

10th YCCC 2026 – Section C (All kinds of problems) – Awards

General Section and Under 13 Section

Jury

AS=Andrey Selivanov

HG=Hans Gruber

KW=Kjell Widlert

MC=Michel Caillaud

MMcD=Michael McDowell

OC=Ofer Comay

PE=Paz Einat

VC=Vlaicu Crişan

Tournament Roles

Julia Vysotska (Director)

Marjan Kovačević (Coordinator)

Hans Gruber (Assistant Director)

Introduction (Hans Gruber)

In view of the splendid development of the YCCC in recent years, it was decided to give special attention to the youngest group of composers, the U13 composers. Therefore a separate subsection of Section C was announced for them, Section CC. Sixteen submissions were received for Section C, and nine submissions for Section CC. This again is an impressive number, and it shows that it is worthwhile to start specifically supporting youngsters at an even younger age than before.

Two problems were excluded because they contained serious duals, i.e. multiple white continuations after a black defence. To be honest, the authors indicated them; it is an important issue to learn to evaluate when a dual is to be considered a flaw. There are examples of duals which are normally accepted, e.g. the dual promotion to queen and rook in a mating move. The duals in submissions C5 and C16 were considered as defects by the jury. These two positions belong to the type of standard chess puzzles in which pieces are added to make the position looking like a chess game and in which the solution often consists of forced moves. It certainly is an important lesson to learn that chess compositions follow different aesthetic rules, with a focus on economy (each piece should have a particular meaning for the solution) and soundness (duals and cooks are considered as defects).

Members of the jury found that for some submissions, earlier published problems could be presented for comparison. It is an open question when such an anticipation seriously affects the originality of the problem. The jury agreed that all problems should be retained in the award for which problems for comparison were presented. It certainly is an important step for young composers to compare their own achievements with earlier publications by different authors.

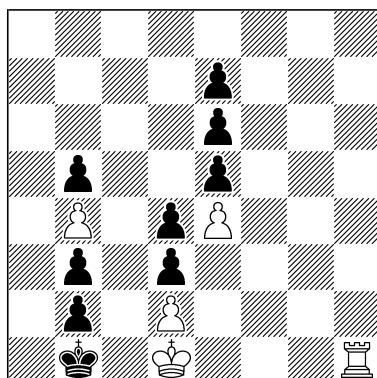
The jury in particular decided to retain the submissions C8 and CC8 in the award although very similar work has previously been published by other composers. It is interesting to compare details, and it should be considered highly commendable that the young composers achieved a similar level to the earlier master composers. The young composers should certainly be consoled with the knowledge that they succeeded in showing an imaginative idea and displayed genuine composing ability. The jury acknowledges that it may be a bit disappointing to see those earlier problems – such experiences may happen throughout a composing career, and it has happened often enough to every member of the jury.

Award General Section

1st Place: C3

Shang Riye

10th YCCC 2026



#30

C+ 5+9

1.Rh8! Ka2 2.Ra8+ Kb1 3.Ke1 Kc2 4.Rc8+ Kb1 5.Rc7 Ka2 6.Ra7+ Kb1 7.Ra6 Kc2 8.Rc6+ Kb1 9.Kd1 Ka2 10.Ra6+ Kb1 11.R×e6 Ka2 12.Ra6+ Kb1 13.Ra5 e6 14.R×b5 Ka2 15.Ra5+ Kb1 16.R×e5 Ka2 17.Ra5+ Kb1 18.Ra8 e5 19.Ke1 Kc2 20.Rc8+ Kb1 21.b5 Ka2 22.Ra8+ Kb1 23.b6 Kc2 24.Rc8+ Kb1 25.b7 Ka2 26.Ra8+ Kb1 27.b8=Q Kc1 28.Qc8+ Kb1 29.Qg4 Kc2 30.Qd1#).

MC: The play of a rook on 2 files has been shown many times but not with so elaborate a strategy, it seems. Strikingly I found a quasi twin (see diagram: 1.Ra8! Kh2 2.Rh8+ Kg1 3.Kd1 Kf2 4.Rf8+ Kg1 5.Rf7 Kh2 6.Rh7+ Kg1 7.R×e7 Kf2 8.Rf7+ Kg1 9.Rf6 Kh2 10.Rh6+ Kg1 11.R×e6 Kf2 12.Rf6+ Kg1 13.Rf5 Kh2 14.Rh5+ Kg1 15.R×e5 Kf2 16.Rf5+ Kg1 17.e5 Kh2 18.Rh5+ Kg1 19.e6 Kf2 20.Rf5+ Kg1 21.e7 Kh2 22.Rh5+ Kg1 23.e8=Q,R (dual) Kf2 24.Rf5+ Kg1 25.Q,Re1+ Kh2 26.Rh5#). wPb4,bPb5 make all the difference. In the *Phénix* problem, the elimination of black pawns is straightforward and the white pawn promotes with dual. The manoeuvre Ra8-c8-c7!!-a7-a6-c6-a6×e6 is indeed attractive. If 5.Rc6? instead of 5.Rc7!!, the rook will be on the wrong foot when capturing e6.

VC: An absolutely amazing piece of work. I had to study it for more than two hours to fully grasp the author's idea. Masterful realization of a systematical movement in a logical moreover. The solution flows naturally from the start to finish. The position is legal, with all missing white pieces being captured by the black pawns.

OC: The problem for comparison lacks many artistic elements present in C3. The move 5.Rc7! is a unique tempo move, and there is a tempo try: 5.Rc6!? Ka1 6.Ra6+ Kb1 and White is in zugzwang. Furthermore, the switchbacks Kd1-e1-d1-e1 are surprising and finally the beautiful move 18.Ra8! which is the only square that enables wPb4 to advance to b8 without interfering with the rook.

PE: The manoeuvre starting at the 6th move, with 6.Ra7+ Kb1 7.Ra6! deviates significantly from the problem for comparison. The return of the white king, 9.Kd1, the capture on e6 to provide the move e7-e6 later on, the precise move 18.Ra8! and again moving the white king to e1, make a very strong impression!

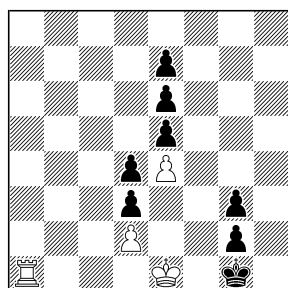
MMcD: Solvers would really enjoy this problem. 18.Ra8 in particular is brilliant!

KW: The winning strategy is to promote wPb4, which requires capture of bPb5. If the white rook were on a5, we would be halfway there – R×b5 Ka2, Ra5+ Kb1, but now b5? leads to stalemate, so we must give Black a couple of moves by continuing R×e5 Ka2, Ra5+ Kb1, b5 e5, b6 e6, Ke1 Kc2, Rc5+ Kb1, b7 and the rest is easy. But how to get the white rook to a5 (Ra8-a5 etc.) while keeping Black busy – what was Black's move before R×b5? So we have to give Black a move by capturing Pe6 earlier, which can only be done from a6. This seems easy enough: after starting the two-files play by 1.Rh8 Ka2 2.Ra8+ Kb1 3.Ke1 Kc2 4.Rc8+ Ka2 5.Rc6? Ka2 6.Ra6+ Kb1 we are already there – but White is in zugzwang for 6.-?- Kc2 7.Rc6+ Kb1 8.Kd1 Ka2 9.Ra6+ Kb1 10.R×e6 etc. So White has to lose one move on the way to a6, which can only be done by the incredibly subtle 5.Rc7! Ka2 6.Ra7+ Kb1 8.Ra6 etc. A final

clever touch is 18.Ra8!, avoiding Ra7? and Ra6? where the white pawn will later interfere with the white rook. All in all, a great moverover.

**For comparison with
C3**

**Roméo Bédoni
Olivier Schmitt
Phénix 2013
3rd Commendation**



#26

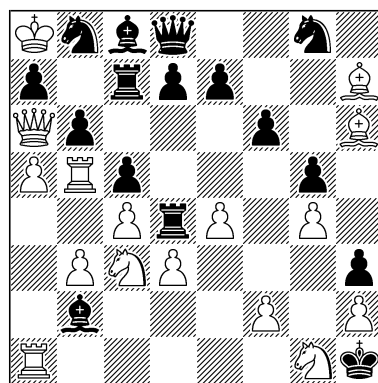
C+ 4+8

2nd-3rd Place ex æquo: C2

Stefan-Constantin

Harnagea

10th YCCC 2026



Proofgame in 27.0 moves C+ 16+16

1.d3 b6 2.Kd2 Bb7 3.Kc3 Bd5 4.Kb4 Sc6+ 5.Kb5 Rc8 6.Ka6 Bc4+ 7.Kb7 Sb8 8.Ka8 Ba6 9.c4 c5 10.Qa4 Rc7 11.b3 Bc8 12.Qa6 h5 13.a4 h4 14.a5 h3 15.Ra4 Rh4 16.Bh6 g5 17.Rb4 Bg7 18.Rb5 Bb2 19.Sc3 Rd4 20.g4 f6 21.Bg2 Kf7 22.Be4 Ke6 23.Bh7 Ke5 24.e4 Kf4 25.Sge2+ Kf3 26.Ra1 Kg2 27.Sg1 Kh1

HG: A proofgame is a composition in which the diagram position has to be reached from the initial game array in the given number of moves. It is a feature when such a proofgame has a unique sequence.

VC: Both kings go into opposite corners. A bag of tricks combining typical retro motifs: black switchback (Sb8), black Rundlauf (Bc8), white imposter (Ra1) and white switchback (Sg1). The construction with no technical captures is a bonus.

PE: Beautiful! The idea is to have the white king on a8 and the black king on h1. The combination starts with the movement of the white king up to a8 and ends with the movement of the black king down to h1. Excellent reasoning that allows the precision of the solution.

MC: The main content appears to me as the two walks by the two kings into the corners. Seven consecutive moves for each walk and play without capture are major features. Other themes (circuit by the bishop, switchbacks by knights, sibling rook) are valuable additions. Excellent technique displayed. The first phase is almost identical to the one in a problem by van Atten (see diagram: 1.d4 g6 2.Kd2 Bg7 3.Ke3 Bf6 4.Kf4 Be5+ 5.Kg5 Sf6 6.Kh6 Bf4+ 7.Kg7 Bh6+ 8.Kxh8 Bf8 9.Bh6 Sg8 10.e3 f6 11.Qh5 Kf7 12.Sf3 Ke6 13.Bc4+ Kd6 14.Rd1 Qe8 15.Rd3 Qf7 16.Ra3 Qd5 17.Sc3 Ke6 18.Ra6+ Kf7 19.a3 Qe6 20.Qc5

Ke8 21.Se5 Qf7 22.Be6 Kd8 23.Sd5 Qe8).

MMcD: This is excellent, even if the white king's march is anticipated. I marvel at the ingenuity that goes into creating such lengthy precise sequences.

KW: Kings walks to the opposite corners, enhanced by a pretty round-trip by Bc8 and by switchbacks of two knights (plus a sibling Ra1). All is done without captures, which is also a good feature. A quality proofgame.

For comparison with

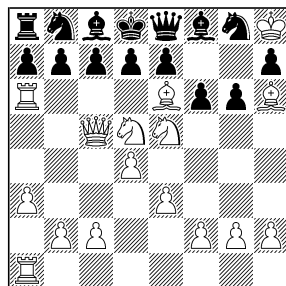
C2

Jasper van Atten

Probleemblad 1985

4th-5th Honourable

Mention

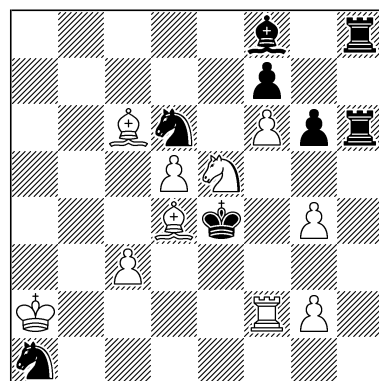


Proofgame C+ 16+15
in 23.0 moves

2nd-3rd Place ex æquo: C4

Ural Khasanov

10th YCCC 2026



#10

C+ 10+8

1.Re2+? Kf4!

1.g3? [2.Re2,Rf4#] Rh2!

1.Sd2! [2.Sc5#] Kd3 (1.– Sb7? 2.d6+ Kd3 3.Se5#) 2.Sc5+ Kc4 3.Sa4 [4.Sb2#] Kd3 4.Sb2+ Ke4 5.g3 [6.Rf4#] g5 6.Sa4 [7.Sc5#] Kd3 (6.– Sb7? 7.d6+ d3 8.Sb2#) 7.Sc5+ Kc4 8.Sd7 [9.Se5#] Kd3 9.Se5+ Ke4 10.Re2#

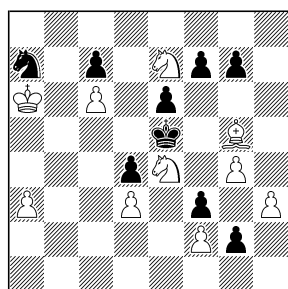
MC: A neatly produced logical problem with play without capture and preventive unpin as a foreplan. Not very innovative though, as many problems of this kind have been produced since Hans-Peter Rehm and maybe earlier (I am not a specialist). The matrix of the duel knight-king with the king circulating on three squares (the diagram one and two controlled by the knight in the diagram) has been used several times (see diagram: 1.Sd2! Kd6 2.Sc4+ Kc5 3.Sa5 Kd6 4.Sb7+ Ke5 5.Sd8 Kd6 6.S×f7+ Kc5 7.Sd8 Kd6 8.Sb7+ Ke5 9.Sa5 Kd6 10.Sc4+ Kc5 11.Sd2 Kd6 12.Se4+ Ke5 13.Bf4+ K×f4 14.Sg6#).

VC: Crystal clear presentation of a logical idea. The main plan 1.Re2+? fails because of the flight f4. The try 1.g3? is refuted by 1.– Rh2! pinning the white rook. After the preparatory plan, shifting the wSe5 to b2, White can continue with 5.g3 because the 2nd rank is closed. The threat Rf4# can be stopped only

by the weak defence 5.– g5. After shifting the wSb2 back to e5, White can execute the main plan.
 PE: I find this original enough, although the knight manoeuvre is known. The need for the anticipatory unpin on the 2nd row is very nice, showing a delay in employing the g3 move.
 MMCD: Excellent well-constructed logical moreover, reminiscent of problems by the likes of Rehm, Johandl and Stefan Schneider (good company to keep!).
 KW: The try 1.g3? has a double threat, but is refuted by the pinning 1.– Rh2! A wS-bK pendulum (of a kind seen fairly often before) closes the second rank, but loses one threat as f3 is no longer guarded by the white knight, so Black can defend the remaining threat by 5.– g5. So the pendulum has to swing back: the white knight returns to e5, restoring the lost threat which now mates. A very clear logical structure, with good construction.

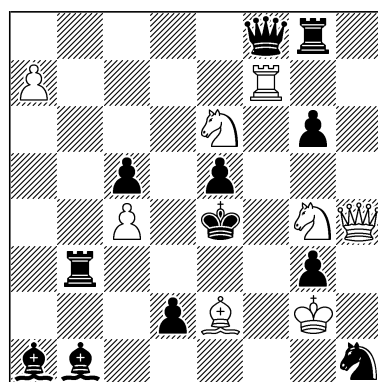
**For comparison with
C4**

Michael Herzberg
idee & form 1999



#14 C+ 10+9

4th Place: C6
Ilija Serafimović
10th YCCC 2026



#3 C+ 8+12

1.Qg5? [2.Sf6#] Rf3!
 1.Qf6! [2.Sg5+ Kd4 3.Q×e5#]
 1.– Qe7,Qg7,Qa8,Qe8 2.Qf4+ e×f4 3.R×f4#
 1.– Qb8 2.Se3 [3.Qf3#] R×e3 3.Qh4#
 1.– Qh6 2.S×c5+ Kd4 3.Q×e5#
 1.– Qd6 2.a8=Q,B+ Rb7/R×a8/Qd5/Qc6 3.Qf3/Q×g6/Q×d5/Q×c6#
 1.– Re3 2.Qf5+ g×f5 3.Sf6#
 1.– Rd3 2.Bf3+ R×f3 3.Q×f3#

Author: Seven queen defences. Twice the black rook blocks on e3. The white queen and the white knight exchange functions (sacrifice and mate) in the variations 1.– Qb8 and 1.– Re3. Switchback of the white queen.

VC: After a very good and surprising key destroying the set battery, there is a wealth of play with one

threat and six variations featuring a diversity of motivations. I found very appealing the variations with white queen sacrifices and the one ending with white queen switchback. I encourage the composer in researching more unified motivations for both black and white play – such elements might significantly increase the artistic impression!

MMcD: The key abandons the battery, with a later switchback. The accuracy of the play following the queen defences is remarkable, and the by-play is good.

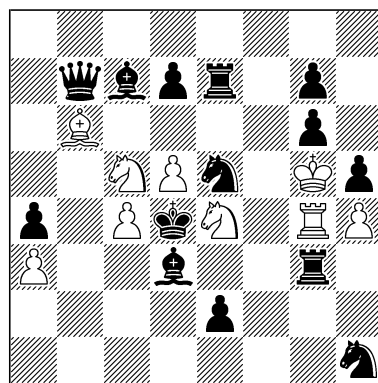
PE: An impressive three-mover for a young composer!! The control of the replies for the black queen are very good, involving correction play, and the additional black rook variations add a lot. There is a motif of self-interferences by the black king: of bBa1 and bRb3.

KW: Fine differentiation of the white replies to seven black queen defences, with four different continuations. There are a lot of good dual avoidance effects making this possible. The abandonment of the set battery, followed by a switchback mate in the quiet star variation 1.– Qb8, improves things considerably.

5th Place: C14

Anton Nasyrov

10th YCCC 2026



H#2 10 solutions C+ 9+14

Author:

1.Bc2 S×a4+ 2.Kd3 Sb2# (MM)

1.B×c4 Sa6+ 2.Kd3 Sb4# (MM)

Symmetrical play, Siers batteries, model mates.

1.h×g4 Sb3+ 2.K×e4 Sd2# (MM)

1.B×b6 Sd6+ 2.K×c5 S×b7# (MM)

Symmetrical play, Zilahi theme, Siers batteries, model mates.

1.Sf3+ (1.S~?) K×g6 2.Ke5 S×d3#

1.S×g4 (1.S~?) Ba5 2.Ke5 Bc3#

Unique knight moves to vacate the e5-square.

1.B×e4 Ba7! (1.– d6?) 2.Rc3 R×e4#

1.S×c4 R×g3 2.Be5 R×d3#

Mates by the white rook, captures of white pieces controlling squares, tempo move.

1.Ke3 S×d3+ 2.Kf3 Se1#

1.K×c4 S×g3+ 2.Kb5 Rb4#

The black king makes two moves, the first along the battery line and the second leaving it. Play of white batteries.

HOTF 5×2. Two mates each from the d3- and b4-squares, four model mates, the black king is mated twice on each of the d4-, d3-, and e5-squares.

VC: This is clearly an overly ambitious composition built on a known matrix with two direct white batteries. The aim is to show as many ideas as possible packed in multi-solution form. However, not all these pairs have the same artistic value and interest. As a personal taste, I think it would be better to keep a balance and pick up only those solutions which display some unified strategy.

PE: Although unity and harmony are not the main features, this is an extraordinary problem.

MC: Difficult to distinguish some pairs of solutions without the indication of the composer. Bb6 is idle in the 1.S×c4 solution.

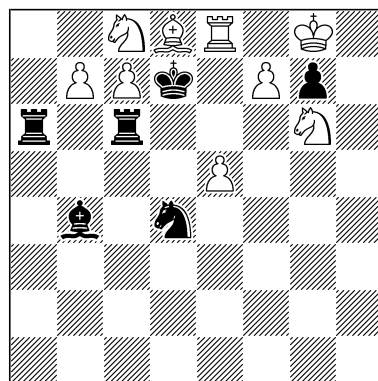
MMcD: Too much straining to pack in as many solutions as possible, and the repeated moves detract.

KW: Very rich play with five pairs of solutions without twinning. Such content can hardly be done without some compromises, and there are some obvious weaknesses here – not all solution pairs are convincingly analogous.

6th Place: C9

Taras Rudenko

10th YCCC 2026



#2

C+ 9+6

1.Sd6? [2.Re7/f8=S/Sf8/b8=S#] B×d6!

1.Sce7! [2.Sf8#] B×e7/Ke6/Se6/R×g6 2.R×e7/f8=S/b8=S/c8=Q,B#

Author: Splitting checkmates of threats of the try in options of the main solution, freeing the square for the black king in the first move.

VC: A very nice idea, which instantly caught me thanks to its superb flight giving key.

PE: The mix of threats and mate is interesting, though the crude refutation to the try is a weakness.

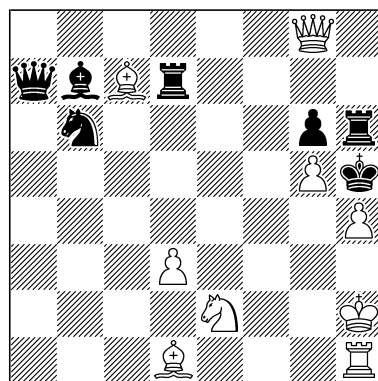
MMcD: Excellent and imaginative content, even if the try refutation is a little unsubtle.

KW: The four threats of the try are transferred to threat + three variations in the solution, after a great flight-giving key. The only drawback – but a serious one – is the refutation of the try, where Black simply captures the line-closing white knight.

7th Place: C13

Ben Smolkin

10th YCCC 2026



#3

C+ 9+7

1.Kg1? [2.Sg3,Sf4#] B×h1!

1.Kg3? [2.Sf4#] R×d3+!

1.Kh3? [2.Sg3,Sf4#] Bg2+!

1.Bg3? [2.Sf4#] Qa2!

1.Qd5! [2.S~+/Kg1/Kg3/Kh3]

1.– R×d5 2.Kg1! (2.Kh3? Bc8+! line opening) R×g5+/S~+ 3.Sg3/Sd4#

1.– S×d5 2.Kh3! (2.Kg3? Qe3+,Qf2+! line opening) Sf4+/Qe3+ 3.S×f4/Sg3#

1.– B×d5 2.Kg3! 3.Sf4#

(1.– K×h4 2.Kg1+,Kg2; 1.– Kg4 2.S~+)

VC: This attractive threemover shows a clear theme: three second moves played by the white king after three different black captures of the actively sacrificed white queen! All three variations feature some sparkling cross-checks – I include the line 2.– Q×c7+ 3.Sf4# in the last variation. It is not so easy to make this mechanism work and that excuses some inherent weaknesses such as the unprovided flights and the multiple threats.

PE: Queen sacrifices are always attractive to young composers. The differentiation between the three captures on d5 is fine, but this is a Fleck type of problem and the duals after the black king defences are annoying, e.g. 1.– K×h4 2.Kg1+,Kg2+.

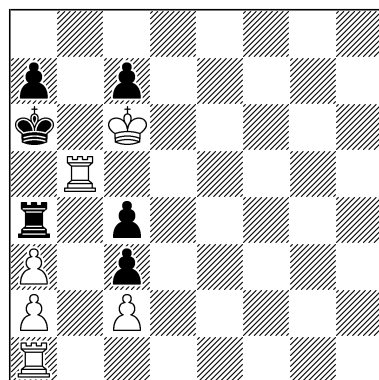
MMcD: Credit for the unity of the idea. A style reminiscent of Kipping!

KW: Black interferences after three captures on d5, interestingly leading to three different white king moves – which is probably a new feature. It is a pity that those three white king moves are not the only threats, as there are parasite threats by Se2, but this seems unavoidable in this matrix.

8th Place: C1

Renārs Mūzis

10th YCCC 2026



#5

C+ 6+6

1.Ra~,Rb7? Ra5!

1.Rab1! (zz) R×a3 2.Ra1 (zz) Switchback Ra4 3.a3 (zz) Ra5 4.a4 (zz) R×b5/R×a4 5.a×b5/R×a4#

1.– Ra5 2.R×a5+ K×a5 3.Rb7 [4.R×a7#] Ka6/a6 4.R×c7 (zz)/Ra7 (zz) Ka5/Ka4 5.R×a7/R×a6#

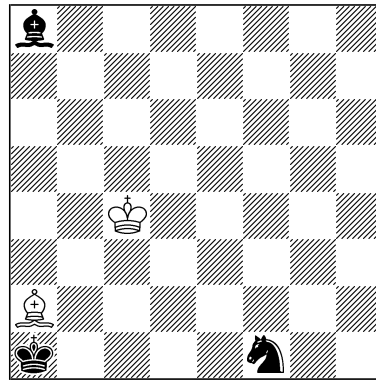
VC: Excellent Meredith: continuous zugzwang after switchback of the key move.

PE: Given the switchback the key is fine, and I find the combination in the main line entertaining.

MMcD: Quite simple play.

KW: I find it very amusing to see how Pa2 follows the black rook up the board, until the rook cannot escape any more. The idea is enhanced by the switchback from and to a1 (2.Ra1! is shocking until you see the idea). It is a good thing that the by-variation 1.– Ra5 is also unique in full length.

9th Place: C12
Maxim Nyrkov
 10th YCCC 2026



H#8 b) ♖f1→a6 C+ 2+3
 c) ♖f1→c8

- a) 1.Kb2 Kd3 2.Kc1 Bd5 3.Kd1 B×a8 4.Ke1 Bg2 5.Kf2 Bh3 6.Kg1 Ke2 7.Kh1 Kf2 8.Sh2 Bg2#
 b) 1.Kb2 Bb1 2.Ka3 Be4 3.Ka4 B×a8 4.Ka5 Bb7 5.Kb6 Bc8 6.Ka7 Kb5 7.Ka8 Kb6 8.Sb8 Bb7#
 c) 1.Kb2 Kc5 2.Ka3 Bd5 3.Ka4 B×a8 4.Ka5 Kc6 5.Ka6 Bb7+ 6.Ka7 Ba6 7.Ka8 Kc7 8.Sa7 Bb7#

Author: Hesitation, switchback, corner-to-corner, echo-mates.

VC: I am impressed how the author extensively researched all possibilities of the matrix and discovered three equal length twins with the same reduced material. This task deserves recognition. Twin b) was shown before (s. Diagr.: 1.Kg2 Bh2 2.Kf1 Be5 3.Ke1 B×a1 4.Kd1 Bb2 5.Kc2 Ba3 6.Kb1 Kd2 7.Ka1 Kc2 8.Sa2 Bb2#).

PE: Solutions b) & c) are too similar, as the latter is more interesting, b) should have been dropped.

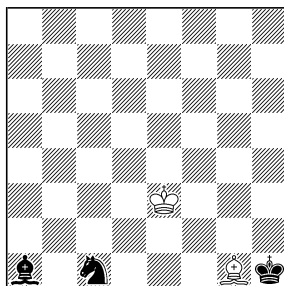
HG: A pity that the first black move and the third white move are always identical. Twins b) and c) are too similar, but I would prefer twin b) because it uses a first white move by the bishop.

MMcD: Too much of the play is repeated, and arguably part c) is superfluous.

KW: Of course, much of this play is known before, and there are some repetitions of moves. But I find it impressive that the composer has managed to combine three echo mates with such long lines of play.

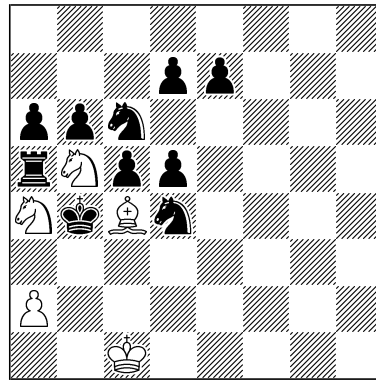
For comparison with
C12

Jean Carf
Šachmatija 2017



H#8 C+ 2+3

10h Place: C7
Georgy Eruslanov
 10th YCCC 2026



H#2 4 solutions C+ 5+10

- 1.K×a4 Kb2 2.Sb4 Sc3#
 1.K×c4 Kd2 2.Sb4 Sa3#
 1.R×a4 S×d4 2.Ka3 Sc2#
 1.d×c4 a3+ 2.K×b5 Sc3#

VC: The author managed to show four solutions in which at least one white officer is captured. There are two distinct pairs of solutions: one pair starts with captures on a4, the other with captures on c4. However, the analogy between the pairs stops here.

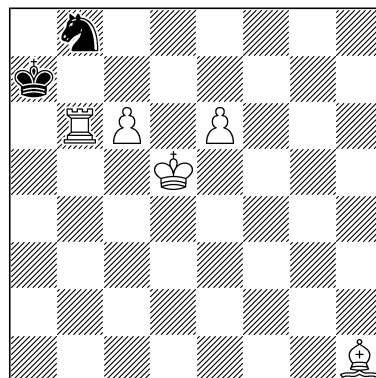
PE: Earlier problems with this kind of white knights, white bishop & black king setup show either captures of white bishop & white knight by the black king or by other black pieces, but not both. The repetition of 2.Sb4 is a weakness.

MC: Three helpmates with passive sacrifices of white officers around black king were present in this edition. In two of them, CC9 being the exception, there are solutions with a white officer idle in the mate (some feature that does not seem to be spotted by the Helpmate Analyzer). Here the Bc4 is idle in the 1.K×a4 solution, the Sa4 is idle in the 1.K×c4 solution. Also repetition of 2.Sb4, that is a smaller flaw.

MMcD: The solutions with repetition of 2.Sb4 are too similar.

KW: An ambitious setup where two white thematic pieces (Sa4, Bc4) are captured by the black king in one pair of solutions, and by other pieces in two other solutions. That only one solution ends in a model mate is unfortunate but no great flaw; the fact that two solutions have passive white pieces in the mates is a real flaw; as is the repetition of Sb4. So my verdict is: idea great, execution moderately good.

11th Place: C15
Iancu-Ioan Sandea
 10th YCCC 2026



-3 & #1 Defensive 5+2
 retractor type Proca

R 1.Kc4×Pd5 d7,d6-d5+ 2.b5×Pc5 e.p. c7-c5 3.Rc6×Pb6 & forward: 1.R×c7#

HG: In a defensive retractor both sides alternatively retract moves (indicated by „R“ in the solution). White aims to retract in such a way that a forward play #1 is possible; Black aims to defend against such a mate. It may look unfamiliar that in retraction play normal moves are inverted: pawns move backward, pieces are uncaptured, and pieces on the promotion rank can be unpromoted. In the type Proca, each side determines on its own whether in the retracted move an opponent piece is uncaptured (and which one). A smart retraction can limit the other side's number of possibilities. Here, the retraction of the en passant capture forces Black to retract the double-step of the pawn – otherwise the en passant capture would not have been allowed.

VC: A miniature which displays the most unexpected stipulation ever seen in ten years of YCCC! The whole sequence aims to open the white bishop's diagonal to guard a8. A nice unifying touch is that all retraction moves uncapture black pawns. Dual in the defensive retractor is considered only when White has several retractions possible after the same black retraction. When Black has several possible retractions, all followed by the same white retraction move it is not considered as a dual. That is similar to the same mate following a random black piece move in a direct twomover. En passant is a common idea in many Proca retractors. All three special moves (en passant, promotion and castling) have been intensively studied.

HG: (a) In a defensive retractor, like in a direct mate problem, black alternatives create variants, not duals. So, here d7,d6-d5 is a variant.

(b) Of course, the strength of variants is „variety“, so there is no added value of a second variant when it is identical to the first.

(c) One might prefer to have exactly one variant rather than two identical ones. (It focuses more on the thematic content.)

(d) Retracting an e.p. capture is most frequent in defensive retractors - because it does not give any freedom to the opponent. Thus, it tends to be a weakness rather than a strength. To compare again with direct mate problems: It is like a check which leaves exactly one move to the opponent. (The strongest means you can exert.)

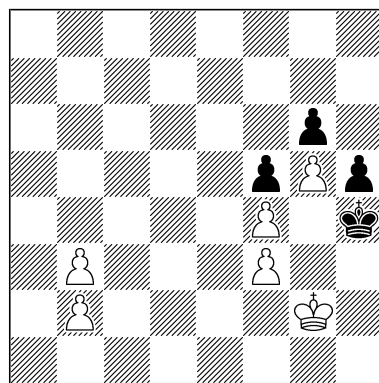
MC: Rather simple but economical. The two first moves cannot be inverted: R 1.b5×Pc6 e.p.? c7-c5 2.Kc4×Pd5 c6×d5!

KW: I am happy to see a Proca retractor in a competition for relative newcomers! This one has a main plan that meets with three obstacles – no guard of a8, no guard of a6, and a self-block of c6. Two foreplans are needed to remove those obstacles by opening h1-a8 and putting a white pawn on b5. The foreplans are independent, but cannot be played in the opposite order due to the defence c6×d5. The solution is short so the content is limited, but it does have some points of interest.

12th Place: C10

Mustafa Hamzazade

10th YCCC 2026



#9

C+ 6+4

1.Kf2! Kh3 2.b4 h4 3.b5 Kh2 4.b6 h3 5.b7 Kh1 6.b8=Q h2 (6.– Kh2 7.Qh8 Kh1 8.Q×h3#) 7.Kg3 Kg1 8.Qa7+ Kf1/Kh1 9.Qf2/Qa1#

2.– Kh2 3.b5 Kh3 4.b6 Kh2 5.b7 Kh3 6.b8=Q Kh2 7.Qb5! Kh3 (7.– h4 8.Qf1 h3 9.Qg1#) 8.Qf1+ Kh2/Kh4 9.Qg2/Qh1#

Author: The promoted queen delivers mate on five different squares: f2, g2, g1, h1, and a1.

HG: There are some irrelevant threats and some short variations; these rightly have been omitted.

VC: I am a big fan of kindergarten compositions and this one has its own charm. Although the key, releasing the set stalemate, is almost obvious, the five distinct mates delivered by the white queen are spectacular. This is something you can show in a chess club to attract newcomers to chess composition!

PE: Most of the play is rather straight-forward though there are some pointed moves towards the end.

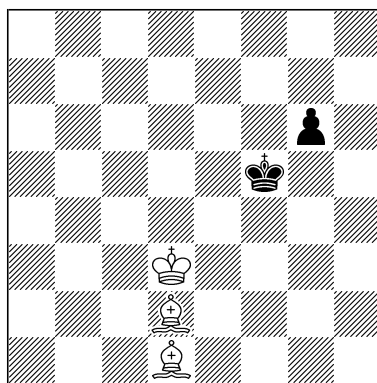
MMcD: Really too simple.

KW: White must play differently according to Black's play. Apart from this, the play has only a few points of interest.

13th Place: C8

Alexandru Mihalcescu

10th YCCC 2026



H#3 b) ♖d2→e1 C+ 3+2

a) 1.Kf6 Ke3 2.Kg5 Kf3+ 3.Kh5 Kg3#

b) 1.g5 Ke2 2.Kg4 Kf2+ 3.Kh4 Kg2#

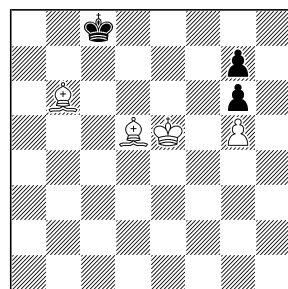
VC: A letztform showing white Durbar ending with chameleon echo mates. This tanagra should go directly into the anthology!

KW: Exact echoes where the white king temporarily closes the lines of both bishops in both solutions. A great find with some danger of anticipation – but I can find no real predecessor (the echoed mates have been done of course, but hopefully not with 2×2 interferences).

PE: Very nice miniature!! The white king play is harmonious and unusual for this type of problem. Problem B for comparison looks significant (see diagram A: * 1.– Kd6 2.Kb8 Kc6 3.Ka8 Kc7#, 1.Kd7 Bc5 2.Ke8 Kd6 3.Kf8 Kd7#; see diagram B: 1.Sd7 Kg5 2.Kd8 Kg6+ 3.Ke8 Kg7#, 1.Se6 Kf6 2.Kd8 Bg4 3.Sc7 Kf7#).

MMcD: This play of the white king is very familiar from problems with a lot more content.

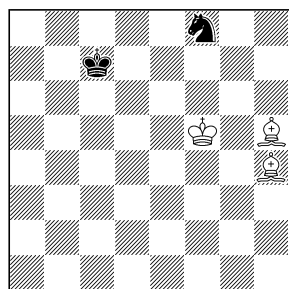
**A for comparison with
C8**
Charles M. Fox
Deutsche Schachblätter
1926



H#3*

C+ 4+3

**B for comparison with
C8**
Anton Nasyrov
Ivunin 65 JT 2022
Special Commendation

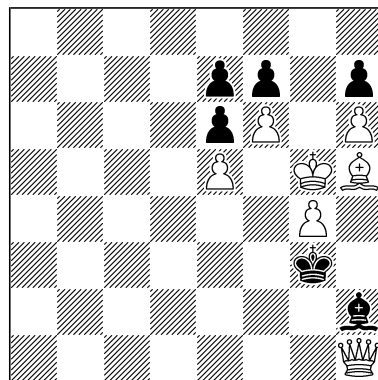


H#3

C+ 3+2

2 solutions

14th Place: C11
Andrei Moga Crăciun
10th YCCC 2026



H#2 b) ♖h2→f5 C+ 7+6
c) remove ♗f6

- a) 1.e×f6+ K×f6 2.Kh4 Q×h2#
- b) 1.B×g4 Qg1+ 2.Kh3 B×g4#
- c) 1.f5 g×f5 2.e×f5 Qf3#

VC: It is commendable how the author explored this closed matrix until he managed to extract three varied mating positions. It is definitely unusual to capture a black officer in the last move of a helpmate – I will take it as a sign of original perspective.

PE: There is a common motif of capture sacrifice in all three solutions, which are different otherwise.

MMcD: The solutions are simple and lack unity.

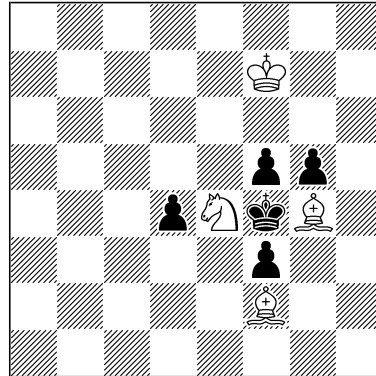
KW: A triplet with no clear theme, apart from the fact that a blocking white pawn (on f6 or g4) is eliminated in each solution.

Award Under 13 Section

1st Place: CC9

Egor Malanin

10th YCCC 2026



H#2 4 solutions

C+ 4+5

1.K×e4 Ke6 2.f4 Bf5#

1.K×g4 Kg7 2.Kh5 Sf6# (MM)

1.f×g4 Bg3+ 2.Kf5 Sd6# (MM)

1.f×e4 Be6 2.Ke5 Bg3# (MM)

VC: Four solutions in a light setting. Charming and enjoyable.

PE: The first pair shows Zilahi. Two captures, each on e4 & g4, are fine. Such a 4-captures task was done before by Onkoud, but in a different way.

MC: Three helpmates with passive sacrifices of white officers around black king were present in this edition. In two of them, CC9 being the exception, there are solutions with a white officer idle in the mate (some feature that does not seem to be spotted by the Helpmate Analyzer).

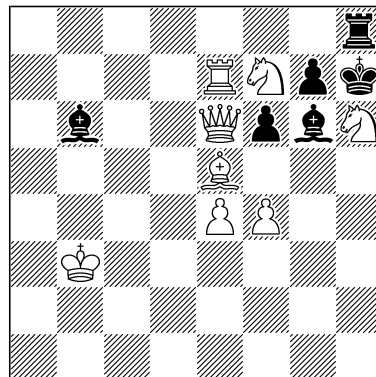
MMcD: Extracts the maximum amount of play from a small force. Good unity too, with two pairs of captures. Three of the mates are models.

KW: A similar idea to C7: the thematic pieces Se4+Bg4 are captured by the black king in one pair of solutions (with Zilahi), by Pf5 in another pair (without Zilahi, as Bf2 mates instead of Se4 after 1.f×g4). The economy is excellent, so I do not mind it that one solution does not end in a model mate – the sun also has its spots!

2nd Place: CC7

Maksym Kryshtafor

10th YCCC 2026



#3

C+ 8+6

1.Sg8! [2.Sg5+ f×g5 3.R×g7#]

1.– B×e4 2.Qh3+ Kg6/K×g8 3.S×h8/Q×h8#

1.– B×f7 2.Q×f7 [3.Q×g7#] R×g8 3.Qh5#

1.– K×g8 2.Re8+ Kh7 3.R×h8#

1.– R×g8 2.Qh3+ Bh5 3.Q×h5#

VC: A great key, granting a flight, creates an amazing threat opening two white lines. In the variations we can see three different white pieces giving mate in the corner. Absolutely astonishing content!

PE: A nice three-mover with a good key. The main feature for me are the two mates on h8.

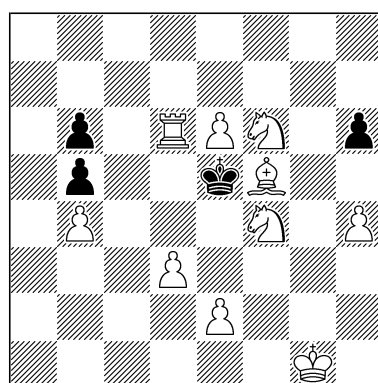
MMcD: Good fight-giving key (there is a set mate for 1.– g×h6: 2.Sg5#) and unexpectedly three pieces mate on h8.

KW: Rich play with four variations after a doubly sacrificial key. There is no clear theme connecting the variations, but the play is satisfying nonetheless.

3rd Place: CC4

Lev Galchenko

10th YCCC 2026



H#2 4 solutions C+ 10+4

1.K×f4 Rd4+ 2.Kg3 Sh5#

1.K×f6 Rd8 2.Kg7 Sh5#

1.K×d6 Se8+ 2.Kc6 Be4#

1.K×f5 S6h5 2.Ke5 Rd5#

VC: All black moves are played by the king. This composition also shows a double Zilahi: the piece captured in a solution gives mate in another solution.

PE: Double Zilahi is a highly commendable achievement, but the superfluous wSf4 in the 3rd solution weakens the impression. A white bishop mate on d7 in the relevant solution would have solved this issue.

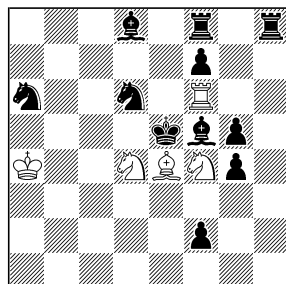
MC: Three helpmates with passive sacrifices of white officers around black king were present in this edition. In two of them, CC9 being the exception, there are solutions with a white officer idle in the mate (some feature that does not seem to be spotted by the Helpmate Analyzer). Here the Sf4 is idle in the 1.K×d6 solution. A flaw has to be weighted with the ambition of the idea. Here the capture of four officers around the king in four solutions form is a very rare achievement (compared to the one in C7). With this matrix, I found only one problem (see diagram A: a) 1.K×f4 Rh6 2.Kg3 Se2#, 1.K×f6 Bc6 2.Ke7 Sd5#; b) 1.K×d4 Se2+ 2.Kc5 Rc6#, 1.K×e4 Re6+ 2.K×f4 Se2#). There are four model mates, but a heavier position, a twinning and no double Zilahi. I do not see how a mate with Bd7 as suggested by Paz can be made, but using the K×R variation in the problem A allows a setting without idle officer (see diagram B: 1.K×e4 Rc4+ 2.Kf3 Sg5#, 1.K×e6 Rc8 2.Kf7 Sg5#, 1.K×c6 Bc3 2.Kb5 Sd4#, 1.K×e5 Sg5 2.Kd5 Rc5#). But now there is no double Zilahi, which was certainly an important feature for the composer.

MMcD: The unused knight in the 1.K×d6 solution is a serious defect.

KW: A double Zilahi (Sf4 and Sf6 take turns being captured or mating; Rd6 and Bf5 do the same), that is a great achievement. The price that had to be paid is the fact that Sf4 is passive in one mate – versions by other composers lack this flaw but also miss the double Zilahi. I think the result is worth the price.

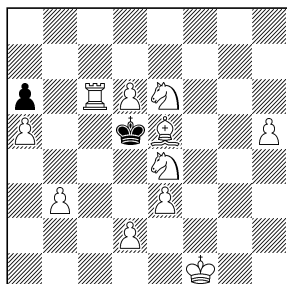
**A for comparison with
CC4**

Anatoly Styopochkin
Pat a Mat 1991-1992
3rd Honourable
Mention



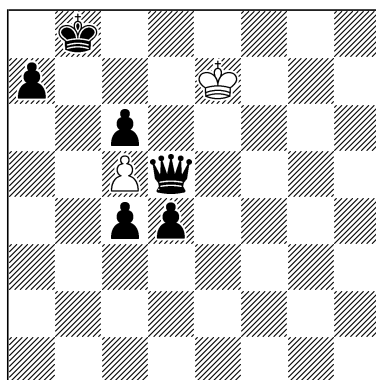
H#2 C+ 5+11
2 solutions
b) ♖d6→f3

**B, version for
comparison with CC4**



H#2 C+ 11+2
4 solutions

4th Place: CC3
Flora Sarmento
10th YCCC 2026



H#4 2 solutions C+ 2+6

1.Qd8+ Ke6 2.Qb6 c×b6 3.Kc8 b7+ 4.Kd8 b8=Q#

1.Qd6+ c×d6 2.Kb7 d7 3.Kb6 d8=Q+ 4.Kc5 Qa5#

VC: White promotes in the piece it has previously captured – a nice motif unifying the solutions.

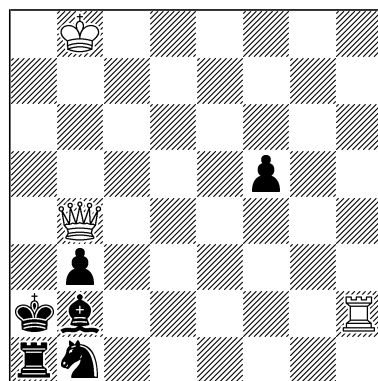
PE: A nice helpmate from a young composer! The black queen sacrifices are fine and the use of the white king in both solutions is commendable.

MMcD: Nicely balanced solutions ending with models.

KW: Black queen sacrifices to allow wPc5 to promote to queens, both solutions ending with model mates.

A good quality helpmate-moremover.

5th Place: CC2
Oleksandr Veksler
 10th YCCC 2026



#5

C+ 3+6

1.Qd4! [2.Q×b2#] Ka3 2.Qc5+ Ka2 3.Qe5 [4.Q×b2#] Sd2/Sc3 4.R×d2/Q×c3 [5.Q×b2#] Rb1/Ka3 5.Qa5#

2.– Ka4 3.Rh4+ f4 4.R×f4+ Bd4 5.R×d4#

Author: White must manoeuvre the queen, spending three out of five moves to fulfill the condition. On the first move, White clears a square for the king. The problem features a model mate with a pin after 4.– Rb1 5.Qa5!

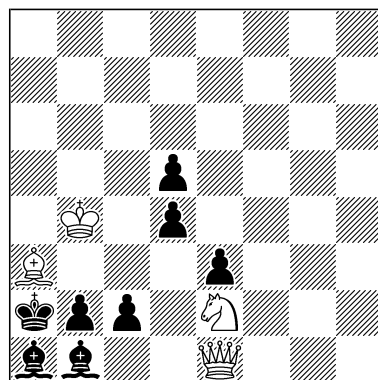
VC: One feature which makes this composition aesthetically pleasing is that white queen goes away from the black king. The pin mate and the secondary variation are also welcome.

PE: Nice white queen manoeuvre.

MMcD: Straightforward play.

KW: An amusing white queen manoeuvre bringing the queen step by step away from the black king. It was certainly a good idea to add Pf5, bringing the by-variation 1.– Ka4 up to the full five moves.

6th Place: CC6
Denys Farkash
 10th YCCC 2026



#2

C+ 4+8

1.Qc3? [2.Qb3#] d×c3 2.S×c3#, but: 1.– c1=S!

1.Qc1! (zz) b×c1=~/d3 2.S×c1/Sc3#

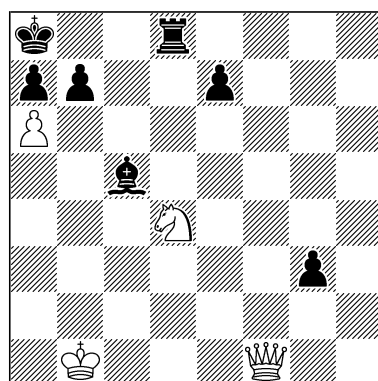
VC: Probably a by-product of composer's attempt to realise a sound composition for section A. Of course, the key with the active sacrifice of the white queen raised a huge smile on my face!

PE: White queen sacrifices, nicely done and a typical young composer's problem.

MMcD: Neat enough, but again very simple.

KW: A choice between two white queen sacrifices to a black pawn, where the best one is also the solution. Limited content, but good.

7th Place: CC5
Teodor Hentea
 10th YCCC 2026



#6

C+ 4+7

- 1.Qg2? [2.Q×b7#] Rd7!
 1.Qh1? [2.Q×b7#] g2!
 1.Qf3! [2.Q×b7#] Rb8 2.Se6 [3.Sc7#] (2.Sb5? Bb6!) Bb6 3.Qg2 (zz) Ba5 4.Sc5 5.a×b7+ R×b7+ 6.Q×b7#
 (3.– Bd8 4.Sc5 or 4.S×d8 6.#)
 (2.– Bd6 3.Sd8 4.a×b7+ R×b7+ 5.Q×b7#)
 (1.– Rd5/Rd7? 2.Qf8+ 3.#)

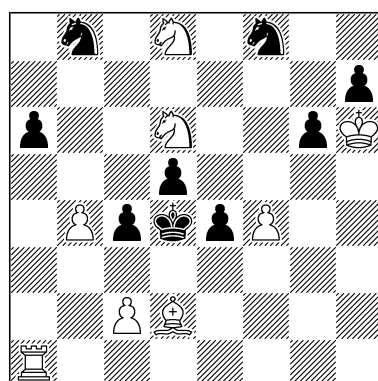
VC: The irresistible idea of launching a direct attack against the black king using the white queen and the white knight is out of a sudden culminating in an unexpected zugzwang after the third white move.

PE: The main point is the tempo 3.Qg2, but the serious dual 3.– Bd8 4.Sc5,S×d8 is a weak point.

MMcD: Not bad, but very straightforward. A player would find nothing surprising in the solution.

KW: A fairly straight-forward 6-mover based on the white attack on b7 and the out-manoeuvering of the black bishop. It is good that white has a choice between three white queen moves at the beginning (although the most likely one is also the key), and a choice between two white knight moves after 1.– Rb8 (only 2.Se6! gains access to c5).

8th-9th Place ex æquo: CC1
Mikhail Shishov
 10th YCCC 2026



#2

C+ 8+9

- 1.Ra3? [2.Be3#] c3!
 1.Re1? (zz) c3 2.Be3#, but 1.– e3!
 1.Rd1! (zz) c3/e3/a5/g5/Sc6,Sbd7/Sfd7,Se6 2.Bc1/Be1/Sb5/Sf5/S(×)c6/S(×)e6#

VC: The fascination of the symmetry! I like how the author found a safe place for the white king. Another

positive aspect is that all white pieces are giving mate.

PE: A single Dombrovskis element and one changed mate. Much of this is known, though no direct or full anticipation.

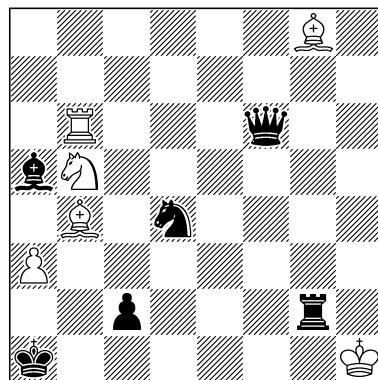
MMcD: The knight on d8 is a fringe piece. It plays no role other than providing two mates which are not part of the central idea. A lighter, more attractive setting can be obtained by moving h7/h6 to h4/h3 and eliminating the three knights on the top rank (C+).

KW: The play is elementary but pretty; the two tries are an essential complement to the variations in the solution. The three knights on row 8 bring no extra value and should be removed.

8th-9th Place ex æquo: CC8

Arseniy Saga

10th YCCC 2026



H#2 2 solutions

C+ 6+6

1.S×b5 B×a5 2.Sd4 Bc3#

1.B×b4 S×d4 2.Bd2 S×c2#

Author: Zilahi, reciprocal captures.

MMcD: The problem A for comparison (see diagram: 1.B×e5 S×e3 2.Bb2 Sc2#, 1.S×f5 B×g3 2.Se7 Bd6#) shows the same idea as CC8, which is a great pity, as the problem is remarkably good for an U-13 composer.

VC: Lovely mutual captures followed by closing black lines and opening a white rook line. Classic and classy.

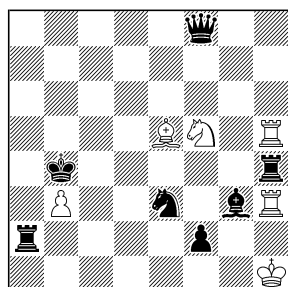
PE: There are strong predecessors (see diagram B: 1.B×c4 S×c6 2.Bf7 Se7#, 1.S×b4 B×b5 2.Sc2 Bd3#), existence of switchback in both solutions would make this somewhat original.

MC: There is no complete anticipation and the achievement certainly deserves recognition. Most of the other helpmates, though not directly anticipated, are not very original. Even the problem A for comparison is not (see diagram C: 1.B×g4 S×d5 2.Bf5 Se3#, 1.S×f4 B×f5 2.Sd5 Bd3#). The switchback Sd4 is an interesting feature that cannot be doubled in this matrix.

MMcD: A quality problem, but unfortunately essentially anticipated.

KW: A very clear and ambitious theme: Zilahi with reciprocal captures between the knights and the bishops. Other composers have done similar things before, but this is the most economical setting (12 pieces = Meredith).

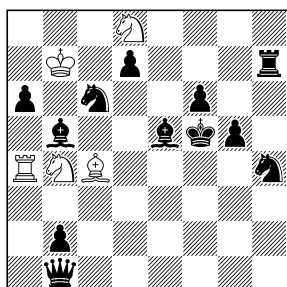
**A for comparison with
CC8**
Aleksandr Pankratiev
Moskovski konkurs
2017
3rd Honourable
Mention



H#2
2 solutions

C+ 6+7

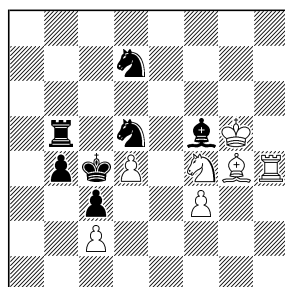
**B for comparison with
CC8**
Andreas Schönholzer
Uralski Problemist
2009
Bron 100 MT
1st-2nd Prize ex æquo



H#2
2 solutions

C+ 5+12

**C for comparison with
CC8**
Alessandro Cuppini
Problemesis 2004



H#2
2 solutions

C+ 7+7