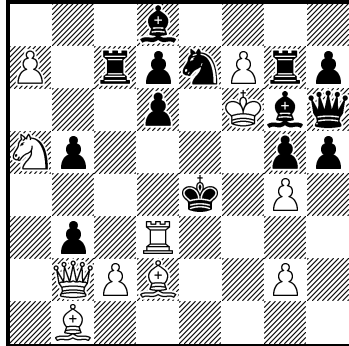


Preliminary award of the WFCC – 70 JT, section F (selfmates)

A total of 32 selfmates were submitted to this section (16 with a length of 2 to 5 moves and 16 longer ones up to 14 moves). A considerable proportion was of a very high standard, as befitted the occasion of the tourney. My ranking is as follows:

F14

1. Prize



s#3

(11+14)

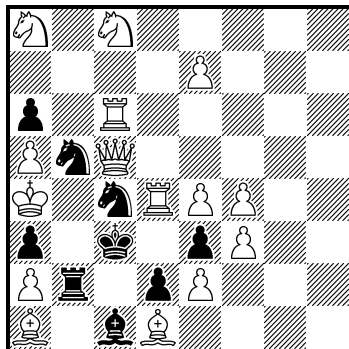
1.cxb3? [2.Rxd6+ A Rc2 3.a8B+ Sc6,d5#]
 1...Rb7,Rxa7 2.Rf3+ B Kd5 3.Rf5+ S,Bxf5#
 1...d5 2.Re3+ C Kf4 3.Qd4+ Be4#
 1...Rc2!
 1.c3!? [2.Rf3+ B Kd5 3.Rf5+ S,Bxf5#; not 2.Rxd6#??]
 1...Rxc3 2.Rxd6+ A R~ 3.a8B+ Sc6,d5#
 1...d5!
 1.c4! [2.Re3+ C Kf4 3.Qd4+ Be4#; not 2.Rxd6#??; not 2.Rf3#??]
 1...bxc4 2.Rf3+ B Kd5 3.Rf5+ S,Bxf5#
 1...Rxc4(!) 2.Rxd6+ A Rc2 3.a8B+ Sc6,d5#

1. Prize: no. 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 play 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.

F18

2. Prize



s#3

(15+9)

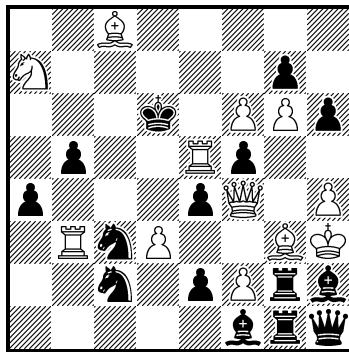
1.Qa7? zz
 1...Sbd6 a 2.Sc7 A Sd6 3.Sb5+ axb5#
 1...Sc7 b 2.Sd6 B Sc7 3.Sb5+ axb5#
 1...Sxa7 c 2.Sxa7 C Kxd4 3.Sb5+ axb5#
 1...Sxd4!
 1.Qd6! zz
 1...Sbxd6 a 2.Sxd6 B Kxd4 3.Sb5+ axb5#
 1...Sc7 b 2.Sa7 C Sc7 3.Sb5+ axb5#
 1...Sa7 c 2.Sc7 A Sa7 3.Sb5+ axb5#
 1...Sxd4 2.Rxc4+ Kxc4 3.Qb4+ Rxb4#

2. Prize: no. F18

The famous Lačný theme has been presented in a modest number of selfmate 2- and 3-movers. The thematic matrix in no. 18 features a distinctive characteristic: the squares entered by the bSb5 in the thematic variations – a7, c7, and d6 – are precisely the squares occupied by the white knights on their second moves. Combined with the harmonious choice between 1.Qa7? and 1.Qd6!, this results in an exceptionally cohesive composition.

F24

3. Prize



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#

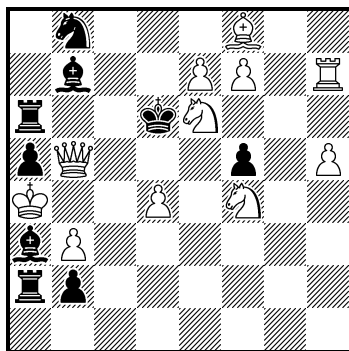
1...Sd5 2.Re6+ Kc5 3.Qd6+ Kd4 4.Be5+ Bxe5#

3. Prize: no. 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). No. F24 is an even more impressive diagonal counterpart of that work, with quiet defences and an inventive trio of variations with king walks to f8, a5 and d4 – far removed from any familiar pattern and masterfully constructed.

F13

4. 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#

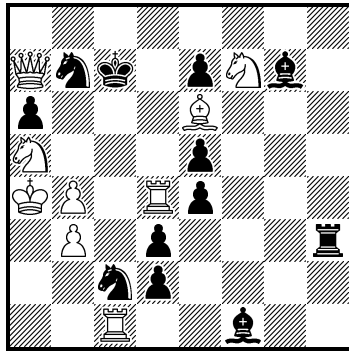
1...Sc6(!) 2.e8Q+ Ke7 3.Qd8+ Kxe6 4.Qxe7+ Bxe7#

4. Prize: no. 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). In no. 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

1. H. M.



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#]

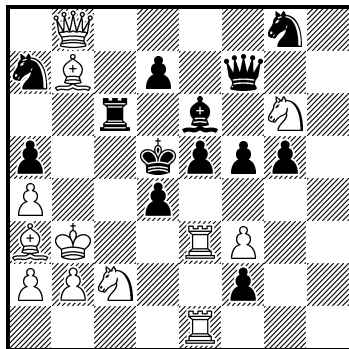
1...Rh5 2.Rd7+ Kc8 3.Rxd3+ Kc7 4.Rd7+ Kc8 5.Rd8+ Kc7 6.b5 [7.Qc5+ Sxc5#] (6...axb5#/Bxb5#??) ~ 7.Qc5+ Sxc5#

1. H. M.: no. F07

An attractive problem of the logical school, involving the inverted Berlin theme (see the current 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 following the key is not unique.

F25

2. H. M.



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#

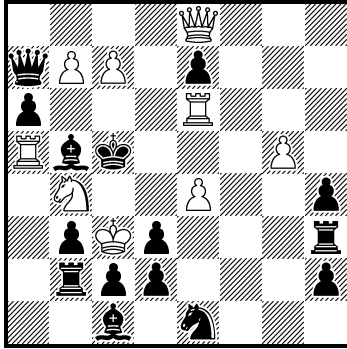
1...fxe1R 2.Se3+ C Rxe3 3.Qxe5+ A Rxe5 4.Rxd4+ B Kxd4#

2. H. M.: no. F25

Complete cycle of White's 2nd, 3rd and 4th moves. Any discovery of a matrix that enables the realization of this ambitious endeavour deserves special recognition. On the other hand, an initial example of this was published over four decades ago (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 no. F25.

F31

3. H. M.



s#3

(9+15)

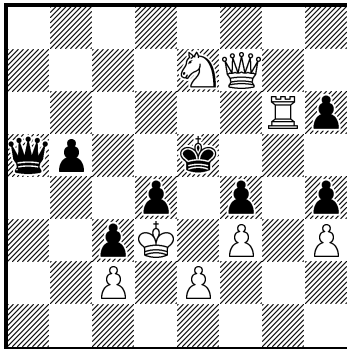
1.c8S? [2.Sxd3+ Sxd3 3.Re5+ Sxe5#]
 1...Qxb7 2.Qxe7+ Qxe7 3.Re5+ Qxe5#
 1...Sf3!
 1.Qg6? [2.Sxd3+ Sxd3 3.Re5+ Sxe5#]
 1...Sf3 2.Qf5+ Se5 3.Sxd3+ Rxd3#
 1...Qxb7!
 1.Qh8! [2.Sxd3+ A Sxd3 3.Qe5+ B Sxe5#]
 1...Qxb7 2.Qe5+ B Qd5 3.Qd4+ C Qxd4#
 1...Sf3 2.Qd4+ C Sxd4 3.Sxd3+ A Rxd3#

3. H. M.: no. 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

4. H. M.



s#10

(8+8)

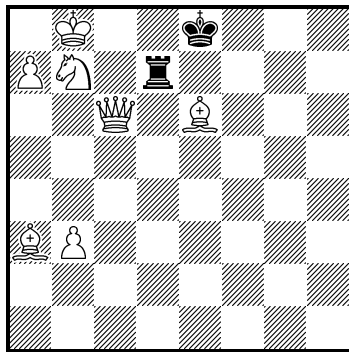
1.Qe8! [2.Qxb5+ Qxb5#]
 1...Qa3,b4,b6.a7,c7 2.Qxb5+ Qc5 3.Ra6 Qd5 4.Rxb6 Qc5 5.Sf5 Kxf5
 6.Qd7+ Ke,g5 7.Qg7+ Kf5 8.Qg6+ Ke5 9.Qf6+ Kd5 10.Qxd4+ Qxd4# (3...h5 4.Sf5)
 1...Qa1 2.Sg8+ Kf5 3.Qf7+ Ke5 4.Qf6+ Kd5 5.Qe6+ Kc5 6.Qe7+ Kd5
 7.Sf6+ Kc6 8.Sg4+ Kd5 9.Qb4 ~ 10. Qc4+ bxc4#

4. H. M.: no. F29

In this unusual selfmate, Black must counter the short threat by moving his queen. If she then controls 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 dominance in a selfmate.

F15

5. H. M.



s#14

(7+2)

1.Qc8+? Rd8 2.Ka8 Rxc8+ 3.Bxc8

1.Sa5! Kd8 2.Qb6+ Ke8 3.Qb5 Kd8 4.Sc6+ Ke8 5.Qh5+ Rf7 6.Sa5 Kd8 7.Qh8+ Rf8 8.Sb7+ Ke8 9.Qh5+ Rf7 10.Bc4 Kd7 11.Qd5+ Ke8 12.Qc6+ Rd7

13.Qc8+ Rd8 14.Ka8 Rxc8#

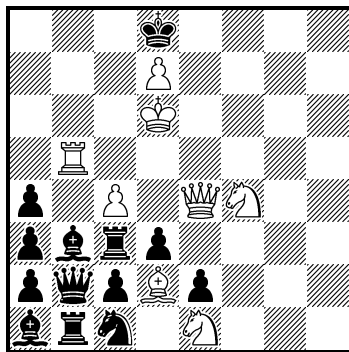
2...Rc7 3.Bf7 Kd7 4.Qe6+ Kd8 5.Qd6+ Rd7 6.Qb6+ Rc7 7.Sb7+ Kd7 8.Qb5+ Rc6 9.Bc4 Ke8 10.Bd6 Kd7 11.Qf5+ Ke8 12.Qf8+ Kd7 13.Qc8 Rxc8#

5. H. M.: no. F15

The failing attempt 1.Qc8+? Rd8 2.Ka8 Rxc8+ 4.Bxc8 shows that White's light-squared bishop should first be played to a different square of the diagonal c4-g8. The bright side of the problem is the variation following 1.Sa5! Kd8 2.Qb6+ Ke8, in which the starting position is reached again after 12 moves, but with wLc4 instead of wLe6. The 13-move side variation following 2...Rc7 is less pleasing, as is wBb3. There is a distant, non-critical connection to P1424044.

F08

1. Comm.



s#5

(8+13)

1.Qh7! zz

1...Rxc4 2.Ba5+ Rc7 3.Qg8+ Bxg8 4.Rb8+ Rc8 5.Qf6+ Qxf6# (3.Qh8+? Bg8 4.Qf6+ Qxf6#, 3...Qxh8!)

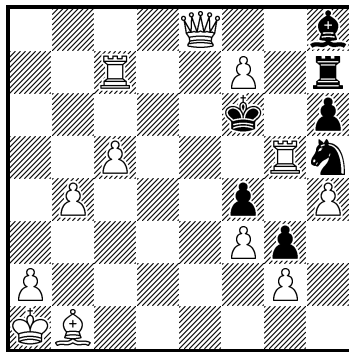
1...Bxc4 2.Se6+ Bxe6 3.Qh8+ Bg8 4.Rb8+ Rc8 5.Qf6+ Qxf6# (3.Qg8+? Bxg8 4.Rb8+ Qxb8#, 4...Rc8!)

1. Comm.: no. 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

2. Comm.



s#6

(12+7)

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...Rxc7 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#

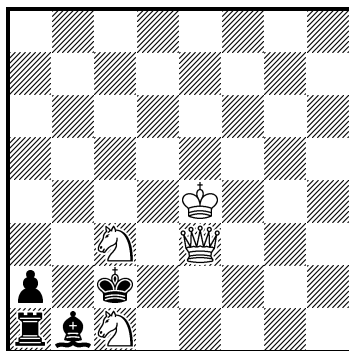
1...Kxc7 2.Qf8+ Kf6 3.Qe7+ Kg7 4.Rc8 Sf6 5.f8S+ Kg8 6.Qxh7+ Sxh7#

2. Comm.: no. F12

Good flight-giving sacrificial key and three varied variations, of which 1...Kxc7, featuring a replacement of the black battery's front piece, is the most attractive.

F30

3. Comm.



s#12

(4+4)

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#

3. Comm.: no. F30

Nice work by the white knights and a pleasant walk of the white king.

Kronshagen (Germany), September 30, 2026

Hartmut Laue