

Problemaz 2026 – helpmates in two moves
Praha, April 2026
Michal Dragoun

Shortly after the closing date the director Abdelaziz Onkoud sent me 40 anonymized problems submitted for the tourney. I consider their quality as average. Important part of the entries contained more than two solutions, but more solutions doesn't automatically mean more quality: first and foremost I appreciated homogeneity of the solutions. Usually the helpmates called HOTF are in their strategy not so deep as problems with two solutions and each of these types has its own value. But lack of unity is flaw in two as well in higher number of solutions.

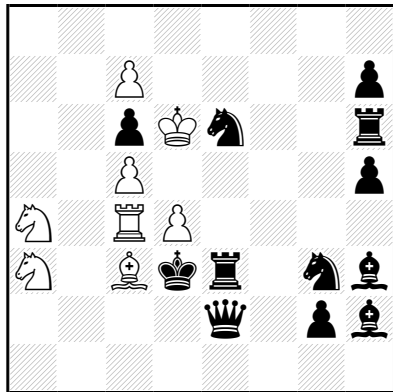
Before the award I have several notes to specific problems, which I did not rank between the awarded ones:

- 2: Interference unpins of white pieces with further interference of unpinning units, but with unbalanced details (only one black critical move, line-opening of 2.Re2 as well).
 - 3, 34: In WinChloe there are currently over 1200 cyclic Zilahis in HX2 and for a distinction it is necessary to add something more. These problems have very unbalanced play.
 - 6: Problem PR01 shows six analogous solutions and later attempts to add more (like PR02 or 6) I don't consider as step forward.
 - 7: Two pairs of solutions. But their content is rather simple (especially in two-move selfblocking manoeuvre) and in details different (2.Sf6 and 1.Be6 are interferences as well).
 - 8, 28: Useless white officers in some of the solutions.
 - 11: The fourth self-block is a new addition compared to PR03, but at the cost of zeroposition.
 - 13: Anticipated by PR04.
 - 16: There are dozens of problems showing white AUW and star of the black king (the authors usually tried to make all black king's moves in B1). With division of his moves between B1 and B2 there is rather close PR05 – it is not an anticipation, but 16 is not better.
 - 17: Problem adds one more solution to PR06, but with a repeated mate Qf6.
 - 18: Unfortunately anticipated by PR07.
 - 23: Reciprocal interferences of Ba2/Rg4 by Black and White, while the second thematic white piece is captured. Use of white officers for interference (and not guard) is here clearly thematic, but I dislike some not homogeneous and not thematic details (unpin by Rc4).
 - 29: Homogeneous creation of twins, but not the play.
 - 32: Anticipated (or already published), see PR08.
 - 36: Anticipated by PR09.
 - 37: Twice mates from batteries with white knight as a front piece, twice transformation of the battery, but both repeated black moves are too disturbing for me.
 - 39: Unpin of white piece with unguard of a mating square and Zilahi with reciprocal captures of two pair of pieces, but in A is black capture hideaway, while in B self-block.
- My award is as follows:

Participants :

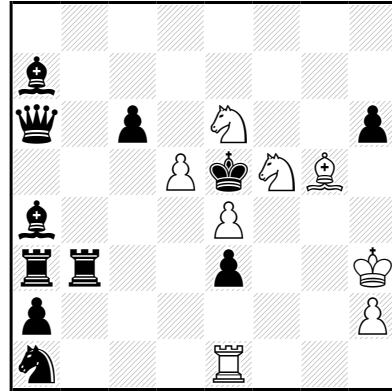
Bidleň Anton : A13 ; Vieira Ricardo : A22, A23, A24, A25, A26 ; Elbaz Mohamed Jamal : A1 ; Labai Zoltán : A10*, A11* ; Onkoud Abdelaziz : A12*, A39, A40 ; Svítek Miroslav : A10*, A11* ; Zamanov Vidadi : A2 ; Антипин Иван И. : A3*, A4*, A33*, A34* ; Васючко Микола Р. : A21* ; Гаврилів Євгеній : A18, A19, A20, A29*, A30*, A32* ; Гальма Михайло Т. : A21* ; Гуров Валерий В. : A14, A15 ; Ивунин Алексей В. : A27*, A28*, A35* ; Колесник Микола І. : A37 ; Мурашѐв Павел А. : A8* ; Насыров Антон : A38 ; Нефѐдов Владислав В. : A12* ; Панкратѐв Александр Н. : A3*, A4*, A5, A6, A7, A27*, A28*, A29*, A30*, A31, A32*, A33*, A34*, A35*, A36 ; Скрипник Анатолий Н. : A8* ; Юзюк Віктор Я. : A16, A17 ; זמנון זמנון : A9

A25 – Ricardo Vieira Problemaz 2026 Prize



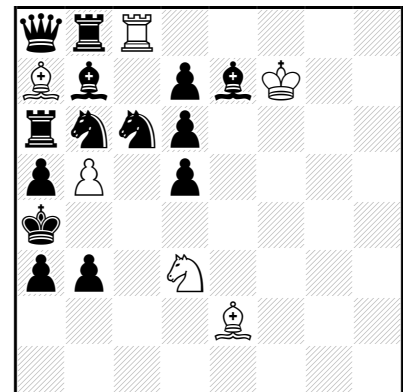
h‡2 2 solutions (8+12) C+

A26 - Ricardo Vieira Problemaz 2026 1st Honorable Mention



h‡2 2 solutions (8+11) C+

A12 - Abdelaziz Onkoud Владислав НЕФѐДОВ Problemaz 2026 2nd Honorable Mention



h‡2 2 solutions (6+14) C+

A25 – Ricardo Vieira : Prize

Black knight e6 intends to make accessible square c5 or d4 for the white knight/rook, but its moves are with check. First moves by another knight anticipatorily interfere one black line and thus allow sidestep by white king, and by guard of one possible mating square determine further play. Strategically the richest problem of the tourney.

1. ♖e4+ ♔e7 2. ♞×d4 ♜×d4‡
1. ♞f5+ ♔d7 2. ♞×c5+ ♝×c5‡

A26 - Ricardo Vieira : 1st Honorable Mention

Interference of black lines, annihilation of black pawn with selfpin and interference unpin with dual avoidance. Interesting blend of line effects.

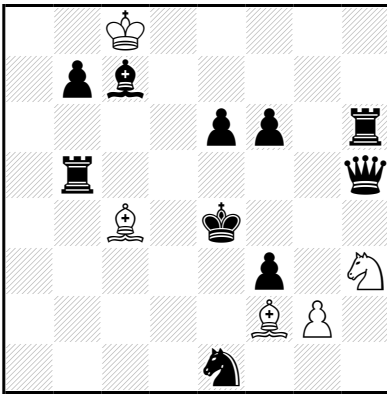
1. ♜b5 ♞×e3 2. ♞b3 ♞c4‡
1. ♜b6 ♞×e3 2. ♞b3 ♞d4‡

A12 - Abdelaziz Onkoud & Владислав НЕФѐДОВ : 2nd Honorable Mention

There are various reciprocal effects in functions of white pieces: Rc8/Ba7 – captured/guard, but as well Rc8/Be2 – guard of b5/mate and Ba7/Sd3 – guard of b4/mate.

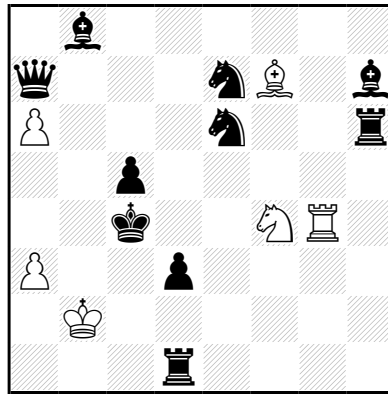
1. ♞×a7 ♜c5 2. b2 ♞d1‡
1. ♞×c8 ♞c5 2. a2 ♞b2‡

A9 - מנחם ויצטום
Problemaz 2026
3rd Honorable Mention



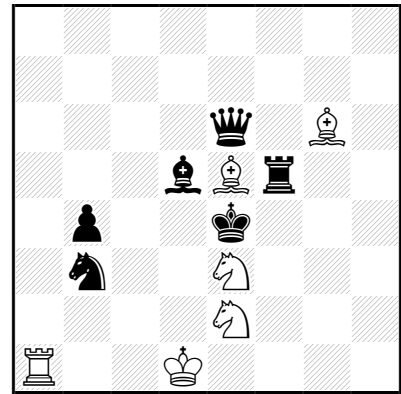
h‡2 b) ♖c4→d7 (5+10) C+
 c) ♜f6→d3, +d) ♞h3→h4

A24 - Ricardo Vieira
Problemaz 2026
4th Honorable Mention



h‡2 2 solutions (6+10) C+

A40 - Abdelaziz Onkoud
Problemaz 2026
1st Commendation



h‡2 2 solutions (6+6) C+

A9 - מנחם ויצטום:
3rd Honorable Mention

Four times black critical moves followed by interference, with all moves serving simultaneously as self-blocks.

- a) 1. ♜e5 g3 2. f5 ♞g5‡
- b) 1. ♜d5 g4 2. e5 ♞f5‡
- c) 1. ♞f5 ♞a6 2. ♞e5 ♞x b7‡
- +d) 1. ♞f4 ♞f5 2. ♞e5 ♞d6‡

A24 - Ricardo Vieira : 4th Honorable Mention

Reciprocal white and black interferences on g6 and c7 (of different lines) as well as unpins of bSe6.

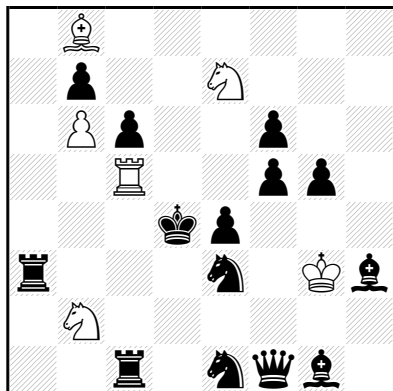
- 1. ♞g6 ♞d5+ 2. ♞d4 ♞c7‡
- 1. ♞d5 a4 2. ♞e7 ♞g6‡

A40 - Abdelaziz Onkoud : 1st Commendation

There is a lot of problems showing Zilahi theme in position of black king with white bishop and knight standing on neighbouring squares on opposite sides of black king. Some of them combine the basic pattern with pin of black pieces (PR10) or self-block by unpinned black piece (e.g. PR11, PR12). But as a whole is this combination probably realised for the first time.

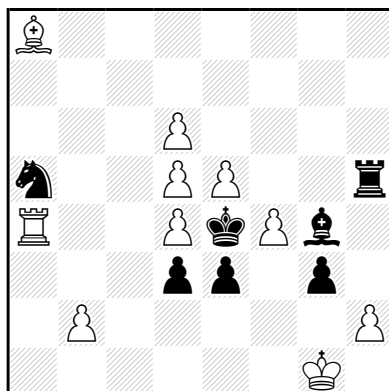
- 1. ♜x e3 ♞a3 2. ♞f3 ♞d4‡
- 1. ♜x e5 ♞a5 2. ♞f6 ♞c4‡

A22 - Ricardo Vieira
Problemaz 2026
2nd Commendation



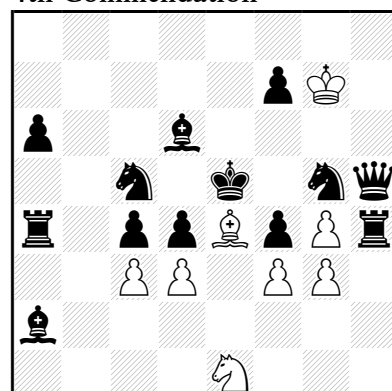
h‡2 2 solutions (6+14) C+

A15 - Валерий ГУРОВ
Problemaz 2026
3rd Commendation



h‡2 b)-♞a5 2 sol (10+7) C+

A5 - Александр ПАНКРАТЬЕВ
Problemaz 2026
4th Commendation



h‡2 4 solutions (8+13) C+

A22 - Ricardo Vieira : 2nd Commendation

Festival of black interferences: in B1 there is an interference of black queen and anticipatorily of black rook, in B2 of two other black pieces. Unfortunately White has only to guard one square.

1. ♞d3 ♙f4 2. ♞c2 ♖c4‡
 1. ♞f3 ♙d6 2. ♞g4 ♗x f5‡

A15 - Валерий ГУРОВ : 3rd Commendation

Familiar matrix with two pawn-batteries seems to be used in B in a new way, with sacrificial critical moves and self-blocks of f5.

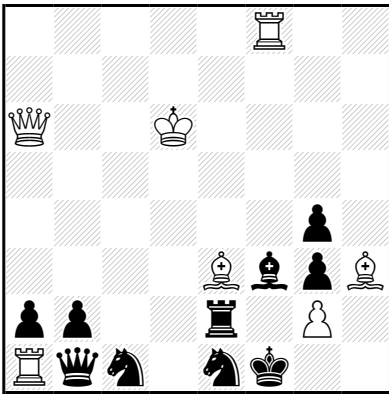
- a) 1. ♞c4 b3 2. ♚x d4 ♖x c4‡
 1. ♞b7 f5 2. ♚x d5 ♙x b7‡
 b) 1. ♙e6 hxg3 2. ♖f5 dxe6‡
 1. ♖x e5 ♙g2 2. ♙f5 dx e5‡

A5 - Александр ПАНКРАТЬЕВ : 4th Commendation

Two pairs of solutions with cycle of white moves and reciprocal captures of Pc3/Pd4 and Pg3/Pf4, but the symmetry of the position is apparent.

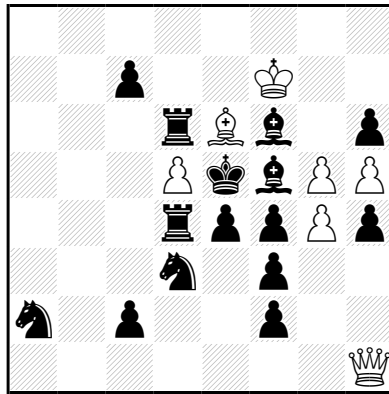
1. cxd3 ♗g2 2. ♙e6 gx f4‡
 1. ♚xg4 ♗c2 2. ♚e6 cxd4‡
 1. dx c3 gx f4+ 2. ♚d4 ♗c2‡
 1. fxg3 cxd4+ 2. ♚f4 ♗g2‡

A19 - Євгеній ГАВРИЛІВ
 Problemaz 2026
 5th Commendation



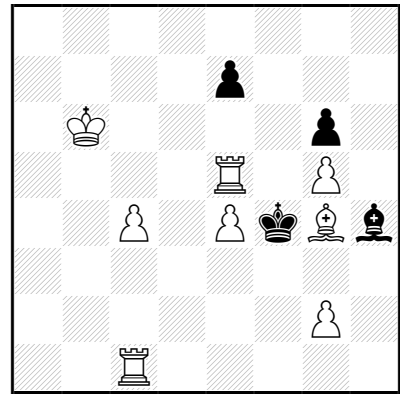
h‡2 2 solutions (7+10) C+

A20 - Євгеній ГАВРИЛІВ
 Problemaz 2026
 6th Commendation



h‡2 4 solutions (7+15) C+

A14 - Валерій ГУРОВ
 Problemaz 2026
 7th Commendation



h‡2 2 solutions (8+4) C+

A19 - Євгеній ГАВРИЛІВ : 5th Commendation

Interference self-unpin followed with self-pin of unpinned black piece on a new line and capture of the interfering piece seems to be here newly enriched with reciprocal function exchange of interfering and captured black piece.

1. ♖c3 ♜x b1 2. ♜x g2 ♚x d3‡
 1. ♚f5 ♜x c1 2. ♜x g2 ♜x f5‡

A20 - Євгеній ГАВРИЛІВ : 6th Commendation

Line-openings, twice with annihilation of white pawns, twice with critical moves and interferences (here with slight unbalance).

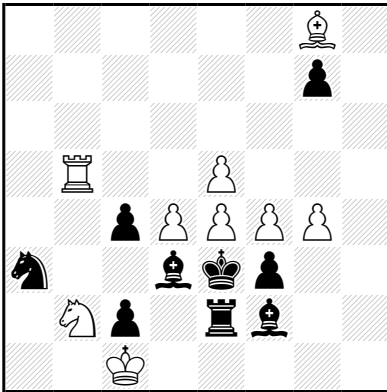
1. ♜a4 ♚é1 2. ♞ab4 ♚ç3‡
 1. ♜a6 ♚b1 2. ç6 ♚b8‡
 1. ♞x g5 ♚x h4 2. ♞f6 ♚x f6‡
 1. ♞x g4 ♚h3 2. ♞f5 ♚x f5‡

A14 - Валерій ГУРОВ : 7th Commendation

Captures of white officers by the king makes the squares accessible for pawn-mates.

1. ♚x g4 ♜g1 2. ♚h5 g4‡
 1. ♚x é5 ♜é1 2. ♚d6 é5‡

A1 - Mohamed Jamal Elbaz
Problemaz 2026
8th Commendation



h♯2 (9+9) C+
 b) ♖b2→e1 ; c) ♖b2→c7

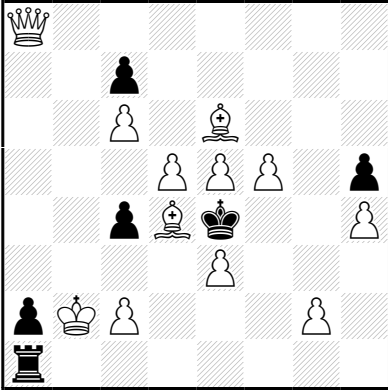
A1 - Mohamed Jamal Elbaz : 8th Commendation

Three mates from the same square and three self-blocks of the neighbouring square with correspondence of mating and selfblocking piece-type. However, there is a still place for better rendering – play in position C is rather different.

- a) 1. ♔×d4 ♘d1 2. ♚×e4 ♜d5♯
- b) 1. ♔×e4 ♘g2 2. ♚×d4 ♜d5♯
- c) 1. ♚×b5 ♜h7 2. ♚×d4 ♘d5♯

Annexe :

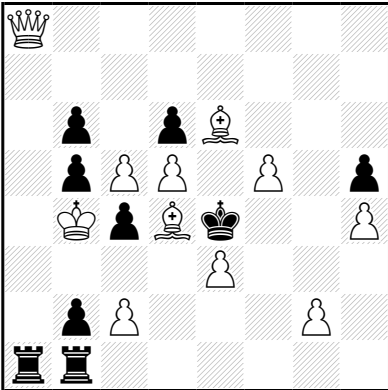
1- Ladislav SALAI Jr
Michal DRAGOUN
Problemblad 2018
1st Prize



h‡2 6 solutions (12+6) C+

- 1.Th1 Dd8 2.T×h4 D×h4‡
- 1.Tf1 Df8 2.T×f5 D×f5‡
- 1.Tç1 Da4 2.T×ç2+ D×ç2‡
- 1.Td1 Da7 2.T×d4 D×d4‡
- 1.Té1 Da3 2.T×é3 D×é3‡
- 1.Tg1 Dg8 2.T×g2 D×g2‡

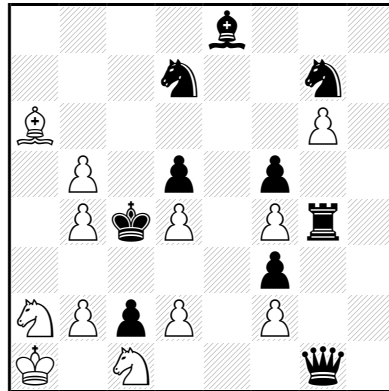
2- Віктор М. ЦІЗОПЕНКО
The Problemist 2018



h‡2 8 solutions (11+9) C+

- 1.Tç1 Da4 2.T×ç2 D×ç2‡
- 1.Td1 Dh8 2.T×d4 D×d4‡
- 1.Té1 Da3 2.T×é3 D×é3‡
- 1.Tf1 Df8 2.T×f5 D×f5‡
- 1.Tg1 Dg8 2.T×g2 D×g2‡
- 1.Th1 Dd8 2.T×h4 D×h4‡
- 1.Ta3 R×a3 2.d×ç5 d6‡
- 1.T×a8 Fç8 2.R×d5 Fb7‡

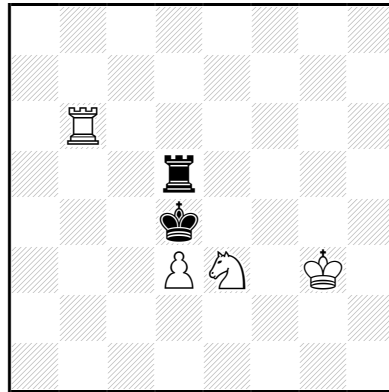
3-Miroslav SVÍTEK
Variantim 2023



h‡2 3 solutions (12+10) C+

- 1.Tg3 f×g3 2.D×d4 b6‡
- 1.Cé6 g7 2.C×d4 d3‡
- 1.Cé5 f×é5 2.T×d4 b3‡

4-Anton BIDLĚŇ
Mémorial M. Mishko 2020
1st Honorable Mention

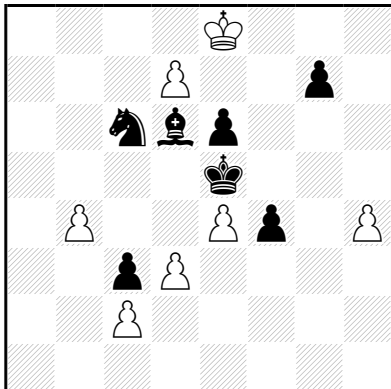


h‡2 2 solutions (4+2) C+

- 1.Tç5 Cç4 2.Rd5 Td6‡
- 1.Tf5 Td6+ 2.Ré5 Cç4‡

5-Imre KIRCHNER

Sakkélet 1995

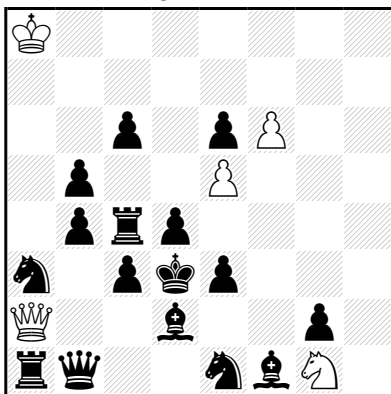


h♯2 4 solutions (7+7) C+

- 1.f3 d8=D 2.Rf4 Dg5♯
 1.Fç7 d8=C 2.Rd6 Cf7♯
 1.Rd4 d8=F 2.Fé5 Fb6♯
 1.Rf6 d8=T 2.é5 T×d6♯

6-Oto MIHALČO

Šachové umění 2007

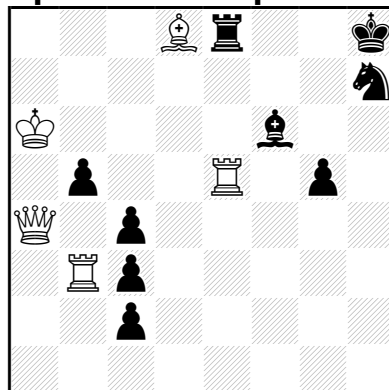


h♯2 3 solutions (5+16) C+

- 1.Fç1 D×g2 2.Fd2 Dg6♯
 1.Tç5 D×é6 2.Tç4 Df5♯
 1.Caç2 Da7 2.Ca3 Dh7♯

7- Пётр Б. ЗАБИРОХИН

Проблеміст України 2018



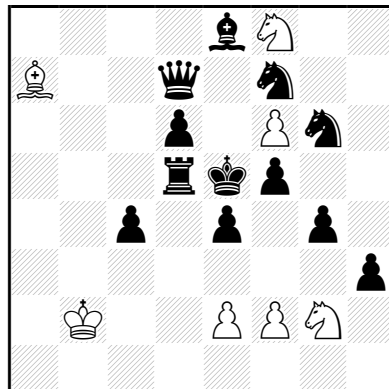
h♯2 2 solutions (5+9) C+

- 1.ç×b3 Dd4 2.F×d8 T×é8♯
 1.b×a4 Tb8 2.T×é5 F×f6♯

8- Євгеній ГАВРИЛІВ

Александр Н. ПАНКРАТЬЕВ

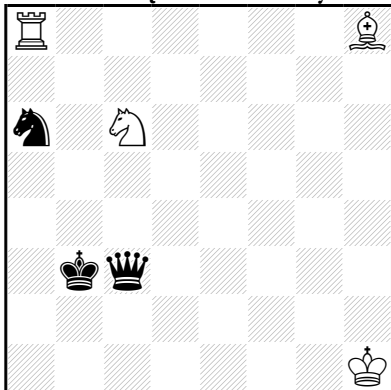
Sinfonie Scacchistiche 2022



h♯2 3 solutions (7+12) C+

- 1.D×a7 f4+ 2.Rd4 Cé6♯
 1.h×g2 C×d7+ 2.Rf4 Fé3♯
 1.C×f8 Fd4+ 2.Ré6 Cf4♯

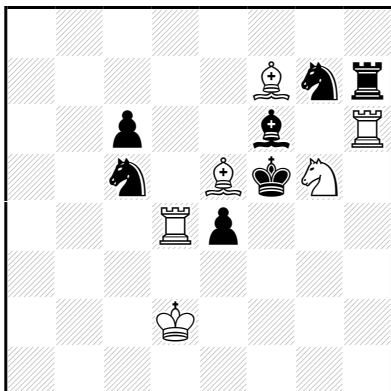
9-Stefan PARZUCH
Polski Związek Szachowy 2015



h♯2 b) ♖a6 (4+3) C+

- a) 1.Cb4 Ta1 2.Dç2 Ca5‡
b) 1.Db4 Fa1 2.Fç4 Cd4‡

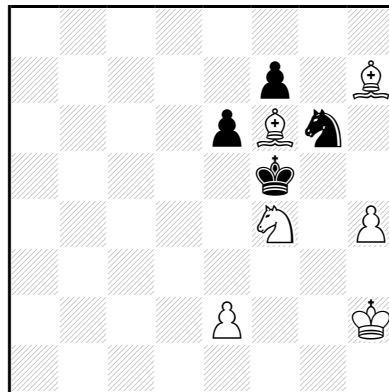
10- Юрий Г. ГОРБАТЕНКО
Уральский Проблемист 2000
5th Prize



h♯2 2 solutions (6+7) C+

- 1.R×é5 Th4 2.R×d4 Cf3‡
1.R×g5 Td6 2.R×h6 Ff4‡

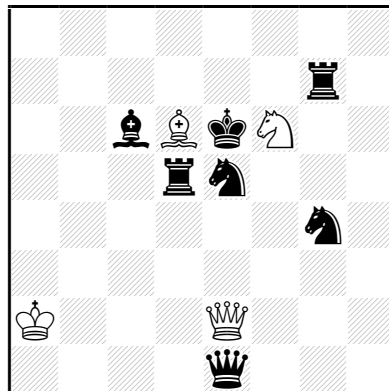
11- K. MURALIDHARAN
Orbit 2002



h♯2 b) ♗é2→d3 (6+4) C+

- a) 1.R×f4 Rh3 2.Cé5 Fg5‡
b) 1.R×f6 d4 2.Cé7 Ch5‡

12- Toma GARAI
Šachová skladba 1988
1st Prize



h♯2 2 solutions (4+7) C+

- 1.R×d6 Dé3 2.Cd7 Cé8‡
1.R×f6 Dé4 2.Cf7 Fé7‡