The 8th FIDE World Cup in Composing

Section H – Retros and Proofgames

Final award by

Nicolas Dupont

MMXX

Participants

H01	K. Prentos (USA)	H12	P. Rāican (ROU)
H02	J. Mikitovics (HUN)	H13	D.-C. Gurgui (ROU)
H03	J. Coakley (CAN)	H14	D. Gatti (ITA)
H04	P. Kamenik (CZE)	H15	S. Vokál (SVK)
H05	R. Osorio (ARG)	H16	V. Crişan (ROU)
H06	M. Khramtsevich (BLR)	H17	K. Wenda (AUT)
H07	V. Semenenko (UKR)	H18	B. Bašić (SRB)
H08	M. Kirtley (USA)	H19	B. Graefrath (DEU)
H09	P. Muljadi (USA)	H20	D. Baibikov (ISR)
H10	H. Grudziński (POL)	H21	A. Frolkin (UKR)
H11	P. Olin (FIN)		

T he tourney director Bulavka Aleksandr sent me 21 problems in anonymous form. It is a bit more than for previous such tournaments, although still not a very high number. The entries are of extremely different quality, from completely trivial to excellent. The average level is correct, not more.

The following problems were near from being awarded:

H02 - I don't think that Umnov is a very interesting proof game theme, as this manoeuver appears frequently just for soundness. Moreover there is some lack of homogeneity in the content of the problem, and too many unthematic captures.

H07 - I'm no more convinced by the Klasinc theme - the white Rook returns to d7 after some black pieces travelled through this square. Moreover long castling with switchback of the intermediate pieces has already been shown.

H11 - The main theme is too near from a known one (P1004374 by Ubaidullaev, reported by the author), and is achieved after 18.h:g6. The remainder is a sequence of moves mainly devoted to make unclear which Chess960 initial position has been chosen.

H12 - It already exists tries with (8+4) thematic Pawns (Die Schwalbe 233) and even (8+5) such Pawns (Die Schwalbe 240), all cooked. This new attempt is more modest with (8+3) thematic Pawns but still interesting and difficult to construct (if sound this time). Nevertheless the move 28...♗:h4, which broke the homogeneity of this figurative problem, is quite ugly to my mind.

H15 - The idea is elegant - retraction of a chain of black Pawns, which follows a necessary retro-move from ♖g1, but the strategy is a bit too straightforward for the problem to be awarded.

H16 - Move -111.♗e8-b5 may be replaced by -111.♗c6-b5.

H17 – Cook: -4.♔e1-e2 ♘h8-g8+ -5.♔c1:♗d2[♔e1] b3-b2+ -6.♖g8-f8 ♗e1-d2+ -7.a7:♖b8=♖[♖b8] & 1.♖g8:a8[♖a8]+ ♔a3-b2#

**H18** – Cook: 6K1/3n1p2/5Pn1/ 4Q1N1/8/7B/6p1/1K6

The above entries, as well as the remaining ones not awarded, suffer of known weaknesses, among them:
- A theme which is not clear, not very appealing or enough ambitious.
- A construction which is not going straight to the point.
- Bad economy e.g. too many unthematic captures.
- Lack of homogeneity in the content.

The following remarkable proof game avoids all those issues, and is a clear winner to my mind:

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MARK KIRTLEY
USA

[chess diagram]
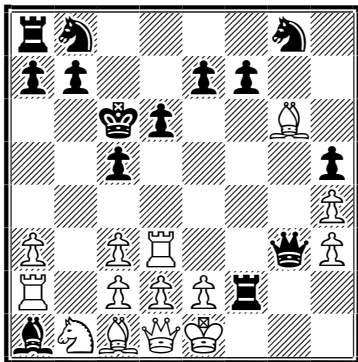
PG 22,5   14+14

1.h4 g5 2.♖h3 ♘g7 3.♖f3 ♘c3
4.b:c3 g4 5.♗g2 g3 6.♕c1 g:f2+
7.♔d1 f:g1=♗ 8.♔e1 ♗c5 9.♕d1
♗a3 10.♗c1 ♗b2 11.a3 c5 12.♖a2
♗a1 13.♗b2 ♕c7 14.♕c1 ♕g3+
15.♔d1 d6 16.♖d3 ♗h3 17.g:h3 h5
18.♗g2 ♖h6 19.♗e4 ♖f6 20.♗g6
♖f2 21.♔e1 ♔d7 22.♕d1 ♔c6
23.♗c1

The white trio (♗,♕,♔)
performs a double switchback.
Moreover this impressive and new
theme is constructed in its purest
form – same case for each double
switchback and no capture at all.
Note that it leads to a non-classical
extended future proof game
(SW&SW) (♗,♕,♔).
     The only way to parry a first
check on square f2 is to play ♗b2
♕c1 and ♔d1. Then a black
Bishop is moving through square
b2, and the only way for white to

allow this manoeuver is to perform
a first switchback of the thematic
trio.   Then a second check on
square f2 forces ♗b2, ♕c1 and
♔d1 once again. Finally the second
switchback of the thematic trio is
made to get the final position,
where it stands at home.
     Note that there is some
similarity with one problem from
mine (17216 Die Schwalbe 287)
which shows a quadruple
interchange of the duet (♕,♔). The
themes are different but the
constructions share a common
feature - check on some side of a
King, action on the other side, new
check of the first side and finally
the diagram position (at home for
the thematic pieces) is reached.

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2ⁿᵈ Prize – Silver medal
### DMITRIJ BAIBIKOV
Israel
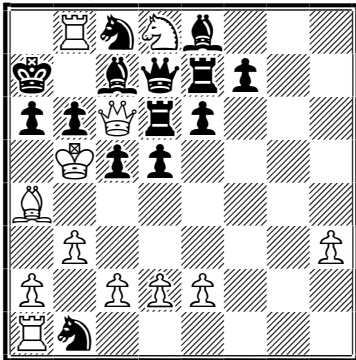
Release the position   12+14

-1...b7:♕a6#   -2.♕a5:♘a6+ ♞b4:♘a6 -3.h2-h3 ♞d3-b4 -4.♕b4-a5 ♞f2-d3 -5.♕g4-b4 ♞h3-f2 -6.♕g8-g4 ♞g1-h3 -7.g7-g8=♕ ♞h3-g1 -8.g6-g7 ♞g1-h3 -9.g5-g6 ♞h3-g1   -10.g4-g5   ♞g1-h3 -11.♘b4-a6 ♞h3-g1 -12.♘d3-b4 ♞g1-h3   -13.♘f4-d3   ♞h3-g1 -14.♘h5-f4 ♞g1-h3 -15.♘f6-h5 ♞h3-g1 -16.♘g8-f6 ♞g1-h3 -17.g7-g8=♘ ♞h3-g1 -18.g6-g7 ♞g1-h3 -19.g5-g6 g2-g1=♘ -20.f4:♞g5 g3-g2 -21.f3-f4 h4:♗g3 -22.♗e5-g3 h5-h4 -23.♗b2-e5 h6-h5 -24.♗c1-b2 h7-h6 -25.b2-b3 g6-g5 -26.♗b3-a4 g7-g6 -27.♔a4-b5 etc.

The retro play begins with 3 un-captures, each of the rebirthed pieces being promoted. This is a nice theme with interesting strategy.

After the retraction -7...♞h3-g1, a de-promotion right now would fail because of lack of enough black retro-moves for white to be able to unlock the west-south

cage (which is only possible after a de-captured Bishop goes to square c1). So white must use its ♗a6 piece (the only one which may retract to provide more available black moves) to de-promote it and then to de-capture the last available black Pawn, to provide enough black retro-moves (after the de-capture of the black squared white Bishop) to have time to unlock the west-south cage.

## 1ˢᵗ Honourable Mention – Bronze medal
ROBERTO OSORIO
Argentina
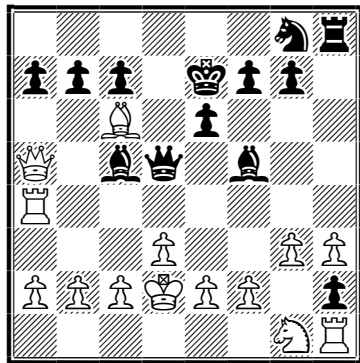
PG 17,0   14+13

1.d3 h5 2.♗h6 ♘:h6 3.♘f3 ♘f5 4.♘e5 ♞g3 5.♘:d7 ♗:d7 6.h:g3 ♘f6 7.♖h4 ♗f5 8.♖g4 h4 9.♕d2 h3 10.♕a5 h2 11.♘d2 ♖h3 12.g:h3 e6 13.♗g2 ♗c5 14.♗c6 ♔e7 15.♘f3 ♕d5 16.♔d2 ♖h8 17.♖h1 ♞g8 18.♘g1

The theme is entertaining and homogeneous: the visible pairs (♖,♘) and (♜,♞) are impostors

and an invisible pair (♜,♝) is cross-captured. In the "future proof game" language it reads SI(♖,♘)& SI(♜,♝) & CC(♜,♝). The construction is clean, straight to the point, although we may deduce it rather easily. Indeed the cross-capture is almost forced, as well as the fact that ♖a4 comes from square h1. The capture of ♗c1 is a flaw – its only motivation is to fix the ♘g8 path – although it looks complicated to fix this path without such a kind of damage.

<div align="center">

2ⁿᵈ Honourable Mention
ANDREY FROLKIN
Ukraine

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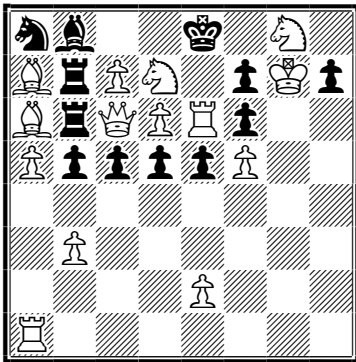
Release the position   14+12

-1.♘e7:♘g8 ♘h6-g8 -2.f4-f5 ♘g4-h6 -3.♔h6-g7 ♘e3-g4+ -4.♔h5-h6 ♘f5-e3 -5.♖g1-a1 ♘h4-f5 -6.a4-a5 ♘g6-h4 -7.a2-a4 ♘f8-g6 -8.♖g8-g1 ♘g6-f8 -9.g7-g8=♖+ ♘h4-g6 -10.♔g4-h5 ♘f3-h4 -11.g6-g7 ♘d2-f3 -12.h5:♗g6 ♘b1-d2 -13.♔g3-g4 b2-b1=♘ -14.♔f2-g3 a3:♘b2-15.♘c4-b2 ♗c2-g6 -16.♘e3-c4 a4-a3 -17.♘g4-e3 a5-a4 -18.♘h6-g4

♗b1-c2 -19.♘g8-h6 ♗c2-b1 -20.g7-g8=♘ ♗e4-c2 -21.g6-g7 g7:♖f6 and the cage is released.

This cage can only be released through g7xXf6, but this must be preceded by two white un-promotions on square g8. The thematic content is well-explained by the author:

Black Pronkin knight is captured on its Pronkin square (g8); the white knight on g8 on the diagram is an anti-Pronkin piece, in view of g7-g8=♘ and ♘g8>b2, a3x♘b2. Also: black promoted knight shields off his king to allow white un-promotion to rook on the same square g8. That rook later goes to a1 to become another Pronkin piece. Black pawn captures white promoted knight, promotes to knight and is also captured – as a Pronkin piece by an anti-Pronkin piece. WCCT-11 theme (expanded version) presented not in a SPG but in a classical-style retro.

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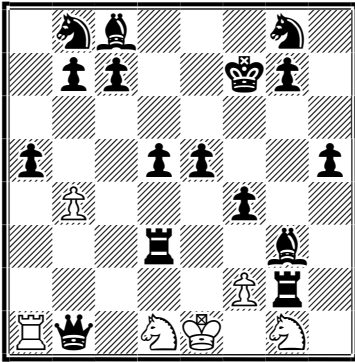
PG 19,0   6+16

1.b4 f5 2.♗b2 ♔f7 3.♗f6 e:f6 4.e4 ♗d6 5.♗d3 ♗g3 6.e5 f4 7.♗g6+ h:g6 8.c4 ♖:h2 9.c5 ♖g2 10.♖h6 f:e5 11.♕h5 g:h5 12.♖b6 a:b6 13.c6 d:c6 14.♘c3 ♕d3 15.♘d1 ♕b1 16.d4 ♖a3 17.d5 ♖d3 18.a4 c:d5 19.a5 b:a5

The theme - 4 zigzag captures - is homogeneous and ambitious but a bit dry to my mind. I prefer when zigzag or crossed captures is a secondary theme to accompany a Ceriani-Frolkin proof game, say. Moreover 8 thematic captures is already a high number, it is a pity that 2 more unthematic captures (♗ g7h7) are needed in the construction. Nevertheless the game contains nice subtleties in order to achieve this complicated theme.
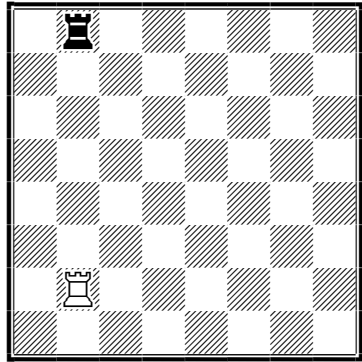
1+1
Add pieces for a proof game which ends with 8.c5#!
Shrinking Men
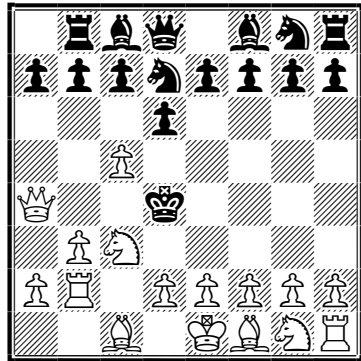
1.c3 d6 2.c4 ♔d7 3.♕a4+ ♔e6 4.b3 ♔d5 5.♘c3+ ♔d4 6.♖b1 ♘d7 7.♖b2 ♖b8 8.c5#

« Add pieces » problems might be very difficult to solve as there is not always a clear strategy to be followed. This issue is overcome here, indeed 8.c6-c5 is certainly not

a check from this Pawn, as the virtual King's capture c5x♔b6/d6 is impossible from the condition. It implies that the solution should be a discovered check mate.

The visible Rooks are of course needed for soundness: ♖b8 fixes the flight of the black King via square d7, and ♖b2 fixes the remainder of white moves after 3.♕a4. There are other subtleties, such as the black King which ends its trip via a length 1 move, so that it cannot escape the check via c5/e5 squares.

Shrinking Men - No unit can make a longer move than it made last time. This restriction also holds for the effect on the opponent's King.