles of the Rd6/Bg7, both of which provide a block on f6. The matrix is very familiar, but put to very pleasing effect here.

1. – Txxg3 2.Lf6 Tg8 3.Se6 Sxd6#
1. – Lxxg3 2.Tf6 Lb8 3.Se4 Sxxg7#

Once again, my thanks to Kenneth, and to all the competing composers.

Christopher Jones

Bristol, October 2024

Matt i 3 drag

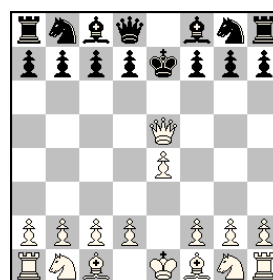
I nr 170 undrade Bo Söderberg hur många olika partier det finns där vit sätter matt med sitt tredje drag. KW undrade sedan hur många av dessa mattställningar som har *entydiga* bevispartier.

Den första frågan har förstås ställts för länge sen, och boken *Schach und Zahl* (från 1971, så även den är inte längre purung) refererar till *Deutsches Wochenschach* 1897 när den ger svaret 347 – ett primtal! Nämligen så:

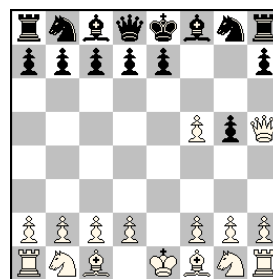
Dh5# = 305 partier (ty vit har ett drag fritt)
Dg6# = 28
Lh5# = 8
Lg6# = 4
Dxe5 = 2

Bo och Kjell är efter ivrigt räknande överens om detta svar.

Tilläggsfrågan har kanske inte ställts förut. KW har hittat tre sådana ställningar, varav två är nästan identiska. Den övre är ganska enkel, om man väl hittat matten med Ke7, men den högra är intressant: endast i denna ställning är ordningsföljden mellan svarts två B-drag entydigt bestämd.



1.e4 e5 2.Dh5 Ke7 3.Dxe5#
Även entydig med Be4 på e3



1.e4 f5 2.exf5 g5 3.Dh5#

– Kan någon hitta flera entydiga partier av denna typ?