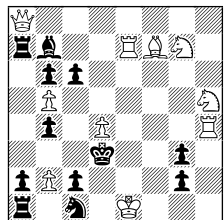


## StrateGems 2020 Selfmates Award

By Miodrag Mladenović

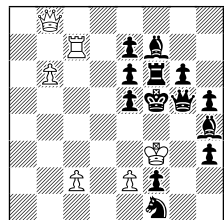
In 2020, 41 problems, were published. C11870 was excluded, since it was previously published in another magazine. The competition was successful in quantitative terms, but the quality was below average.

1<sup>st</sup> Prize  
Alexandr Kuzovkov



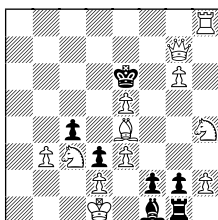
s#5v. (10+12)

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize  
Marcin Banaszek



s#19 C- (6+13)

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize  
Petko A. Petkov



s#6v. (12+7)

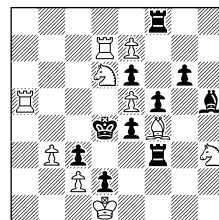
**1<sup>st</sup> Prize - (Alexandr Kuzovkov - S0801)** Amazing problem with two beautiful tries. In the thematic tries black King escapes through the free flights b5 & f3. However, White has an amazing plan on how to control b5 & f3. After the wonderful key that gives two flights there are two defenses by black King where white knight will take control over the b5 in one variation and over the f3 in the other variation. The foreplan will work now. One of the best selfmates I have seen recently. Two completely synchronized variations in excellent construction. **Solution:** Thematic tries: 1.Bc4+? Kxc4! 2.Qg8+? Kxb5!; 1.Re3+? Kxe3! 2.Qe8+? Kf3!; **1.Se6!** (2.Sc5+ bxc5 3.Sf4+ Kxd4 4.Se2+ Kd3 5.Sxc1+ Rxc1#), 1...Ke3 2.Sg5+ Kd3 3.Re3+ Kxe3 4.Qe8+ Kd3 5.Qe2+ Sxe2#, 1...Kc4 2.Sc7+ Kd3 3.Bc4+ Kxc4 4.Qg8+ Kd3 5.Qb3+ Sxb3#.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Prize - (Marcin Banaszek - S0796)** Great zig-zag maneuvers of the white Queen and Rook with logical motives. To achieve the goal White has to promote "c" Pawn to Knight. Although zig-zag play is not new in longer selfmates this is one of the best. **Solution:** **1.Ra7!** (2.Qxe5+ Kxe5#), 1...Bg3 2.Ra5 Bh4 3.Qe8 Bg3 4.Qb5 Bh4 5.Qb1 Bg3 6.Qa1 Bh4 7.c3 Bg3 8.c4 Bh4 9.Qa4 Bg3 10.Qb5 Bh4 11.Qe8 Bg3 12.Qb8 Bh4 13.c5 Bg3 14.c6 Bh4 15.c7 Bg3 16.c8S Bh4 17.Sd6+ exd6 18.Rxe5+ dxe5 19.Qxe5+ Kxe5#.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Prize - (Petko A. Petkov - S0805)** Two nice tries. Change of variations between tries and actual play. In the actual play two synchronized variations with very nice play by white. Two variations with white Q/B Indian theme. **Solution:** Thematic tries: 1.Bb7? (zz), 1...Rh1[a] 2.Qf6+ Kd7 3.Bc8+ Kc7 4.Sb5+ Kb8 5.Bh3+ Kb7 6.Bxg2+ Bxg2[A]#, 1...cxb3[b]!; 1.Rh6? (zz), 1...cxb3[b] 2.Qf7+ Kxe5 3.g7 ~ 4.Sg6+ Kd6 5.Sf4+ Kc5(Ke5) 6.Sxd3+ Bxd3[B]#, 1...Rh1[a]!; **1.Rh7!** (zz), 1...Rh1[a] 2.Qd7+ Kxe5 3.Qd4+ Ke6 4.Bd5+ Kd6 5.Bxg2+ Ke6 6.Bh3+ Bxh3[C]#, 1...cxb3[b] 2.Qf7+ Kxe5 3.Qf4+ Ke6 4.Bf5+ Kf6 5.Bxd3+ Ke6 6.Bc4+ Bxc4[D]#.

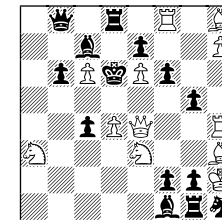
**1<sup>st</sup> Honorable Mention - (Andrey Selivanov - S0808)** Black rook cross on the mating moves in the threat and three defenses. White R/S battery is playing in the threat and all variations. Excellent construction. Although the black rook cross on the mating move in a S#3 has been done several times before, this is a new matrix with a duel between white Sd6 and black Rf3. Nice play in all variations. **Solution:** 1.Bh6? g5!; **1.Bg5!** (2.Sxe4+ Kxe4 3.Sf2+ Rxf2#), 1...Rd8 2.Sc4+ Rxd7 3.Be3+ Rxe3#, 1...e3 2.Sxf5+ Ke4 3.Sg3+ Rxc3#, 1...f4 2.Sf7+ Ke3 3.Bxf4+ Rxf4#.

1<sup>st</sup> Honorable Mention  
Andrey Selivanov



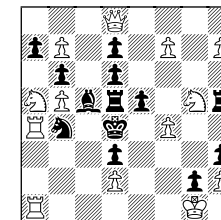
s#3 (10+10)

2<sup>nd</sup> Honorable Mention  
Zoran Gavrilovski



s#4 (12+14)

3<sup>rd</sup> Honorable Mention  
Zoran Gavrilovski

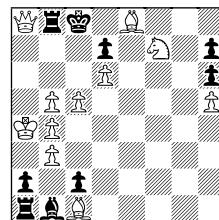


s#3v. (13+13)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Honorable Mention - (Zoran Gavrilovski - S0820)** White has to activate the black B/K battery to achieve the task. The only way to do this is to sacrifice three times multiple white pieces. The white Queen is sacrificed in all three lines (threat + 2 variations). In the thematic variations the last two white sacrificial moves are at the same time "Umnov" moves. Nice problem. **Solution:** **1.Rh5!** (2.Sexc4+ Bxc4 3.Sb5+ Bxb5 4.Qd5+ Kxd5#), 1...g4 2.Rd5+ Kxc6+ 3.Rd6+ Kxd6 4.Qc6+ Kxc6#, 1...f5 2.Be5+ Kxe6 3.Bd6+ Kxd6 4.Qe6+ Kxe6#.

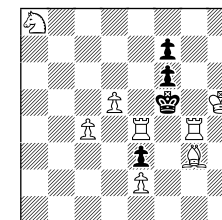
**3<sup>rd</sup> Honorable Mention - (Zoran Gavrilovski - S0799)** Two nice tries become White's second moves in the variations in the actual play. In the solution there is the black King's cross on the mating move. Also nice quiet threat. **Solution:** 1.Re1[B]? (2.Se6+ dxe6 3.Re4+ Kxe4#) bxa5[x]!; 1.Rc1[A]? (2.Sc6+ dxc6 3.Rc4+ Kxc4#) exf4!; **1.Qf6!** (2.Qf5 ~ 3.Qxd3+ Kxd3#; 2...e5~ 3.Qxd5+ Kxd5#), 1...Rxc5 2.Re1[A] ~ 3.Re4+ Kxe4#, 1...bxa5[x] 2.Rc1[B] ~ 3.Rc4+ Kxc4#.

1<sup>st</sup> Commendation  
Aleksey Oganessian



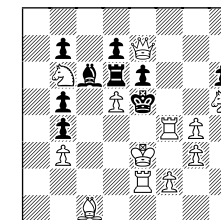
s#5\* b) Pc5→h6 (11+9)

2<sup>nd</sup> Commendation  
Kostas Prentos  
& Ioannis Kalkavouras



s#15 C- (8+4)

3<sup>rd</sup> Commendation  
Gennady Koziura  
& Valery Kopyl



s#4 Tries (12+9)

**1<sup>st</sup> Commendation - (Aleksey Oganessian - S0821)** Unusual problem with two-phase Fata-Morgana theme. In a), there are echo mates where white King and three blocking white Pawns are shifted one line up. In b), there is a completely different solution with an unusual sequence of white moves to lose a tempo. **Solution:** a) 1... Rxa8#; **1.c6!** dxc6 2.b6 c5 3.b5 c4 4.b4 c3 5.Ka5! Rxa8#; b) 1...Rxa8#; **1.Se5!** Kd8 2.Bf7 Rc8/Kc8 3.Sd3 Rb8/Kd8 4.Bg5+! Kc8 5.Sc1 Rxa8#.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Commendation - (Kostas Prentos & Ioannis Kalkavouras - S0794)** Multiple creations of white batteries where white Bishop and white Rook are a few times the front pieces and a few times the rear battery pieces (Zabunov theme). Unusual play of white Rooks in the first few moves. **Solution:** **1.Ref4+!** Ke5 2.Rd4+ Kf5 3.Rgf4+ Ke5 4.Rh4+ Kf5 5.Rdf4+ Ke5 6.Rfg4+ Kf5 7.Bf4 Ke4 8.Bb8+! Kf5 9.Sc7 Ke5 10.Se6+ Kf5 11.Sf4 Ke4 12.Sd3+ Kf5 13.Bf4 Ke4 14.Bh6+ Kf5 15.Rg6 fxc6#.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Commendation - (Gennady Koziura & Valery Kopyl - S0790)** Nice tries and interesting play in two thematic variations. Both variations end up with double-check mates. Solution: 1.Rf6/Rd4? (zz), 1...Rxd5 2.Kf3+ Kxd4 3.Bb2+ Kd3 4.Qh7+ Rf5#, 1...Bxd5!; 1.Rf7? (zz), 1...Bxd5 2.Qg5+ hxg5 3.f4+ gxf4+ 4.Kd3+ Be4#, 1...Rxd5!; **1.Rf8!** (zz), 1...Bxd5 2.Qg5+ hxg5 3.f4+ gxf4+ 4.Kd3+ Be4#, 1...Rxd5 2.Kf3+ Kd4 3.Bb2+ Kd3 4.Qh7+ Rf5#.

*We thank Miodrag for substituting for the original judge. The award stays open for 3 months. Comments should be sent to Petko A. Petkov.*

## StrateGems 2020 h#2 Award

By Valery Gurov

A few words about some problems that did not make it into the award:

**H2454 (Janevski)** Six solutions, but there is too much disharmony to be considered organized!

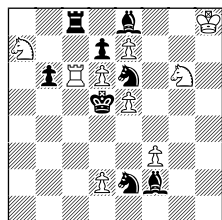
**H2457 (Kopyl)** Unfortunately, the cycle of white moves is lacking.

**H2501 (Vasyuchko)** A problem with extraneous white material when it's not well justified. Of course, the interference on a single distant square is spectacular, but with linear pieces, interference in two solutions was shown without unnecessary pieces. Perhaps another judge would have seen the problem differently.

**H2502 (Colaneri)** I suggest that the author publish the problem in a different form, with more thematic content and fewer pieces: **8/5B1p/3P1P1k/2bKP3/1Q1Pp3/2P1Pr2/8/8**

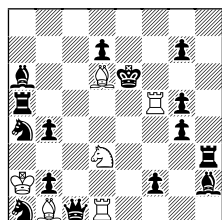
**H2478 (Ložek)** The author used the scheme of the problem... repeating only 2/3 of its content. In one pair, Black's play is slightly different, but this is not enough for distinction. Also, this can be done without a pinned static white queen: **8/Bp3N1K/4b3/P1Pn4/1pPkP1R1/3p2P1/2n5/2r5**

1<sup>st</sup> Prize  
Mario Parrinello



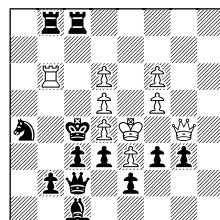
h#2 2 solutions (9+8)  
b) Sa7→b3

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize  
Vitaly Medintsev



h#2 4 solutions (6+15)

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize  
Mark Basisty, Andrey Frolkin  
& Sergey I. Tkachenko



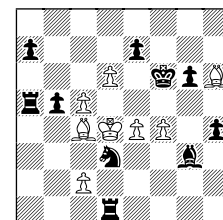
h#2 6 solutions (9+12)

**1<sup>st</sup> Prize - (Mario Parrinello - H2477)** Two pairs of solutions with homogeneous tactics are united by the Albino theme. If the black thematic knight was also sacrificed in the second pair, it would have been ideal. This problem still seems to me the best in the tournament. Solution: a) 1.Sc3 dxc3 2.Bd4 c4#; 1.Be3 dxc3 2.S2d4 e4#; b) 1.Bh4 d4 2.Bxe7 Sxe7#; 1.Bc5 d3 2.Bxd6 Rxd6#.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Prize - (Vitaly Medintsev - H2504)** Two pairs of solutions with rich tactics: opening and closing of lines (both white and black), clearing the square, double hideaway at B1/B2 in the first pair. A new interpretation of the rather well-known placement of white pieces. The implementation is slightly lacking the ideal: the hideaways are different - black either sacrifices a piece or not. Solution: 1.g3 Rd2 2.g4 Sf4#; 1.Rc5 Bc2 2.Sb6 Sxc5#; 1.Rxd3 Bf8 2.Rg3 Rd6#; 1.Bxd3 Rf8 2.Bb5 Bf5#.

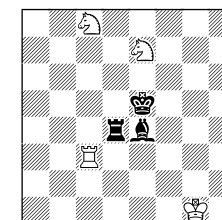
**3<sup>rd</sup> Prize - (Mark Basisty, Andrey Frolkin & Sergey I. Tkachenko - H2505)** Three pairs of solutions with change of functions by White and sacrifices of black pieces. For such a complex idea, the construction can be considered normal. The play is inventive and it's great that there are no twins. The authors even managed to make B2 moves in odd solutions into hideaways, though with different motivations: sacrifice, line opening, removal of control. Unusual problem. (It seems to be the last one for the untimely departed Mark Basisty.) Solution: 1.Rc6 dxc6 2.Rg8 Qxg8[A]#; 1.Rc5[a] Qg8[A] 2.Rxd5 Qxd5#; 1.Sc5+ dxc5 2.Rxc5[a] Ke5[B]#; 1.Bxe3 Ke5[B] 2.Bxd4+ Qxd4#; 1.Qb3[b] Qxf3 2.d2 Qxe2[C]#; 1.f2 Qxe2[C] 2.Qb3[b] Qxd3#.

Sp. Prize for "new viewing"  
Ladislav Salai Jr.  
& Michal Dragoun



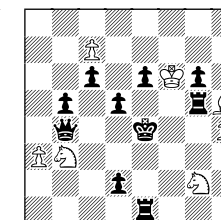
h#2 3 solutions (8+10)

Sp. Prize for miniature  
Kivanç Çefle



h#2 (4+3)  
b/c/d) Sc8→d2/a6/g8

1<sup>st</sup> Honorable Mention  
Michal Dragoun



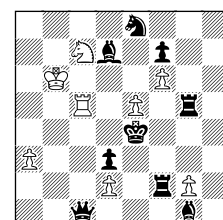
h#2 4 solutions (7+10)

**Special Prize for "new viewing" - (Ladislav Salai Jr. & Michal Dragoun - H2480)** In each solution B1 and W1 have the same motif in relation to the future mate. There are antiduals and the scheme itself is original. Diverse motifs show the experimental nature of the concept of the problem, but is it possible that the future of helpmate is in such original ideas?! Solution: 1.Be1 (Bf2+?) cxd3 2.e5+ fxe5#; 1.b4 (bxc4?) c6 2.Rg5 fxg5#; 1.Sxf4+ (Bxf4?) Ke3 2.Ke5 Bg7#.

**Special Prize for miniature - (Kivanç Çefle - H2497)** Beautiful miniature aristocrat with perfect twins. Black play in each solution is harmonious, which allows us to speak of a unified complex. Solution: a) 1.Bd5 Sg6+ 2.Ke4 Sd6#, b) 1.Rd5 Sb1 2.Kd4 Sc6#, c) 1.Rd6 Sc6+ 2.Kd5 Sc7#, d) 1.Bf5 Sg6+ 2.Ke4 Sf6#.

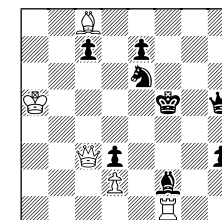
**1<sup>st</sup> Honorable Mention - (Michal Dragoun - H2456)** Mixed AUW in an interesting implementation, but the thematic pawns play only in pairs, creating a somewhat artificial feeling. The problem matrix, as often is the case with Michal, is original. Solution: 1.Rg3 c8Q 2.Rd3 Qxe6#; 1.Qc4 c8S 2.Qd3 Sd6#; 1.d1B hxg5 2.Bf3 Bxg6#; 1.d1R axb4 2.Rd4 Sc5#.

2<sup>nd</sup> Honorable Mention  
Abdelaziz Onkoud



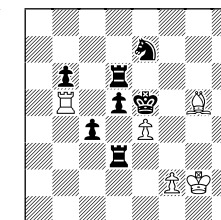
h#2 4 solutions (8+9)

3<sup>rd</sup> Honorable Mention  
Fadil Abdurahmanović



h#2 2 solutions (5+8)

4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Honorable Mention  
Živko Janevski



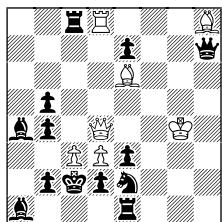
h#2 3 solutions (5+7)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Honorable Mention - (Abdelaziz Onkoud - H2525)** Two pairs of solutions with a double change of functions of the white pieces. The complex looks original. It's regrettable that the scheme did not allow the author to make all four mates model. Solution: 1.Kd4 Rb5 2.Kc4 Rb4#; 1.Kf5 Sb5 2.Ke6 Sd4#; 1.Rf4 Sxe8 2.Bd4 Sd6#; 1.Rxe5 Rxc1 2.Bf5 Rc4#.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Honorable Mention - (Fadil Abdurahmanović - H2475)** Nice tactical "cocktail" with good form and pleasant help-play. Opening the lines, unpinning black and pinning/unpinning of the white queen. Solution: 1.Kf4+ Qc5 2.Sg5 Qe3#; 1.Kg4+ Qe5 2.Bc5 Qf4#.

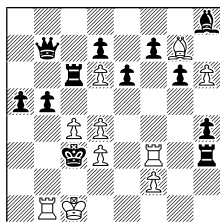
**4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Honorable Mention - (Živko Janevski - H2474)** The fourth solution asks for itself with the mate on f4, and then there would be complete harmony. The first two solutions are very nice and the third complements them. Solution: 1.Kxe4 f4 2.d4 Re5#; 1.Kd4 Bf4 2.dxe4 Be5#; 1.Rd7 exd5 2.Kd6 Bf4#.

4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Honorable Mention  
Yuri Gorbatenko



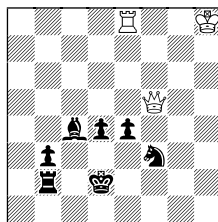
h#2 2 solutions (7+13)

1<sup>st</sup> Commendation  
János Csák



h#2 b) Pf7→f4 (10+12)  
c) bPc6, d) Pa5→f4,  
e/f) Qb7→h2/h5

2<sup>nd</sup> Commendation  
Daniel Novomesky



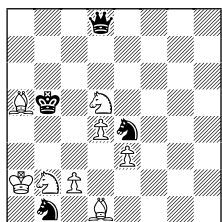
h#2 4 solutions (3+7)

**4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Honorable Mention - (Yuri Gorbatenko - H2503)** Elegant solutions with captures of white and black linear pieces and a beautiful play of the white queen moving away from the black king. The position can be improved, for example, like this: **2rR3B/7q/1p6/N7/p2Q2K1/2PPp3/1nkpn3/b7.** Solution: 1.Qxh8 Qd7 2.Kxc3 Qxc8#; 1.Rxd8 Qg7 2.Kxd3 Qxh7#.

**1<sup>st</sup> Commendation - (János Csák - H2482)** Three pairs of interconnected solutions. Familiar ideas, but I did not find a complete anticipation. Very radical twins and non-identical play in pairs did not allow higher placement. Solution: a) 1.Rxc4 Rxb3 2.Qe4 dxe4#; b) 1.e5 Bxb8 2.e4 d5#; c) 1.bxc4 Rf5 2.cxd3 Rc5#; d) 1.Rxd6 Bf8 2.Rxd4 Bb4#; e) 1.Qxf2 Rxf2 2.Rxd3 Rc2#; f) 1.Qxh6+ Bxh6 2.Bxd4 Bd2#.

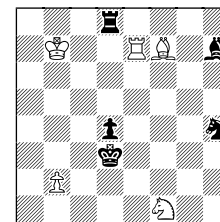
**2<sup>nd</sup> Commendation - (Daniel Novomesky - H2450)** The second pair of solutions is not entirely harmonious; mate Qe4 is expected. Solution: 1.Ke1 Rxe4 2.Sd2 Re1#; 1.Kd1 Qxe4 2.Rd2 Qb1#; 1.Kc3 Ra8 2.Kb4 Qa5#; 1.Ke3 Qg6 2.Kf4 Rxe4#.

3<sup>rd</sup> Commendation  
Shaul Shamir & Paz Einat



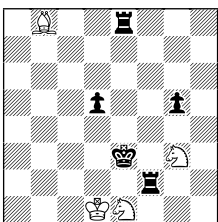
h#2 2 solutions (8+4)

4<sup>th</sup> Commendation  
Kabe Moen



h#2 2 solutions (5+5)

5<sup>th</sup> Commendation  
Christer Jonsson



h#2 2 solutions (4+5)

**3<sup>rd</sup> Commendation - (Shaul Shamir & Paz Einat - H2522)** Meredith with beautiful play and sacrifices of white pieces. The authors managed to successfully make use of the bishop and pawn battery in both solutions. Solution: 1.Qxa5+ Sa4 2.Kxa4 c4#; 1.Qxd5+ Sc4 2.Kxc4 Be2#.

**4<sup>th</sup> Commendation - (Kabe Moen - H2521)** Mixed Bristol. Simple and elegant (I did not find an anticipation). A version with a single black thematic piece suggests itself, for example: **8/8/4kp2/4b3/5n2/B7/2BR3K/2q5.** Solution: 1.Re8 Re2 2.Re4 Rd2#; 1.Bg8 Ba2 2.Bc4 Bb1#.

**5<sup>th</sup> Commendation - (Christer Jonsson - H2498)** Known motivations for white sacrifice with the Zilahi theme. But a very elegant implementation of the idea. Solution: 1.Re4 Bf4+ 2.gxf4 Sf5#, 1.Rf4 Se4 2.dxe4 Ba7#.

*We thank Valery for this award. The award stays open for 90 days. Please send comments to Abdelaziz Onkoud.*

## StrateGems 2021 Retros & Proof Games Award

by Paul Răican

Many thanks to Kostas Prentos who gave me the opportunity to judge this retro tournament. There were 37 problems published:

A) Proof Games: P0506, P0507, P0508, P0509, P0510, P0511, P0512, **P0513** (cooked), P0514, P0515, P0516, P0517, P0518, P0519, P0520, P0521, P0522, P0523, P0524, P0525=19  
B) Retractors: R0334, R0335, R0336, **R0337** (version in SG95), R0338, R0339, R0340, R0341, R0342, **R0344** (withdrawn), R0345, R0346, R0348, R0349, R0350, R0351, R0352=16  
C) Orthodox retros: **R0343** (version in SG96), R0347=2

PGs and Retractors were well represented; the trend regarding orthodox retros is downward.

I have a few comments about the problems not selected.

**R0336 (Thoma, SG93):** Anticipated by P1012046.

**R0342 (Thoma, SG94):** The h column full of Pawns is illegal in Anticirce.

**R0345 (Thoma, SG95):** The wBb8 is uneconomical. Without it, the stipulation could be -8 & #2 with forward checkmate in two moves: 1.Kxh1(+wKe1)+ Kb8 2.Ra8#

**P0514 (Prentos, SG95):** The idea (pin mate by a promoted Knight) could be achieved with a shorter play: 1.b4 Sc6 2.b5 Sd4 3.b6 Sxe2 4.bxc7 b6 5.Qxe2 Ba6 6.c8S Bb7 7.Sd6#

**P0515 (Prentos, SG95):** The mate with a promoted Knight was already classified by Baibikov (see the 2018 PG award in SG95) Special Comm. - (Paul Răican - P0448): 1.h4 e6 2.h5 Bd6 3.h6 Se7 4.hxg7 Rf8 5.g8S Bh2 & 1.Sf6#

**P0520 (Argirakopoulos, SG96):** The Black duelist condition is there only to eliminate alternative play.

Regarding the winners, I made two separate rankings: A) Proof games B) Other retros.

### A) Proof games