

GATTI 10th AT

Jubilee Anniversary Chess Composition Tourney

FINAL AWARD

Some introductory words...

When I announced this Jubilee Tourney to celebrate the tenth anniversary of my first published chess problem, I could not imagine how warmly the chess composition community would respond. The number of entries — and, more importantly, the high quality and the spirit behind them — has deeply moved me. Many composers clearly understood the essence of this event: not a competition in the ordinary sense, but a collective act of creative freedom, an invitation to think boldly, playfully, and without fear of the unknown. We live in a world that is mostly unknown: just think about the obscure depths of the oceans. I am sure that the most marvellous things are yet to be discovered.

I chose to mark these ten years not with a book or a retrospective, but with a tournament, because composition, to me, has never been a solitary art. Its beauty lies in the dialogue — between minds, between ideas, between the visible and the invisible logic that binds the sixty-four squares.

*When I began composing in mid-2015, I was not seeking fame or recognition. I was, quite simply, seeking survival. Something to devote myself to, something that helped me escape from something I could not even name. Chess composition offered me something I hadn't found anywhere else in my life: a precise form of meaning. It trained my mind to transform chaos into harmony, pain into geometry, and uncertainty into purpose, step by step, in a relentless growth. **In a very real sense, it saved my life.***

Through these years, I have experienced both triumph and silence, the ecstasy of discovery and the calm of understanding. Now, looking at the works sent to this tournament, I see the same pulse that has guided me all these years: imagination disciplined by logic, emotion translated into form. That is the true celebration — not of my ten years, but of the living art we share.

My heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed their time, their ideas, and their fragments of wonder. You have made this Jubilee what it was meant to be: a proof that, even after centuries, chess composition remains one of humanity's most delicate ways to speak the language of the infinite.

Thanks again to you all.

*Just one last reflection,
before beginning to delve into the beauty of composed chess.*

Judging a composition tournament properly is not a mechanical operation. It requires time, concentration, analytical rigor, anticipation checking, stylistic sensitivity, and above all a deep respect for the work of every Author involved, whether awarded or not. This emerges especially if, like me and some others, you feel important to comment every non-included composition, to make the Author aware of the motivations that brought at that decision.

In the chess composition world, this enormous amount of work has traditionally been offered freely, almost taken for granted. Perhaps, in the future, our community should begin reflecting more seriously on the actual value of this effort and on the sustainability of expecting increasingly demanding and specialized work without any form of recognition in return, with few and almost insignificant exceptions.

Passion is essential.

But passion alone cannot indefinitely support everything.

Daniele Guglielmo Gatti

FIDE International Judge

Sovramonte, Italy – July 2026



SECTION B

Selfmates S#10-n (Theme free)

--- ONLY C+ BRUTE FORCE PROBLEMS ACCEPTED ---

(A challenge of precision and imagination)

Among the two sections of this Jubilee Tourney, the one dedicated to long selfmates was undoubtedly the most demanding, both artistically and technically.

To compose a selfmate in ten or more moves that remains fully C+ verified is no small achievement. It requires not only imagination but also exceptional discipline: a rare balance between creative freedom and mathematical control. Long selfmates are peculiar creatures. They must be ambitious yet economical, rich in content yet free from unintended solutions, dramatic yet perfectly coherent. Every move matters. Every tempo matters. Every defensive possibility must be accounted for.

The stipulation was intentionally ambitious. My goal was not simply to collect long selfmates, but to encourage composers to explore what happens when artistic aspiration encounters the practical limits of exhaustive computer verification. In other words, to investigate whether a problem can remain imaginative and surprising while still surviving the most rigorous forms of testing.

Having composed around sixty selfmates of ten or more moves myself, almost all successfully brute-force tested, including a selfmate in 19 moves without promotions and another in 23 moves with promotions, I knew that the challenge was difficult but realistic. The question was not whether it could be done, but what kind of artistic results such a challenge might produce.

The answer exceeded my expectations.

I received 26 entries from a total of 20 Authors, considerably more than I predicted, and the overall standard was remarkably high. More importantly, the composers clearly understood the spirit of the section. The requirement of exhaustive verification was not treated as a burden but as an invitation: an opportunity to demonstrate that long selfmates can still combine originality, depth and complete soundness. Interestingly, the award also offers an unexpected perspective on one of the most discussed topics in modern composition: the role of computer verification.

Some composers embrace exhaustive testing enthusiastically, others accept it reluctantly, while a few question whether it should be considered a necessary requirement at all. Yet the strongest entry in this section reveals a fascinating paradox. The first prize, awarded to Michael Herzberg, required eighteen days of continuous computation on extremely powerful modern hardware. This is an extraordinary verification time. Yet the artistic idea behind the problem is immediately accessible to the human mind. Its strategic concept can be understood,

appreciated and admired within minutes. Thus the machine and the composer seem to exchange their traditional roles. The composer sees the destination almost instantly. The computer, despite its overwhelming calculating power, must wander through immense forests of variations before finally confirming what the human imagination already knew.

We often hear that computers have surpassed humans. In practical chess this is undoubtedly true. Yet compositions such as these remind us that there remain areas where creativity leads and computation follows. The machine supplies the proof; the composer provides the vision. Whether one regards exhaustive verification as an indispensable standard or merely as a valuable tool, the problems in this section demonstrate that the relationship between human creativity and computational power is far more subtle than a simple contest between man and machine.

Ultimately, this is what the section became: a celebration of precision and imagination working together. In a field where a single tempo can separate perfection from failure, these selfmates show that rigour and creativity are not opposing forces. They are partners in the same artistic endeavour. And perhaps the most beautiful irony of all is that some of the most computationally demanding works in the tournament also turned out to be among the most elegant.

IMPORTANT NOTE

My old-school hardware was not able to certify again the soundness of some problems, as I wished to do. In most cases I was able to re-test problems for being 100% sure, but there were exceptions where I could simply not reach the necessary goal (not in reasonable time, at least). I had then to rely on the digital certificate of successfully executed Brute-force test, which every Author diligently sent to me, even when I was at first sight doubtful of the soundness of those problems.

*A curiosity: **Jose A. Garzon** was the only composer to compete in both A and B sections (as if it wasn't enough, receiving a special distinction in both!)*

Some "quick" words about the problems excluded from the award, as usual, are provided to help the Authors understand my reasons and, in some cases, improve their own works.

Problems excluded from the beginning:

- **Olaf Jenkner (S#11 – a1/c1)**. Substantially anticipated. The remarkable idea of a Black Allumwandlung achieved by a single black pawn already on the 2nd rank is no longer a novelty. Considering the "task" nature of this kind of

problem, as well as the well-known mating patterns, this work appears weaker when compared to its predecessors. If the objective is to achieve the task in the fewest possible moves, the historical S#4 by Petko Petkov (Stella Polaris, 12/1969, 3rd Prize – PDB P0501049) remains unsurpassed, and it is doubtful it can be improved. If, on the other hand, we value length and constructional variety, the S#13 by Torsten Linss (Roman Zalokotsky MT, 1st Prize – PDB P1406102) stands far superior: a miniature with four model mates, no promoted pieces in the initial position, and a record-setting economy of means. If it was a first, this problem could compete as a special prize winner: unfortunately, it is not.

- **Mirko Degenkolbe (S#12 – h3/f1)**. Nice idea, but the realization is not so impressive and the manoeuvres not so memorable. I would have appreciated a more ambitious idea, for example re-positioning a larger number of pieces. This problem could be more lucky if sent elsewhere, but I suggest to the Author to try to expand the idea.
- **Ivan Bryukhanov (S#10 – b3/a5)**. A pleasant miniature, but the induction system is known. The final manoeuvres add some interest, but not enough to mark the composition.
- **Wilfried Neef (S#11 – h8/a1)**. The matrix and the idea are not particularly original. Despite the pleasant solution, it leaves a rather strong impression of "well known".
- **Sergey Smotrov (S#11 – d4/f3)**. Somewhat interesting, but not fully convincing strategic and artistic core. In this case I can state that is purely a matter of taste.
- **Alexander Fica & Jiri Jelinek (S#10 – c1/d5)**. Authors provide these comments: 2/3 Valladao task (castling is missing), anti-Phénix: 5.d8=Q+, 10.- SxQb3, Umnov: 5.d7-d8=Q, Ne5-d7, delayed Umnov: a) 1.- a5xb4, 6.Qd8-a5b) 2.c2-c4, 3.- c3-c2 c) 3.d6-d7, 8. – Kd5-d6 delayed „follow my leader“: 1.b2-b4, 8. Na4-b2. For other judges these could be remarkable thematic elements, but to me it appears just a bunch of themes mixed together without a leitmotiv. The mate position is fun: this is maybe the most appreciable feature.
- **Jozef Holubec (S#15 twin – a1/b6)**. A remarkable exercise of technique, but no more than an exercise, in my view. Passive Black play (heavy pieces captured without even moving) and insufficient differentiation between twins (practically the same checkmate) are significant drawbacks that surpass the coherence of the double Bishop/Knight return on the same square.
- **Viktor Yuzyuk (S#10 – h1/a7)**. Although some manoeuvres are remarkable, the feeling is too mechanical. The strategy should be improved with some more interesting motifs.

Problems excluded or re-ranked after the publication of the provisional award because of previously unknown anticipations:

- **RE-RANKING: Michael Herzberg** (S#11 – d1-e3). **2nd Prize**. Following the publication of the provisional award, several claims of anticipation were submitted, supported by extensive documentation including numerous potential predecessors, the most significant listed below. After a thorough examination of the available material, I have concluded that the present problem belongs to a well-established thematic and constructional line.
- **A)** Mark Erenburg - P1360294 - FIDE Olympic Tourney n. 42 (Baku)
- **B)** Sven-Hendrik Loßin - Die Schwalbe n. 275 10/2015
- **C)** Anatoly Steepochkin - P1387966 - Shakhmatnaya Kompozitsiya 152 05/2020
- **D)** Gennady Koziura - P1413965 – 20th Ukrainian Team Championship (2021)
- **E)** Ivan Soroka - P1376659 – Gaudium n. 213 (2019)
- **F)** Roland Baier – P1359477 - Die Schwalbe 291, p. 490 (06/2018)

The central mating mechanism is already clearly recognizable in earlier works, while the characteristic systematic manoeuvring of the white Rook has likewise been explored in several predecessors. Taken together, these similarities substantially reduce the originality of the main thematic core and no longer justify the distinction originally awarded. Nevertheless, I do not consider complete exclusion to be the most appropriate solution. Unlike its closest predecessors, the present problem incorporates a substantial secondary thematic variation with an independent strategic development leading to a different mating finale. This additional content does not fundamentally alter the main thematic matrix, which remains largely anticipated, but it does enrich the artistic structure of the work and demonstrates a genuine creative contribution beyond a simple repetition of known material. For this reason, I consider a substantial downgrade to be a more balanced solution than exclusion.

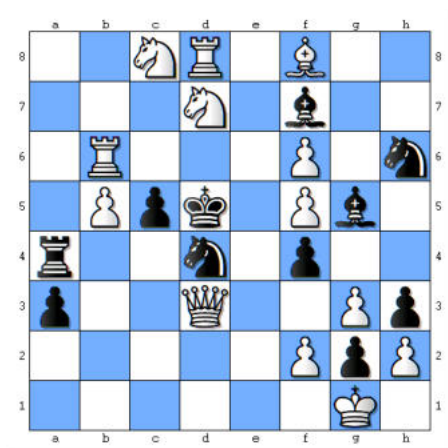
I therefore re-assign this problem to the lowest rank of the regular Commendations.

Consequently, the 3rd Prize assigned to Steven Dowd & Mark Pevsner is raised at the rank of 2nd Prize.

The problem by Andrii Sergienko & Ivan Soroka, originally awarded as 1st Honorable Mention, is raised at the rank of 3rd Prize.

The following regular Honorable Mentions are all raised of 1 position.

Below follows the final ranking:



Michael Herzberg

S#12 (C+ - Brute Force tested)

>>> 1st Prize <<<

An extraordinarily fascinating construction in which Black appears to enjoy remarkable freedom, yet every defensive choice ultimately leads to the same unavoidable fate.

The play begins with a striking sequence of sacrifices that gradually strip away White's material while preserving the hidden mating mechanism. Elements of logic appear: it is important to free the f6 square. Particularly memorable is the repeated oscillation of the black King between d5 and e5, a curious motif that creates the impression of activity and escape while in reality guiding Black deeper into the composer's net.

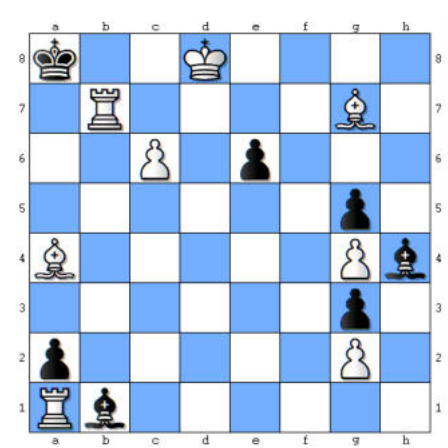
The strategic heart of the problem lies in the paradoxical relationship between freedom and inevitability. Black's pieces seem unconstrained, and yet all roads converge towards the elegant finale 12. Qf3+ Qxf3#. The final mate appears almost predetermined long before it becomes visible.

A highly original work whose artistic strength comes not from forceful restriction, but from the illusion of unrestricted movement. In this sense it is perfectly in harmony with the spirit of the tourney: bending the rules to their limits while never violating their internal logic.

*Try: 1.Nxc5+ Ke5 2.Nd7+? Kd5 3. Rc6
(4. Qf3+ Sxf3#) 3. ...Bh5 4. g4 Bxg4 5. Nf6+?? Not possible.*

**Solution: 1. Nxc5+! Ke5 2. Bd6+! Kxf6
(2. ... Kd5 3. Bxf4+/Bc7+/Bb8+ Kxc5 4. Qc3+ Rc4 5. Bd6+ Kd5 6. Qf3+ Nxf3#)**

**3. Be5+ Kxe5 4. Nd7+ Kd5 5. Rc6 Bh5 6. g4 Bxg4 7. Nf6+ Ke5 8. Nxg4+ Nxg4
9. Rd5+ (9. Re8+?) Kxd5 10. Nb6+ Ke5 11. Nd7+ Kd5 12. Qf3+ Qxf3#**



Steven Dowd & Mark Pevsner

S#11 (C+ - Brute Force tested)

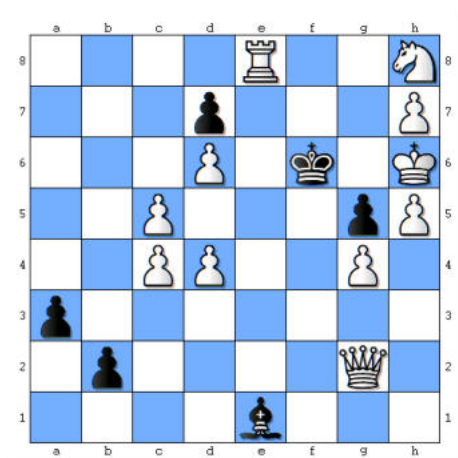
>> 2nd Prize <<

A majestic synthesis of two variations that both culminate in a double-Bishop mate, like two snipers perfectly coordinated. Also, there is significant differentiation in the solution (even through underpromotion) and in the mating position, in which the direct control of the black King is switched with two self-blocks. An exercise of mastery.

Solution: 1. **Bc2!**

1. ... Bxc2 2. Rxa2+ Bc4 3. Bd4! e5 4. Be3 e4 5. Rb6! Ka7 6. c7 Ka8 7. c8=B! Ka7 8. Rb4! Ka8 9. Bb7+ Kb8 10. Bxe4+! Bb5 11. Bxg5 **Bxg5#**

1... e5 2. Bxe5 Bxc2 3. Rxa2+ Ba4 4. Rc7! Kb8 5. Rg7! Ka8 6. Rg6! Ka7 7. c7 Kb7 (or Ka8) 8. c8=Q+! Ka7 9. Bb8+ Ka8 10. Bc7+ Ka7 11. Rxc7 **Bxc7#**



Andrii Sergienko & Ivan Soroka

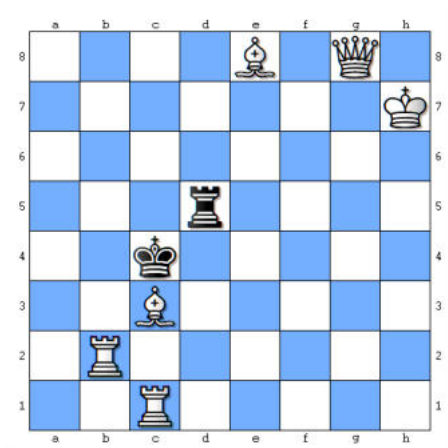
S#12 (C+ - Brute Force tested)

> 3rd Prize <

The artistic appeal of this selfmate lies in the beautifully coordinated movement of three different pieces. Throughout the solution, the black Bishop performs a systematic zigzag journey across the diagonal, while the white queen follows an equally organized path and the rook provides the rhythmic sequence of forcing checks. Rather than relying on tactical surprises, the problem derives its beauty from the harmonious choreography of these interrelated manoeuvres.

The final selfmate appears as the inevitable culmination of the preceding geometric construction, giving the whole play remarkable unity. Although the mechanism is highly systematic and therefore somewhat predictable once understood, the clarity and elegance of the coordinated piece movement leave a lasting artistic impression.

Solution: 1. **Qf1+** Bf2 2. Rf8+ Ke6 3. Qe2+ Be3 4. Re8+ Kf6 5. Qf3+ Bf4 6. Rf8+ Ke6 7. Qe4+ Be5 8. Qg6+ Bf6 9. Qe8+ Be7 10. Rf5! Threatening 11.Re5+ Kf6 12.Qf8+ **Bxf8#**



Marcin Banaszek

S#10 series-twin (C+ - Brute Force tested)

Special Prize

I directly cite the commentary of the Author.
"Continued twins. White's distinctly varied play forces Black to mate the white king in different ways in each of sixt twin positions, which change successively in relation to the previous position. Black's Rook gives seven model mates. In twin b), there are two variations

after White's second move, in which the mate positions form a chameleon echo. The mate position from twin b2) is repeated twice more, in twins a) and c), after a completely different course of play. In twins c), d) and e), we see a double change of continuation of the play until mate, after the same first move by Black. The mate positions in d) and e) create an echo in a mirrored reflection along the diagonal a8-h1. In the last twin the key is the same as in (c), but the continued play is completely different and just as attractive as all the others."

Now the judge is speaking. And what can he say else?

This entry is one of the most interesting and artistically valid in the whole tourney.

I will make copy-paste of the images provided by the Author for better comprehension of the problem.

a) diagram b)=a) Rb2>b7 c)=b) Be8>e4 d)=c) Kh7>h1
 e)=d) Rb7>b6 f)=e) Rb6>a5

Solutions:

a) 1.Bf6+ Kd3 2.Qg3+ Ke4 3.Bg6+ Rf5 4.Re2+ Kd5 5.Qb3+ Kd6 6.Be7+ Kd7
 7.Qa4+ Rb5 8.Bf5+ Ke8 9.Bg4! Kf7 10.Bh5+ R:h5#
 b) 1.Bh5! Kd3 2.Qg3+ Kc4 3.Bf7! Kc5 4.Be1+ Kd4 5.Bf2+ Ke4 6.Re1+ Kf5
 7.Be6+ Kf6 8.Qf4+ Rf5 9.Kh6! R:f4 10.Bh4+ R:h4#
 2. ... Ke4 3.Re1+ Kf5 4.Bg4+ Kg5 5.Bf6+ K:f6 6.Qf4+ Rf5
 7.Rf7+ K:f7 8.Qc7+ Kf6/8 9.Qd8+ Kf7 10.Bh5+ R:h5#
 c) 1.Qe6! Kc5 2.Qb6+ Kc4 3.Qb3+ Kc5 4.Bf6+ Kd6 5.Rb6+ Kd7 6.Qa4+ Rb5
 7.Bf3! Ke8 8.Rc7! Kf8 9.Rc8+ Kf7 10.Bh5+ R:h5#
 d) 1.Bf5! Kc5 2.Qc8+ Kd6 3.Qb8+ Kc6 4.Rb6+ Kc5 5.Be1+ Kd4 6.Rb4+ Ke3
 7.Qg3+ Ke2 8.Re4+ Kf1 9.Qd3+ R:d3 10.Bh3+ R:h3#
 e) 1.Bh7! Kc5 2.Ba5+ Kd4 3.Qg1+ Ke5 4.Re1+ Kf4 5.Re4+ Kf3 6.Qg4+ Kf2
 7.Qe2+ Kg3 8.Be1+ Kh3 9.Bf5+ R:f5 10.Qf1+ R:f1#
 f) 1.Qe6! Kb3 2.Bf6! Kb4 3.Qb6+ Rb5 4.Rb1+ Kc4 5.Ra4+ Rb4 6.Qa5! R:a4
 7.Bd5+ Kd3 8.Qc3+ Ke2 9.Bf3+ Kf2 10.Bh4+ R:h4#

On next page, follow the mating positions. Although it is a series-twin position, a setting that gives much liberty to the composer, the more I watch to the position, and the more I convince myself that this is an astonishing task.

Special distinction is almost unavoidable.

Positions of mates:



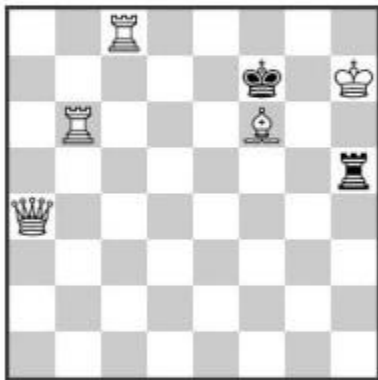
model mate in a)



model mate in b1)



model mate in b2)



model mate in c)



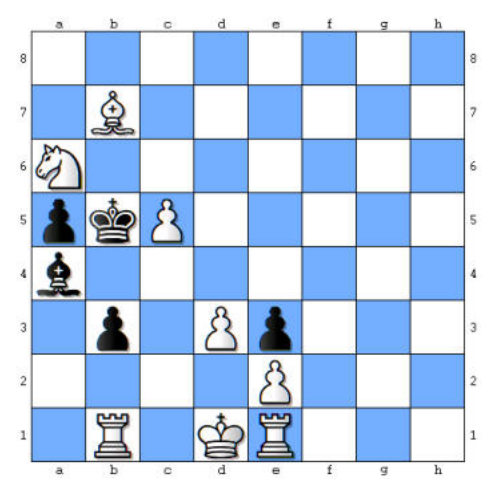
model mate in d)



model mate in e)



model mate in f)



Udo Degener

S#10 (C+ - Brute Force tested)

1st Honorable Mention

A finely constructed selfmate based on accurate timing and harmonious cooperation among all White forces.

The initial set play already reveals the final mating picture after 1...b2#, while the actual solution develops this idea through a carefully prepared sequence of manoeuvres. Particularly pleasing is the way White gradually guides the black King along a predetermined route while simultaneously arranging the necessary placement of the remaining pieces. A sense of inevitability.

The Rook, Bishop and Knight all contribute actively to the execution of the plan, each performing a distinct strategic function. The play never feels redundant: every move serves a precise purpose, and several tempos must be judged with exact accuracy in order to reach the desired position.

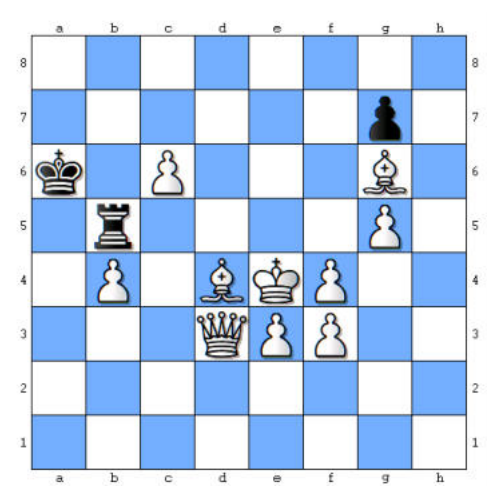
The final phase, beginning with 5. Bc6, is especially convincing. White's pieces coordinate elegantly while Black's a-pawn becomes an essential component of the mating mechanism. The return to the mating picture already shown in the set play provides a satisfying sense of unity and completion.

Although the thematic content is relatively straightforward, the economy of the construction and the precise synchronization of the various components make this an enjoyable and technically accomplished selfmate.

Set play: **1...b2#**

Solution: **1. Kc1!** b2+ 2. Rxb2+ Bb3 3. Rxb3+ Ka4 4. Rb2 Ka3 5. Bc6 a4 6. Rb1 Ka2 7. Nb4+ Ka3 8. Nc2+ Ka2 9. Rd1 a3 10. Rb2+ **axb2#**

[Echo with Set Play]



Anatoly Steepochkin

S#12 (C+ - Brute Force tested) – Two solutions

2nd Honorable Mention

This two-solution selfmate presents rich and ambitious play, with a clearly defined thematic nucleus. Both solutions revolve around White forcing Black to deliver mate with ...gxf5#, but the paths diverge into two parallel structures: one based on 1. Be8!, the other on 1. Bf7!. The dual introduction is intentional and structurally

coordinated, and the composer succeeds in giving both lines coherence and narrative flow. The main artistic weight, however, rests unmistakably on the 1. Be8! solution. This line displays two well-designed echo variations (after 4...Ka6 and 4...Kc6), each leading to a distinct yet thematically parallel finale. The manoeuvres around b5, c7, and the subsequent Rook interferences are handled with precision, and the overall geometry has both clarity and elegance. In particular, the White play involving c7–c8=Q, the Rook chases, and the Bishop switchback on d7 demonstrates careful construction: a well-polished thematic core that could easily stand alone.

The second solution, beginning with 1.Bf7!, is thematically related but notably less compelling. While it mirrors several motifs of the main line, its structure is looser, with fewer refined points and a more mechanical sequence. There is connection, but less artistic density; the manoeuvres feel more instrumental than expressive. In a single-solution setting, this would be considered a secondary branch rather than a co-equal thematic line. For this reason, the problem leaves a mixed impression: the composer's idea is strong, the main solution is prize-worthy. However, the presence of a second solution — though intentional — diminishes the aesthetic purity and dilutes the thematic impact of the stronger line. A one-solution version centred on 1.Be8! would likely achieve significantly higher value, and could have contended for a higher distinction.

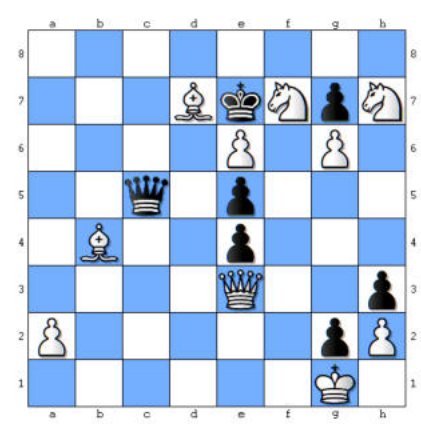
Solution:

1.Bf5? g6 2. ...?? gxf5#

A) 1.Be8! g6 2. Qa3+ Ra5 3. b5+! Kxb5 4. c7+ Kc4 5. c8=Q+ Rc5 6. Qe6+ Rd5 7. Qc5+ Kb3 8. Bd7! Ka2 9. Qc1 Kb3 10. Qb2+ Kc4 11. Qa6+ Rb5 12. Bf5 gxf5#

other variation 4...Ka6 5. Qd6+ Kb7 6. Qc6+ Kc8 7. Qd7+ Kb7 8. c8=R+! Ka6 9. Rc6+ Kb5 10. Rb6+ Kc4 11. Bf7+ Rd5 12.Qf5 gxf5#

B) 1.Bf7! G6 2. Qa3+ Ra5 3. bxa5 Kb5 4.a6 Kxc6 5.Be8+ Kc7 6. a7 K~any 7. a8=Q Kc7 8. Q3a5+ Kd6 9. Q8d8+ Ke6 10. Bb5 Kf7 11. Bd3 Ke6 12.Qf5+ gxf5#



Viktor Yuzyuk

S#10 (C+ - Brute Force tested) – Two solutions

3rd Honorable Mention

Again a two-solution selfmate. In this case, the evaluation is simpler. A double Excelsior (one complete, one "slower") with differentiation of promotion on the same square is an artistic point that surpasses the slightly annoying sensation that this

mechanism could be condensed in two variations of the same problem, without using the two solutions. But honestly I don't know if it's even possible.

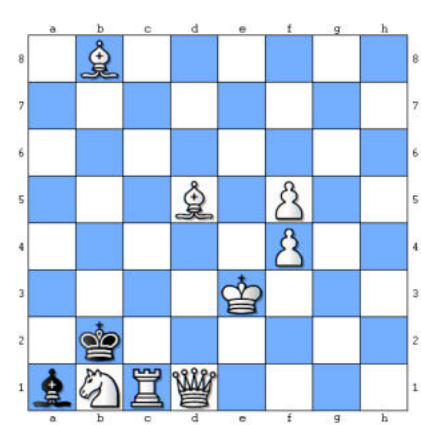
What I can say for sure it's that this remarkable geometrical construction deserves an appropriate recognition.

Solutions (with comments of the Author):

First solution: 1. **a3!** Qd6 2. a4 Qc5 3. a5 Qd6 4. a6 Qc5 5. a7 Qd6 6. a8=N Qc5 7. Nb6 Qd6 8. Bc5 Qxc5 9. Nc8+ Qxc8 10. Qc5+ **Qxc5#**

Second solution: 1. **a4!** Qd6 2. a5 Qc5 3. a6 Qd6 4. a7 Qc5 5. a8=Q Qd6 6. Qb8 Qc5 7. Qxe5 Qd6 8. Bc5+ Qxc5 9. Qg5+ Qxg5 10. Qc5+ **Qxc5#**

The problem features Excelsior, Slow Excelsior, promotion of one and the same pawn into two different pieces, and a switchback to the exact same square (vertically — 9...Qc5xc8 10...Qc8xc5#, diagonally (where "pendulum" might be more accurate) — 1...Qc5-d6 2...Qd6-c5..., and horizontally — 9...Qc5xg5 10...Qg5xc5#).



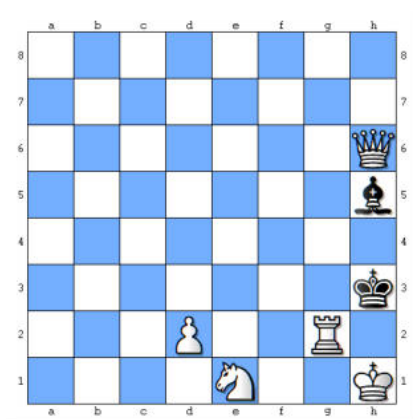
Daniel Novomesky

S#11 (C+ - Brute Force tested)

4th Honorable Mention

A light construction with a beautiful starting position and also an enjoyable solution, which builds the checkmate step by step with natural flow. Maybe it's not the most original or astonishing selfmate in the world, but the quality is not in discussion.

Solution: 1.**Rc4!** Ka2 2. Rc6+ Kb2 3. Nc3 Ka3 4. Qa4+ Kb2 5. Kd4 Kc1 6. Qd1+ Kb2 7. Re6 Ka3 8. Bd6+ Kb2 9. Ke5 Kxc3 10. Qe2 Bb2 11. Qd3+ **Kxd3#**



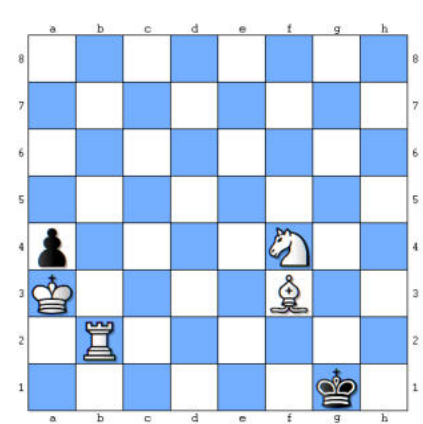
Bèla Majoros

S#12 (C+ - Brute Force tested)

1st Special Honorable Mention

Few pieces, much to admire. The simple and charming harmony of this miniature immediately mesmerized me at first sight.

Solution: 1. **d3!** [*Festina Lente*] Kh4 2. d4 Kh3 3. d5 Kh4 4. d6 Kh3 5. d7 Kh4 6. d8=Q+ Kh3 7. Qd1 Kh4 8. Nf3+ Kh3 9. Ng1+ Kh4 10. Rh2+ Kg3 11. Qf3+ Bxf3 12. Rg2+ [*Switchback*] **Bxg2#**



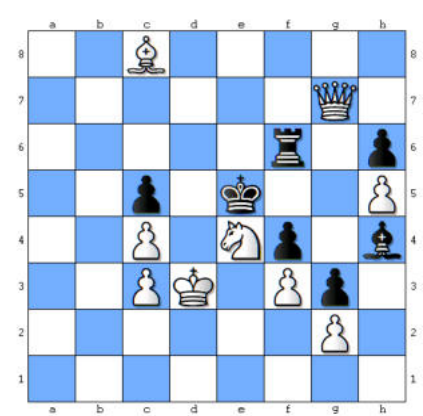
Bèla Majoros

S#10 (C+ - Brute Force tested)

2nd Special Honorable Mention

Another exquisite miniature with perfect pieces coordination and the always attractive King's march, and also a model mate, always appreciated as the icing on the cake. But what impresses me the most is the remarkable realization with such small material.

Solution: 1. **Bd5!** Kf1 2. Rg2 Ke1 3. Bc4 Kd1 4. Re2 Kc1 5. Ba2 Kc1 6. Kb2 a3+ 7. Ka1 Kc1 8. Nd5 Kd1 9. Nc3+ Kc1 10. Rb2 **axb2#**



Daniel Novomesky

S#11 (C+ - Brute Force tested)

After Avournin Jacques - S#12 [Cooked]

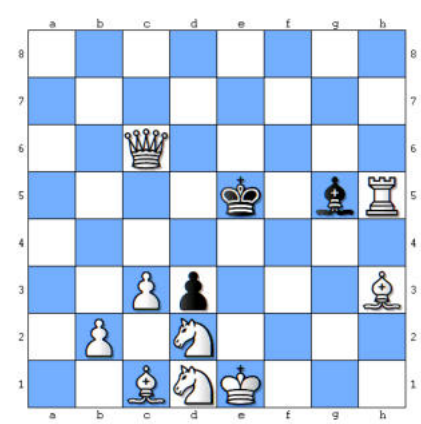
Europa Echecs, 1965 – 2nd HM.

3rd Special Honorable Mention

A correction of the cooked original version. A long King march is always fascinating, and in this specific case, I found this a lovely problem.

And thanks to the Author who spent time to find a working correction for this amusing construction.

Solution: 1. **Kc2!** Bg5 2. Kb3 Bh4 3. Ka4 Bg5 4. Kb5 Bh4 5. Kxc5 Bg5 6. Nd6 Bh4 7. Kc6 Bg5 8. Kc7 Bh4 9. Ne8 Bg5 10. Kd8 Bh4 Qc7+ **Rd6#**



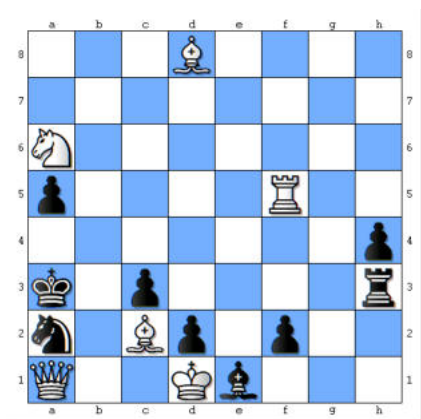
Mark Pevsner & Steven Dowd

S#10 (C+ - Brute Force tested)

1st Commendation

Highly precise and complex manoeuvres highlight this problem. There is a good alternance between checking and quiet moves, the overall impression is of solid construction and clarity.

Solution: 1. **b4!** Kf4 2. Qf3+ Ke5 3. Qf8! Kd5 4. b5! Ke5 5. Qf7! Kd6 6. Ne4+ Ke5 7. Bf4+ Kxe4 8. Qf5+ Kf3 9. Bh2+! Bf4 10. Bf1 **d2#**



Ivan Soroka

S#11 (C+ - Brute Force tested)

2nd Commendation

White constructs the final mating mechanism through a sequence of quiet logical manoeuvres. The repeated oscillation of the black Rook is systematically exploited while White builds the decisive battery, each phase preparing the next one with remarkable economy. The

absence of white pawns further emphasizes the purity of the construction. Although the mechanism becomes somewhat predictable after the initial stages, the study remains an elegant example of logical selfmate strategy.

Solution: 1. **Rc5!** [threatening 2. Rxc3+ Rxc3 3. Qxc3+ Nxc3#]

1. ... Rh1 2. Rb5! [threatening 3. Qxc3+ Nxc3#]

2. ... Rh3 3. Rb3+

3. ... Ka4 4. Rb8+

5. ... Ka3 5. Rc8! [threatening 6. Rxc3+ Rxc3 7. Qc3+ Nxc3#]

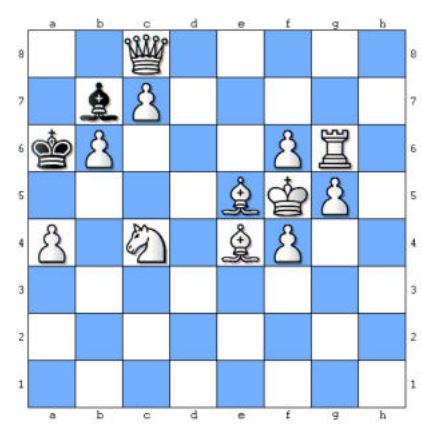
5. ... Rh1 6. Bc7 [threatening 7. Qxc3+ Nxc3#]

6. ... Rh3 7. Bf4!

7. ... Rh1 8. Rg8!

8. ... Rh3 9. Rg3! [threatening 10. Rxc3+ Rxc3 11. Qxc3+ Nxc3#]

9. ... Rh1 10. Be3! [threatening an inevitable mate with 11. Qxc3+ Nxc3#]



Anatoly Steepochkin

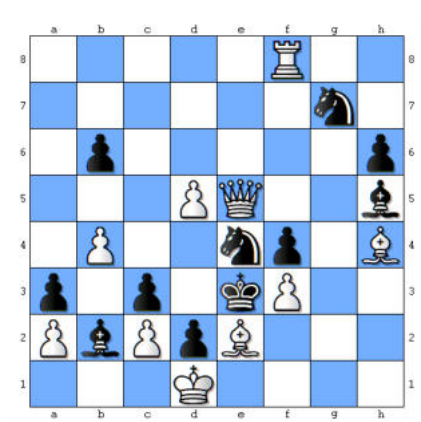
S#13 (C+ - Brute Force tested)

3rd Commendation

A nice Black Minimal – Fata Morgana with a surprising sacrifice followed by Phoenix effect in the introduction. Not easy solution.

Set Play: **1...Bxc8#**

Solution: **1. Qa8+!** Bxa8 2. b7 Bxb7 3. c8=Q [Phenix] Ka7 4. Qc5+ Ka6 5. f7+ Bc6 6. Qa5+ Kb7 7. Nd6+ Kb8 8. f8=Q+ Be8 9. Nf7+ Kc8 10. Qc3+ Kd7 11. Bf6! Bxf7 12. Qfc8+ Kd6 13. Qe6+ **Bxe6#**



Michael Herzberg

S#11 (C+ - Brute Force tested)

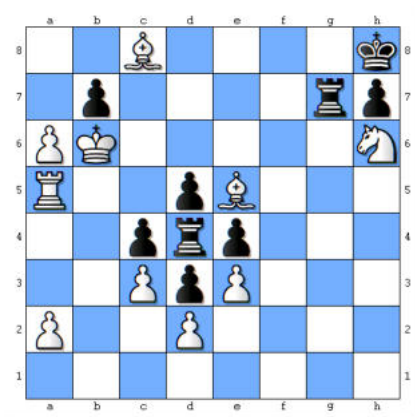
4th Commendation

As explained in the corresponding re-ranking section, this study has been downgraded and placed at the bottom of the regular Commendations, due to partial anticipation. Nevertheless, I would like to add a few remarks concerning its artistic content, beyond the reasons for its new placement.

The main attraction of this problem lies in the elegant systematic manoeuvring of the white Rook, which gradually prepares the final mating construction through a remarkably harmonious sequence of repositioning moves. The play develops with excellent rhythm and gives the impression of a carefully choreographed strategic dance, where every Rook move contributes to the final geometry. Particularly interesting is the secondary thematic variation, which departs from the principal line and reaches a different mating conclusion through an independent strategic development. This additional content broadens the artistic scope of the problem and shows that the Author did not merely reproduce an established mechanism, but attempted to enrich it with further thematic material.

While the principal matrix belongs to a well-explored family of constructions and is therefore substantially anticipated, the supplementary thematic content preserves sufficient artistic individuality to justify the study's inclusion in the award. Its contribution is admittedly limited, yet it remains a genuine contribution rather than no contribution at all.

Solution: **1. Rc8!** Bc1 2. Ra8 Bb2 3. Rxa3 Bc1 4. Ra7 Bb2 5. Rc7 Ba3 6. Rxg7 Bb2 (6. .. Bxb4 7. a3 Be8 8. axb4 Bb5 9. Bxb5 Kxf3 10. Be2+ Ke3 11. Qxc3+ Nxc3#) 7. Rc7 Ba3 8. Rf7 Bb2 9. Rf5 Bc1 10. Qd4+ Kxd4 11. Bf2+ Nxf2#



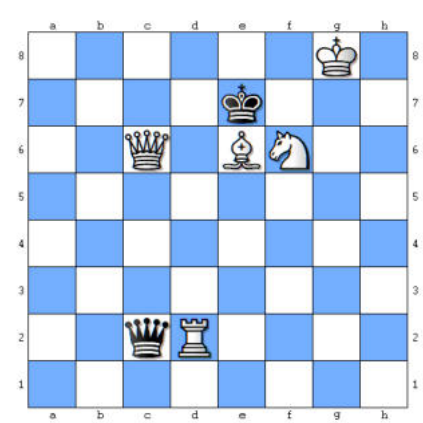
Jose A. Garzon

S#10 (C+ - Brute Force tested)

Special Commendation

A nice humoristic problem with some known themes. I let the Author speak: "*The solution has 4 steps: 1. Move the white King through the seventh rank 2. Open "the sarcophagus" to free the black Rook and move it to the eighth rank 3. Occupy "the empty tomb" with the white Bishop 4. Rooks duel with several Pelle moves.*"

Solution: **1. Rc5!** Bxa6 2. Bb7 a5 3. Ka7 a4 4. Ka8 a3 5. Bxd5! Rxd5 6. Rc8+ Rd8 7. Bd4! Re8 8. Rd8 Rf8 9. Rd8 Rg8 10. Rf8 **Rxf8#**



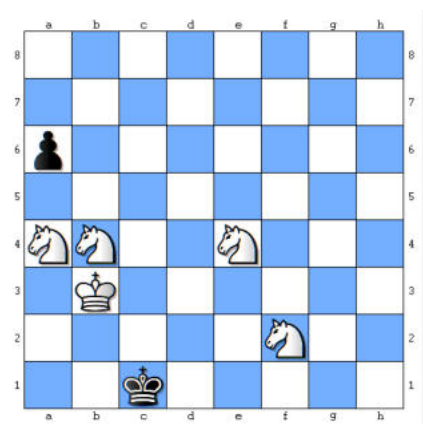
Jozef Holubec

S#22 (C+ - Brute Force tested)

Special Commendation

An energetic and highly demanding miniature. Just only having found this position, with a black Queen alone on the board and no cooks or duals, deserves a special reward. And it also represents a challenge even for the better solver on this strange and colourful planet.

Solution: **1. Nd5+!** Kd8 2. Qd6+ Ke8 3. Bd7+ Kd8 4. Bf5+ Ke8 5. Qg6+ Kd8 6. Qg5+ Ke8 7. Nf6+ Ke7 8. Nh5+ Ke8 9. Qe3+ Qe4 10. Bg6+ Ke7 11. Qc5+ Ke6 12. Rd6+ Ke7 13. Rd5+ Ke6 14. Ng7+ Kf6 15. Qf8+ Kxg6 16. Qf7+ Kh6 17. Qf6+ Qg6 18. Qh4+ Qh5 19. Nf5+ Kg6 20. Ne7+ Kh6 21. Qf6+ Qg6+ 22. Qg7+ **Qxg7#**



Mirko Degenkolbe

S#10 (C+ - Brute Force tested)

Special Commendation

What is this? A miniature with four white Knights and a lone black pawn? **Marvellous!** An entire cavalry army that must bend the knee to a simple reserve soldier. The Knights leap up and forward, making switchbacks, and when the danger is imminent, they constrict the reluctant black King to checkmate.

Solution: **1. Ka2!** a5 2. Nbd3+ Kc2 3. Nab2 a4 4. Nb4+ [*Switchback!*] Kc1 5. Ka1! a3 6. Na2+ Kc2 7. Ng4! Kb3 8. Nd2+ Kc2 9. Nb1 Kb3 10. Ne3 **axb2#**

Editorial note (final version)

Following the claim period, some commentaries (especially in Section A) have been slightly expanded or clarified in order to explain more explicitly the artistic reasoning behind a few borderline evaluations.

In section B, graphics of the diagrams and parts of the introduction have been updated.

These editorial improvements do not affect the final ranking, which remains unchanged, except for where explicitly stated in the apposite sections.