Israel Ring Tourney Award: Helpmates – 2015

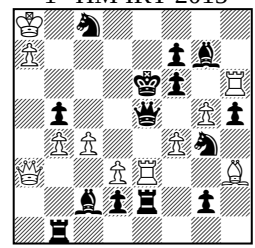
Judge: Christopher Jones, Bristol, UK

I was very grateful to be asked to judge this tourney. It was an enjoyable task, with many pleasant and well-constructed problems competing. If in the light of this my award seems less than generous it is because, after the decades of activity in the field of the orthodox helpmates, a judge is now looking for problems that manage a sense of freshness in the way in which they combine (generally familiar) elements or for problems that show an unusual degree of elegance in the way in which they present well-known ideas. The problems in this tourney will, I am sure, have given much solving pleasure but none seemed quite to satisfy my fastidiousness to the extent of earning Prize status. My award is as follows:

1st Honourable Mention: Var. 2648 Emil Klemanič Ladislav Salai jr. Michal Dragoun

Although the play is not beautiful, this problem uses a highly ingenious matrix to show a rather original idea. If any of the three thematic black pieces (at e5/f6/g4) is captured, then the other two would guard against the mate but for being pinned. In order to achieve mate it is necessary to remove the guard on and capture one of the thematic black units (by prosaic withdrawals on move B2), but also to guard, cyclically, flights at two of the three squares d6/d7/e7. This is achieved by means of sacrifices on move B1 that activate the wQ. Unfortunately it isn't possible to incorporate any 'multi-tasking' on the part of the black officers (the six black moves are made by six different units: no exchanges of function), but despite the inherent cumbersomeness of the problem this struck me as having the greatest ingenuity and originality of all the competing problems.

E. Klemanič L. Salai jr.
M. Dragoun
1st HM IRT 2015



H#2 3.1.1.1 11+14

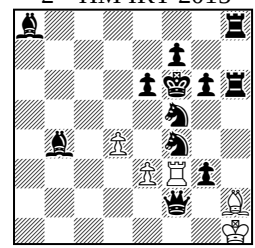
1.♖xb4 ♕xb4 2.h4 ♗xg4# 1.♗xd3 ♕xd3 2.♖f2 ♖xe5# 1.♘xa7 ♕xa7 2.♗f8 ♖xf6#

2nd Honourable Mention: Var. 2703 Emanuel Navon

Rich and enjoyable play on the pin-lines. In each solution one of the bSs unpins first one and then the other of the white line-pieces. The first 'unpinnee' captures on g3 and is then re-pinned on the square to which Black moved on move 1. Perhaps the need to move the wR in the twinning is a slight detraction but this problem scores well for the interplay between white and black pieces.

a) 1.♘g2 ♖xg3 2.♘gh4+ ♖g2 3.♗e7 ♗e5#
b) 1.♘h4 ♗xg3 2.♘f3+ ♗h4 3.♔f5 ♖xf4#

Emanuel Navon
2nd HM IRT 2015



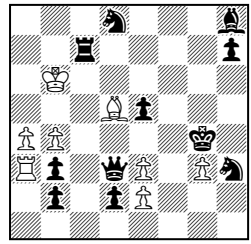
H#3 b)♖f3→e4 5+12

1st Commendation: Var. 2751 Yoel Aloni

I always enjoy problems such as this, in which the wR and wB each in one solution have to spend two moves hiding behind a wP. Very satisfying play, though I think that the first solution is better than the second: annihilation of bPb3 and avoidance of 3...e3?; and the mate in (a) (unlike in (b)) is a battery mate. a) 1.♖c5 ♗xb3 2.♕xe3 ♗d1 3.♕g5 e4#

b) 1.♗f6 ♖a1 2.♕g6 ♖g1 3.♔f5 g4#

Yoel Aloni
1st Com IRT 2015

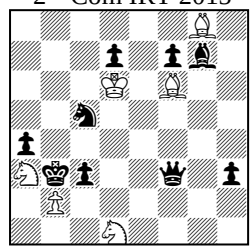


H#3 b)♘h3→g5 8+11

2nd Commendation: Var. 2698 Menachem Witztum

Finely matched solutions. In each there is only one hideaway square for the (highly mobile) bQ, and it entails the capture of a white officer after check prevention by the bS. The moves of both white officers to c3 is highly felicitous. a) 1.♘d3 ♗xc3 2.♕xd1 ♗xf7# b) 1.♘e6 ♘xc3 2.♕xf6 ♖b8#

Menachem Witztum
2nd Com IRT 2015



H#2 b) ♖g8 6+9

3rd Commendation: Var. 2697 Menachem Witztum

Delightfully elegant and economical. Sxd4 serves also to open the line d3-d6 (an effect not matched in the other solution) though.

1.♘xd3 ♕e8 2.♘b2 ♗xe5# 1.♘xd4 ♕d7 2.♘c6 ♖d6#

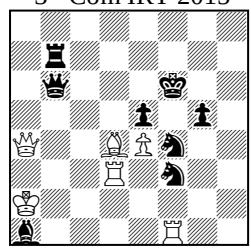
4th Commendation: Var. 2696 Yoel Aloni

A resourceful construction showing an enjoyable mix of elements; it's nice that Sc5 and Pf2 perform guard duties in the solutions in which they are not sacrificed. I think I prefer the mates with ...Sc3!

a) 1...♘d3! 2.cxd3 ♘c3# 1.♔d5 f4 2.exf4 ♖h5#

b) 1...f4! 2.exf4 ♖h5# 1.♔d4 ♘d3 2.cxd3 ♘c3#

Menachem Witztum
3rd Com IRT 2015



H#2 2.1.1.1 6+8

5th Commendation: Var. 2749 Emanuel Navon

It is nice that superficially it might appear that any of the three white units could give mate diagonally from e4. The pleasure given by the need to choose the right one each time is analogous to that given by the Fleck theme.

1.dxe6 ♕g4 2.♖f5 ♕e4# 1.♖c4 c6 2.♗d4 ♗e4# 1.♘d4 ♗xb5 2.♖f3 e4#

6th Commendation: Var. 2706 Eugene Fomichev

Very nice to have the three different P-routes to three different promotions and then three mates at d6. This nice problem might have been placed higher, but similar play has been shown in other problems and in this case the repetition of Pe5>e4 is, I feel, a slight detraction.

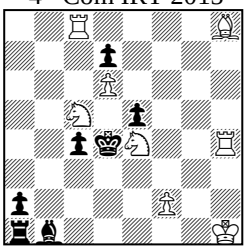
a) 1.♗f5 exd7 2.e4 d8=♕ 3.♔e5 ♕xd6# b) 1.♗d5 e7 2.♔e4 e8=♘ 3.♗f4 ♘xd6# c) 1.♖f7 exf7 2.♗f3 f8=♗ 3.e4 ♗xd6#

7th Commendation: Var. 2747 Stefan Parzuch

Nicely matched solutions, with pleasingly interchanged functions of wB and wSe6; perhaps there is a sense of its being quite a heavy position. 1.♘c4 ♗d7 2.e3 ♘g5# 1.♘g4 ♘c5 2.♘2e3 ♗xe4#

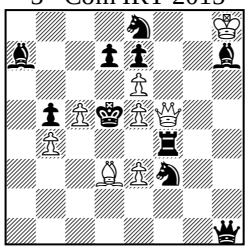
Once again, my gratitude for having been entrusted with this enjoyable task, and my thanks to the composers who made it enjoyable!

Yoel Aloni
4th Com IRT 2015



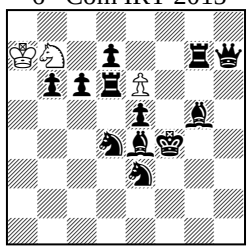
H#2* b)♔d4→d5 8+7

Emanuel Navon
5th Com IRT 2015



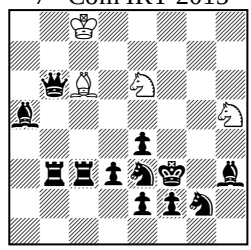
H#2 3.1.1.1 8+10

Eugene Fomichev
6th Com IRT 2015



H#3 b)♘b7→e1 3+12
c)♘b7→h6

Stefan Parzuch
7th Com IRT 2015



H#2 2.1.1.1 4+12