

FIDE World Cup 2010

Helpmates section award

PARTICIPANTS: № 1. Menachem Witztum (Israel); №2. Prof. Dr Rolf Wiehagen (Germany); № 3. Viktor Zaitsev (Belarus); № 4. Antonin Tribus (Ukraine); № 5. Mikhail Gershinsky (Ukraine); № 6. György Bakcsi (Hungary); № 7. Karol Mlynka (Slovakia); № 8. Kenan Velihanov (Azerbajdan); № 9. Andreas Strebkovs (Latvia); № 10. Micislovas Rimkus (Lithuania); № 11. Christer Jonsson (Sweden); № 12. Antanas Vilkauskas (Lithuania); № 13. Jurij Belokon (Ukraine); № 14. Janos Csák (Hungary); № 15. Walter Diaz (Argentina); №16. Vasily Thernich (Russia – many cooks); № 17. Zoltan Labai (Slovakia); №18. Fadil Abdurahmanovic (Bosnia & Hercegovina); №19. Abdelaziz Onkoud (Morocco) ; № 20. Pierre Tritten (France); № 21. Friedrich Hariuc (Germany); №22. Lkhundevin Togookhuu (Mongolia); № 23. Jan Kovalic (Slovakia); № 24. Jury Trepalin (Russia); № 25. Alexandr Maksimov (Russia) № 26. Zivko Janevski (Macedonia); № 27. Sergey Ryabov (Russia); № 28. Miodrag Radomirovic (Serbia); № 29. Alexey Gasparyan (Armenia) ; № 30. Victor Ravino (Belarus); № 31. Mario Parrinello (Italy); № 32. Vladimir Ryabcev (Russia); № 33. Borislav Gadjanski (Serbia); № 34. Henry Tanner (Finland); № 35. Giorgy Oblyashevsky (Ukraine); № 36. Alexandr Semenenko (Ukraine); № 37. Stefan Parzuch (Poland); № 38. Boris Shorokhov (Russia); № 39. Valery Semenenko (Ukraine); № 40 Waldemar Tura (Poland); № 41. Vladimir Kozhakin (Russia); № 42. Wilfried Neef (Germany); № 43. Stefan Sovik (Slovakia); №44. Valery Kopyl (Ukraine); № 45. Stanislav Vokal (Slovakia); № 46. Zlatko Mihajloski (Macedonia); № 47. Genadi Koziura (Ukraine); № 48. Marcel Tribovski (Germany); № 49. Anatoly Tithjushin (Ukraine); № 50. Vladimir Klipachov (Russia); № 51. Gennady Chumakov (Russia); № 52. Bela Majoros (Hungary); № 53. Viktor Zheltukhov (Russia); № 54. Vladislav Nefyodov (Russia); № 55. Miroslav Svitek (Czech Republic); № 56. Alexander Fica (Czech Republic); № 57. Borislav Atanasov (Bulgaria); № 58. Olexij Lysjanyi (Ukraine); № 59. Bosko Miloseski (Macedonia); № 60. Miihajilo Milanovic (Serbia); № 61. Milomir Babic (Serbia); № 62. Alexandr Nikolichev (Russia); № 63. Tseslav Yakubovski (Russia); № 64. Agshin Masimov (Azerbajdjan); № 65. Valerio Agostini (Italy); № 66. Ivan Antipin (Russia); № 67. Vitaly Medintsev (Russia); № 68. Marjan Kovacevic (Serbia); № 69. Hamlet Amirian (Armenia- cooks); № 70. Valery Plenkov (Ukraine); № 71. Mikola Chernyavskiy (Ukraine); № 72. Semion Shifrin (Israel); № 73. Georgi Hadzi-Vaskov (Macedonia); № 74. Radomir Nicitovic (Serbia); № 75. Stanislav Hudak (Slovakia - cook); № 76. Viktor Chepizhny (Russia); № 77. Valery Gurov (Russia); № 78. Ivan Bruchanov (Ukraine); № 79. Andreas Schönholzer (Switzerland); № 80. Samvel Pohosyan (Armenia – many cooks).

First, my best thanks to the FIDE for the invitation to judge this interesting new tourney. As an alternative to international competitions which take years to resolve, we have here a rapid format which is clearly a worthwhile experiment. However two easily remediable defects should be noted:

1/ The time allowed to composers (i.e. the time between the announcement and the closing date for entries) was inadequate if the highest standards are to be expected. I would suggest a period of at least 6 months, ideally rather more. Shorter periods simply encourage composers to enter problems which they have not had time to polish to perfection and/or to check thoroughly for anticipation.

2/ The requirement that all lengths of helpmate be judged in a single section is unreasonable. This question must be addressed in any future

tourneys.

As many recent judges have noted, really outstanding original helpmates are now rare. However there was a good number of quite strong entries, which (in combination with point 2 above) made the judging task difficult. It would be pointless to clutter this award with lists of anticipations to problems which the reader will not see, or of constructional improvements which less hurried composers might very well have discovered for themselves. Individual composers are welcome to contact me if they have queries about unplaced problems.

In view of the unusual format of the tourney, it is necessary to outline the judging method which I used. The 80 entries were of wildly variable standard, from the very good to the almost unimaginably bad. First I eliminated problems which for various reasons stood no chance of a distinction. Surprisingly that included unsoundness in a few cases, an inexcusable feature in the age of computer-testing. Unlike some judges, who are content with felicitous renderings of well-worn themes, for inclusion in an award I require above all a certain degree of originality, and when deciding whether to include a problem in an award, I hope to find evidence that the composer engaged in abstract thought before investigating concrete possibilities with the board and men. As for difficulty, I avoid rewarding it for its own sake but I would not underestimate its value in illuminating the logic or indeed the construction of a composition, and I am well aware that a judge who had not solved the problems would very likely have formed quite different impressions.

Next I divided the remaining problems into three categories:

1/ Those to which any judge might reasonably award the first place. This requires both originality and good construction; and in the present context I also determined, for reasons which are (I hope) obvious, to include at least one problem of each of the standard lengths: $n=2$, $n=3$ & $n>3$. These are the prizewinning problems, and a different judge might very well have awarded the first place to any one of them.

2/ Those which are prevented by some (not necessarily major) defect from belonging to the first category, but which nevertheless have both originality and thematic interest. These are the Honourable Mentions, and in a lesser tourney they might have won prizes.

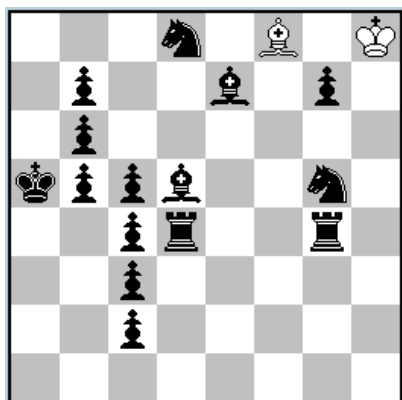
3/ Other very interesting problems, but with relatively lesser originality and/or with more significant defects. These might normally gain Commendations. Here there were several problems which seemed capable of significant improvement, perhaps even to prizewinning standard. It occurred to me that it would be quite hard on their composers, bound as they were by the requirement to work within a very short period of time, if they had to make do with Commendations for ideas which deserved to do better. Therefore I decided to omit such problems from the award, allowing those composers the chance to do some reworking and thus perhaps to obtain a better result elsewhere.

After the above preamble readers will appreciate that the choice of the winning problem is very much a matter of personal preference. Therefore my

best congratulations go to the composers of **all** the awardwinning problems, and I thank them for the entertainment provided. Although the orthodox helpmate is by no means fully exhausted, it is becoming increasingly difficult to produce good original problems in this genre, and so I commend them all for their artistic imagination, skill, application and knowledge.

Finally before the award itself, my best thanks to Geoff Foster, Zivko Janevski, Rolf Wiehagen and a couple of other friends who prefer to remain anonymous, for help with questions of anticipation and other matters. Especial thanks to Tourney Director Petko Petkov for his invaluable work in presenting the entries on anonymised diagrams in an ideal format. That the world's leading composer should consider it worthwhile to place this tourney ahead of his own creative work says much for the cause of friendly international rivalry in composition, and corroborates the interdependence between composers and their public. Gens una *s*imus!

1st Prize
Mario Parrinello (Italy)
Cup winner



h#6 (2+15)

**1.Bf6 Bxc5 2.Be5 Bf8 3.Bd6 Kxg7 4.Kb4 Kf6
 5.Be7+ Kxe7 6.Kc5 Kd7#.**

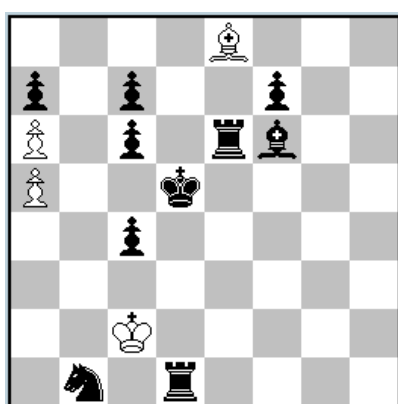
1st Prize – № 31. Mario Parrinello (Italy) - Cup winner

The composer may be disappointed to learn that I solved this problem rather quickly, but that was surely because in recent years there have been so many WB-minimal h#-moremovers with discovered mates that one is pre-conditioned to look for such a conclusion. That, and the fact that I am in general dubious about the value of single-line helpmates unless they show something quite remarkable, made me initially doubt whether this problem should be placed first. However, a comparative study of various approximate forerunners with capture-free round trips led me to value it more highly. Whereas in (for example) Abdurahmanovic & Ellinghoven *Schach-Aktiv* 1999 (P0582961 in the PDB) the composing task is eased by the fact that the black bishop's round trip must end in a squareblock, here we have the conceptually much subtler and more difficult notion that the bishop must return *in order to*

be captured. This idea is very much in keeping with my belief that the essence of the helpmate as a genre lies in the motivations for the moves, and I have come to the conclusion that it does indeed qualify as the “something quite remarkable” referred to above. Here its logic ensures fine interplay between Black and White, thus adding greater interest to the otherwise potentially boring king moves, for their timing is dependent on the bishop’s round trip.

Despite my initial reservations about single solution helpmates and the recent profusion of bishop-play moremovers in similar style, I found that the more I studied the leading problems in this tourney the better this one seemed. I took that as a sure sign of lasting quality and of a worthy winner.

2nd Prize
Viktor Chepizhny (Russia)



h#4 b) e8=>white R (4+10)

a) 1.c5 Bb5 2.Rd6 Bxc4+ 3.Kc6 Bb3 4.R1d5 Ba4#

1...Ba4? 2... Bb3 3... ?

b) 1.Kd6 Rb8 2.Kd7 Rb7 3.Kc8 Rxa7 4.Rd7 Ra8#

1...Ra8? 2... Rxa7 3... ?

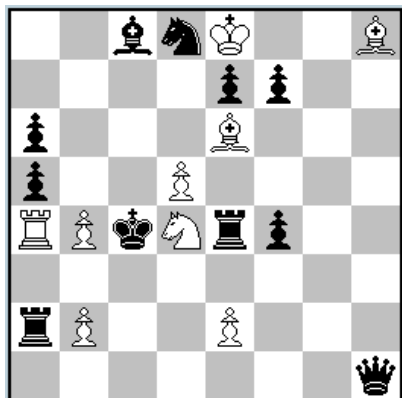
2nd Prize – № 76. Viktor Chepizhny (Russia)

A difficult concept in which the tries clarify the logic of the solutions in admirable fashion. It is certainly paradoxical that occupying the mating square, leaving it and then returning (a 3-move manoeuvre) fails, while a circuitous 4-move manoeuvre succeeds by quitting the mating line at a different point. It is also an attractive feature that both tries and solutions require the thematic white piece to cross the square on which the king is later mated. My impression is that this is perhaps the most original idea in the tourney.

As so often in tempo problems, the technical difficulties are considerable and not easily appreciated unless one tries to set the idea oneself. The construction is sound and the twinning is clearly the best way to present the idea, but an obvious defect of the theme is that it concentrates on the white play, so that what Black does is mechanical and relatively uninteresting. In my view original helpmate ideas are now so uncommon that we should not make too much of that criticism. Even so, it could have been

somewhat mitigated by reworking the idea in h#3½ form, thus removing the unthematic first moves and placing the thematic avoidance of the tries at the most prominent point in the solution. It was these considerations which ultimately led me to place this problem below the previous one, but its conceptual brilliance nevertheless makes it a memorable achievement. It was also very enjoyable to solve!

**3rd Prize
Vitaly Medintsev (Russia)**



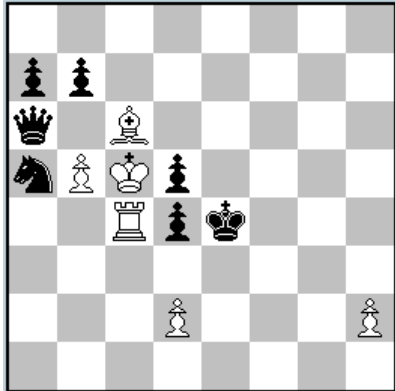
h#2 6 solutions (9+11)

- I. 1.Bb7 Bc8 2.Bxd5 Bxa6# II. 1.Rxb2 Ra2 2.Rxb4 Rc2#
 III. 1.Re5 Bf5 2.Rxd5 Bd3# IV. 1.Sc6 Ra3 2.Sxb4 Rc3#
 V. 1.axb4 Rxa6 2.Sc6 Rxc6# VI. 1.Rxe2 Bg4 2.Qxd5 Bxe2#

3rd Prize: № 67 - Vitaly Medintsev (Russia)

A fundamentally different kind of helpmate from the two preceding ones. The rear piece of a white battery moves around to give mate on a line at a right angle to the battery line. That is not a new idea; here the composer's achievement is to have believed (and then proved) that it is possible to show it six times in good economy, without twinning or any repetition of white moves, and indeed with only a single repeated black move. The technical skill is mainly tactical, so what I admire in this problem is its fine craftsmanship rather than any visionary artistry. In the h#2's present advanced stage of development it is natural for many of the better new works to be of this kind. This is clearly the best h#2 in the tourney.

**4th Prize
Janos Csák (Hungary)**



h#3 0.2;1.1;1.1 + 2.1;1.1;1.1 (6+7)

I. 1...Rc3 2.Sc4 Rf3 3.Se5 Bxd5# II.1...Bd7 2.Sc6 Bg4 3.Se5 Rxd4#.

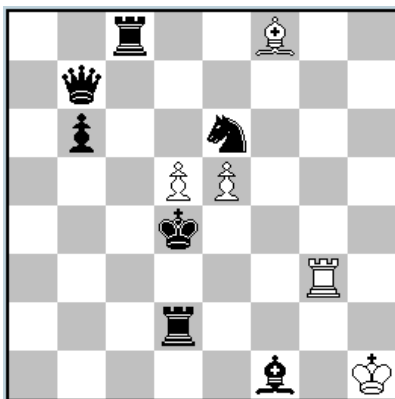
I. 1.Kf3 Kxd4 2.Qb6+ Kd3 3.Qf2 Bxd5#.

II. 1.Kf4 Kxd5 2.Qxb5+ Ke6 3.Qg5 Rxd4#.

4th Prize - №14 Janos Csák (Hungary)

This problem earns its prize as the best h#3 in the tourney. Its qualities are the excellent use of the material and the economical mastery of the difficult 0.2;1.1;1.1 + 2.1;1.1;1.1 form, rather than any profound concept or novel strategy. The set lines are neat, if unexciting, but the surprising activity of both kings in the well-matched solutions is very pleasing, and the added dimension of interest resulting from the contrast between the set and actual phases is refreshing. The repeated mating moves cannot be seen as a defect when the mates which they effect are so very different!

**1st Honourable Mention
Marian Kovacevic (Serbia)**



h#3½ 2 solutions (5+7)

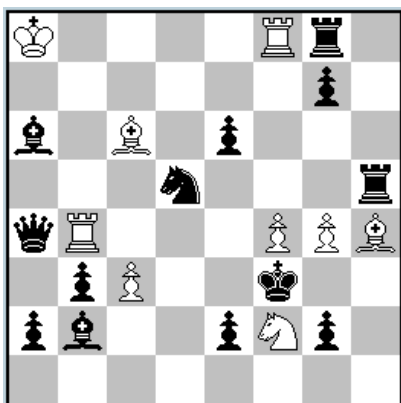
I. 1...Re3 2.Rcc2 Re1 3.Bc4 Bc5+ 4.Kd3 Re3#

II. 1...Bd6 2.Bb5 Bb8 3.Rc4 Rd3+ 4.Kc5 Bd6#

1st Honourable Mention - №68 - Marian Kovacevic (Serbia)

The idea which earns this problem its place can be seen in the sidesteps on the second white moves. In addition there are fine tries in 1...Rg1? and 1... Rg4+?, both leading to interference effects. If there had been similar tries to reach the bishop mate, that would certainly have been enough for a prize; as it is, the balanced use of e2 and c7 as points where interference must be avoided by White is some compensation. It is curious that the solutions here superficially resemble the tries in the 2nd Prize problem, and it is true that the black play here is better, and the problem length more appropriate... but this one is not a tempo-problem, and this white play is very much easier to show!

2nd Honourable Mention Miodrag Radomirovic (Serbia)



h#2 2 solutions (9+13)

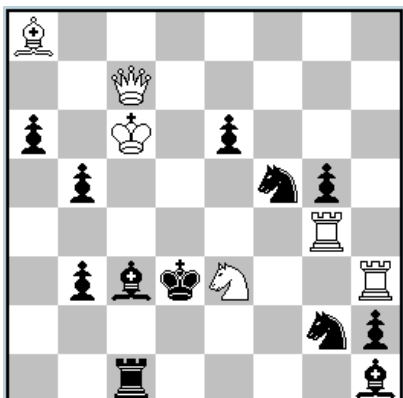
I. 1.Ba3 Rxb3 2.Qxf4 c4#

II. 1.Qa3 Re4 2.Sxf4 Re5#

2nd Honourable Mention: №28 - Miodrag Radomirovic (Serbia)

Hideaways at both B1 and B2, and on the same squares in each case, with the second moves being selfpins by capture, a feature which may possibly be novel in such a context. The construction is ingenious but far from elegant. The tactical details are uneven; although that is perhaps refreshing, it creates a sense of untidiness in an already heavy position. It seems to me that the composer has made very skilful use of the resources available in his scheme, but that in the process the artistic impression has suffered a little. Perhaps it is not possible to do better with such a theme?

**1st Commendation
Fadil Abdurahmanovic (BiH)**



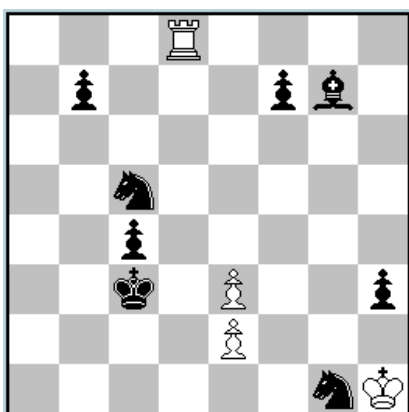
h#2 2 solutions (6+12)

- I. 1.Sf4+ Sg2+ 2.Ke4 Kc5#**
- II. 1.Bd4+ Sc2+ 2.Kc4 Kd7#**

1st Commendation: №18 - Fadil Abdurahmanovic (BiH)

Here we have very familiar motifs in a possibly original combination, but there is some unevenness of motivation in the white play, and it is perhaps a pity that in the second mate the square b3 is blocked as well as guarded. Nevertheless an enjoyable problem.

**2nd Commendation
Tseslav Jakubovski (Russia)**



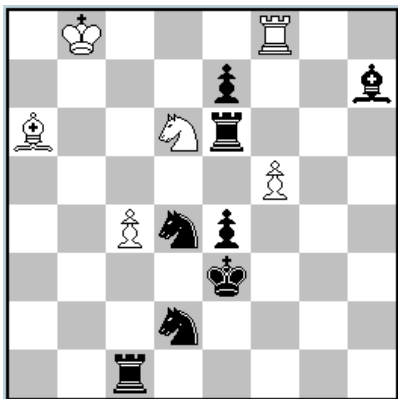
h#4 b) Pf7>f6 c) Kc3<>Sc5 (4+8)

- a) 1.Sd7 e4 2.Kd4 e5 3.Kd5 e4+ 4.Ke6 Re8#.**
- b) 1.Se4 Rd7 2.Sd6 e4 3.Kd4 e3+ 4.Ke5 Re7#**
- c) 1.f5 Rg8 2.Kd5 Rxc7 3.Ke4 Rg6 4.Sd5 Re6#.**

2nd Commendation: №63 - Tseslav Jakubovski (Russia)

The great defect of this triple-echo problem is its poor twinning, but the specific mating position is a hard one to work with. Since no anticipation was discovered, the ingenuity of the solutions, with relatively little repetition, deserves acknowledgement, even though this style of composition is not to everyone's taste.

3rd Commendation Christer Jonsson (Sweden)



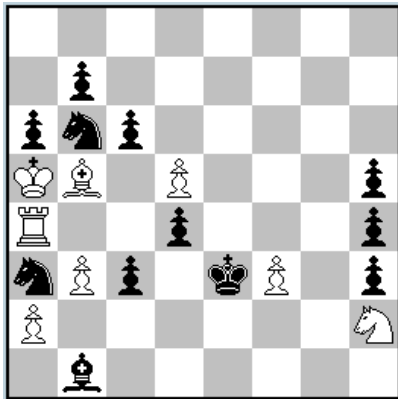
h#3 2 solutions (6+8)

- I. 1.Sxc4 fxe6 2.Sa3 Bf1 3.Sac2 Sc4# (1.Rxc4?)**
II. 1.Sxf5 c5 2.Sh4 Rf1 3.Sg6 Sf5# (1.Bxf5?)

3rd Commendation: №11 - Christer Jonsson (Sweden)

This is largely anticipated by T.Garai (*Vratnica-64* 2002 : Kb8 Rc8 Bh6 Se6 Pc5 Pd4 Pf4 // Kd3 Rd7 Rf2 Ba8 Sd1 Pd6, h#3 2 solutions. 1.dxc5 f5 2.cxd4 Rc1 3.Se2 Sc5# & 1.Rxf4 cxd6 2.Rxd4 Bc1 3.Be4 Sf4#), a rather feeble problem artificially extending a Brazil-motif scheme which is very well known in the h#2. The present problem offers a more convincing extension of the Brazil motif, in that after making the line-opening capture, the same piece must subsequently close the line pointing to the capture square – a genuine 3-move theme. That is a pleasing touch of artistry, but it is a relatively minor effect in an extremely familiar context, so that a higher award is out of the question. Rather than BBh7 & BPe7, I should have chosen a slightly freer position with BBh3 and BPg2, thus allowing it to be the black king which blocks the alternative knight route in both solutions.

**4th Commendation
Valery Gurov (Russia)**



h#3 b) Pd4>d3 (8+12)

a) 1.Sc2 Rc4 2.Kd3 Sf1 3.Sbxc4+ Bxc4#

b) 1.Sxd5 Bc4 2.Kd4 Sg4 3.Saxc4+ Rxc4#

4th Commendation: №77 - Valery Gurov (Russia)

The idea of this problem is to be found in the first white moves and the last black ones; it consists of a white Grimshaw followed by captures by clearing black pieces on the thematic square, an amusing and (I hope) original concept. Unfortunately the larger part of the play, and indeed the indispensable twinning, is all technical and colourless. As far as I can see there is no other way to make it work. What is more, there seems to be no substantive prospect of lightening the heavy and static position (60% pawns!), which incidentally makes the solutions very obvious. Ease of solution is not always a failing, but it must be counted as a regrettable feature in a theme featuring supposedly paradoxical captures.

To put this theme into perspective, a comparison may be made with the more natural idea of a white Grimshaw followed by captures *by the black king* on the thematic square. The composer of the present problem presumably avoided that because it has been shown before; however it does allow more intensive thematic play. For example further captures of White and white switchbacks can be added, as in my own P1071009 in the PDB. This comparison is made not in order to criticise this composer, who is to be congratulated on the originality of his idea, but rather to make it clear that this problem's theme is a relatively ungrateful and thematically unintensive one. For that reason I felt unable to award it a higher place.

**Stamford, May 2010
Judge: C.J.Feather**