

**AUSTRALIAN JUNIOR CHESS PROBLEM-SOLVING CHAMPIONSHIP
HOBART, 22 January 2010**

Report, and Suggestions for the Future

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Solving in progress (1). About half of the hall. Solvers include Stephen Solomon (rear left), Bobby Cheng (centre left in blue-grey) and Yita Choong (centre right in yellow). Those solving different papers faced each other. Peter Wagg (rear) and NN (centre) are invigilating.
Photo courtesy of Helena Smirnis.



Solving in progress (2). Ari Dale, who solved both papers quickly (feet on chair, in yellow).
Photo courtesy of Helena Smirnis.

1. This was the fourth year of the event, following Canberra 2007, Sydney 2008 and Adelaide 2009.

2. The number of junior solvers was 62, comprising 60 of the 117 players and 2 who had not entered the main tournament; thus over 50% of the juniors participated. That is a record number and percentage. It is considered quite a good rate for the still somewhat novel event held on a rest day. The entry fee was \$10. In addition, five adults participated, also a record (here one should bear in mind that many of the adults associated with the tournament naturally value their rest day as such).

3. Each solver was provided with a board and men, and many with a clock which could be set to two hours.

4. The time taken was noted when each question sheet was returned, to be used if needed to break ties. It was scarcely needed this time, as also last time. It might seem that the timing could be dispensed with, but it is important to make sure that Champions can be determined, ties not being acceptable (playoffs are held to break ties in the playing events). Few competitors left particularly early, and quite a large number stayed for the whole two hours.

5. The questions and solutions, with diagrams, might be made available on the 2010 Championship's web site <http://www.chesstasmania.org.au/AJCC/index.html> or elsewhere. I also have plenty of spare copies on paper that may be requested. They are also included at the end of this file.

6. My article entitled "A Quick Introduction to Chess Problems and End-game Studies", which I had originally prepared for the 2007 Championship, was made available on the present Championship's web site. Just before solving started, I asked competitors whether they had read that article, and this time a fair proportion had. The article is of some value in making sure that all competitors know in advance what problems and studies are, and that they have been exposed to a suitable introduction to them, with examples.

7. The format of the question sheet continues to work well: a single A3 sheet folded over to take up A4 size, with only the instructions on the front page so that the sheet could be placed unopened on the tables in advance.

8. During the solving period, Peter Wagg and I acted as invigilators and were available to answer questions from the competitors. Only a few questions were asked.

9. Marking was carried out by Peter Wagg and myself. We each marked each answer independently on marking sheets prepared in advance as blank sheets. It took about an hour and a half just to enter all competitors' names in age/gender groups for each of the two papers and the three ages within each paper. It was important to have the results ready for the presentation on the last day of the Championships, so about three days were available for marking, but various limitations of availability meant that less time could actually be used; nevertheless the marking was completed in time. A few errors, generally of a clerical nature, by each marker were resolved. The two markings differed very little generally, but small differences of partial credit were allowed to remain in cases where they could not affect prizes. It is very valuable to

have the two independent markers, both in ensuring accuracy, in resolving matters of judgment, and in providing confidence to the competitors and their parents. In the selection of tasks one should keep in mind easy marking, which was effective this time as previously. The constant number of marks per task (10) worked well (total marks for each paper was 120).

10. It may be worth while pointing out that the running of a direct-mate solving competition is relatively straightforward. The running of an endgame study solving competition is much less straightforward. Some studies might be capable of complete computer testing, others not. It may not be enough for the person running the event to know the intended solution and the main branch lines and false lines. A solver might put forward a different, unanticipated, analysis of the set position, in which case that analysis has to be evaluated in the limited time available at the event. Probably no human or computer is capable of guaranteeing perfection in handling all such situations. We naturally do our best, and the studies are a very valuable component of the competition, but it will be healthy to realise that it can only be our best. The selection of studies suitable for our purpose is also not easy and is very time-consuming.

11. The markers' job is assumed to be finished when the total marks have been reported in each of the 12 age-group/gender sections. Then the organizers apply a method of determining prizes according to a scheme published at <http://www.auschess.org.au/constitution/By-law3.txt> . The same scheme is used also in the playing Championships. (That scheme seems to have much complexity and some disadvantages. There is a "butterfly effect" in which a tiny difference can cause substantial repercussions to ripple through the system. The scheme implies that 1st place in U16 is preferable to second place in U18, which seems debatable. Although the scheme might benefit from a review, it is right that this matter is handled by the tournament officials, not the problemist markers.) The problemist markers do have a role to play in breaking ties and in recommending special awards.

12. An error was made in determining the prizes, and a revised list was published some days later. The various affected solvers did not complain, except for one parent. The task where the error arose involved processing an alphabetical list of solvers whose marks and age had been indicated for each gender. (It may be pointed out that the task of processing such a list according to the scheme used here is not trivial, and demands much care and patience. Each step should be checked carefully before proceeding to the next step, for otherwise serious errors can occur. All the careful work done in connection with the event can be vitiated by any undue haste at this stage.)

13 .The list of prize-winners is available on the Championship web site at http://www.chesstasmania.org.au/AJCC/awards_problems.html . Many prizes were presented. The official prizes were trophies for the top places in the Championship and medals for other places in the age/gender groups. The special (unofficial or private) ones were a cash prize of \$150 to be shared by any solvers scoring 100% or near approaches kindly donated by Dennis Hale, six subscriptions to Australasian Chess kindly donated by Brian Jones, and four books kindly donated by Peter Parr. All entry fees were included in the prize fund. The prizes are greatly appreciated, and this event has since its beginning increased the likelihood of people going home happy. The possibility of including special prizes for girls could be considered, though the smaller number of girl solvers might lead to a disproportion.

14. Very many thanks indeed are offered to Geoff Foster for carrying out the time-consuming expert job of setting the tasks and preparing the solutions. It is clear from the results, presented later in this report, that the range of difficulty of the tasks was well suited to this

competition. Other (more whimsical) types of questions could also be included in some sections, but that is subject to debate. It is best to make the tasks set as obscure as can be managed, so that no solver is likely to have seen them before.

15. The question of the number of separate papers to set is still worth discussing. In Canberra 2007 we had just one paper for all, in Sydney 2008 and Adelaide 2009 three, and in Hobart 2010 two (the playing Championships are divided into U18 and U12 as the main age divisions, and the same was done for the solving). If a single paper having the full range of difficulty increasing throughout is used, the youngest solvers will expect just to work on the early ones, which will take only a little time for the older ones to solve. Certainly the younger ones might feel overwhelmed by presence of all the harder tasks. But the single paper could be divided into clearly marked sections considered appropriate for the various age groups. Another factor in favour of a single paper is that there are fewer tasks in total to set (see especially (10) last sentence).

16. Adults were invited this time as last time. Five took part, including to our great delight Stephen Solomon, a former Australian Champion across the board, who was in Hobart as a coach. He scored 100% in 1hr 22min. Some interest has been expressed for a solving competition in adult events – when time is available for organizing it, it would be interesting to try this.

17. The general impression from their comments was that competitors enjoyed the event. The administrators also seemed very satisfied with it. It has been reported that parents like the examination atmosphere of the event, making it seem somewhat similar to school exams and thus suggesting that chess is not just a matter of their children playing games – an unforeseen favourable effect.

18. I asked some of the excellent young solvers how it came about that they were so good at this – they generally answered that their coaches gave them some to solve. Some had trained specifically for this event, a welcome tendency that is increasing now that the event is becoming well-known. Some had even tried their hand in a preliminary way at composition. Indeed, the hope for that was one of my motivations in introducing this event in 2007. In my short presentation speech I suggested that competitors might ask their coaches to include some problems and studies, as indeed some coaches already do; I also foreshadowed composition as a possible later pursuit of interested solvers.

19. A few comments on the past of the running of the event. I introduced the event in 2007. My motivation was that I had greatly enjoyed playing in early junior championships, wanted to do something in return, and noticed the absence of a solving event combined with the fact that there were some rest days during the event. I had suggested it for some years earlier, meeting with universal courteous opposition to the idea, even from within the problemist community. Finally I mentioned it to Ian Rogers who approved of it, which eventually led to the first event. In that and all the following events Geoff Foster has been an indispensable collaborator.

20. A few comments on the future of the running of the event. I am not seeking any long-run personal ownership of the event, and am satisfied to have set it in motion as well as I could. I will also continue as long as that is desired. Geoff Foster has indicated that he is happy to continue as well. When a replacement is needed, the main requirements seem to me to be as

follow. (i) A close familiarity with the world of solving direct mates and endgame studies (not just via local newspapers). (ii) A willingness to spend a lot of time liaising with the organizers of the main event and setting and marking the tasks. (iii) A willingness to travel to the venue – however, we are presently looking into ways to run the event remotely in case that is needed. Expertise in endgame studies is not widespread, and is perhaps limited to the top senior players who however would generally not be in a position to take on this job.

Some Statistics of the Marks (Please see the Tables below.)

21. As always, our policy has been not to release individual results. The reasons for this include the following. (i) No disparagement was ever intended towards those scoring low marks; some may never have seen a formal problem or endgame study before. (ii) Requests for revision might lead to prolonged correspondence for which there simply isn't time, and the marking has already been done with all care (see paragraph 9). (iii) In cases where it was already clear that prizes would not be affected, less attention might be given to the awarding of partial credit or the resolving of differences between markers, as a purely practical matter.

22. The marks scored have meaning only in relation to the particular tasks set and their difficulty, so that comparisons from year to year, or to school-work exams, would not have full validity. Comparisons between the two columns of Table 2 also have little meaning. Comparisons could be made within any one Championship event between playing and solving results, and a fairly close correlation has been informally observed. The relationship between the percentage marks scored and the difficulty as estimated in advance (according to the maximum marks allotted to each task) was observed to a fair extent (see Table 2). Any tendency for endgame studies to be solved more easily or less easily than direct-mate problems could only be investigated informally; no particular preference or difference seems apparent. The comparison of tasks set in more than one paper (see the asterisks in Table 2) showed that the Hawes #2 was, not surprisingly, a good deal more difficult for the younger solvers.

Best wishes for the future!

Nigel Nettheim, 17 February 2010.

Table 1. Number of Competitors, in each Age Group and each Gender

Age	U8	U10	U12	U14	U16	U18	Adult	Total
Male	5	10	16	6	6	3	5	51
Female	1	2	3	7	3	0	0	16
Total	6	12	19	13	9	3	5	67

Those U8, U10 and U12 took the U12 paper (except that one by mistake took the U18 paper, and one took both papers). Those U14, U16 and U18 and the adults took the U18 paper.

Table 2. Percent of Total Marks Scored, for each Task on each Paper

Results for males and females are combined here, with Adults included as well. The task diagrams are shown at the end of this report. Equal marks are obtainable for each task; each cell shows the percent of these awarded (not absolute marks). The same task in different sections is indicated by [*] etc..

	U12/U10/U8		U18/U16/14	
	Task	%	Task	%
1	#6 Ropke 1.Kd4 [*]	94	#6 Ropke 1.Kd4 [*]	100
2	Win Damiano 1.Nd4	92	Win Shumov [**] 1.Ba5 or 1.Kf5	79
3	Draw Anonymous 1.Kg8	63	#2 Weenink 1.Bxa7	87
4	#2 Euwe 1.Qd6	53	Win Duras 1.Bg2	52
5	Win Shumov [**] 1.Ba5 or 1.Kf5	64	#2 Hawes [***] 1.Nc4	52
6	#2 Kalina 1.Be1	47	Win Rossilimo 1.h7	56
7	Win Gascio 1.Ra1	36	#2 Bwee 1.Nxa6	55
8	#2 Moikin 1.Qh8	39	Win Pogosyants 1.Kc7	25
9	Win Reti 1.Ba5	17	#2 Piatetsi 1.Bd2	29
10	#2 Mansfield 1.Kf2	56	Win Benko 1.Ke7	30
11	Draw Copie 1.Rh1	54	#3 Warton 1.Qb3	29
12	#2 Hawes [***] 1.Ne4	30	#Win Kaiev 1.h7	33
	Total (100%)	54	Total (100%)	53

Averages over each whole paper:
 U18 Girls 36%, Boys/Adults 62%
 U12 Girls 40%, Boys/Adults 57%.

A few comments on the tasks:

We had originally aimed for a single paper with 15 tasks; a fairly late change to two separate papers of 12 tasks meant that they were in total a little easier than might have been desirable. Certainly one very difficult task as the last one of the U18 paper is warranted to challenge the best solvers – perhaps a difficult #3 or even a #4, or a difficult study.

U12 No. 1. We had tried in previous years to make sure that everyone had the satisfaction of finding at least one solution – this was a further attempt, as the only legal moves solve it. Even here, though, two solvers did not answer the question, perhaps feeling intimidated by the #6 stipulation. Although it makes a light-hearted beginning, it does reduce the effective number of tasks by one, and the marks, though more pleasant, are a bit misleading. The inclusion of such a problem is thus a matter for judgement.

U12 No. 2. This was found easy, as was obviously intended.

U12 No. 3. Again easy.

U12 No. 4. Still found fairly easy – composed by a former World Champion.

U12 No. 5. This turned out to be not quite a satisfactory task, for two reasons. Firstly, the given solution 1.Ba5 is too short, and does not satisfy the instruction to “reach a clearly winning position”. What would be needed for that is 1.Ba5 bxa5 2.b6 Kg2 3.b7 f3 4.b8=Q f2 5.Qg8+ Kf3 6.Qg6 f1=Q 7.Qxf6+ Ke2 8.Qxf1+ Kxf1 9.Kxe5 Ke2 10.Kd4 Kd2 11.Kc4 wins (and simple alternatives are available for White’s 6th move). Secondly, there is an alternative solution with 1.Kf5 Ke2 2.Bxf4 exf4 3.Kxf4 Kd3 4.Kf5 Kd4 5.Kxf6 Kxe4 6.Ke6 wins. Subsequent investigation shows that this study was re-published in a normally very reputable source, though is certainly not sound. A thought that the WK should be shifted from e6 to d6 turned out not to be the explanation, for it placed the WK too close to the Pb6, allowing a second solution involving 1.Be1 followed by Bf2. Both solutions were marked correct, but as 1.Ba5 without further analysis does not satisfy the instructions a small penalty was applied.

U12 No. 6. A good average problem.

U12 No. 7. Rather low scores. Tempting was 1.Rc2+ and Rxa2, but solvers needed to know the “theory” that K+RP vs K does not win in positions of the kind that result here.

U12 No. 8. Found fairly difficult.

U12 No. 9. Found the most difficult on the paper.

U12 No. 10. Solved fairly well.

U12 No. 11. Another faulty task. This is an original by a Correspondence Grandmaster. The intended solution is: 1.Rh1 Bc2 (1...Be4 2.Rd1 g4 3.Rxc2 Bh7 4.Rd7 Bg8 (4...g3 5.Rxf7 Bg8 6.Rg7=) 5.Rxf7 Bxf7 stalemate) 2.Rd1 Bxd1 stalemate. However, it appears that 2.Ra1 would lead to the same result. Both solutions, with suitable analysis, were credited.

U12 No. 12. A relatively difficult #2.

U18 No. 1 = U12 No. 1.

U18 No. 2. = U12 No. 5.

U18 No. 3. A very attractive composition, easy to solve.

U18 No. 4. A nice study of average difficulty, fairly well solved. Perhaps rather widely known.

U18 No. 5. = U12 No. 12.

U18 No. 6. Another study of average difficulty.

U18 No. 7. Many tries but quite well solved.

U18 No. 8. Found the hardest task on the paper.

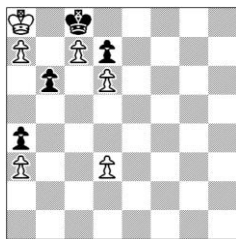
U18 No. 9. A rather difficult #2.

U18 No. 10. A rather difficult study by a US Grandmaster.

U18 No. 11. Caused real agony to some. Stephen Solomon commented that he spent too much time on it.

U18 No.12. Again quite difficult, with an underpromotion highlight at the end of a fairly long line.

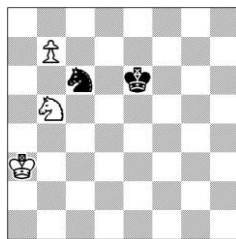
U12/U10/U8



Number 1.
White to play and mate in 6
V Ropke, *Skakbladet*, 1942

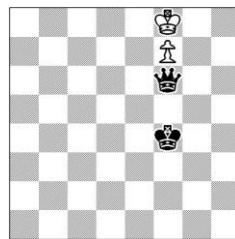
- | | |
|-----------|------|
| 1.d4 | b5 |
| 2.d5 | b4 |
| 3.axb4 | a3 |
| 4.b5 | a2 |
| 5.b6 | a1=Q |
| 6.b7 mate | |

A joke: the problem solves itself!



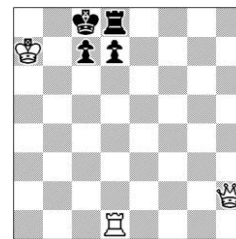
Number 2.
White to play and Win
P Damiano, 1512

- 1.Nd4+ Nx4 2.b8=Q wins



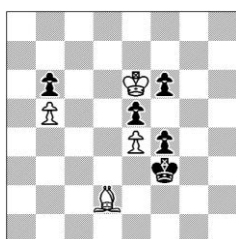
Number 3.
White to play and draw
anonymous, 1792

- 1.Kg8 Qg6+ 2.Kh8 Qxf7 stalemate



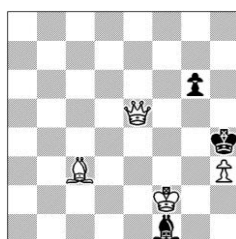
Number 4.
White to play and mate in 2
Max Euwe, 1927

- 1.Qd6! (threat 2.Qa6)
- | | |
|--------------|--------|
| 1..... cxd6 | 2.Rc1 |
| 1..... c6 | 2.Qb8 |
| 1..... R any | 2.Qxd7 |



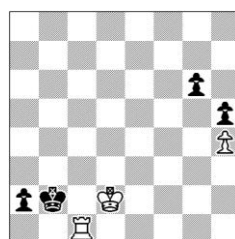
Number 5.
White to play and Win
I S Shumov, *La Strategie*, 1870

- 1.Ba5! wins
[BUT SEE COMMENT]



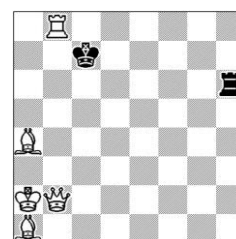
Number 6.
White to play and mate in 2
V Kalina, *64*, 1925

- 1.Be1! waiting
- | | |
|---------------|-------|
| 1..... Bxh3 | 2.Kf3 |
| 1..... B else | 2.Kg2 |
| 1..... g5 | 2.Qh8 |
| 1..... Kxh3 | 2.Qg3 |



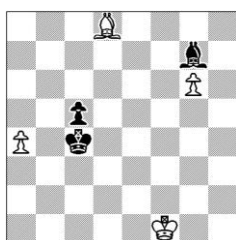
Number 7.
White to play and Win
G Cascio, *L'elegantia, sottilita, verita della virtuosissima professione de scacchi*, 1590

- 1.Ra1! Kxa1 2.Kc2! wins



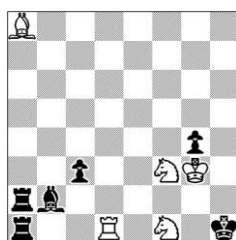
Number 8.
White to play and mate in 2
V Moikin, Special Prize,
Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1973

- 1.Qh8! (threat 2.Qd8)
- | | |
|-------------|--------|
| 1..... Kd6 | 2.Qe5 |
| 1..... Rxh8 | 2.Be5 |
| 1..... Rd6 | 2.Qc8 |
| 1..... Rh2+ | 2.Qxh2 |



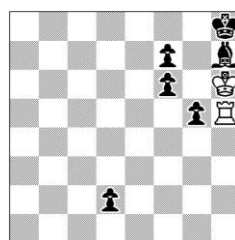
Number 9.
White to play and Win
R Reti, *Tagesbote*, 1925

- 1.Ba5 Kb3 2.Bc3! wins



Number 10.
White to play and mate in 2
C Mansfield, 1 Prize, *Teplitz Schonauer Anzeiger*, 1932

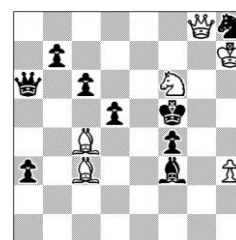
- 1.Kf2! (threat 2.Ng3)
- | | |
|-------------|--------|
| 1..... Bc1+ | 2.N1d2 |
| 1..... Ba3+ | 2.N3d2 |
| 1..... gxf3 | 2.Bxf3 |



Number 11.
White to play and Draw
J A Copie, *Finales y Temas*, 2008

- 1.Rh1 Bc2 2.Rd1! Bxd1 stalemate

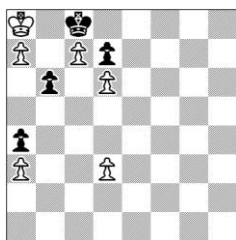
[BUT SEE COMMENT]



Number 12.
White to play and mate in 2
F T Hawes, *Sunday Times*,
Sydney, 1913

- 1.Ne4! (threat 2.Nd6)
- | | |
|----------------|----------|
| 1..... Kxe4 | 2.Qe6 |
| 1..... Bxe4 | 2.Qg4 |
| 1..... dxe4 | 2.Be6 |
| 1..... c5 | 2.Qxd5 |
| 1..... Nf7,Ng6 | 2.Q(x)g6 |
| 1..... d4 | 2.Qe6 |

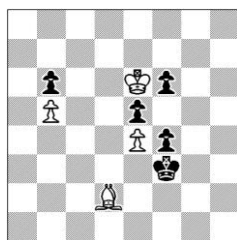
U18/U16/U14



Number 1.
White to play and mate in 6
V Ropke, *Skakbladet*, 1942

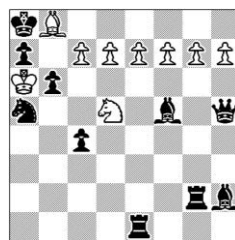
- | | |
|-----------|------|
| 1.d4 | b5 |
| 2.d5 | b4 |
| 3.axb4 | a3 |
| 4.b5 | a2 |
| 5.b6 | a1=Q |
| 6.b7 mate | |

A joke: the problem solves itself!



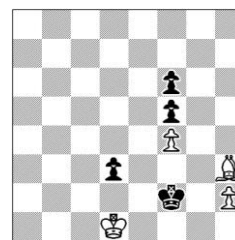
Number 2.
White to play and Win
I S Shumov, *La Strategie*, 1870

- 1.Ba5! wins
[BUT SEE COMMENT]



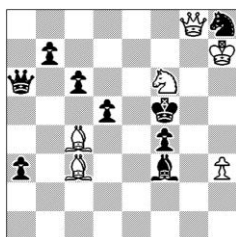
Number 3.
White to play and mate in 2
H Weenink & J Hartong,
=1 Prize, *L'Echiquier* 1928

- 1.Bxa7! (threat 2.Nxb6)
- | | |
|-------------|--------|
| 1..... Bg1 | 2.c8=Q |
| 1..... Re6 | 2.d8=Q |
| 1..... Rb1 | 2.e8=Q |
| 1..... Rg6 | 2.f8=Q |
| 1..... Rb2 | 2.g8=Q |
| 1..... Qg6 | 2.h8=Q |
| 1..... Bxc7 | 2.Nxc7 |



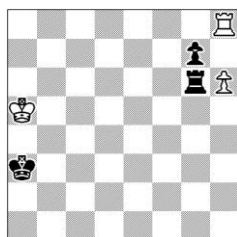
Number 4.
White to play and Win
O Duras, *Casopis
ceskoslovenskych sachistu*, 1923

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| 1.Bg2! Ke3 | 2.h4 Kxf4 |
| 3.Bf3 Ke5 | 4.h5 Ke6 |
| 5.Bd5+ Ke7 | 6.h6 wins. |



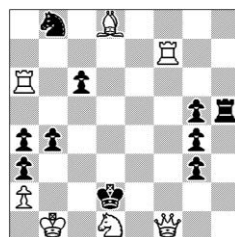
Number 5.
White to play and mate in 2
F T Hawes, *Sunday Times*,
Sydney, 1913

- 1.Ne4! (threat 2.Nd6)
- | | |
|----------------|----------|
| 1..... Kxe4 | 2.Qe6 |
| 1..... Bxe4 | 2.Qg4 |
| 1..... dxe4 | 2.Be6 |
| 1..... c5 | 2.Qxd5 |
| 1..... Nf7,Ng6 | 2.Q(x)g6 |
| 1..... d4 | 2.Qe6 |



Number 6.
White to play and Win
N Rossolimo, 5 Prize,
Shakmatny listok, 1927

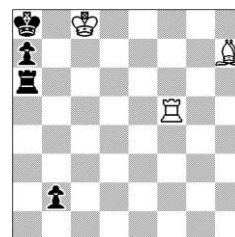
- 1.h7 Rh6
- 2.Kb5 (threat 3.Ra8+) Kb3
3.Kc5 Kc3 4.Kd5 Kd3
5.Ke5 Ke3 6.Kf5 Kf3
7.Rf8! Rxh7 8.Kg6+ wins



Number 7.
White to play and mate in 2
Touw Hian Bwee, 1 Prize,
Schach-Echo, 1980-1

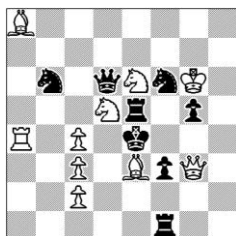
- Tries:
- 1.Rb6? waiting, but 1...b3!
1.Bf6? waiting, but 1...g2!
1.Re7? (2.Qe2), but 1...Rh2!
1.Rf6? (2.Rd6), but 1...Rh6!
1.Bb6? (2.Be3), but 1...c5!
1.Be7? (2.Bxb4). but 1...Nxa6!

- Key: 1.Ba5! (threat 2.Bxb4)
- | | |
|-------------|-------|
| 1..... c5 | 2.Rd6 |
| 1..... Nxa6 | 2.Rd7 |



Number 8.
White to play and Win
E Pogosyants, 1976

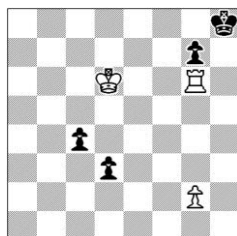
- 1.Kc7! Rc6+ 2.Kxc6 b1=Q
3.Rf8+ Qb8 4.Be4! a5
5.Kc5+ Ka7 6.Rf7+ Ka6
7.Bd3+ Qb5+ 8.Bxb5 mate.



Number 9.
White to play and mate in 2
A Piatetsi, 3 Prize, *Sinf. Scacch*.
1971

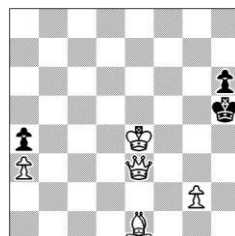
- Try: 1.Bd4?, but 1...Nbx5!
Try: 1.Bc5?, but 1...Qxd5!
Try: 1.Bf4?, but 1...Nfx5!
Try: 1.Bxg5?, but 1...Rxd5!

- Key: 1.Bd2! (threat 2.Nxf6)
- | | |
|-------------|--------|
| 1..... Nbx5 | 2.c5 |
| 1..... Qxd5 | 2.Nc5 |
| 1..... Nfx5 | 2.Qg4 |
| 1..... Rxd5 | 2.Nxg5 |



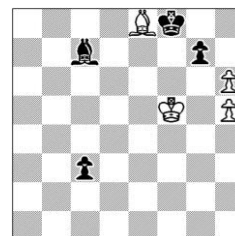
Number 10.
White to play and Win
P Benko, 1981

- 1.Ke7 d2 2.Rd6 c3 3.Kf7 Kh7
4.g4 c2 5.g5 d1=Q 6.Rh6+ gxh6
7.g6+ Kh8 8.g7+ Kh7
9.g8=Q mate.



Number 11.
White to play and mate in 3
T & J Warton, *The Observer*, 1935

- 1.Qb3!
- | | |
|-------------|------------------|
| 1..... axb3 | 2.Kf5 b2 3.g4 |
| 1..... Kg6 | 2.Qg8+ Kf6 3.Bh4 |
| | Kh5 3.g4 |



Number 12.
White to play and Win
L Kaiev, *Shakmaty v SSSR*, 1939

- 1.h7 g6+ 2.Kf6 Be5+ 3.Kxe5 Kg7
4.hxg6 c2 5.h8=Q+ Kxh8
6.Kf6 c1=Q 7.g7+ Kh7
8.Bg6+ Kh6 9.g8=N mate.