



The 10th FIDE World Cup in Composing

Section H – Retros

Final award by

Kostas Prentos

MMXXII

Participants

H01 Gasparyan A. (ARM)

H02 Raican P. (ROM)

H03 Shpakovsky A.

H04 Olin P. (FIN)

H05 Khramtsevich M.

H06 Frolkin A. (UKR)

H07 Koch J.-R. (FRA)

H08 Syzonenko V. (UKR)

H09 Buchanan A. (SGP)

H10 Semenenko V. (UKR)

H11 Velmurugan N. (IND)

H12 Daga A. (IND)

H13 Kirtley M. (USA)

H14 Semenenko A. (UKR)

The tourney director Aleksey Oganessian sent me 14 anonymous diagrams, with full solutions and authors' comments.

Only orthodox proof games were allowed this year, as mandated by the organizers of the Cup. Perhaps, this was a way to compensate for allowing only classical retros, last year. I hope all types of retros without restrictions will be accepted again, in the future.

The quality of the submitted problems was rather average – lower than I expected for this prestigious competition. Although none of the entries can be called a masterpiece, several among them were good enough to find a place in the award. Before presenting the winners, I offer brief comments about most of the problems not selected for the award:

- **H1** (PG 16, ♔b3-♔c8, 16+15): A single Pronkin is not adequate for a distinction nowadays. Moreover, extending the solution artificially offers nothing.

- **H2** (PG 25, ♔g1-♔b6, 13+13): An ambitious idea of captured Pronkin Queen and 3 Ceriani/Frolkin Bishops. However, the part that is applicable for the WCCT11 is anticipated by Michel Caillaud's pioneer problem ([P1000444](#)). Also compare with H56 & H70 from WCCT11 entries booklet that show the same content, in a more targeted and organized manner.

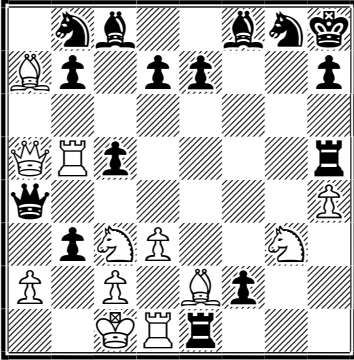
- **H3** (SPG 10.5, ♔e1-♔e8, 13+14): The two phases are almost identical; they look like a solution and a cook, rather than two distinct solutions.

- **H4** (PG 19.5, 16+15, a and b): There is nothing wrong with this A→B proof game; it has certain qualities and an air of originality – it just did not make the final cut.

- **H7** (PG 12.5, ♔e3-♔f8, 12+14): This type of siblings (♚a1↔♚h1) has been done better many times before, often with additional content. The clearing of the first rank lacks subtlety.

- **H12** (PG 21, ♔c4-♔e8, 14+13):
Cooked: 1.h4 g5 2.h:g5 a5 3.♚h5 a4 4.g6 a3 5.♚b5 h5 6.♗c3 ♗h6 7.♗d5 h4 8.g7 h3 9.g8♙ f5 10.♙e6 d:e6 11.♗f4 ♙d5 12.♗g6 ♙:g2 13.e4 h2 14.♔e2 h1♙ 15.♔d3 ♙hh3+ 16.♔c4 ♙b3+ 17.a:b3 ♙g4 18.♚:a3 ♗g7 19.♙f3 ♗f7 20.♗d3 ♚h1 21.♗h8 ♗c3.

H11 – 1st Prize – Gold medal
 VELMURUGAN NALLUSAMY
 India



PG 20.0

12+15

1.h4 a5 2.♖h3 a4 3.♖b3 ♖a5
 4.d3 ♖h5 5.♙e3 g5 6.♙a7 c5
 7.♖b5 ♚a5 8.b4 a:b3 e.p.+ 9.♚d2
 ♚a4 10.♚a5 g4 11.♙c3 g3 12.0-0-0
 g:f2 13.g4 f5 14.g5 f4 15.g6 f3 16.g7
 f:e2 17.g:h8 ♖ e1♖ 18.♙e2 ♙f7
 19.♙g3 ♙g7 20.♙e2 ♙:h8

A total of 15 white moves are visible on the diagram: ♙a7(2) ♚a5(2) ♖b5(3) ♙c3(1) ♙g3(2) ♙e2(1) 0-0-0(1) captured Pb2→b3/b4(1) Pd3(1) Ph4(1): A total of 20 black moves are visible: ♚a4(2) Pb3(3) Pc5(1) ♖h5(2) Pf2(4) ♙h8(3) ♖e1(5) [either by ♙g8(2) and ♖h8→e1(3), or by pawn promotion, with the b♖h8 captured at home (5)]. If the ♖e1 is the original ♖h8, it must have come by playing the moves ♖h8-g8-g1-e1. For this plan to work, the wPg2 needs at least 4 moves to clear the g-file, leaving only 1 move

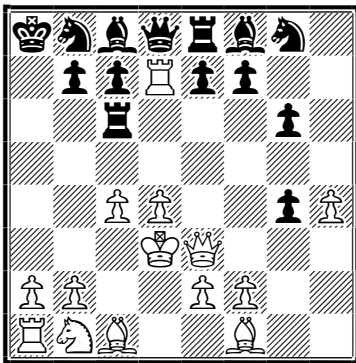
for the Pe2 to commit suicide; an impossible task. So, the ♖e1 is the promoted bPf7 and the bPg7 stands on f2, having captured the white f-pawn.

Having identified all the black moves, only the whereabouts of the w ♙g2 are still unknown. This pawn needs at least 4 moves to reach Black's path, so it can be captured. Since the b♖h8 was captured at home, there is only one possible way to kill two birds with one stone: ♙g2-g7:h8. The promoted w ♙h8 was captured by the b♙ on h8, without moving. The type of promotion on h8 depends on the timing of the ♙e8-f7-g7:h8 sequence. Unsurprisingly, this piece is a Rook, the only piece that does not obstruct the black King's path.

While the Schnoebelen capture on h8 is rather typical and the mechanism has been used several times before, the embedded *en passant* capture 8...a:b3 e.p. is done in a quite original way. White needs to castle as fast as possible and allow for ♙g7xf2, to prevent running out of moves. For the w♚a5 and w♙c3 to reach their final destinations, b♚a4 and b ♙b3 must already occupy theirs. The move ♚a5-a4 can be played after the b ♙a4 has vacated that square. Timing is again essential: If 7...♚a5+ is met by 8.♚d2?, the solution comes to a stop a few moves later. White must play 8.b4 first and after 8...a:b3 e.p., the square a4 is vacated for the b♚.

The thematic content can be described as Valladao task including a Phoenix Rook on e1, together with a Schnoebelen Rook captured on h8. All is done neatly, with excellent timing. However, the author's claim that this is the first combination of Valladao and Schnoebelen in an orthodox PG is incorrect. Compare with [P1106920](#). Despite the fact that the core theme of the two problems is the same, I believe that **H11** has enough differences to justify a high placement in this award. After all, it is almost impossible for an orthodox PG to be completely original anymore.

H10 – 2nd Prize – Silver medal
 VALERY SEMENENKO
Ukraine



SPG 15.0

14+14

1.h4 h5 2.♖h3 ♖h6 3.♖d3 ♖c6
 4.♖:d7 g6 5.♖d5 ♔d6 6.♗h3 ♗:h3
 7.c4 ♗d7 8.♔a4 0-0-0 9.♔:a7 ♖e8
 10.♔e3 ♗b8 11.d4 ♗a8 12.♗d2

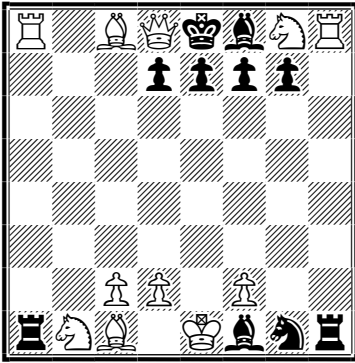
♗b8! 13.♗d3 ♗c8! 14.g4 ♔d8!
 15.♖d7! h:g4

If the ♖e8 has come from h8, then ♗f8 and ♗g8 must have moved out and back to clear its path. This plan takes 5 moves. Black needs 5 more moves for ♗e8→a8, 2 for ♖a8→c6 and 3 for the pawns to reach g4, g6, a total of 15 moves. Therefore, the bPa7, bPd7 were captured at home. This leaves no time for White to play ♖h1:d7, then hide away the Rook to let the b♗ out. The plan with ♗g1:d7 and ♔d1:a7-e3 also fails to clear the path for the b♗e8 or w♖h1 fast enough.

The only remaining possibility is for the ♖e8 to have come from a8 by means of castling, after ♗b8, ♗c8 and ♔d8 have moved away. Once the ♖a8 and ♗e8 have switched places, the three black pieces can return home. The author describes this maneuver as follows: "Switchbacks of 3 thematic pieces in double Castling Klasinc theme on b8, c8 and d8". This strategy takes exactly 15 moves. So, the bPd7 and bPa7 were captured at home, by the Rook and Queen, respectively. Once the white Rook captures on d7, it must move away to release Black's army. This allows for a come-and-go type of Klasinc between the w♖d7 and the black pieces ♗c8, ♗b8 and ♔d8.

Quite rich content in a very compact setting. Exchange of places between the black King and Rook. Switchback by one white and three black pieces. Klasinc theme. Overall, a nice problem to solve and enjoy.

H9 – 1st Honorable Mention –
Bronze medal
ANDREW BUCHANAN (VERSION)
Singapore



PG 14.5

11+10

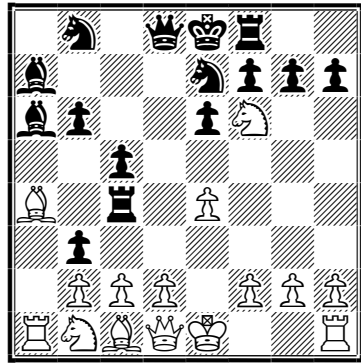
1.g4 ♖c6 2.g5 ♘d4 3.g6 ♘:e2
4.g:h7 ♘:g1 5.h:g8 ♘ ♖:h2 6.♖f3
♖g2 7.♖h8 ♖h2 8.♖:b7 ♖h1
9.♖:a7 ♘a6 10.♘g2 ♘f1 11.♖:c7
♖:a2 12.♘b7 ♖:b2 13.♖a8 ♖a2
14.♘c8 ♖a1 15.♖:d8+

During the 37th World Congress of Chess Composition that took place in the small French city of Belfort in 1994, a composition tourney for PGs was organized with the theme: *In the final position, at least two units occupy the initial squares of units of the same type but opposite color.* This PG theme has since been known as “Belfort”. The winner of that tourney ([P0002533](#)) achieved 8 Belfort pieces. Later, Unto Heinonen raised the record to 10 ([P1000196](#) & [P1080441](#)).

H9 shows 9 such pieces with the additional effect of “home-and-

away-base”: If the colors of the pieces were ignored, the diagram would show a double homebase. The previous record of 6 Belfort pieces with this constraint was achieved by Andrew Buchanan in [P1304592](#). The solution also features three bicolor Platzwechsels (♖h1↔♖h8, ♖a1↔♖a8 & ♘f1↔♘c8) and runs smoothly throughout, with precise timing. Some captures of pawns were used to expedite line openings and ensure the home-and-away-base.

H14 – 2nd Honorable Mention
ALEKSANDR SEMENENKO
Ukraine
(Dedicated to Andrey Frolkin – 65)



SPG 13.5

15+15

1. ♘f3 a5 2. ♘d4 a4 3. ♘b3 a:♘b3
4. e4 ♖a4 5. ♘b5 ♖c4 6. a4 e6 7. a5
♘c5 8. a6 ♘e7 9.7 ♖f8 10. a8 ♘ ♘a7
11. ♘b6 c5 12. ♘d7 b6 13. ♘a4 ♘a6
14. ♘f6#

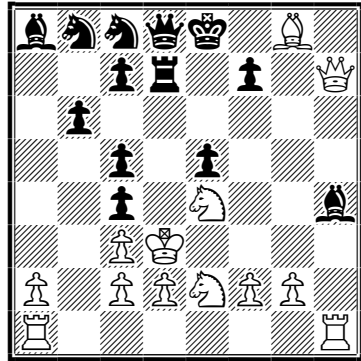
1. e4 a5 2. ♘c4 a4 3. ♘b3 a:♘b3
4. ♘f3 ♖a4 5. ♘e5 ♖c4 6. a4 e6 7. a5
♘c5 8. a6 ♘e7 9. a7 ♖f8 10. a8 ♘

♙a7 11. ♘:d7 b6 12. ♘c6 ♙a6
 13. ♙a4 c5 14. ♘f6#

Back in the 1990s, Frolkin proposed in a *diagrammes* article a formula for assessing SPGs with 2 solutions based on the number of moves occurring on different plies and the number of moves occurring in only one of the solutions. In this problem, there are 10 cases of moves occurring on different plies (5+5, marked yellow) and 18 moves (9+9, marked green) occurring in one solution only (the mating moves are made by different knights, so they can be regarded as not coinciding). That is, there is no coincidence of moves in 28 out of the 54 cases of single moves (51.85%) in the two solutions. (author.)

The move count of the diagram determines all 13 black moves. The bPd7 was captured at home. An original white piece was captured on b3 and later the wPa2 promoted on a8 to a piece of the same type (Phoenix). The bPd7 is captured by the original Knight in one solution and the promoted Knight in the other. The final double check involves one original and one promoted white piece. The piece that is captured in one solution, gives mate, together with a Phoenix piece, in the other (Zilahi). Two well matched and adequately distinct solutions.

H6 – 1st Commendation
 ANDRIY FROLKIN
 Ukraine



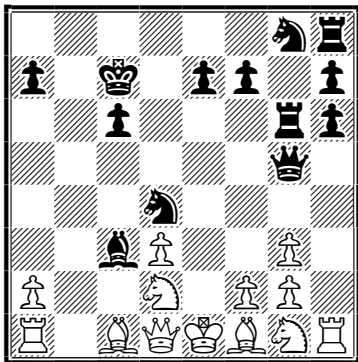
SPG 27.0

13+13

1.e4 d5 2.e5 ♔d6 3.e:d6 e5 4.h4 ♙e7
 5.h5 ♙g5 6.h6 ♘e7 7.h:g7 h5 8.♖h3
 h4 9.♖b3 h3 10.♖b6 a:b6 11.♘c3
 ♖a3 12.♘e4 ♖c3 13.c3 h2 14.♙a3
 h1 ♔ 15.♙c5 b:c5 16.♙c4 b6 17.♗e2
 ♙b7 18.♗d3 ♘c8 19.d7 ♗e7 20.d8 ♖
 ♙a8 21.♖d6 ♖d8 22.♘e2 ♔h8
 23.♔h1 ♖d7 24.♔h7 ♔d8 25.♖h6
 ♗e8 26.♖h1 ♙h4 27.g8 ♙d:c4

After a lengthy introduction, the main course comprises two Pronkin pieces, promoted on each other's home squares. Square d8: Is occupied by the Pronkin b♔, is the promotion square of the Pronkin w♖ and is visited by the original b♖. Square h1: Is occupied by the Pronkin w♖, is the promotion square of Pronkin b♔ and is visited by the original w♔. Nice counterclockwise area and line clearances by w♖d8, b♖h8, b♔h1, w♔d1. Switchback by the b♗e8.

H5 – 2nd Commendation
 MIKHAIL KHRAMTSEVICH



PG 18.5

13+13

1.c4 d5 2.c5 d4 3.c6 d3 4.c:b7 d:e2
 5.b:c8♙ e:f1♘ 6.♙a6 ♘g3 7.h:g3
 ♘c6 8.♞h6 g:h6 9.♙f1 ♙g7 10.d3
 ♙c3+ 11.♘d2 ♘d4 12.b4 c6 13.b5
 ♚a5 14.b6 0-0-0 15.b7+ ♔c7
 16.b8♞ ♞d6 17.♞b5 ♞g6 18.♞h5
 ♚g5 19.♞h1

This problem shows the theme of the ongoing WCCT11. A quick research revealed this was exactly the same problem as **H41** from the WCCT11 entries document. I immediately thought both problems were composed by the same Russian or Belarusian composer. Upon my request, the tourney director contacted the composer and confirmed that this was indeed the case. I am grateful to Aleksey for his assistance with this matter.

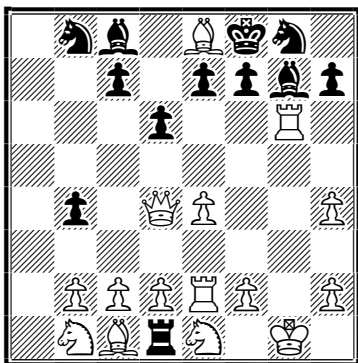
On March 30th 2022, in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine,

the WFCC delegates took the following decision: *Russia/Belarus nationals are not allowed at all to participate in the 11th WCCT. Compositions of RUS/ nationals are not listed in the results booklet at all and no team result is applicable.*

However, the problems by the two sanctioned teams were already published on the WCCT entries booklet, albeit without names. What happens to disqualified problems? Paragraph 19 of the WCCT General Rules states about problems not included in the final awards booklet: *Any unpublished entries will be available to their composers for publication elsewhere, once the final awards document has appeared.* Although the final award is not out yet, it is already mandated that the problems in question be excluded from the results booklet. I decided to accept **H5** as a new original.

Ceriani/Frolkin Knight promotion on f1; Pronkin Bishop on f1, with an additional Pronkin Rook on h1. The solution runs smoothly. I have the impression this PG, as a whole, benefits from being judged in a tourney with a free theme, rather than the WCCT.

H13 – 3rd Commendation
 MARK KIRTLEY
 USA



PG 17.0

15+12

1.e4 a6 2.♙:a6 b5 3.♚g4 b4 4.♜b5
 ♜:a2 5.♞f3 ♞a3 6.0-0 ♞e3 7.♚:g7
 ♞e1 8.♚:h8 ♞d1 9.♚d4 ♜g7
 10.♞a6 ♞f8 11.♞g6 d6 12.♜e8 ♚d7
 13.♞e1 ♚h3 14.g:h3 ♜a6 15.h4 ♞f1
 16.♞e2 h3+ 17.♞e1 ♜c8

In the last 4 moves of the solution, the b♜c8 performs a long-range capture-free rundlauf, in order to unpin the w♞e1 and allow it to vacate e1 for the w♞f3. A consecutive capture-free roundtrip is not very common. Here is a short one for comparison: **WID 845553** (Mark Kirtley & Michel Caillaud, *The Problemist Supplement* 2022, PG 9.0: 1.e4 a6 2.♜:a6 c6 3.♜:b7 ♞a5 4.g3 ♞h5 5.♚:h5 d5 6.♞d1 ♜h3 7.♜c8 ♞f1 8.♜f5 ♜a6 9.d3 ♜c8). The unpinning motivation is appealing and secured this problem a place in the award.

Kostas Prentos,
 August 3, 2022