The 9ᵗʰ FIDE World Cup in Composing

Section H – Retros

Final award by

Joaquim Crusats

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Participants

H01	Mikitovics J. (HUN)	H08	Tar G. (HUN)
H02	Crisan V. (ROM)	H09	Vokál S. (SVK)
H03	Grudziński H. (POL)	H10	Muljadi P. (USA)
H04	Frolkin A. (UKR)	H11	Baibikov D. (ISR)
H05	García C. E. (VEN)	H12	*Withdrawal the author's request*
H06	Gatti D. (ITA)	H13	Bašić B. (SRB)
H07	Packa L. (SVK)	H14	Coakley J. (CAN)

F irst of all I would like to express my gratitude to Andrey Selivanov and all the organizers of this 9th edition of the FIDE World Cup in Composing for entrusting me with the responsibility of judging the Retros section of this prestigious competition. I also want to thank the tourney director, Yuri Bazlov, for his efficient work, and all the composers for submitting their entrie.

I received 14 problems from the tourney director in anonymous diagrams. One of them (H12) was deleted at the author's request. The rules of the tourney specified that only classical retros without fairy elements were allowed, also leaving out proof games. I concur with this atypical format insofar as it may be a constructive initiative to palliate the current lack of "orthodox" retros in front of the ultra-popular SPGs and the expanding domain of fairy retros.

As a result, entries **H01**, **H03**, and **H07** (orthodox and fairy proof games) were ineligible to participate.

Nonetheless, this still leaves a total of 10 problems in the competition, certainly a low number, but not too different from previous editions of the tourney.

However, three problems are cooked:

- **H02** is a very nice Retractor showing an excellent construction and logical play, but Black has an unexpected defensive retraction;

- **H09** is a *can't castler*, but retroanalysis shows that White still retains the castling rights;

- **H10** is a simple *last mover* problem, but Black's last move is not determined.

I decided to leave two problems out of the award:

- **H05**, which is a constructional task with little retro content;

- **H06**, which is more of a scheme than a finished problem.

In summary, my initial classification resulted in 3 Prizes, 1 Honorable Mention, and 1 Commendation.

Unfortunately, as our colleague and participant in the competition D. Baibikov found out, the Honorable Mention (**H13**) appearing in the preliminary award is also cooked: –1.♔g4:♗f5 ♗e4(g6)-f5+ –2.♘f5:♘h6 ♘f7~+ – 3.♘f8:♖h7 & 1.♘(:)g6#; – 1…♗e4:Xf5+/♗c8(d7,e6,g6):♙(♕,♗) –2.♔g5:♖g4 ♖~+ –3.♔f6:♗g5 B~+ –4.♘f8:♖h7 & 1.♘(:)g6#; – 1…♗c8(d7,e6):♘f5 -2.♖f7-f5 ♗~+ – 3.♘f8-h7 & 1.♘g6#; –1…♗g6:♖f5 – 2.♔g5:♖g4 ♖~+ –3.♖f8:♖f5 ♖f6~+ (–3…♖f7~+ –4.♘f6-h7 & 1.♖:g8#) – 4.f7-f8=♖ & 1.f7:g8=♕#; – 1…♗c8(d7,e6,g6):♘f5 –2.♘f8:♖h7 & 1.♘(:)g6#. These lines do not allow forward defenses by Black.

Thus, to my regret, I have to exclude this problem from the final award.

I am well aware that this outcome is rather unusual, but probably this is simply a consequence of the current composing trends that overshadow the genre of classical orthodox retros. In this regard, I hope that the following problems will contribute to shed some more light on our beloved field.

This is the final ranking:
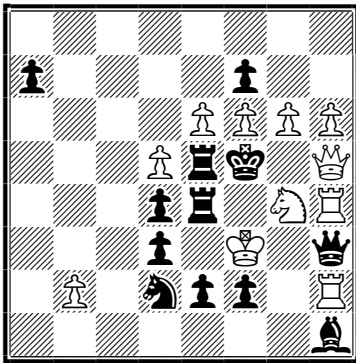
Add units and release the position   11+12

The last move was –1…♘~-d2+, so at least 3 units have to be added on squares g2, g3, and g5 to prevent illegal checks. If only black pieces are added, both balances are closed. However, after –1…♘~-d2+ White is retrostalemated. Thus, a white piece must be added on square g3 so that it can be then unpinned: –1…♘f1-d2+ –2.X~-g3

♘g3-f1+. This white piece can only be a bishop. After the addition of the w♗g3 and two black pieces (for example, b♗g5 and b♘g2) both balances are closed too; however, after –1…♘f1-d2+ –2.♗f4-g3 ♘g3-f1+ –3.♗d2-f4 ♗f4-g5 –4.g5-g6+ it turns out that the retro-free dark-squared w♗d2 cannot reach the c8 square for unpromotion. So a white piece needs to be added on g2, which after unpinning, can reach the c8 square, while a black piece is needed on g5, which will be able to unpin the white piece on g2. Taking into account all these facts, the required additions are: w♕g2, w♗g3, and b♕g5. The balances are as follows:

- White: 11 (on diagram) + 2 (added) + 3 (captured by black Pawns c:d, g:f, h:g) = 16;
- Black: 12 (on diagram) + 1 (added) + 3 (captured by white Pawns a:b, d:e, e:d) = 16.

Then –1…♘f1-d2+ –2.♗f4-g3 ♘g3-f1+ –3.♗c1-g5! ♕d2-g5 –4.g5-g6+ and further –4…♕e1-d2 –5.♗d2-c1 ♕f1-e1 –6.♗b4-d2 ♕g1-f1 –7.♗d6-b4 ♕f1-g1 –8.♗b8-d6 ♕g1-f1 –9.b7-b8♗ ♕f1-g1 –10.b6-b7 ♕g1-f1 –11.b5-b6 ♕f1-g1 –12.b4-b5 ♕g1-f1 –13.b3-b4 ♕f1-g1 –14.a2:♗b3 ♕g1-f1 and now tempoplay starts: –15.♕f1-g2 g2-g1♕+ –16.♕c1-f1 b4-b3 –17.♕c8-c1 b5-b4 –18.c7-c8♕ b6-b5 –19.c6-c7 b7-b6 –20.c5-c6 e3-e2 –21.c4-c5 c5:♗(♘)d4 etc.

For the first time, the addition of three promoted pieces is realized without stipulation pressure.

This problem is one of these impressive constructions that fill a hole in the retroanalysis realm. The problem speaks for itself, but the freshness of the biarticulated cage, resistant to various combinations of colored units in the vacant squares, and the excellent try refuted by the color of the promotion square, are worthy to remark. The clear winner of this competition. Hats off.

2ⁿᵈ Prize – Silver medal
ANDREY FROLKIN
Ukraine
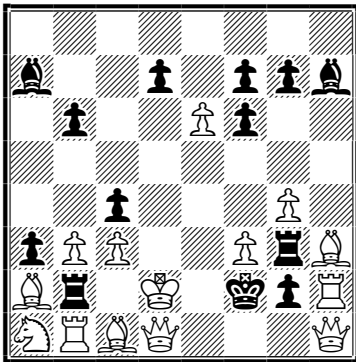
Last 16 single moves?   14+13

White balance: 14 (pieces on the board) + 2 (e7:f6, h:g) = 16.

Black balance: 13 + 2 (a6:b7-b8, d:c→c8=♗) = 15.

The h-pawn could have promoted on h8. One black piece is unaccounted for. This means, in particular, that the possibility of h7:g8=♗ and d6:c7-c8 or d:e (with a white promotion on e8) cannot be discarded immediately. The last

move is –1…♗c2-h7+, and the resulting position features a retrocage in the bottom half of the board. An attempt to release the cage through e2:f3 necessitates four captures by white while three black pieces are missing. The cage can only be released by retracting the black king to f1 after the installation of two shields – on e1 and g1.

Then **–2.e5-e6** (d5:e6?) ♗b8-a7 **–3.e4-e5** ♗d6-b8 **–4.e3-e4** ♗f8-d6 **–5.e2-e3** e7:♘f6! **–6.♘d5-f6** a4-a3 **–7.♘e3-d5** a5-a4 **–8.♘f1-e3** a6-a5! **–9.♘e3:**♕f1 – the sequence of 16 unique single moves is over; now **–9...♕g1-f1** (a7-a6) **–10.♘d5-e3** a7-a6 (♕g1-f1) **–11.♘b4-d5** ♕f1-g1 **–12.♘a6-b4** ♕g1-f1 **–13.♘b8-a6** ♕f1-g1 **–14.b7-b8=♘** ♕g1-f1 **–15.a6:♘b7** ♘c5-b7 **–16.a5-a6** ♘d3-c5 **–17.a4-a5** ♘e1-d3 **–18.a3-a4** ♔f1-f2 **–19.f2-f3** ♖~-g3 and the cage is released.

–8...a7-a5? leads to retroopposition between the black king and the uncaptured queen on f1 – the queen arrives there at the wrong moment and Black later has to waste a tempo; this eventually results in retrostalemate for white. The uncaptured white knight serves a dual purpose: to uncapture, in its turn, the black shielding queen and then, after unpromoting, to uncapture the second shielding black piece, a knight.

We are in front of a masterly composed classical retro problem

based on a Release the Position approach. The presence of a cage that allows an open balance adds a lot of thrill to the solving process. The uncapture of an officer by another officer — not in relation to any check — together with the initial double-step of the b♙a7 being ruled out on the basis of a subtle retro-opposition mechanism, are very nice touchs that enrich this enjoyable problem.

3ʳᵈ Prize – Bronze medal
JEFF COAKLEY
Canada

| A	n	d	D	R	N	D	R
n		e			y		d
				R		D	a
Y		E				E	d
			E	R			e
A		N					
e							
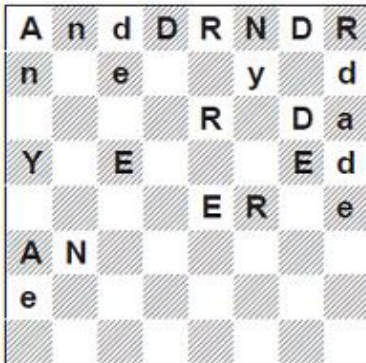
Rebus: determine the position and last 8 moves   6+13

In order to determine the position, the following facts must be taken into account:

- Y is king (letter with only one uppercase, one lowercase);
- E is pawn (remaining letter not on 8th rank);
- D is not queen or bishop (impossible double check);
- R is not queen or bishop (impossible double check);
- N is not queen (both kings in check);
- A is queen;
- N is bishop;
- if D is knight and R is rook there an impossible double check, so D is rook and R is knight.

There is a check on square h8, so last move was-1.g7:h8=♘+ meaning that caps are White (see solution diagram below):
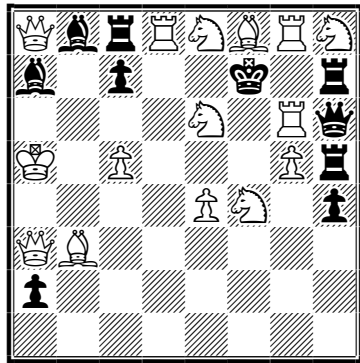
Solution diagram   15+10

The last moves were: — **1.g7:♘h8=♘+ ♔e7-f7 –2.f7-f8=♗+ ♔d7-e7 –3.e7:♘d8=♖+ ♔c6-d7 – 4.b7:♗a8=♕+ ♔d7-c6**. Black's moves were not captures because white pawns were on f7 and e7. — 3...♔c6-d7 –4.b7:a8=♕+. Black's move was not a capture. The only missing white piece is a dark bishop. No other black retractions are possible, regardless of which pieces were captured on h8 and d8. the diagram below shows the position before –4.b7:a8=♕+.
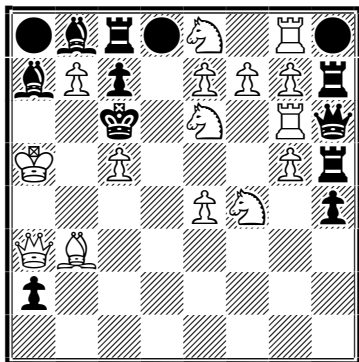
Earlier position with black officers on a8, d8, and h8

White has seven pawns and a promoted knight. The only missing white piece is a dark-square bishop. Black has at least two promoted pieces (rook and dark bishop). Black is missing three pieces. The pawn formation and promoted pieces could only occur by the following play:

White: a: ♗b, b8=♞, d: ♗e, h: ♗g;

Black: ...d1=♖, ...f:♗g, ...g1=♗ (or...f:♗e, ...e1=♗). Three black pawns (b, e, g) were captured by White. Therefore the three black pieces awaiting capture on the 8th rank are a light bishop and two knights. The bishop is on light square a8 and the knights are on d8 and h8. Previous move is: – 4...♔d7-c6.

Allumwandlung on White's last four moves in which three of the promotions are captures. The only other *last mover* to achieve this task with exactly determined moves is Kornilov-Frolkin 1981 ([P0000545](#)), but their problem has no captures.

The *rebus* part of this problem is straightforward as for retroanalysis, but the problem is excellently constructed as a *last mover*, with the positive feature that the nature of the first uncaptures cannot be decided until further back in the retroplay. The four retractions of the black king confer a nice sense of thematic unity to the problem. Many pieces on the board are required to make the last sequence of moves unique, and this poses a severe limitation to the flexibility of the position, yet the composer still shows great skill to present the concept in a *rebus* form. It is a little bit disenchanting, though, that none of the deeper retro subtleties of the *last mover* facet of this problem can be entangled to the resolution part of the *rebus*, and somehow this deprives this outstanding construction of a full sense of wholeness.

h=7   AP   5+14

pinning of the wR on f4 and ruling out a move of the promoted unit out of the final cage — do not seriously detract from the problem.

Joaquim Crusats,
September 20th, 2021
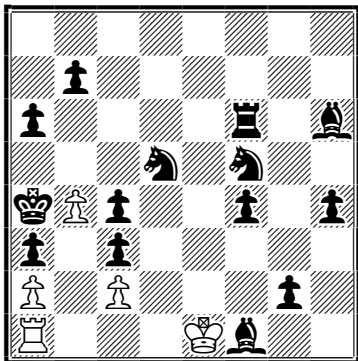
1.c4:b3 ep.! 0-0-0 2.g2-g1=♖ ♖d1:f1 3.♖g1-g5 ♖f1:f4+ 4.♘d5-b4 ♖f4:f5 5.b3:c2 ♖f5:f6 6.♖g5-a5+ ♖f6:h6 7.b7-b5 ♖h6:h4=.

An *a posteriori* retro allowing the *en passant* capture key by subsequent castling. The problem shows the Valladao theme (*en passant capture, castling, and promotion*) along with an anticipated Phoenix by the black rook. There and dozens of *a posteriori* problems showing the Valladao theme, but here the helpstalemate stipulation allows the composer to use minimal white force that, in addition to the pleasant help play, aesthetically compensates for the trivial retro part.

The fact that castling is inevitable and that there is a double motivation for Black's underpromotion — preventing the

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