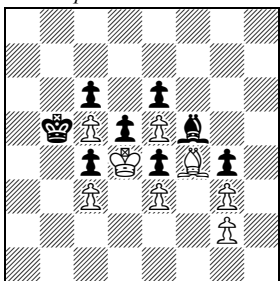


HELPMATES IN THREE AND MORE MOVES 2010

Judge: Christopher Jones (United Kingdom)

It was an honour (for which I am grateful to Harry Fougiaxis) and a pleasure to judge the longer original helpmates in Mat Plus in 2010. Only one problem did I exclude on grounds of anticipation (1724; cf. W. Seehofer and H. Grubert, *Probleemblad*, April-June 2009), although of course the extent of partial anticipation was an issue in evaluating other problems. There were some excellent problems, although also many that seemed to me to lack the distinctive quality that one now looks for in longer helpmates, so that the award is a tad top-heavy: 6 Prizes, fewer problems in the lower categories. I enjoyed reading readers' comments, from which it is clear that many problems that in my fastidious way I omitted from the award succeeded in their primary objective of providing solvers with pleasure.

Mirko Degenkolbe
Steven B. Dowd
Guy Sobrecases
1.pr Mat Plus 2010

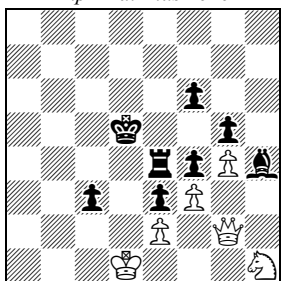


h#14

8+8

1st Prize: 1725 – Mirko Degenkolbe (Germany), Steven Dowd (USA) and Guy Sobrecases (France). A spectacular achievement. I can do little to supplement the comments quoted in issue 39-40. Particularly gratifying, in the midst of the long parallel journeys of the white and black bishops, is the exactitude of the Kb5>a5>b5 switchback, both as to its timing and as to the determining of the square a5. Some critics deprecate prolonged introductions to the main action in such problems, finding them tedious or an affront to the economy of time, but in a case such as this the need for such protracted manoeuvrings seems to me to be a witty and essential part of the problem. *1.Bg6 Bg5 2.Be8 Bd8 3.Bd7 Ba5 4.Bc8 Bb4 5.Ba6 Ba3 6.Ka5! Bc1 7.Bb5 Bd2 8.Ba4 Be1 9.Bd1 Bf2 10.Bf3 gx3 11.Kb5! fxe4 12.dxe4 Kxe4 13.Kxc5 Kf4 14.Kd5 e4#.*

Abdelaziz Onkoud
2.pr Mat Plus 2010

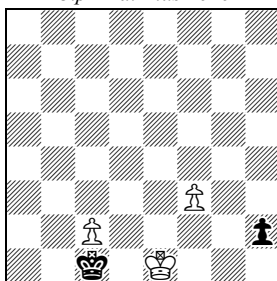


h#3

411...

6+8

Rolf Kohring
3.pr Mat Plus 2010

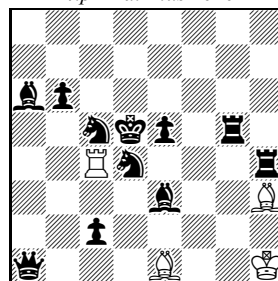


h#5.5

211...

3+2

Valerio Agostini
Antonio Garofalo
4.pr Mat Plus 2010



h#3

211...

4+11

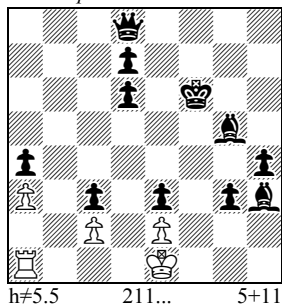
2nd Prize: No.1714 – Abdelaziz Onkoud (Morocco). A real find. Rarely does one see a wQ in a h#3, and on those rare occasions it generally is unattractively hemmed in by a wall of pieces; so the lightness of this seeing is near miraculous. Also very pleasing is the reciprocity of the functions of wQ and wS in the two pairs of symmetrical solutions. A very fine conception and construction. *1.Rc4 Sg3 A 2.fxg3 Qxg3 B 3.Kd4 Qd6#, 1.Ke5 Qg3 B 2.fxg3 Sf2 C 3.Kf4 Sd3#, 1.Re6 Sf2 C 2.exf2 Qxf2 D 3.Ke5 Qc5#, 1.Kd4 Qf2 D 2.exf2 Sg3 A 3.Ke3 Sf5#.*

3rd Prize: No.1723 – Ralf Kohring (Germany). At first sight, the sort of problem that one might expect to see amongst Honourable Mentions at best. But not only does this problem have the virtues that would entitle it to an HM (reciprocal functions of the 2 wPs, completely distinct but harmoniously combined move-sequences), it has in addition an unusual and attractive feature: the bPh2, which must promote and then make two further moves in one solution, amazingly turns out to be a (very!) distant selfblock in the other. An excellent find, in my opinion eminently Prize-worthy. *1...f4 2.h1=B f5 3.Bd5 f6 4.Bg8 f7 5.Kb2 fxc8=Q 6.Ka3 Qb3#, 1...c4 2.Kc2 c5 3.Kd3 c6 4.Ke3 c7 5.Kf4 c8=Q 6.Kg3 Qg4#.*

4th Prize: No.1586 – Valerio Agostini and Antonio Garofalo (Italy). As remarked by one commentator, this problem (like the 2nd.Prize winner) shows heavy white force marshalled with a lightness of touch that bespeaks great constructional skill. Although the wBe1 serves only to guard flight squares in both solutions, the diagram is vastly more pleasant than if those potential flights were blocked by bPs. The strategy is rich. I disagree with another commentator's reference to a "repeated W2": the wR plays to d5 from two different squares and indeed I regard this "two ways to d5" feature as an essential component in the attraction of the problem, underlining as it does the harmony of the strategy in the two solutions. In each, on B1 the bK walks into one pin, which is then released on W1 in favour of the preferred pin of the same S on W2. Even the capture of the inactive Ss can be seen in a favourable light: a further connection between the two solutions, an exchange of functions between the bSs. *1.Ke4 Rxc5 2.Kd3 Rd5 3.Re4 Bf1#, 1.Kc6 Rxd4 2.Kb5 Rd5 3.Rc4 Bd7#.*

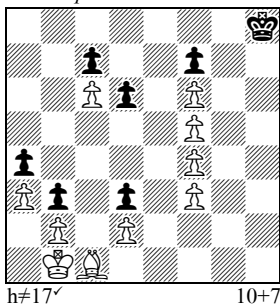
Zlatko Mihajloski

5.pr Mat Plus 2010



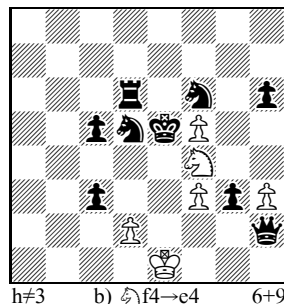
Miodrag Radomirović

6.pr Mat Plus 2010



Dmitry Alexandrov

1.hm Mat Plus 2010



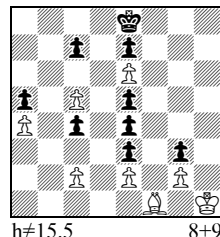
5th Prize: No.1591 – Zlatko Mihajloski (Macedonia). As solvers noted, the solution in which the bK goes to h3 seems to be the stronger one, and one imagines that it was the one that occurred first to the composer. But in grafting on the non-castling solution he found an excellent accompaniment: analyzing its structure, one finds, in this R-P Bristol, a very good match for the R-K Bristol. Many nice features are shared: the need of the wR to stop at g1 and b7, in each case one square of the eventual mating square, the vacating at move B1 of the square that will in the end be occupied by the bK. A masterly work. *1...0-0-0 2.Be6 Rg1 (Rh1?) 3.Kf5 Kd1 4.Kg4 Ke1 5.Kh3 Kf1 6.Bg4 Rh1#, 1...Rb1 2.Qa5 (Qb6?) Rb7 (Rb8?) 3.Qb4 axb4 4.Ke7 b5 5.Kd8 b6 6.Be7 Rb8#.*

6th Prize: No.1727 – Miodrag Radomirović (Serbia). Composers continue to find new and surprisingly subtle nuances in the ultra-long helpmate. In this case, the need for a tempo move, Ke5!, deeply concealed in the later stages of the solution, is convincingly and serendipitously underlined by the presence of a full-length try which fails only because it does not make 15.Ke5! possible. This is a striking example of the potential value of tries in the helpmate genre. But for the try, the capture of the wPf4 in the solution would be mere collateral damage in a not enthralling sequence of moves, even arguably a weaselly prolongation of the solution. But as it is,

the try gives the solution strategic depth, in the same way that dual avoidance does – and indeed the whole try could be considered as dual avoidance. *Try: 1.Kg8? Kal... 9.Kxc6 Kal 10.Kd5 11.c5... 14.cxb2 Kxb2 15.K?? (the bK cannot access e5 to gain the necessary tempo) Kc3 16.d5 Kb4 17.Kd4 Lb2#, therefore his Majesty should follow the other way round: 1.Kh7! Kal 2.Kh6 Kb1 3.Kh5 Kal 4.Kh4 Kb1 5.Kg3 Kal 6.Kxf4 Kb1 7.Ke5 Kal 8.Kd5 Kb1 9.Kxc6 Kal 10.Kd5 Kb1 11.c5 Kal 12.c4 Kb1 13.c3 Kal 14.cxb2+ Kxb2 15.Ke5! Kc3 16.d5 Kb4 17.Kd4 Bb2#*

Incidentally, there is an interesting comparison to be made with this problem's neighbour in issue 39-40. In No.1726, there is, similarly, a move-sequence that fails. (In this case, the mate would be a radically different one, so the pleasure would be that of an anti-identical helpmate rather than one that could be seen in the light of dual-avoidance.) But in this case it is not just that the "try" fails for being a move too long but also because its move-order is not forced, so that it could never have been a legitimate solution. In my view the effect of this combination of defects is that it adds nothing to the solution (which I feel is not quite strong enough on its own to merit a place in this award).

Mirko Degenkolbe
Steven B. Dowd
1726. *Mat Plus* 2010



Perhaps the composers may yet find a way to achieve a convincing combination of these phases in a fully successful problem. *1...Kg1 2.Kd8 Kh1 3.Kc8 Kg1 4.Kb7 Kh1 5.Kc6 Kg1 6.Kd5 Kh1 7.Kd4 c3+ 8.Kxc3 Kg1 9.Kd4 Kh1 10.c3 Kg1 11.c2 Kh1 12.c1=S Kg1 13.Sd3 exd3 14.Kd5 d4 15.Kc6 Ld3 16.e2 Le4#; The try 2.Kf8 fails by a move: 2...Kh1 3.Kg7 Kg1 4.Kf6 Kh1 5.Ke6 Kg1 6.Kd5 Kh1 7.Kd4 c3+ 8.Kxc3 Kg1 9.Kd2 Kh1 10.c3 Kg1 11.c2 Kh1 12.c1=D Kg1 13.Db1 c6 14.Db7 cxb7 15.Kc1 b8=D 16.Kd1 Db2 17.Ke1 Dc1#.*

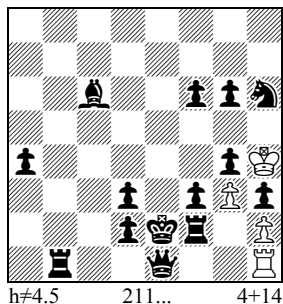
1st Honourable Mention: No.1718 – Dmitry Alexandrov (Russia). A very pleasing construction in which in each solution a bS sacrifices itself to allow a capturing wP to open a line for the bQ on its way to a blocking function on that S's initial square. Interchanges of function between bSs and between wS and wPf3. The sweeping moves of the bQ create so favourable an impression that in a weaker tourney this attractive problem might well have won a Prize. *a) 1.Sg4 hxg4 2.Qh4 dxc3 3.Qf6 Sd3#, b) 1.Se3 dxe3 2.Qa2 Sxg3 3.Qd5 f4#.*

2nd Honourable Mention: No.1589 – Guy Sobrecases (France). A highly ingenious compilation of 3 intricate lines of play, with significant connecting strands between different phases in different ways: 2 involve the activation of the wK, 2 take 9 half-moves (one takes 8). Remarkable slide-rule precision in the different manoeuvres by White and Black to reach the mating configurations (very much in the best co-operative help-play spirit). So nicely forced are the precise waiting W1 moves *1...Rg1!* and *1...Rf1!* that it seems a pity that there could not be another W1 waiter that could uniquely precede the 8-half-move sequence, but it would be miraculous to find a sound way to do this.

Notwithstanding the lack of complete harmony among the 3 phases I found the play so very likeable that I wanted to award 1589 a Prize until I considered why the composer could not stipulate "2 solutions, one set play". The reason is that one of the solutions would work also as a further set play (beginning *1.Kd1 Rg1*). So the value of the play beginning *1.f5 Kg5* exists in unstipulated limbo. For some reason, I feel (by contrast with my comments on 1726 above) that some account can be taken of this unstipulated play in evaluating the problem, but a degree of downgrading is required. *1...?? 2.f5 Kg5 3.Og1! Kf4 3.Ke1 Ke3 4.Rxh2+! Rxg1#; 1...Rg1! 2.Qf1! Rh1! 3.Og2! Rcl 4.Qf1 Rxc6 5.Rd1 Re6# (2.Q~? Rcl 3.~ Rxc6 4.Qf1 ~ 5.Rd1 Re6, 2.Qd1?! R~ 3.Qb3 Rcl 4.Rbf1?? Rxc6 5.Qd1 Re6); 1...Rf1! 2.Kd1 Rg1! 3.Re2 Rg2 4.Qxg3+ Kxg3 5.Ke1 Rg1#.*

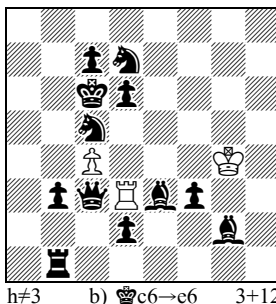
3rd Honourable Mention: No.1715 – Georg Pongrac (Austria). Nice reciprocal line-opening strategy, well-matched in the two solutions, giving intense white/black interplay. a) 1.Qe5 Rxb3 2.Qd5 Rb8 3.Rb5 cxb5#, b) 1.Bg5 Rxf3 2.Be7 Rf5 3.Bd5 cxd5#.

Guy Sobrecases
2.hm Mat Plus 2010



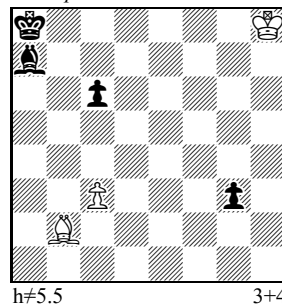
h#4.5 211... 4+14

Georg Pongrac
3.hm Mat Plus 2010



h#3 b) ♖c6→e6 3+12

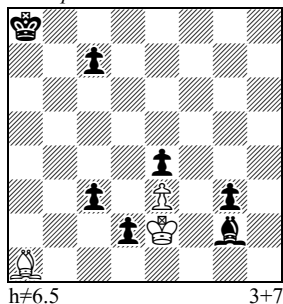
Guy Sobrecases
Rolf Wiehagen
sp.hm Mat Plus 2010



h#5.5 3+4

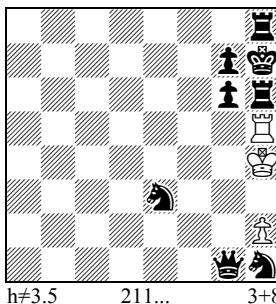
Special Honourable Mentions: Nos.1592 and 1595 – Guy Sobrecases (France) and Rolf Wiehagen (Germany). It is not immediately clear how best to reward these two problems, culminations of efforts in a number of previously published problems to find the best way to show the attractive idea that a white officer would have to move to a1 in anticipation of being captured there much later by a bR. One cannot ignore the fact that the degree of originality of both these settings is diminished, but equally one wishes to accord recognition to a setting that may well represent *letztforn* (1592) and one that boasts the appealing and logical enhancement of an extra bR promotion (1595).

Guy Sobrecases
Rolf Wiehagen
sp.hm Mat Plus 2010



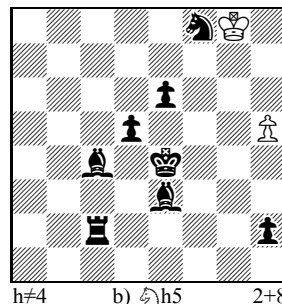
h#6.5 3+7

Jacques Rotenberg
Guy Sobrecases
1.cm Mat Plus 2010



h#3.5 211... 3+8

Kenneth Solja
Christer Jonsson
2.cm Mat Plus 2010



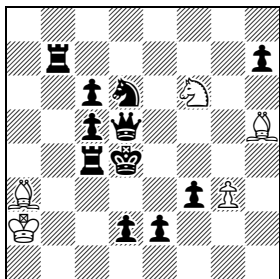
h#4 b) ♘h5 2+8

c) ♙h5 d) ♖h5

1st Commendation: No.1588 – Jacques Rotenberg (Israel) and Guy Sobrecases (France). The composers' list of thematic elements packed into these two solutions is impressive, and I find it quite hard to identify why I do not rate this very clever construction more highly. I think I tend to value such anti-identical pairs of solutions the more highly the longer they are. In this comparatively short anti-identical problem the connecting strands – Zilahi, mutual captures of wP/bQ – seem to me to be the most important elements. 1...?? 2.Q~ Kg5 3.Rg8 Rh3 4.Rh4 Rxh4#, 1...Kh3 2.Qxh2+ Kxh2 3.Rg8 Rh3 4.Rh4 Rxh4#, 1...Rxh6+ 2.Kxh6 h3 3.Qg4+! (Sg4?) hxg4 4.Rh7 g5#.

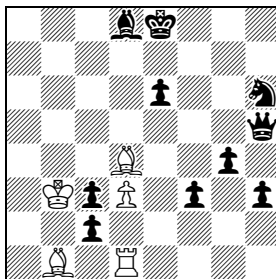
2nd Commendation: No.1722 – Kenneth Solja (Finland) and Christer Jonsson (Sweden). The highly ingenious achievement of the Forsberg twinning deserves recognition, especially as the solutions exploit the light material in a pleasingly varied way, but understandably some of the strategy must be quite perfunctory, notably the treks of the bK. a) 1.Kd3 h6 2.Kd2 h7 3.Kc1 h8=Q 4.Bd2 Qa1#, b) 1.e5 Kxf8 2.Bc5+ Ke8 3.d4 Kd7 4.Kd5 Sf6#, c) 1.Bg1 Bg6+ 2.Kf3 Bxc2 3.Kg2 Bd1 4.Kh1 Bf3#, d) 1.Kf4 Rh3 2.Kg5 Rxe3 3.Kh6 Kf7 4.Kh7 Rh3#.

Mechislovas Rimkus
3.cm Mat Plus 2010



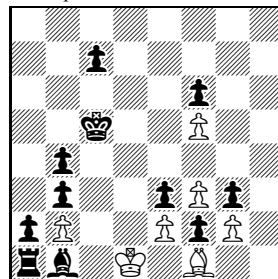
h≠2.5 b) ♖f6→g4 5+11

Christer Jonsson
4.cm Mat Plus 2010



h≠3 211... 5+10

Marcel Tribowski
sp.cm Mat Plus 2010



h≠9 311... 7+11

3rd Commendation: No.1575 – Mechislovas Rimkus (Lithuania). Nice strategy, with witty thematic twinning. This could have been placed higher, but the analogy between solutions is imperfect (an unmatched Leibovici interference and a different order of moves of bQ and bK, albeit mitigated by the attractiveness of their reciprocal follow-my-leader play). a) 1...Bg6 2.Ke3 Bxc5+ 3.Qd4 Sg4#, b) 1...Bf7 2.Qe6 Bb2+ 3.Kd5 Sf6#.

4th Commendation: No.1717 – Christer Jonsson (Sweden). Attractive and well-matched play, albeit the matrix of units at b3/b1/c2/d3/d1 is known; the capture of the bB detracts. 1.cxb1=B Bf6 2.Bxd3 Rxd3 3.Qf7 (Sf7?) Rxd8#, 1.cxd1=R Bc5 2.Rxd3 Bxd3 3.Sf7 (Qf7?) Bb5#.

Special Commendation: No.1596 – Marcel Tribowski (Germany). As with 1722, the legend under the diagram compels recognition! It is a significant part of the achievement that – as “311...” indicates – the three long solutions begin with different bK moves. But thereafter there are considerable areas of overlap between the solutions that diminish the impact of the problem. I do realize that this is an unavoidable downside in the achievement of so considerable a task: the grafting together of three solutions each of which would on its own constitute a very worthwhile problem. 1.Kb6 Kc1 2.c5 Kd1 3.c4 Kc1 4.c3 bxc3 5.Bd3+ Kb2 6.Bxe2 Kxb3 7.Bd1+ Kc4 8.Ka5 Kc5 9.Ba4 cxb4#, 1.Kb5 Kc1 2.c5 Kd1 3.c4 Kc1 4.c3 bxc3 5.Be4+ Kb2 6.Rd1 fxe4 7.Rd3 exd3 8.e2 d4 9.Kc4 Bxe2#, 1.Kd5 Kc1 2.c5 Kd1 3.c4 Kc1 4.c3 bxc3 5.Be4+ Kb2 6.Rc1 cxb4 7.Rc6 f4 8.Rd6 Kc3 9.Bxg2 Bxg2#.

Many thanks to the composers (including those not named above) who made the judging so enjoyable!

