



The 8th FIDE World Cup in Composing

Section H – Retros and Proofgames

Preliminary award by

Nicolas Dupont

MMXX

Participants

H01	K. Prentos (USA)	H12	P. Răican (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)		

The 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 manoeuvre 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.

H21 - There is a couple of issues with this problem: one should read - 5. ♚g1-a1 instead of -5. ♚g1-h1 and, more importantly, -6... ♗g6-h4 is illegal with the white King standing on square h8. I think the author should submit this interesting problem once again after correction.

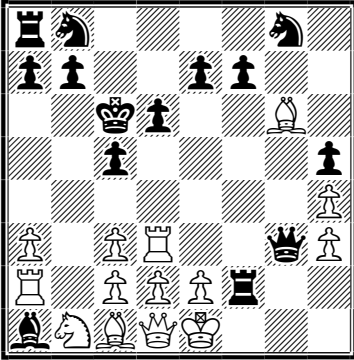
The above entries, as well as the remaining ones not awarded, suffer of known weaknesses, among them:

- 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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1st Prize – Gold medal
 MARK KIRTLEY
 USA



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) (♕, ♞, ♔).

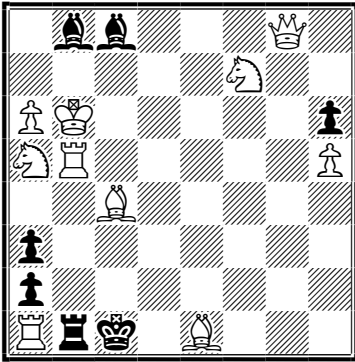
The only way to parry a first check on square f2 is to play ♕b2 ♞c1 and ♔d1. Then a black Bishop is moving through square b2, and the only way for white to

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.

~

2nd Prize – Silver medal
 VLAICU CRIȘAN
 Romania



-115 & r#1

10+7

Pacific Retractor

- | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| -1. ♖c7-b6 | ♙a7-b8+ | -2. ♜d7-c7 |
| ♙b7-c8+ | -3. ♖c6-d7 | ♙c8-b7+ |
| -4. ♖c5-c6 | ♙b8-a7+ | -5. ♜d6-c5 |
| ♙a7-b8+ | -6. ♖e6-d6 | ♙b7-c8+ |
| -7. ♜d5-e6 | ♙c8-b7+ | -8. ♜d4-d5 |
| ♙b8-a7+ | -9. ♖e5-d4 | ♙a7-b8+ |
| -10. ♜f5-e5 | ♙b7-c8+ | -11. ♖e4-f5 |
| ♙c8-b7+ | -12. ♖e3-e4 | ♙b8-a7+ |
| -13. ♜f4-e3 | ♙a7-b8+ | -14. ♖g5-f4 |
| h7-h6+ | -15. ♜f5-g5 | ♙b7-c8+ |
| -16. ♖e4-f5 | ♙c8-b7+ | -17. ♜d4-e4 |
| ♙b8-a7+ | -18. ♖e5-d4 | ♙a7-b8+ |
| -19. ♖e6-e5 | ♙b7-c8+ | -20. ♜d5-e6 |
| ♙c8-b7+ | -21. ♖c5-d5 | ♙b8-a7+ |
| -22. ♜d6-c5 | ♙a7-b8+ | -23. ♜d7-d6 |
| ♙b7-c8+ | -24. ♖c6-d7 | ♙c8-b7+ |
| -25. ♜b6-c6 | ♙b8-a7+ | -26. ♞g5-b5 |
| ♜b2-c1+ | -27. ♖c7-b6 | ♙a7-b8+ |
| -28. ♜d7-c7 | ♙b7-c8+ | -29. ♖c6-d7 |
| ♙c8-b7+ | -30. ♖c5-c6 | ♙b8-a7+ |
| -31. ♜d6-c5 | ♙a7-b8+ | -32. ♖e6-d6 |
| ♙b7-c8+ | -33. ♜d5-e6 | ♙c8-b7+ |
| -34. ♜d4-d5 | ♙b8-a7+ | -35. ♖e5-d4 |

- | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| ♙a7-b8+ | -36. ♜f5-e5 | ♙b7-c8+ |
| -37. ♖e4-f5 | ♙c8-b7+ | -38. ♖e3-e4 |
| ♙b8-a7+ | -39. ♜f4-e3 | ♙a7-b8+ |
| -40. ♖g4-f4 | ♙b7-c8+ | -41. ♜f3-g4 |
| ♙c8-b7+ | -42. ♜f2-f3 | ♙b8-a7+ |
| -43. ♖g3-f2 | ♙a7-b8+ | -44. ♜h3-g3 |
| ♙b7-c8+ | -45. ♜g2-h3 | ♙c8-b7+ |
| -46. ♖g1-g2 | ♙b8-a7+ | -47. ♙b4-e1 |
| ♜c1-b2+ | -48. ♜h2-g1 | ♙a7-b8+ |
| -49. ♜h3-h2 | ♙b7-c8+ | -50. ♜g2-h3 |
| ♙c8-b7+ | -51. ♜f2-g2 | ♙b8-a7+ |
| -52. ♖g3-f2 | ♙a7-b8+ | -53. ♖g4-g3 |
| ♙b7-c8+ | -54. ♜f3-g4 | ♙c8-b7+ |
| -55. ♖e3-f3 | ♙b8-a7+ | -56. ♜f4-e3 |
| ♙a7-b8+ | -57. ♜f5-f4 | ♙b7-c8+ |
| -58. ♖e4-f5 | ♙c8-b7+ | -59. ♜d4-e4 |
| ♙b8-a7+ | -60. ♜e5-d4 | ♙a7-b8+ |
| -61. ♖e6-e5 | ♙b7-c8+ | -62. ♜d5-e6 |
| ♙c8-b7+ | -63. ♜c5-d5 | ♙b8-a7+ |
| -64. ♙f1-c4 | a4-a3 | -65. ♜d6-c5 |
| ♙a7-b8+ | -66. ♜d7-d6 | ♙b7-c8+ |
| -67. ♜c6-d7 | ♙c8-b7+ | -68. ♜b6-c6 |
| ♙b8-a7+ | -69. ♙e7-b4 | ♜b2-c1+ |
| -70. ♖c7-b6 | ♙a7-b8+ | -71. ♜d7-c7 |
| ♙b7-c8+ | -72. ♖c6-d7 | ♙c8-b7+ |
| -73. ♖c5-c6 | ♙b8-a7+ | -74. ♜d6-c5 |
| ♙a7-b8+ | -75. ♖e6-d6 | ♙b7-c8+ |
| -76. ♜d5-e6 | ♙c8-b7+ | -77. ♜d4-d5 |
| ♙b8-a7+ | -78. ♖e5-d4 | ♙a7-b8+ |
| -79. ♜f5-e5 | ♙b7-c8+ | -80. ♖e4-f5 |
| ♙c8-b7+ | -81. ♖e3-e4 | ♙b8-a7+ |
| -82. ♜f4-e3 | ♙a7-b8+ | -83. ♖g4-f4 |
| ♙b7-c8+ | -84. ♜f3-g4 | ♙c8-b7+ |
| -85. ♜f2-f3 | ♙b8-a7+ | -86. ♜g3-f2 |
| ♙a7-b8+ | -87. ♜h3-g3 | ♙b7-c8+ |
| -88. ♜g2-h3 | ♙c8-b7+ | -89. ♜g1-g2 |
| ♙b8-a7+ | -90. ♙b5-f1 | ♜c1-b2+ |
| -91. ♜h2-g1 | ♙a7-b8+ | -92. ♜h3-h2 |
| ♙b7-c8+ | -93. ♜g2-h3 | ♙c8-b7+ |
| -94. ♜f2-g2 | ♙b8-a7+ | -95. ♜g3-f2 |
| ♙a7-b8+ | -96. ♖g4-g3 | ♙b7-c8+ |
| -97. ♜f3-g4 | ♙c8-b7+ | -98. ♖e3-f3 |
| ♙b8-a7+ | | |

-99. ♖f4-e3 ♜a7-b8+ -100. ♖f5-f4
 ♜b7-c8+ -101. ♖e4-f5 ♜c8-b7+
 -102. ♖d4-e4 ♜b8-a7+ -103. ♖e5-d4
 ♜a7-b8+ -104. ♖e6-e5 ♜b7-c8+
 -105. ♖d5-e6 ♜c8-b7+ -106. ♖c5-d5
 ♜b8-a7+ -107. ♖d6-c5 ♜a7-b8+
 -108. ♖d7-d6 ♜b7-c8+ -109. ♖c6-d7
 ♜c8-b7+ -110. ♖b6-c6 ♜b8-a7+
 -111. ♜e8-b5 ♖b2-c1+ -112. ♖c7-b6
 ♜a7-b8+ -113. ♖d7-c7 ♜b7-c8+
 -114. ♖d8-d7 a3-a2 -115. ♜d7-e8 &
 1. ♖g8-e8 ♜a7-b6#

Note that there is a typo in author's solution. It is -90... ♖c1-b2+ instead of -90... ♖b2-c1+. To construct its own mating cage, white must retro-play 2 non-retro-checks. Those moves must appear when black's answer cannot destroy the position, thus at the precise moment when black must retract a Pawn move to follow the 50-moves rule. But the first non-retro-check can't occur before 50 moves. One key point is that there are 3 available Pawn retro-moves for black, namely h7-h6, a5-a4 and a3-a2. White is using the first one to "delete" the 50-moves rule.

A first scale manoeuver leads to -25. ♖b6-c6 ♜b8-a7+ where the position is the same than in the diagram one, except that ♜h6 lands on square h7, and the "50 moves clock" is placed at 11 because h6-h7+ is played at move -14. After -26. ♜g5-b5 ♖b2-c1+ (square b5 is the only one which will not disturbing the future retro-checks), white is ready for a new scale manoeuver with key

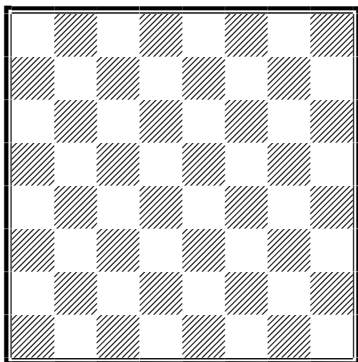
moves -46. ♖g1-g2 ♜b8-a7+
 -47. ♜b4-e1 ♖c1-b2+ and then
 -63. ♖c5-d5 ♜b8-a7+ -64. ♜f1-c4
 a4-a3. Note here the very precise timing: retro-move 64 is the one where black must retract a (safe for white) Pawn move because $11+(64-25)=50!$

A new scale manoeuver puts the white King on the thematic square b6 and then are played -69. ♜e7-b4 ♖b2-c1+ -89. ♖g1-g2 ♜b8-a7+ -90. ♜b5-f1 ♖c1-b2+. Once again the white King is going on the thematic square b6 and then are played -110. ♖b6-c6 ♜b8-a7+ -111. ♜e8-b5 ♖b2-c1+. The last key move is -114. ♖d8-d7 a3-a2, where black is once again obliged to retract its last available Pawn move because $64+50=114!$ And now everything is ready for white to be checkmated by a reflex black move.

This is an impressive retro sequence where white first delays the 50-moves rule, and then applies it 2 times for black to be able to checkmate.

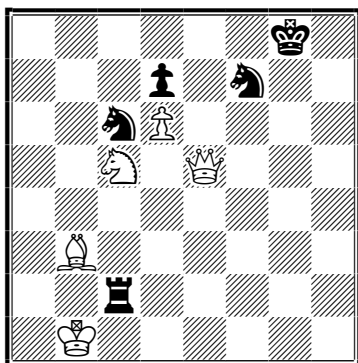


3rd Prize – Bronze medal
 BOJAN BAŠIĆ
 Serbia



Circe Assassin 0+0

Construct an illegal cluster with 5 white different pieces and 5 black (not necessarily different) pieces, where a piece standing on a light square gives check and observes none of the pieces of its own color.



Illegal clusters are not exactly my cup of tea, but I particularly enjoy this one where almost nothing is known about the 10 pieces to be placed on the board.

The diagram position is clearly illegal: the black side is in-check as $\text{♟xf7} [+ \text{♜g8} - \text{♚g8}]$ would annihilate the black King. It implies that white just moved but there is no such previous move. Indeed ♜a4-b3 and ♞d5-d6 are illegal as black is still in-check in those retracted positions (♜c6 is attacked). Moreover ♜e6-c5 is illegal too as this time the white King is in-check from ♞d7 (hence its position on square b2 is forced).

If we delete ♜c6 or ♞d7 the above respective last moves are now working. If we delete ♞c2 then retraction ♜c2/d1-b3 is ok. If we delete the last black piece ♜f7 , we can put a w ♝f7 which capture b ♞d7 as last move – this Rook is then replaced by the captured Pawn.

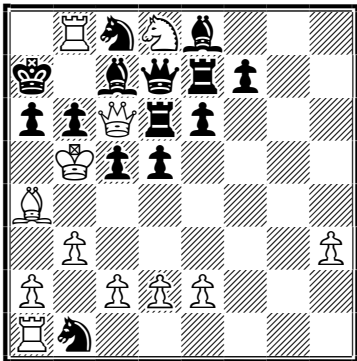
Concerning white pieces, the position is clearly legal if we delete the Bishop. If we delete the Knight or the Queen, then ♞d6 may recapture en-passant and ♞d7 which stands one move before on square d5 is closing the diagonal a2/g8 . Finally if we delete ♞d6 , we can put a w ♝d5 which capture b ♞d7 as last move (same trick than for - ♜f7).

The author gave strong arguments to convince the reader that the position is unique with the given constraints, I hope that nothing has been missed.

Circe Assassin - Like Circe, but when the rebirth square is occupied, the occupant is

«assassinated» (replaced) by the captured unit.

1st Honourable Mention
DMITRIJ BAIBIKOV
Israel



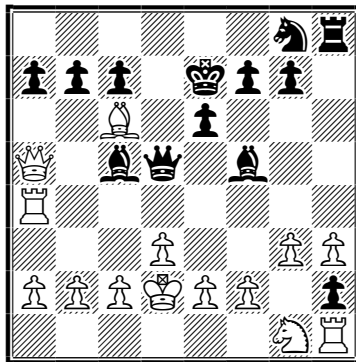
Release the position 12+14

-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.

2nd Honourable Mention
ROBERTO OSORIO
Argentina



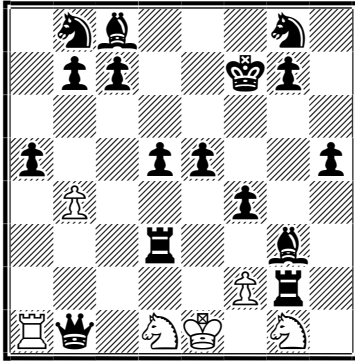
PG 17,0 14+13

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.

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.

3rd Honourable Mention
KOSTAS PRENTOS
USA

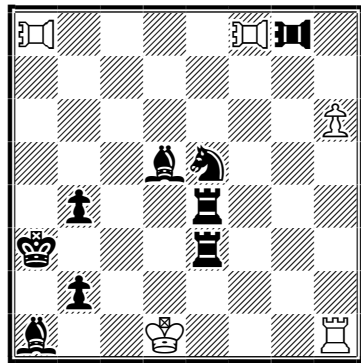


PG 19,0

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

1st Commendation
KLAUS WENDA
Austria



-10 & s#1

5+9

Proca retractor
Anti-Circe Calvet
g8, f8, a8: Pao

-1. ♖c3:♘c2[♖h1] ♘d3-c2+
-2. ♗e2-d1 ♘c2-d3+ -3.PAb8-a8
♘a8-d5+ -4. ♗d1-e2 ♘d3-c2+
-5. ♗e2-d1 ♘c2-d3+ -6. ♗d1-e2
♘d3-c2+ -7. ♗e2-d1 ♘b1-d3+
-8. ♗e1-e2 PAh8-g8+
-9. ♗h5:♗g6[♗e1] ♗h7-g6+
-10.a7:PAb8=PA[PAb8] &
1.PAf8:a8[PAa8]+ ♗:a7[♗d8]#

Adding fairy pieces to an already complex stipulation should be strongly motivated, which is the case here as the solution is centered on the Paos. This solution is complicated and interesting but remains mostly a puzzle as there is no clear theme. The main steps go as follows:

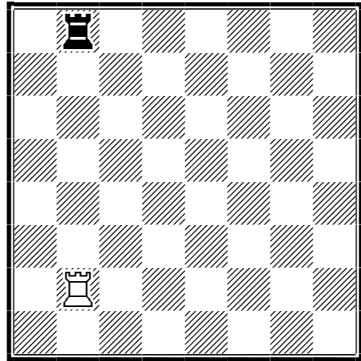
-1. ♖c3x♙c2[♖h1] White is using the rebirth possibility of ♖h1 to control square b3.

-8. ♔e1-e2 ♚h8-g8+ After the use of the 3-fold repetition rule to put the rebirthed black Bishop on the inoffensive square b1, white is putting its King on its original square d1.

-9. ♕h5x♚g6[♕e1] ♗h7-g6+ White is using the rebirth possibility of ♕d1 to create a rebirthed black Queen, and after retraction -10 everything is in place for a #1.

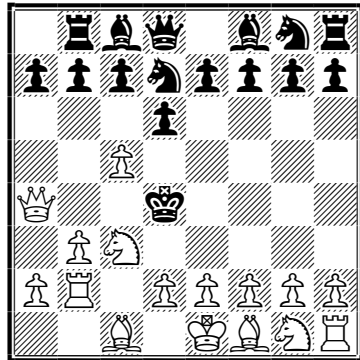
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2nd Commendation
BERND GRAEFRAETH
Germany



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 $c5 \times \text{c}6/d6$ 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: $\text{R}b8$ fixes the flight of the black King via square d7, and $\text{R}b2$ fixes the remainder of white moves after $3. \text{W}a4$. 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.