

Israel Ring Tourney: Threemovers Award 2007

Judge: John Rice (England)

I have much enjoyed studying the 20 problems submitted to me on anonymous diagrams by tourney director Yoel Aloni. As is usual in informal tourneys, some of them are routine column-fillers that appeal to solvers without being candidates for an honour. However, the fact that I have been able to identify 9 entries worthy of inclusion in the award suggests a more than acceptable overall standard.

1st prize: Vm 1685, Arieh Grinblat

In the set position the Se6, unpinned by 1...Sd6 and 1...Sf6, can give an immediate check followed by mate from the other S. The key switches guards of the squares d4 and e5, so that now the checks by the Se6 after the unpins must be delayed until move 3. Instead, White can play the checks by the Sd3 that are the mating moves in the try-play. The AB/BA CD/DC pattern is familiar, of course, but it is here combined with a threat making use of *en passant* capture and good by-play too. My only regret is that it all takes 26 units!

1...Sd6 2.S:c7+(A) Q:c7 3.Sb4(B)# 1...Sf6 2.Se:f4+(C) g:f4 3.Sd:f4(D)# (1...Sa3 2.Rd7+ K:e6 3.f8S#); 1.B:d4! (2.e4+ f:e3 ep 3.f4#) 1...Sd6 2.Sb4+(B) Q:b4 3.S:c7(A)# 1...Sf6 2.Sd:f4+(D) g:f4 3.Se:f4(C)# (1...S:d4 2.Rd7+ K:e6 3.f8S# 1...Qd2 2.Q:b5+).

2nd prize: Vm 1589, Michael Keller (Germany)

Formation of a battery by the WQ looks a likely way to start things off, but Black has adequate defences, in each case a capture of the piece that is not part of the battery. The key switches attention away from the h-file in order to induce the Sa5 and Be2 to abandon their guards of c6 and f3 respectively. Once they have moved away, the batteries can be formed, since White now has replies to the captures that refute the tries. The problem may not be hard to solve (the Be8 draws attention to itself, being evidently idle in the initial position), but the play is skillfully arranged and convincing.

1.Qh4?/Qh7? Q:f5!/S:g4!; 1.Ba4! (2.Bc2+) Sb3/Bd3 2.Qh4/Qh7 Q:f5/S:g4 3.Bc6/g:f3# (1...Bd1 2.B:d1).

1st Honourable Mention: Vm 1595, Arieh Grinblat

Black's principal defences, 1...Sc5/b3/Sf6, lead to continuations which do not appear until move 3 of the threat, an idea that has been much worked in recent years. As in the 1st prizewinner, there is good by-play. This problem might have been a candidate for a prize if the key had been better: the square e3 is adequately guarded by the Pf2, so the Sf1 clearly has no role as a guarding unit.

1.Sg3! (2.Rd3+ K:d3/c:d3/e:d3 3.Q:d5/Sb3/S:f3#) Sc5/b3/Sf6 2.Q:d5+/S:b3+/S:f3+ K:d5/c:b3/e:f3 3.Rd6/Qc3/B:e5# (1...B:g4/h:g4 2.Rd6/R:h7).

2nd Honourable Mention: Vm 1682, Arieh Grinblat

Pinning the Rf6 enables White to threaten checks on c6 and f3, but Black refutes by 1...Bxe4! So White tries an anticipatory line-closure with 1.Bc4?, threatening only 2.Sc6+, but this move turns out to be also a line-opening, so that 1...Rd6! refutes. The key has a similar line-closing effect without any attendant weakness.

Arieh Grinblat

1st Prize IRT 2007



#3* (14+12)

Michael Keller

2nd Prize IRT 2007



#3 vv (13+11)

Arieh Grinblat

1st Hon. Men. IRT 2007



#3 (12+13)

Regrettably, 1...Rc6+ leads to a dual continuation (2.Sc6+ and 2.Bxc6). However, there is enough interesting play for me to give the problem a reasonably high place in the award.

1.Bg7? (2.Sc6+, Sf3+ 3.d4#) B:e4! 1.Bc4? (2.Sc6+) Rd6! 1.Re3! (2.Sf3+) Rc6+ 2.S,B:c6 3.Bg7# (1...h:g5/B:e4 2.R:g5+/B:e4).

1st Commendation: Vm 1590, Yoel Aloni

It's hard to discern a precise theme in this problem, but there is a wealth of attractive variations, some involving K-flights. A pity a better key was not possible.
1.Qd3! (2.Q:d5+ K/e:d5 3.R:c5/Re7#) f:g4/Qd1/Qg2/S~/Ba2,Ra5 2.Sc4+/Bf4+/Qd4+/Bd4+/R:c5.

2nd Commendation: Vm 1596, Jacques Rotenberg

Here too the merit of the problem lies in the variety of the play, which involves sweeping Q-moves and a switchback – good solver-appeal.
1.Qa2! [2.Sc5 (3.Q:c4#) R:c5 3.Qg2#] g:h2/d2/Rc7/K:e4 2.Sf6+/Q:d2+/Q:a8+/Qg2+ 3.Q:h2/Qd4/Q:R/Bh6# [1.Ba4? (2.Sg5,f6+) Rf8].

3rd Commendation: Vm 1594, Efren Petite (Spain)

A neat, if familiar, Dombrovskis setting, but with a flaw: after 1.Bxe6? Bf3 White has two continuations, 2.Be7 or 2.Qd3. Normally one might not criticise a try-play dual, but in this case the composer has missed the chance to ensure accuracy and to improve the problem at the same time. If the Sg1 is moved to c1, the move 2.Qd3 is eliminated, and that ugly Pa2 can be removed as well.

1.B:e6?(A)/B:c7?(B) Bc4!(a)/Sc4!(b); 1.c4! (2.R:c7+) Bc4(a)/Sc4(b) 2.Be6(A)/Bc7(B) (1...b:c4 2.Qa4+).

4th Commendation: Vm 1592, Leonid Makaronetz & Leonid Ljubashevski

This problem's principal attraction is the quiet threat, which Black parries by means of captures on d4. The quiet continuation 2.Rh5 after 1...Sxe2 is another good feature.

1.f6! (2.Bg8) R:d4/B:d4/S:e2/Sf3 2.Qe7+/Qc6+/Rh5/Sh:f3.

5th commendation: Vm 1591, Yoel Aloni & Paul Vatarescu

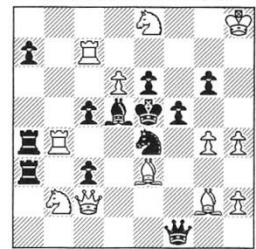
Quiet continuations following 1...Sc6 and 1...Sf7 are the main appeal of this problem. However, the key is weak, since the R that makes it clearly has nothing to do on a7. Personally I should have opted for a key such as 1.Bh7-c2.
1.Rd7! (2.B:e5+) Sc6/Sf7/Bg7 2.Rg3/Rb7/Re4+.

Arieh Grinblat
2nd Hon. Men. IRT 2007



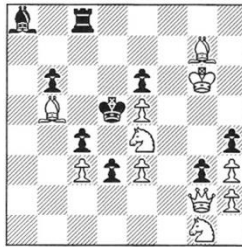
#3 vv (12+12)

Yoel Aloni
1st Comm. IRT 2007



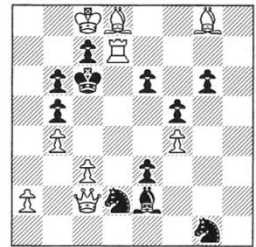
#3 (12+12)

Jacques Rotenberg
2nd Comm. IRT 2007



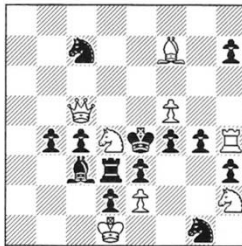
#3 (11+9)

Efren Petite
3rd Comm. IRT 2007



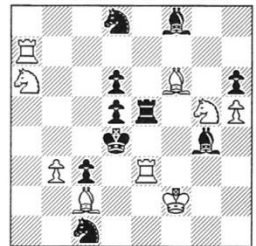
#3 vv (9+11)

Leonid Makaronetz & Leonid Ljubashevski
4th Comm. IRT 2007



#3 (8+13)

Yoel Aloni & Paul Vatarescu
5th Comm. IRT 2007



#3 (9+10)

My thanks to the editors of *VARIANTIM* for inviting me to judge this tourney.

[JMR]