

Suomen Tehtäväniekat Award of the selfmates 1994–1995

Last summer the board of ST asked me, to my surprise, to judge the selfmate originals of the ST magazine for the years 1994 and 1995. The request was baffling for sure, but I decided to accept it without further consideration, as I thought that extra delay would not be good.

I have not judged selfmates before, and the experience I have has come almost purely from solving. In giving value judgements to problems, judges have more or less personal tastes. I appreciate selfmates with many variations, especially when these have thematic unity. I do not find manymovers with only one solution very interesting.

An extra difficulty with judging selfmates is that all problems, irrespective of the move number, are judged together. What would a judge of normal two-movers think if he would be given a 7- or 8-mover to ponder, and this should then be placed among the ordinary twomovers?

To avoid being influenced by the names of the composers, I asked Henry Tanner to send the problems without authors' names, which he did. I want to thank him for his troubles.

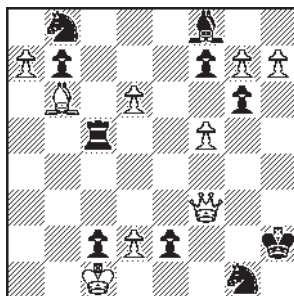
During my long experience of solving I have seen many fine selfmates, which made this competition a small disappointment. There were no really fine problems. I feel that a real expert in this field would have been still harsher when writing the award. I decided to place ten problems, but with the last problems I was quite unsure. Possibly those problems might have been left out. But a line must be drawn somewhere, and I decided to draw it after these. There may be some inflation of the grades in this award, as a Honourable Mention is, after all, a high grade.

In problem no. 665 I would have changed the initial position: wQh6, wPg2. The key would then be 1.g3! (1.g4? Bh5!). In this problem, the wB creates a variation, that is true, but it does not add to the total of mates, as 1.-Qxg3 2.Qh3+ allows the mate Qg2, too.

I did not include no. 463 in the award, because white has a Fleck-like threat and black has moves that do not force white to choose a certain move.

Below is the list of the awarded problems.

Reino Heiskanen Prize ST 1994-95



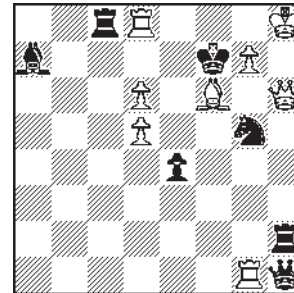
s#16 9+10

1.h8R+! Sh3 2.Rxh3+ Kg1 3.Rg3+ Kh2 4.Rg2+ Kh1 5.Rxg6+ Kh2 6.Rg2+ Kh1 7.Rxe2+ Kg1 8.g8R+! Bg7 9.axb8S! f6 10.Sa6 bxa6 11.d7 a5 12.d8B! a4 13.Bxf6 a3 14.Bb2 a2 15.Ba3 and now either 15.-a1B 16.Bb2 Bxb2# or 15.-a1S 16.d3 Sb3#.

Great sparkling fireworks of promotions. The aesthetic value is added by the pure mating positions in which all the black pieces, except the king, take part. It was

thought that the bPe2 was unnecessary, but I have the opposite view. Without this pawn, white could force the bK to move via e2 to c3, and after captures of the black pieces, there would be a normal pawn mate in the end.

Waldemar Tura 1-2 HM ST 1994-95

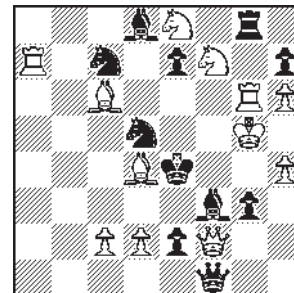


s#2 8+7

1.Bd4! (>2.Qh5+) 1.-Sh3 2.Df4+, 1.-Sh7 2.Qf6+, 1.-Bxd4 2.Rf8+, 1.-Rxd8+ 2.g8Q+. 1.Be5? Sh7!, 1.Be7? Sh3!

The main point of the problem is with choosing the right key. The number of variations is satisfactory.

Ryszard Kapica 1-2 HM ST 1994-95

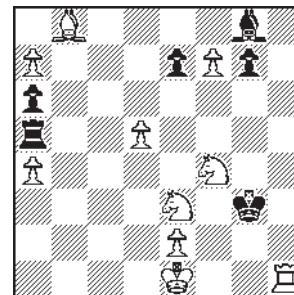


s#2 12+11

1.Bb6! (>2.Sf6+) 1.-R~8 2.Re6+, 1.-Sxe8 2.Rxe7+, 1.-Bg4 2.Qf4+, 1.-B~ 2.Qf5+. 1.Bc5? Sxe8! , 1.Be3? Bg4!

A presentation much like the previous one, only with heavier force. A small finesse is the wR on the 7th row. On a7 it stops the wB moving there.

Juha Saukkola 1 Comm. ST 1994-95

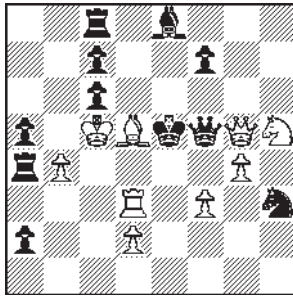


s#8 10+6

1.Sg6+! e5 2.dxe6+ ep Re5 3.fxg8S a5 4.Sh6 gxh6 5.a8B h5 6.Bg2 h4 7.0-0 h3 8.Bh1 h2#.

To show ep-capture, promotion(s) and castling (ie the Valladao theme) in one problem is always a feat.

Lars Larsen
2 Comm. ST 1994-95

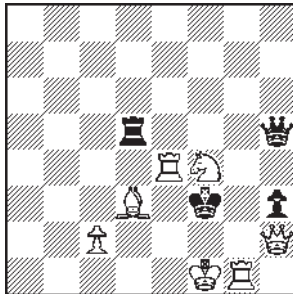


s#3 9+11

1.Rc3! (>2.Qe3+ Qe4 3.Qd4+) 1.-Qxg5 2.Re3+ Qxe3+ 3.d4+, 1.-Rxb4 2.Qe7+ Qe6 3.Qd6+, 1.-Sf4 2.Qxf4+ Qxf4 3.d4+, 1.-Sxg5 2.f4+ Qxf4 3.d4+, 1.-cxd5 2.Qe7+ Qe6 3.Qxc7+. 1.Rb3? a1B!

Enough variations. The repetition of white's d4+ gives a little monotonous impression.

V. Didenko
3 Comm. ST 1994-95

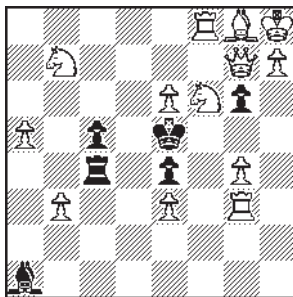


s#3 7+4

1.Sg6! (>2.Sh4+ Qxh4 3.Qf2+) 1.-Qe5 (Qxg6) 2.Rg3+ Qxg3 3.Qf2+, 1.-Qf5 2.Re3+ Kxe3+ 3.Qf2+, 1.-Rxd3 2.Rf4+ Ke3 3.Qe2+.

Variations are created by rather few pieces. In this problem also, the annoying factor is the repetition of the move Qf2+.

Leonid Makaronez
4 Comm. ST 1994-95



s#4 13+6

1.Rc8! (>2.Sd7++ Kd5 3.Qe5+ Bxe5+ 4.Sf6+; 1.-Rc3 2.Qc7+ Kxf6 3.g5+ Kf5 4.Qxc5+, 1.-Rd4 2.Sd5+ Kxd5 3.Rd8+ Kc6 4.Qd7+.

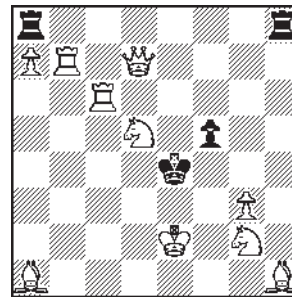
Three full-length variations. However, the mating piece is obvious from the start and some white pieces are used only in one variation.

Send claims to this award before March 14, 2002, to Joose Norri, Meritullinkatu 7 A 13, 00170 Helsinki, Finland. ST subscribers abroad will receive this award in English.

Translation Henry Tanner & Neal Turner

Further Commendations without order:

Andrej Dikusarov
Comm. ST 1994-95

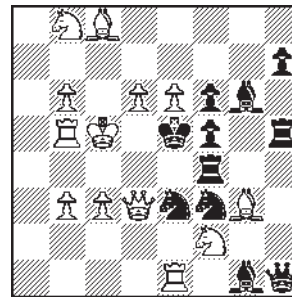


s#8 10+4

1.Sgf4+! Rxh1 2.Qe8+ Rxe8 3.Re7+ Rxe7 4.Re6+ Rxe6 5.Sf6+ Rxf6 6.a8Q+ Rc6 7.Qa4+ Rc4 8.Qc2+ Rxc2#.

An amusing series of sacrifices to open the a8-e4 diagonal. A nice point in the beginning is: not 1.Sge3+? because that would guard the mating square c2.

Vukota Nikoletic (+)
Comm. ST 1994-95

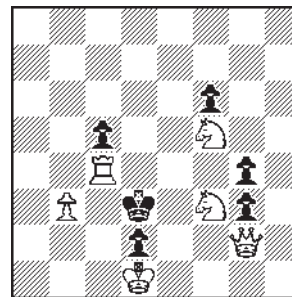


s#3 13+11

1.b4! (>2.Sd7+ Kxe6 3.Qc4+) 1.-Be8 2.Sg4+ fxg4 3.Qe4+, 1.-Sd4 2.Sc6+ Sxc6 3.Qd5+, 1.-Sxe1 2.Qxe3+ Qe4 3.Sd3+.

Pins and line-openings. A heavy setting however for the content. Furthermore, moves by the black f8 create only one real variation; the other variation is only slightly "correcting" the random moves of this knight, eg 1.-Sh4, which would lead to a short mate.

V. Didenko
Comm. ST 1994-95



s#4 6+6

b) bPg4→f7 c) - bPg3, -bPf6.

a) 1.Sh2! gxh2 2.Qh1 g3 3.Qg2 and 3.-h1Q,R+ 4.Qf1+, 3.-h1B 4.Qf3+, 3.-h1S 4.Qh3!

b) 1.S3d4! cxd4 2.Qc6 g2 3.Rc3+ dxc3 4.Qxg2

c) 1.Qg3! gxf3 2.Rxc5 Ke4 3.Qe5+ Kd3 4.Qe2+.

Interesting manoeuvres with the black pawns. The computer may here have had more importance than the composer. It would have been better if, for example, the solutions of two positions had been realized without twinning.

In Turku, October 14, 2001
Pauli Perkonaja