WFCC 70th Jubilee Tourney 2026, section F (selfmates)
Final Award

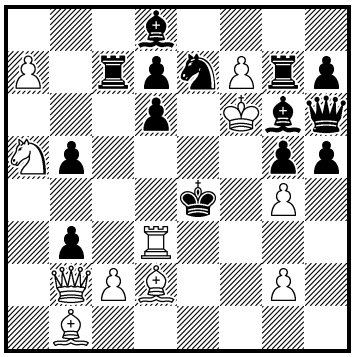
A total of 32 selfmates were submitted to this section (16 ranging from 2 to 5 moves and 16 longer ones with up to 14 moves). A considerable proportion was of a very high standard, as befitted the occasion of the tourney. In two problems of outstanding quality (F18, F24), however, the placement had to make concessions to the presence of precursors, taking into account feedback on the preliminary report that had been received within the objection period. A misprinted solution line for F08 has been corrected. F15 was excluded due to the discovery of a severely dualistic abbreviation (in 10 moves) of the side variation indicated by the author (2...Rc7 3.Sb7+! Ke8 4.Qb5+ etc.). In a problem of this nature, this significantly diminishes its artistic value.

Participants:
F01 Gatti, Daniele; F02 Rãican, Paul; F03 Herzberg, Michael; F04 Banaszek, Marcin; F05 Novomeský, Daniel; F06 Degenkolbe, Mirko; F07 Krätschmer, Ralf; F08 Piliczewski, Bogusz; F09 Holubec, Jozef; F10 Majoros, Bela; F11 Garzón, José; F12 Trommler, Sven; F13 Selivanov, Andrey; F14 Jordan, Raúl; F15 Stepochkin, Anatoly; F16 Zamanov, Vidadi; F17 Labai, Zoltán ; F18 Gvozdják, Peter; F19 Dimitrov, Ognian; F20 Feoktistov, Aleksandr; F21 Gasparyan, Aleksey; F22 Tura, Waldemar; F23 Yuzyuk, Viktor; F24 Kuzovkov, Aleksandr; F25 Khramtsevich, Mikhail; F26 Pankratiev, Aleksandr; F27 Crăciun, Ovidiu; F28 Havran, Jozef; F29 Erenburg, Mark; F30 Soroka, Ivan; F31 Stojnić, Dragan; F32 Sergiienko, Andrii.

My ranking is as follows:

F14 **Raúl Jordan**

1st Prize



s#3 (11+14)

1.cxb3? [2.Rxd6+ A Rc2 3.a8B+ Sc6,d5#]
1...Rb7,Rxa7 2.Rf3+ B Kd5 3.Rf5+ S,Bxf5#
1...d5 2.Re3+ C Kf4 3.Qd4+ Be4#
1...Rc2!

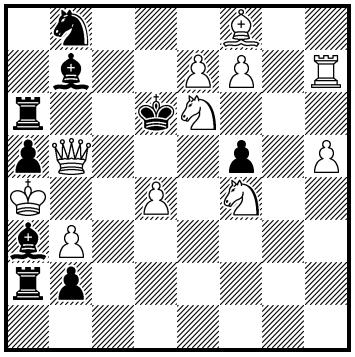
1.c3!? [2.Rf3+ B Kd5 3.Rf5+ S,Bxf5#; not 2.Rxd6#??]
1...Rxc3 2.Rxd6+ A R∼ 3.a8B+ Sc6,d5#
1...d5!

1.c4! [2.Re3+ C Kf4 3.Qd4+ Be4#; not 2.Rxd6#??; not 2.Rf3#??]
1...bxc4 2.Rf3+ B Kd5 3.Rf5+ S,Bxf5#
1...Rxc4(!) 2.Rxd6+ A Rc2 3.a8B+ Sc6,d5#

1st Prize: F14
This problem presents a highly original three-move complete tertiary threat correction with an option key by a white pawn, combined with an arrival correction (1...bxc4, 1...Rxc4(!)). The motive of the defence 1...bxc4 (allowing the king to move to d5 after 2.Re3+?) and the secondary motive of 1...Rxc4 (allowing the rook to interfere with the white battery line on c2 after 2.Rf3+?) are inverted by White: 2.Rf3+ Kd5, 2.Rxd6+ Rc2, respectively. A further inversion of Black's defensive motive occurs after 1.cxb3? R∼7, where Black's intention to relinquish the rook's control over c2 is exploited by White – forcing the variation that reappears as the threat line after 1.c3!?. Additionally, the variation introduced by 1.cxb3? d5 recurs as the threat line after 1.c4!. The first phase thus leads to a first Pseudo le Grand when compared to the second phase, and to a second Pseudo le Grand when compared to the third phase. The thematic density and wealth of genre-specific elements create a complexity in the unusual that makes this problem a convincing tourney winner.

F13 **Andrey Selivanov**

2nd Prize



s#4 (11+9)

1.Sg6! [2.e8S+ Kxe6 3.Sc7+ Kf6 4.Be7+ Bxe7#]

1...Rc6 2.e8B+ Kxe6 3.d5+ Kf6 4.Be7+ Bxe7#

1...Bc6 2.e8R+ Kd7 3.Rd8+ Kxe6 4.Rd6+ Bxd6#

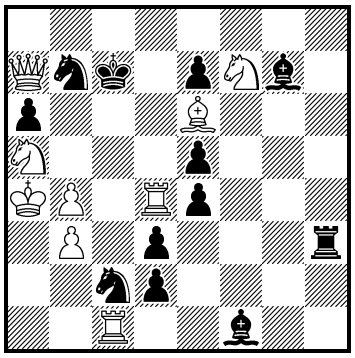
1...Sc6(!) 2.e8Q+ Se7 3.Qd8+ Kxe6 4.Qxe7+ Bxe7#

2nd Prize: F13

A white AUW via battery play, combined with a corresponding thematic feature on the black side, was showcased in several works by A. Selivanov (e. g., his famous problem P1181828[1]). In F13, the threat 2.e8S+ etc. is parried by moves to c6 by Ra6, Bb7, Sb8, which are answered by the promotions to B, R, Q on e8. Beyond this formal correspondence, the defences 1...Rc6, 1...Bc6 are exploited here as Grimshaw interferences by White. The defence 1...Sc6 interferes with both Grimshaw lines but prevents both the relative exploitations by White. It thus constitutes a simultaneous black correction, which enriches the complex of variations with a highly welcome aspect of gradation. The flight-giving key is pleasurable.

F07 **Ralf Krätschmer**

3rd Prize



s#7 (9+12)

1.Rd7+? Kc8 2.Rd8+ Kc7 3.b5? [4.Qc5+ Sxc5#] axb5+!

1.Rd7+? Kc8 2.Rxd3+ Kc7 3. Rd7+ Kc8 4. Rd8+ Kc7 5. b5 [6.Qc5+ Sxc5#] (5...axb5#/Bxb5#??) Rc3!

1.Rd8! [2.Qb8+ Kb6 3.Sc4+ Kc6 4.Sf,cxe5+ Bxe5 5.Sxe5+ Kb6 6.Sd7+ Kc6 7.b5+ axb5#]

1...Rh5 2.Rd7+ Kc8 3.Rxd3+ Kc7 4.Rd7+ Kc8 5.Rd8+ Kc7 6.b5 [7.Qc5+ Sxc5#] (6...axb5#/Bxb5#??) $\sim$ 7.Qc5+ Sxc5#

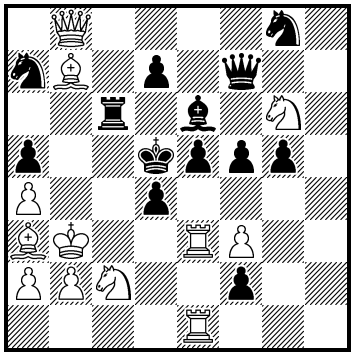
3rd Prize: F07

An attractive problem of the logical school, involving the inverted Berlin theme (see the 240th theme tourney of *Die Schwalbe*). After 1.Rd7+ Kc8 2.Rd8+ Kc7, White would like to play 3.b5 with the threat of 4.Qc5+, but Black thwarts this with 3...axb5+. The crucial idea is to neutralize this check by turning it into a mating move. To this end, White can attempt to remove the bPd3 via a foreplan, but after 1.Rd7+? Kc8 2.Rxd3 Kc7 3.Rd7+ Kc8 4.Rd8+ 5.b5, it turns out that this neutralization of the pawn check (5...axb5#??) leads to the new refutation 5...Rc3!. Therefore, another foreplan is required beforehand to divert the bRh3 from the 3rd rank. A threat of full length after 1.Rd8! forces Black to play 1...Rh5, after which nothing stands in the way of carrying out the second foreplan and the main plan. The only tiny flaw in this impressive thematic program is that White's 4th move in the threat is not unique.

[1] referring to the numbering system of the database PDB (likewise in similar cases in the sequel)

F25 Mikhail Khramtsevich

1st Honourable Mention



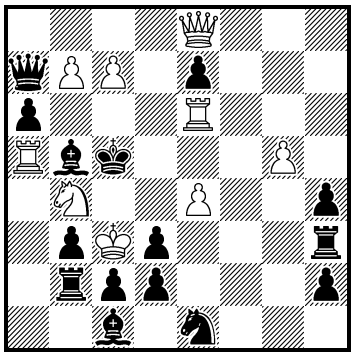
s#4 (12+13)

1.Rd3! [2.Sf4+ g,exf4 3.Se3+ fxe3 4.Qxe5+ Kxe5#]
1...fxe1Q 2.Qxe5+ A Qxe5 3.Rxd4+ B Qxd4 4.Se3+ C Qxe3#
1...Qxg6 2.Rxd4+ B exd4 3.Se3+ C dxe3 4.Qe5+ A Kxe5#
1...fxe1R 2.Se3+ C Rxe3 3.Qxe5+ A Rxe5 4.Rxd4+ B Kxd4#

1st Honourable Mention: F25
Complete cycle of White's 2nd, 3rd and 4th moves. Any discovery of a matrix that enables the realisation of this ambitious endeavour deserves special recognition. On the other hand, an initial example of this was published over four decades ago (N. Shankar Ram's P1082232), and over the past 20 years there have been numerous interesting contributions featuring this type of cycle; M. Khramtsevich, in particular, deserves a great deal of credit here. Of course, this strong thematic context of existing works could not be ignored when ranking F25.

F31 Dragan Stojnić

2nd Honourable Mention



s#3 (9+15)

1.c8S? [2.Sxd3+ Sxd3 3.Re5+ Sxe5#]
1...Qxb7 2.Qxe7+ Qxe7 3.Re5+ Qxe5#
1...Sf3!

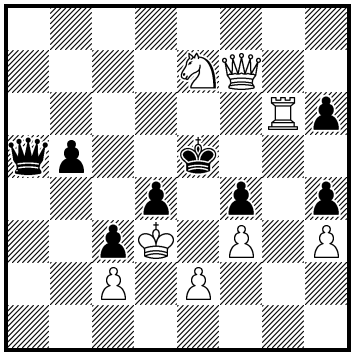
1.Qg6? [2.Sxd3+ Sxd3 3.Re5+ Sxe5#]
1...Sf3 2.Qf5+ Se5 3.Sxd3+ Rxd3#
1...Qxb7!

1.Qh8! [2.Sxd3+ A Sxd3 3.Qe5+ B Sxe5#]
1...Qxb7 2.Qe5+ B Qd5 3.Qd4+ C Qxd4#
1...Sf3 2.Qd4+ C Sxd4 3.Sxd3+ A Rxd3#

2nd Honourable Mention: F31
An interesting combination of changed play and cyclic play: The threat 2.Sxd3+ etc. is launched by 1.c8S?, 1.Qg6? and (slightly modified) by 1.Qh8!. Of the two parries – 1...Qxb7 and 1...Sf3 – one serves to refute one of the two tries, while the other leads to a changed continuation compared to the solution phase. After the key, they introduce two variations in which, together with the threat variation, White's second and third moves form a three-move cycle.

F29 **Mark Erenburg**

3rd Honourable Mention



s#10 (8+8)

1.Qe8! [2.Qxb5+ Qxb5#]

1...Qa3,b4,b6.a7,c7 2.Qxb5+ Qc5 3.Ra6 Qd5 4.Rxh6 Qc5 5.Sf5 Kxf5 6.Qd7+ Ke,g5 7.Qg7+ Kf5 8.Qg6+ Ke5 9.Qf6+ Kd5 10.Qxd4+ Qxd4# (3...h5 4.Sf5)

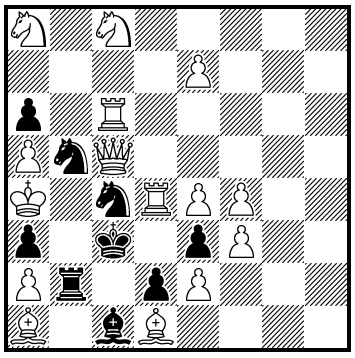
1...Qa1 2.Sg8+ Kf5 3.Qf7+ Ke5 4.Qf6+ Kd5 5.Qe6+ Kc5 6.Qe7+ Kd5 7.Sf6+ Kc6 8.Sg4+ Kd5 9.Qb4 ∼ 10. Qc4+ bxc4#

3rd Honourable Mention: F29

In this unusual selfmate, Black must counter the short threat by moving his queen. If she then can move to c5, 2.Qxb5+ Qc5 leads to an interesting variation of full length that ends with a mating move by the queen to d4. (This variation also shows that after 2.Qxb5+, a move by Black's queen to d5 only results in a one-move reduction.) However, if Black's queen is to move in such a way that she cannot subsequently go to any of the squares b5, c5, or d5, the only option remaining is 1...Qa1. This gives rise to a second interesting variation, in which White, thanks to the "absence" of Black's queen, can finally afford to make the quiet yet decisive move 9.Qb4. A rare example of domination in a selfmate.

F18 **Peter Gvozdják**

Special Honourable Mention



s#3 (15+9)

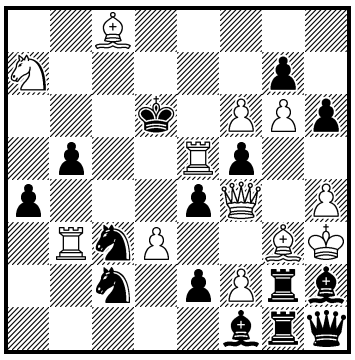
1.Qa7? zz
1...Sbd6 a 2.Sc7 A Sd6∼ 3.Sb5+ axb5#
1...Sc7 b 2.Sd6 B Sc7∼ 3.Sb5+ axb5#
1...Sxa7 c 2.Sxa7 C Kxd4 3.Sb5+ axb5#
1...Sxd4!

1.Qd6! zz
1...Sbxd6 a 2.Sxd6 B Kxd4 3.Sb5+ axb5#
1...Sc7 b 2.Sa7 C Sc7∼ 3.Sb5+ axb5#
1...Sa7 c 2.Sc7 A Sa7∼ 3.Sb5+ axb5#
1...Sxd4 2.Rxc4+ Kxc4 3.Qb4+ Rxb4#

Special Honourable Mention: F18

In F18, the famous Lačný theme is presented based on a thematic matrix that shows a distinctive feature: the squares occupied by the bSb5 in the thematic variations are identical to the squares occupied by the white knights with a zugzwang effect on their second moves. This remarkable mechanism is already known in a different form from a direct three-mover by P. Gvozdják (P1427802), which precludes a top-tier ranking for F18 in this tourney. Nevertheless, and in comparison, the aesthetics of its construction are impressive, with its excellent use of material, the appealing proximity of the thematic squares a7, c7, and d6, and the harmonious choice between 1.Qa7? and 1.Qd6!. The artistic merit of this excellent selfmate undoubtedly deserves special recognition in this award.

F24 Aleksandr Kuzovkov
Special Honourable Mention

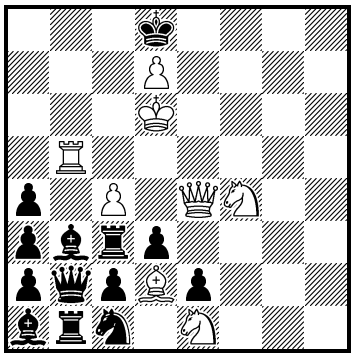


s#4 (12+15)

1.f7! [2.Rxf5+ Ke7 3.Qc7+ Kf8 4.Bd6+ Bxd6#]
1...Kc7 2.Rd5+ Kb6 3.Qb8+ Ka5 4.Bc7+ Bxc7#
1...Sd5 2.Re6+ Kc5 3.Qd6+ Kd4 4.Be5+ Bxe5#

Special Honourable Mention: F24
A triple white-white-black Bristol, introduced by battery play on the thematic line – this ambitious content was presented two years ago by A. Kuzovkov (P1423910). F24 is a masterfully constructed diagonal (wQ-wB-bB) counterpart of that work, with a *rook* as the front piece of the white battery. Following P. A. Petkov's P1259023 (featuring, in the sense of this context, only two thematic variations) and his P1197567 (in five moves and with a swapped placement of the white queen and white bishop), F24 is the first complete realisation of the specific thematic objective in question. However, the construction mirrors essential parts of P1259023, which anticipates both the threat and the variation 1...Kc7. Consequently, F24 cannot be awarded a prize. Nevertheless, it is a surprising and valuable discovery that this very matrix allows for a third thematic variation (1...Sd5). Together, Petkov's P1183841, Kusovkov's P1423910 and F24 form a memorable thematic trilogy with a knight, a bishop, a rook as the relative front piece of the white battery. F24 showcases a particularly impressive trio of variations with king walks to f8, a5 and d4.

F08 Bogusz Piliczewski
1st Commendation



s#5 (8+13)

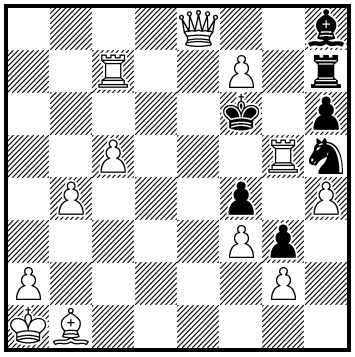
1.Qh7! zz
1...Rxc4 2.Ba5+ Rc7 3.Qg8+ Bxg8 4.Rb8+ Qxb8 5.Bxc7+ Qxc7#
1...Bxc4 2.Se6+ Bxe6 3.Qh8+ Bg8 4.Rb8+ Rc8 5.Qf6+ Qxf6#

1.Qd4?, 1.Qe5?, 1.Qh1? Rxc4!; 1.Qd5?, 1.Qe6?, 1.Qg2? Bxc4!

1st Commendation: F08
The thematic idea behind this problem is interesting: After 1...R/Bxc4, it is not the line just opened for Black's queen that is used for the checkmate combination, but – paradoxically – the one that initially remained blocked. Unfortunately, the technical execution leaves something to be desired, as wBd2 only comes into play after 1...Rxc4, and wSf4 only after 1...Bxc4 – where, however, it (albeit being necessary for correctness) just serves to extend the variation to the full length by means of a sacrifice.

F12 **Sven Trommler**

2nd Commendation



1. . . Rg7 2.Qd8+ Ke6 3.Qc8+ Kf6 4.f8R+ Rf7 5.Rc6+ Ke7+ 6.Re5+ Bxe5#

1.Rg7! zz
1...Sxg7 2.Rc6+ Se6 3.Qxe6+ Kg7 4.Rc8 h5 5.f8S Rh6 6.Qf7+ Kxf7#

1...Rxg7 2.Qc6+ Ke5 3.Qe4+ Kf6 4.c6 Rg4,g5,g8 5.Qe6+ Kg7 6.Qxh6+ Kxh6#, 4...Rg6,f7,h7 5.Qxg6+ Ke5 6.Qd6+ Kxd6#

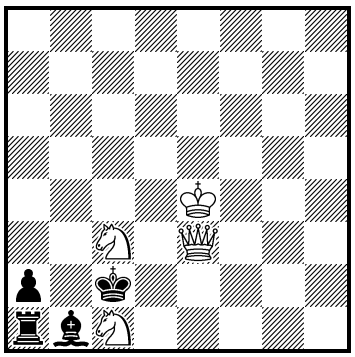
1...Kxg7 2.Qf8+ Kf6 3.Qe7+ Kg7 4.Rc8 Sf6 5.f8S+ Kg8 6.Qxh7+ Sxh7#

s#6 (12+7)

2nd Commendation: F12
Good flight-giving sacrificial key and three varied variations, of which 1...Kxg7, featuring a replacement of the black battery's front piece, is the most attractive.

F30 **Ivan Soroka**

3rd Commendation



1.Kf3! Kb2 2.Sa4+ Kc2 3.Sb3 Kd1
4.Sc3+ Kc2 5.Sa5 Kb2 6.Sa4+ Kc2
7.Kf2 Kd1 8.Sc3+ Kc2 9.Ke1 Kb2
10.Sa4+ Kc2 11.Qf4 Kd3 12.Kd1 Bc2#

s#12 (4+4)

3rd Commendation: F30
Nice work by the white knights and a pleasant walk of the white king.

Kronshagen (Germany), November 22, 2026 Hartmut Laue