



The 10th FIDE World Cup in Composing

Section H – Retros

Preliminary award by

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MMXXII

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.

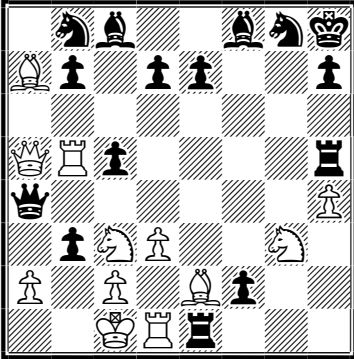
- **H4** (PG 19.5, 16+15, a and b): There is nothing wrong with this A→B proof game; it has certain qualities and an air of originality – it just did not make the final cut.

- **H7** (PG 12.5, ♗e3-♗f8, 12+14): This type of siblings (Ra1↔Rh1) has been done better many times before, often with additional content. The clearing of the first rank lacks subtlety.

- **H8** (SPG 11, ♗d8-♗f8, 14+10);

- **H12** (PG 21, ♗c4-♗e8, 14+13):
Cooked: 1.h4 g5 2.h:g5 a5 3.Rh5 a4 4.g6 a3 5.Rb5 h5 6.Sc3 Sh6 7.Sd5 h4 8.g7 h3 9.g8Q f5 10.Qe6 d:e6 11.Sf4 Qd5 12.Sg6 Q:g2 13.e4 h2 14.Ke2 h1Q 15.Kd3 Qhh3+ 16.Kc4 Qb3+ 17.a:b3 Qg4 18.R:a3 Bg7 19.Qf3 Sf7 20.Bd3 Rh1 21.Sh8 Bc3.

H11 – 1st Prize



PG 20.0

12+15

1.h4 a5 2.Rh3 a4 3.Rb3 Ra5 4.d3 Rh5 5.Be3 g5 6.Ba7 c5 7.Rb5 Qa5 8.b4 a:b3 e.p.+ 9.Qd2 Qa4 10.Qa5 g4 11.Sd2 g3 12.0-0-0 g:f2 13.g4 f5 14.g5 f4 15.g6 f3 16.g7 f:e2 17.g:h8R e1R 18.Se2 Kf7 19.Sg3 Kg7 20.Be2 K:h8

A total of 15 white moves are visible on the diagram: Ba7(2) Qa5(2) Rb5(3) Sd2(1) Sg3(2) Be2(1) 0-0-0(1) captured Pb2→b3/b4(1) Pd3(1) Ph4(1): A total of 20 black moves are visible: Qa4(2) Pb3(3) Pc5(1) Rh5(2) Pf2(4) Kh8(3) Re1(5) [either by Sg8(2) and Rh8→e1(3), or by pawn promotion, with the bRh8 captured at home(5)]. If the Re1 is the original Rh8, it must have come by playing the moves Rh8-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 Re1 is the promoted bPf7 and the

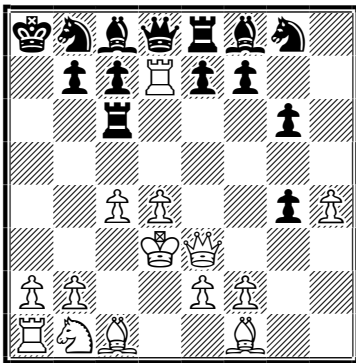
bPg7 stands on f2, having captured the white f pawn.

Having identified all the black moves, only the whereabouts of the wPg2 are still unknown. This pawn needs at least 4 moves to reach Black's path, so it can be captured. Since the bRh8 was captured at home, there is only one possible way to kill two birds with one stone: Pg2-g7:h8. The promoted wPh8 was captured by the bK on h8, without moving. The type of promotion on h8 depends on the timing of the Ke8-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 Pg7xf2, to prevent running out of moves. For the wQa5 and wSd2 to reach their final destinations, bQa4 and bPb3 must already occupy theirs. The move Qa5-a4 can be played after the bPa4 has vacated that square. Timing is again essential: If 7...Qa5+ is met by 8.Qd2?, 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 bQ.

The thematic content can be described as Vallādao 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 Vallādao 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



SPG 15.0

14+14

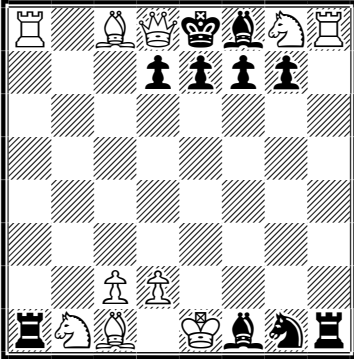
1.h4 h5 2.Rh3 Rh6 3.Rd3 Rc6
 4.R:d7 g6 5.Rd5 Qd6 6.Sh3 B:h3
 7.c4 Sd7 8.Qa4 0-0-0 9.Q:a7 Re8
 10.Qe3 Kb8 11.d4 Ka8 12.Kd2
 Sb8! 13.Kd3 Bc8! 14.g4 Qd8!
 15.Rd7! h:g4

If the Re8 has come from h8, then Bf8 and Sg8 must have moved out and back to clear its path. This plan takes 5 moves. Black needs 5 more moves for Ke8→a8, 2 for Ra8→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 Rh1:d7, then hide away the Rook to let the bK out. The plan with Sg1:d7 and Qd1:a7-e3 also fails to clear the path for the bKe8 or wRh1 fast enough.

The only remaining possibility is for the Re8 to have come from a8 by means of castling, after Sb8, Bc8 and Qd8 have moved away. Once the Ra8 and Ke8 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 wRd7 and the black pieces Bc8, Sb8 and Qd8.

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



PG 14.5

10+10

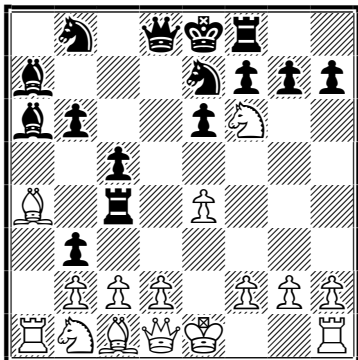
1.g4 Sc6 2.g5 Sd4 3.g6 S:e2 4.g:h7
 S:g1 5.h:g8S R:h2 6.Qf3 R:f2 7.Rh8
 Rh2 8.Q:b7 Rh1 9.Q:a7 Ba6 10.Bg2
 Bf1 11.Q:c7 R:a2 12.Bb7 R:b2
 13.Ra8 Ra2 14.Bc8 Ra1 15.Q:d8+

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 (Rh1↔Rh8, Ra1↔Ra8 & Bf1↔Bc8) and runs smoothly throughout, with precise timing. Some captures of pawns were used to expedite line openings and ensure the home-and-away-base. Had I been in the composer’s shoes, I would definitely have chosen to avoid the technical capture 6...R:f2, since the alternative 6...Rg2 also leads to a sound PG.

H14 – 2nd Honorable Mention



SPG 13.5

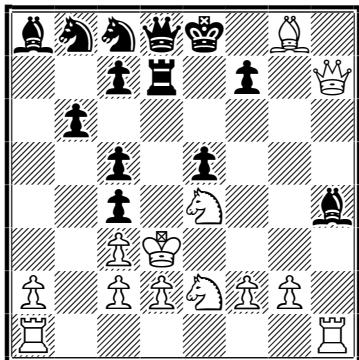
15+15

1.Sf3 a5 2.Sd4 a4 3.Sb3 a:Sb3 4.e4 Ra4 5.Bb5 Rc4 6.a4 e6 7.a5 Bc5 8.a6 Se7 9.7 Rf8 10.a8S Ba7 11.Sb6 c5 12.Sd7 b6 13.Ba4 Ba6 14.Sf6#

1.e4 a5 2.Bc4 a4 3.Bb3 a:Bb3 4.Sf3 Ra4 5.Se5 Rc4 6.a4 e6 7.a5 Bc5 8.a6 Se7 9.a7 Rf8 10.a8B Ba7 11.S:d7 b6 12.Bc6 Ba6 13.Ba4 c5 14.Sf6#

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



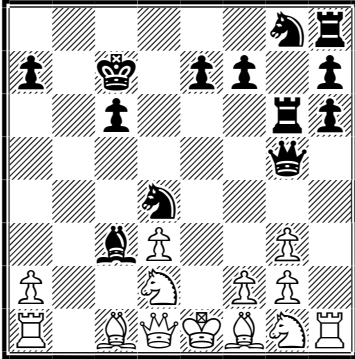
SPG 27.0

13+13

1.e4 d5 2.e5 Qd6 3.e:d6 e5 4.h4 Be7 5.h5 Bg5 6.h6 Se7 7.h:g7 h5 8.Rh3 h4 9.Rb3 h3 10.Rb6 a:b6 11.Sc3 Ra3 12.Se4 Rc3 13.c3 h2 14.Ba3 h1Q 15.Bc5 b:c5 16.Bc4 b6 17.Ke2 Bb7 18.Kd3 Sc8 19.d7 Ke7 20.d8R Ba8 21.Rd6 Rd8 22.Se2 Qh8 23.Qh1 Rd7 24.Qh7 Qd8 25.Rh6 Ke8 26.Rh1 Bh4 27.g8B 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 bQ, is the promotion square of the Pronkin wR and is visited by the original bR. Square h1: Is occupied by the Pronkin wR, is the promotion square of Pronkin bQ and is visited by the original wQ. Nice counterclockwise area and line clearances by wRd8, bRh8, bQh1, wQd1. Switchback by the bKe8.

H5 – 2nd Commendation



PG 18.5

13+13

1.c4 d5 2.c5 d4 3.c6 d3 4.c:b7 d:e2
 5.b:c8B e:f1S 6.Ba6 Sg3 7.h:g3 Sc6
 8.Rh6 g:h6 9.Bf1 Bg7 10.d3 Bc3+
 11.Sd2 Sd4 12.b4 c6 13.b5 Qa5
 14.b6 0-0-0 15.b7+ Kc7 16.b8R Rd6
 17.Rb5 Rg6 18.Rh5 Qg5 19.Rh1

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.

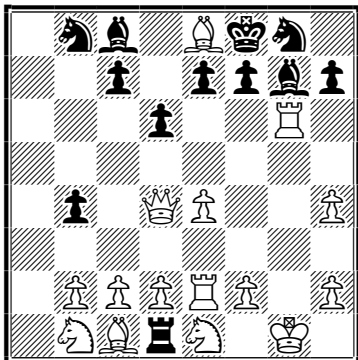
On March 30th 2022, in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the WFCC delegates took the following decision: *Russia/Belarus*

nationals are not allowed at all to participate in the 11th WCCT. Compositions of RUS/BLR 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



PG 17.0

15+12

1.e4 a6 2.B:a6 b5 3.Qg4 b4 4.Bb5
 R:a2 5.Sf3 Ra3 6.0-0 Re3 7.Q:g7
 Re1 8.Q:h8 Rd1 9.Qd4 Bg7 10.Ra6
 Kf8 11.Rg6 d6 12.Be8 Qd7 13.Re1
 Qh3 14.g:h3 Ba6 15.h4 Bf1 16.Re2
 h3+ 17.Se1 Bc8

In the last 4 moves of the solution, the bBc8 performs a long-range capture-free Rundlauf, in order to unpin the wRe1 and allow it to vacate e1 for the wSf3. 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.B:a6 c6 3.B:b7 Ra5 4.g3 Rh5 5.Q:h5 d5 6.Kd1 Bh3 7.Bc8 Bf1 8.Bf5 Ba6 9.d3 Bc8). The unpinning motivation is appealing and secured this problem a place in the award.

Kostas Prentos,
 August 3, 2022