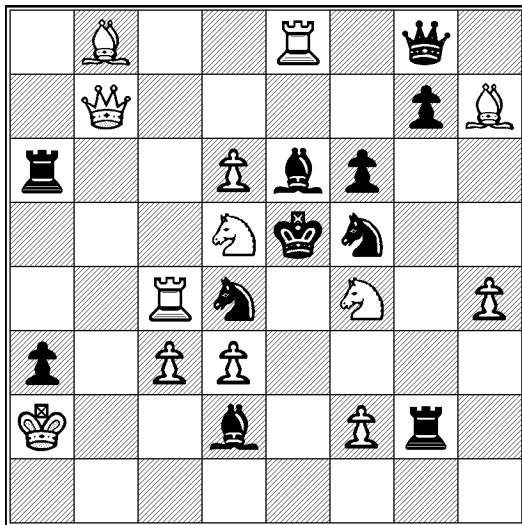


## Award of the 6<sup>th</sup> YCCC – Section A

Composers were invited to construct two-movers in which all 4 knights occupy squares in the bK field; knights of the same colour guarding each other and knights of the opposite colour not attacking one another. A search of databases indicated that few diagrams had such an arrangement, suggesting that entries stood every chance of being original but that their composition might be fraught with difficulty... and so it proved. I received 14 diagrams – this number was down on last year. However, those participating rose to the challenge and some remarkable ideas were demonstrated!

### 1<sup>st</sup> Place – No.12 – Ilija Serafimović



Set play: 1...Sc6 2.Re4, 1...Sg3 2.cxd4.

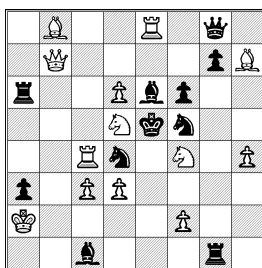
1.Se3? (>2.Qe4) 1...Sc6 2.Qb5 (2.Re4??),  
1...Sg3 2.Sg6 (1...Kxf4 2.Qe4) but 1...Rc6!

**1.Sb6!** (2.Qe4) 1...Sc6 2.Sd7 (2.Re4??),  
1...Sg3 2.d7 (1...Kxf4 2.Qe4)

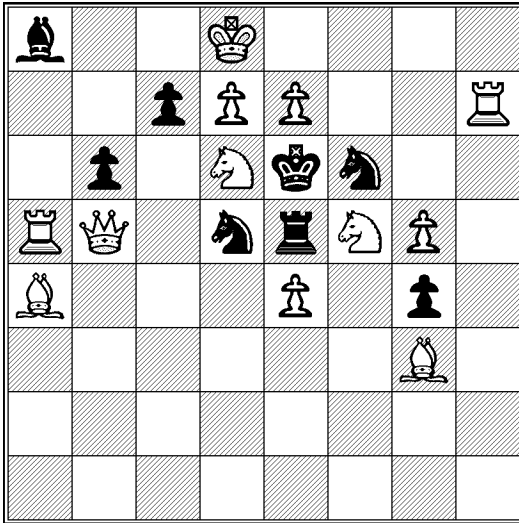
### #2

To receive a classical Zagoruiko (3x2 mate change) was an absolute delight! Moreover both try and key grant a flight to the bK. True, wPh4 is an indicator (though not wPf2) and this is the only blemish in an otherwise magnificent work. The success of the enterprise depends on the white half-pin line e6-a2, an inspired piece of invention. I understand that the composer has chosen to concentrate on black's two thematic defences and so has eschewed by-play. I am confident that the setting below was considered.

### 12 (v)



In the mate 1.Se3? Sg3 2.Sg6#, wSe3 holds f5. In the extra mate 1.Sb6! Re1 2.Sg6# bSf5 *blocks* f5. Thus 2.Sg6 becomes a genuinely transferred mate as 1...Re1 is not a valid defence in the try. In the context of the stipulation this gives an extra function for one of the knights. I am talking of nuances here but this is the setting I prefer. This entry is a clear winner and the author's technique is worthy of close study. A problem that would grace any tourney!

2<sup>nd</sup> Place – No.11 – Toshimasa Fujiwara

Set play: 1...Sc3 2.Qxe5, 1...Sxd7 2.Qxd7.

1.Qb4? (>2.Sg7/2.Sd4) 1...Rxf5 2.exf5, 1...Sxb4  
2.Rxe5 but 1...c5!

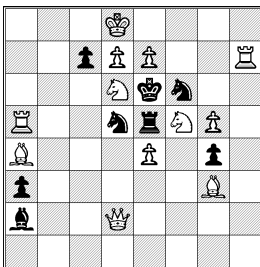
**1.Qb2!** (>2.Qxe5) 1...Rxe4 2.Sg7 (2.Sd4? Rxd4!),  
1...cxd6 2.Sd4 (2.Sg7? Kf7!), 1...Sc3 2.Rxe5 and  
1...Sxd7 2.Bxd7.

#2

Mate change features again here but the changes are concurrent, wRa5 and wBa4 duplicating the orthogonal/diagonal powers of the wQ. However, what sets this problem apart is the fine dual avoidance pair and it is entirely praiseworthy that these two mates are introduced as threats by the try. Three knights move in the course of the solution and the fourth, wSd6, guards f5/f7 *and* offers itself to capture with self-blocking!

This competition is designed to be a workshop so again I might suggest another direction. Seeing the wRa5 and wBa4 effectively eclipsed by the wQ, the solver might at once search for promising openings by the latter unit. Perhaps the try play could be expanded at the expense of losing those changes?

11 (v)



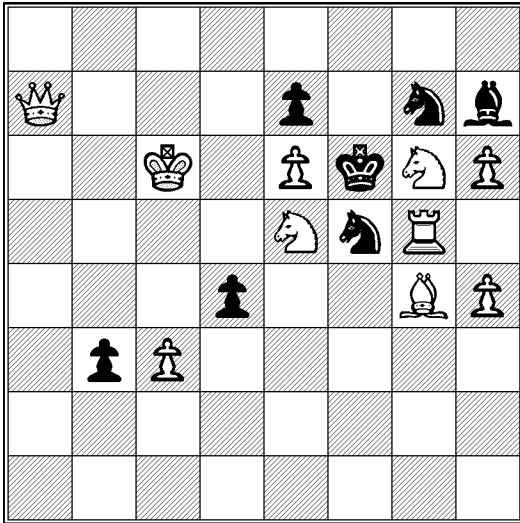
1.Ra6? (>2.Sg7/2.Sd4) 1...c6!

1.Qb4? (>2.Sg7/2.Sd4) 1...c5!

1.Qd4? (>2.Qxe5) 1...cxd6! (2.Sd4??)

1.Qc3! (>2.Qxe5)

The three tries are all defeated by moves of bPc7.

3<sup>rd</sup> Place – No.14 - Sergiienko Andrii

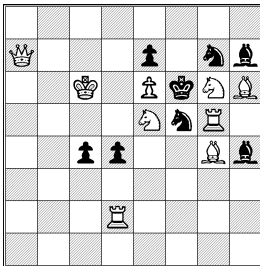
Set play: 1...Sxh4 2.Qxe7, 1...Sxe6 2.Rxf5 and (importantly) 1...Kxe6 2.Qxe7.

**1.Sf8!** (>2.Sed7) 1...Sxh4 2.Sxh7, 1...Sxe6 2.Sfd7 and 1...Kxe5 2.Qxd4.

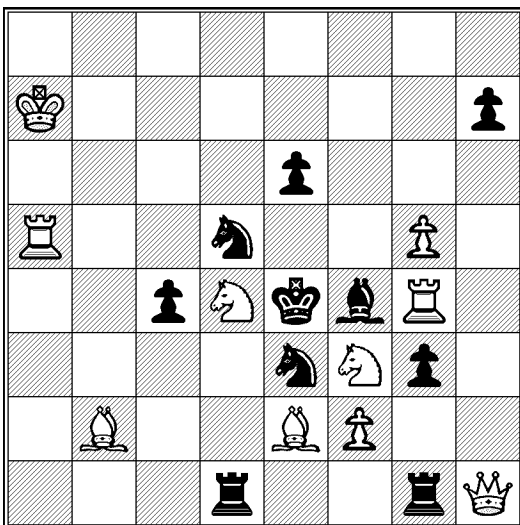
The key gives one flight and takes another, a so called “give and take” key, leading to good changed mates. bSf5 is pinned from different directions when the bK takes his flights. It is a little unfortunate that the only possible purpose of wPc3 is to support the wQ in the 2.Qxd4 mate. Perhaps a different supporting white unit might have an additional role to play?

#2

14 (v)



1.Re2? (>2.Sd7) promotes 1...Sxh6 2.Qxe7, 1...Sxe6 2.Rxf5 etc but 1...Bxg5!  
1.Sf8! (>2.Sed7) Kxe5 2.Qxd4.

4<sup>th</sup> Place – No.1 - Samir Alammadov

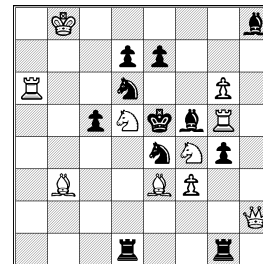
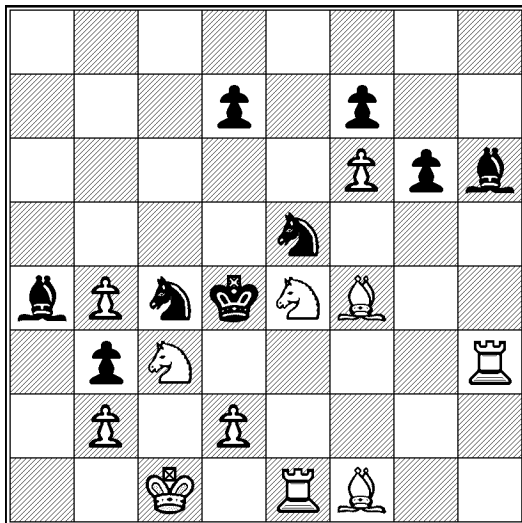
1.Sf5? (>2.Sd6) 1...e/Sxf5 2.Sd2, 1...Sd~  
2.Sd2/Re5, 1...Kxf5 2.Sh4 but 1...Sxg4! (2.Qh7?)  
unpins bBf4 with effect. **1.Sb5!** (>2.Sd6) 1...Sf5  
2.Sd2, 1...Sd~ 2.Sc3!, 1...Kxf5 2.Sh4  
and 1...Sxg4 2.Qh7.

As is the case with the first and third placed problems, *all* the knights move in the course of the solution. Try and key both give a flight and how I enjoyed 2.Sc3#!

#2

The try play dual is unfortunate and probably the composer refrained from adding bPd6 since this blocked a square in the extended bK field – 1.Sd2+! Ke5 2.Qe4# would be a cook. However, a simple remedy is to replace bPh7 with bBh7. This confers an advantage; the position can be moved up a rank and the cramp of the SE corner relieved.

1 (v)

5<sup>th</sup> Place – No.7 - Aleksei Abramenko

1.Se~? (&gt;2.Re4) but 1...Bc6!

**1.Sc5!** (>2.Re4) 1...Bc6 2.Sxb3, 1...Sxd2/Sd6

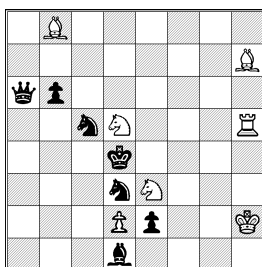
2.Bxe5, 1...Se3 2.dxe3, 1...d5 2.Se2 and

1...Sd3+ 2.Rxd3.

#2

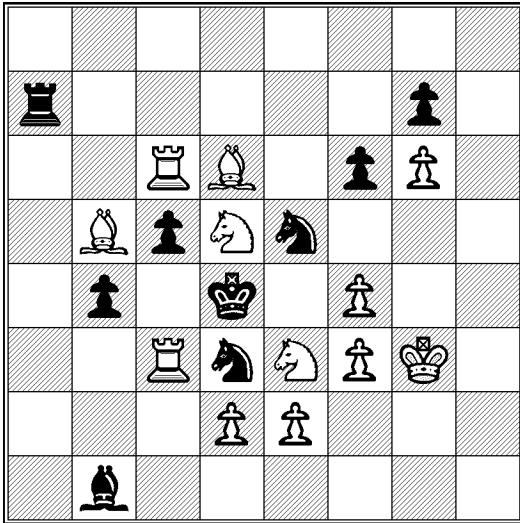
A random move by wSe4 introduces a threat that is refuted. An improved move by the wS provides for this awkward defence – this is “white correction”. I warmly approve of this concept! All 4 knights move and in order to achieve this it has proved necessary to employ a precise wK placement and an otherwise unnecessary wRh3 to provide mate after the checking defence. This has led to constructional difficulty and the mate 2.Se2# is now of lesser interest. Might I suggest the reconstruction below?

7 (v)



bSc5 is functionally important – it blocks c5. And bPc5 would not be good because 1...Sb4 2.Be5 and 2.Rh4 is then an unfortunate dual.

1.Sc3! Qc4 2.Sf5 – wSc3 uniquely guards e4.

6<sup>th</sup> Place – No.5 - Nikita Ushakov

#2

1.Bxe5+? fxe5 2.Rc4 but 1...Sxe5! 1.fxe5?  
(>2.Rc4) Sxe5 2.Bxc5 but 1...Sb2! (2.Bxc5? Kxe5!)  
Also 1...bxc3 2.dxc3 and 1...Ba2 2.Rxd3.

1.Rxd3+? Bxd3 2.Bxc5 but 1...Sxd3! 1.exd3?  
(>2.Bxc5) Sxd3 2.Rc4 but 1...Sd7! (2.Rc4? Kxd3!)

{1.Bxd3? (2.Bxc5) Sxd3/Sd7 2.Rc4 but 1...Ra5!}

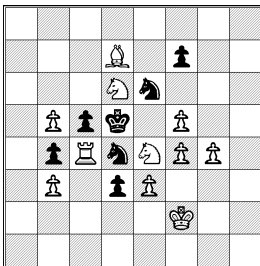
1.Bc4? (>2.Sf5) 1...Sd~ 2.Bxc5, 1...Sxc4 2.Rxc4,  
1...bxc3 2.dxc3 but 1...Sxf3! (2.Rc4??)

**1.Sb6!** (>2.Sf5) 1...Sd~ 2.Bxc5 and 1...Sxf3 2.Rc4.

The stipulation stated that knights of the same colour should guard each other. In relation to the black knights the author chose to *thematise* this condition and my congratulations are in order; the interpretation is original and I love it! The first two pairs of tries are perfectly matched and balanced – the “correcting” captures of the black knights by the white pawns share the same weakness. Convention frowns on tries that capture yet alone with check; such daring is entirely justified in this instance and deserves reward. However, this diagram was the most difficult to rank in the tourney!

Unfortunately the key is weak; wSd5 moves to the only square where it can avoid capture and wRc6 is reduced to the role of spectator. Yes, it does prevent the cook 1.Bc6 (also guarding d5) without the self-blocking error of 1.Bc4?, but a passive white officer in the actual play is a serious flaw. The diagram below shows an alternative means of developing the key phase.

5 (v)

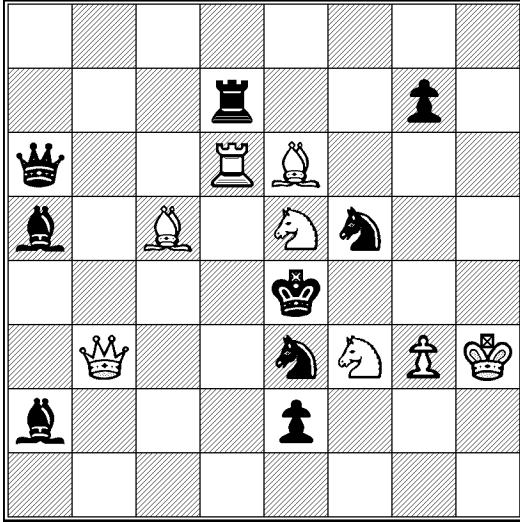


1.Bxe6+? Sxe6! 1.fxe6? Sxb3! 1.Rxd4+? Sxd4! 1.exd4? Sd8!

1.Sc8? (>2.Sf6) 1...Sxb3 2.Sb6 but 1...Sxf4!

1.Sxf7! (>2.Sf6) 1...Sxb3 2.Bxe6 and 1...Kxe4 2.Bc6.

wB and wR are the only officers supporting their knights and they combine in the mate following the flight capture.

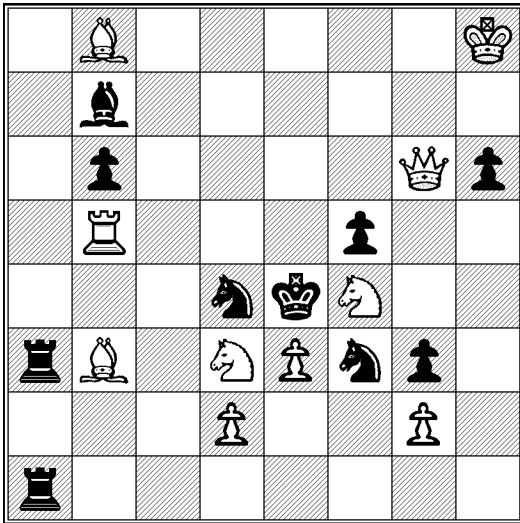
7<sup>th</sup> Place – No.13 - Iancu-Ioan Sandea

#2

1.Qb2? (>2.Sg5) 1...Sxg3(Sd4) 2.Q(x)d4  
but 1...Bc3!

**1.Sg4!** (>2.Sg5) 1...Kxf3 2.Bd5, 1...Sxg4 2.Bd5,  
1...Sxg3 2.Qxe3 and 1...Bd8 2.Sd2.

The key grants a flight and a pin mate ensues when the bK flees. All 4 knights move during the course of the solution but there is a minor downside. The means of controlling the powerful white force is most ingenious but also expensive in terms of material. The danger in circumstances such as these is that the solver might expect more play.

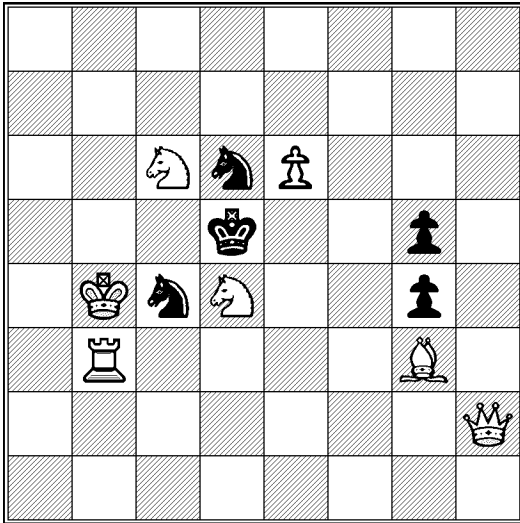
8<sup>th</sup> Place – No.3 - Taras Rudenko

#2

1.Qxg3? (>2.Sf2) but 1...Rf1! 1.Qxc5? (>2.Sc5)  
1... Se6/Sxb3 2.Qxb7 but 1...Rc1!

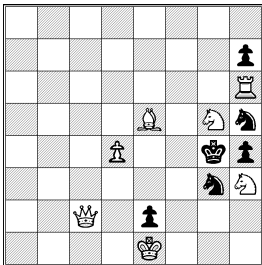
**1.Bc2!** (>2.Sf2/2.Sc5) 1...Rxd3 2.Bxd3, 1...Sxc2  
2.Qxf5 and 1...Sxd2 2.Re5.

The key carries a double threat and the two tries introduce each of these threats in turn. This fine idea gives a coherent framework to the problem and is known as the Barnes theme. To develop this coping with the restrictions of the stipulated condition is a considerable achievement!

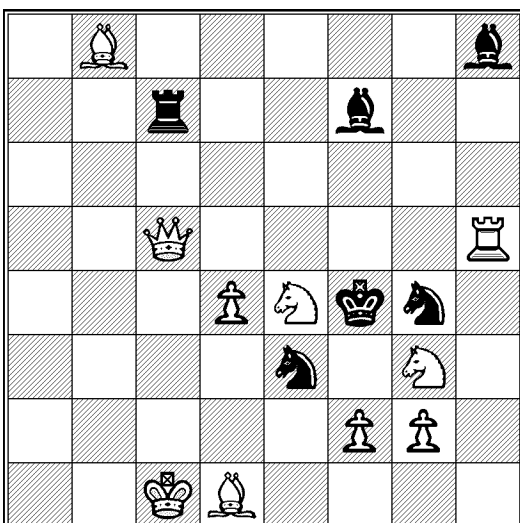
9<sup>th</sup> Place – No.4 - Ural Khasanov

#2

5 (v)



Set 1...Sg~ 2.Qc8, 1...Sf5!? 2.Qxe2. 1.Qxh7? (-) 1...Sh~ 2.Rxh4, 1...Sg~ 2.Qd7 but 1...Sf5! **1.Qc1!** (-) 1...Sh~ 2.Qf4, 1...Sg~ 2.Qc8, 1...Sf5 2.Sf2 and 1...Kf5 2.Qc8. An extra bP has been used but I think the outcome makes this worthwhile.

10<sup>th</sup> Place – No.10 - Anirudh Daga

#2

1.Qe2? (-) 1...Sd~ 2.Qg2, 1...Se4!? 2.Qxc4, 1...Sc~ 2.Qe5 but 1...Se3!

**1.Qh8!** (-) 1...Sd~ 2.Qh1, 1...Se4!? 2.Se7! , 1...Sc~ 2.Qe5 and 1...Ke4 2.Qh1.

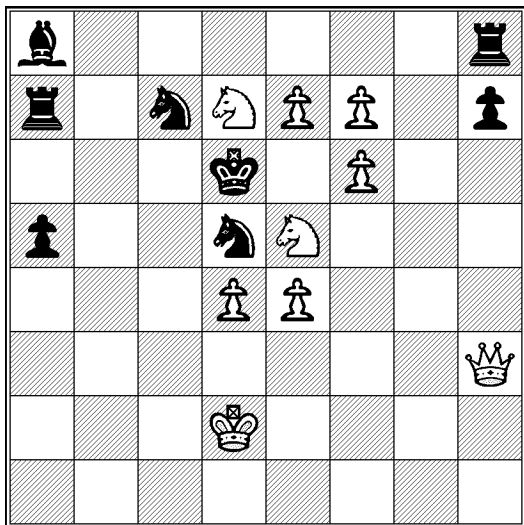
To achieve changes after the random and correction moves of bSd6 is a good objective. However, the try is flight-taking whilst the key is “neutral”. It is also a little unfortunate that wRc3 has no role in the try. However, this is the only Meredith (8-12 units only) of the tourney and such economy is most commendable. Ideally the try should be the “neutral” move and the key flight-giving in a matrix such as this, and this is possible with a different starting position

1.Sg5? (>2.Sh3/2.Se2) 1...Sxf2! (2.Se2? Kg4!)

1.Sc3? (>2.S{either}e2/2.Qg5) 1...Se5!

**1.Bf3!** (>2.Se2) 1...Sxg2 2.Rf5 and 1...Bc4 2.Qg5.

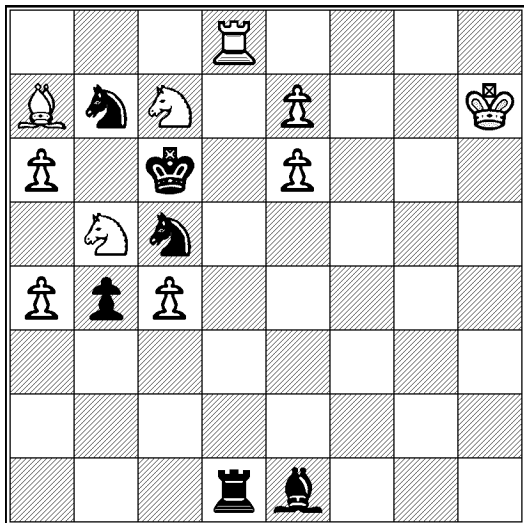
Again all 4 knights are involved in the action and the manner in which the black ones defend is of interest. The key critically crosses the e2 square so that moves by bSg4 do not meet the threat. It is encouraging to find a composer full of ideas but the realisation needs further sophistication. The overall picture is a little diffuse and a single unpin of the wQ is expensive in terms of the material used.

11/12<sup>th</sup> Place e.a. – No.8. - Dmitry Bozhenko

**1.Sf8!** (>2.Qd7) 1...Sb6/Sxf6 2.Qa3, 1...Sc~  
2.e8S, 1...Se8 2.fxe8 and 1...Bc6 2.Sc4.

The author has achieved his goals in an unfussy way in this problem. I particularly enjoyed the double function by wPf7, not only mating but also preventing a dual after 1...Bc6.

#2

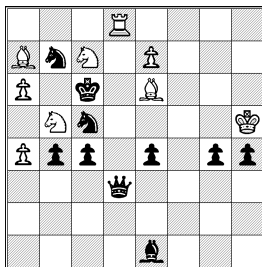
11/12<sup>th</sup> Place e.a. – No.9. - Vera Fomina

**1.Sd5!** (>2.Rc8) 1...Bg3 2.Sxb4, 1...Sd6 2.Rxd6,  
1...Sxd8 2.exd8S and 1...Sxe6/Sxa6 2.e8Q.

Here we see activity from 3 knights again with two different promotions. Ideally wSb5 should mate at d4 and this can be arranged... with a forest of black pawns!

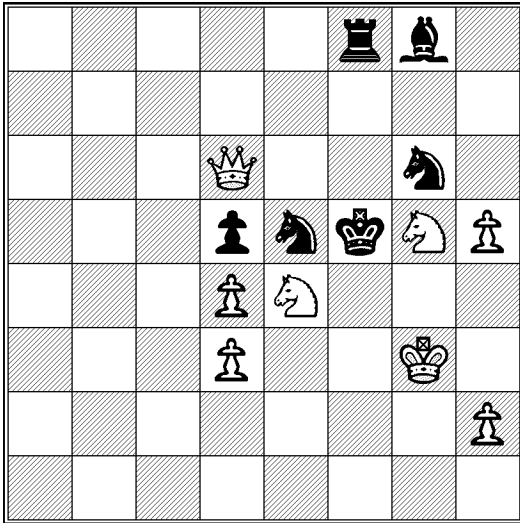
#2

9 (v)

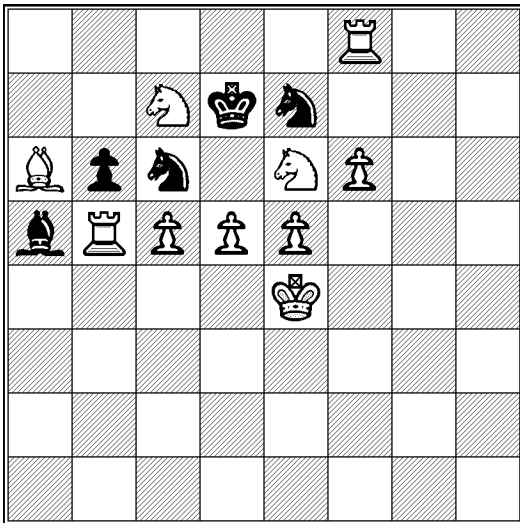


1.Sd5! (>2.Rc8) 1...Qg3 2.Sd4 and 1...Qxd5+ 2.Rxd5.



13<sup>th</sup> Place – No.6 - Andrew Vodinh-Ho

#2

14<sup>th</sup> Place – No.2 - Dylan Schenker

#2

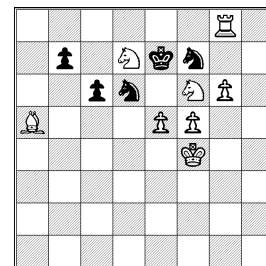
**1.h4!** (-) 1...Rf7 2.Qe6 and 1...Bf7 2.Qf6.  
 (This mutual interference between bR and bB is known as a Grimshaw) 1...Se~ 2.Qxg6, 1...Sg~ 2.Qxe5 and 1...dxe4 2.dxe4.

Wieland Bruch (who kindly checked for predecessors) noted that this diagram has close similarities with the Zander #2 quoted in the tourney announcement. However, the composer has added good strategy with the Grimshaw. Sadly the key by the out-of-play wPh2 is self-evident.

**1.Sa8!** (-) 1...B~ 2.Sxb6, 1...Sd~ 2.R(x)d8, 1...Se~ 2.B(x)c8 and 1...bxc5 2.Sxc5.

All the knights participate in the play and this is commended. Sadly wRb5 is unpleasant and the position is crowded. The black defences are simple un-guards and so, when circumstances permit, defences of greater interest might be developed; for example interference (as in the preceding problem) or self-block. The position below shows small economies.

2 (v)



1.Sb8! (-)

It has been a pleasure to analyse these entries and I congratulate the successful composers. I hope that those competitors who struggled with the stipulation will nonetheless have appreciated the exercise. Through such endeavours are skills improved! Our young composers will wish to join me in thanking Julia Vysotska and Marjan Kovačević for their dedication to YCCC. I also look forward to studying another fine crop of #2s in 2023!

David Shire, Canterbury, September 2022