

HCCW 15 JT Final Award – Fairies Section

I was very excited and happy when János Mikitovics asked me to act as a judge for the Hungarian Chess Composers Website Jubilee Tournament for several reasons:

1. I always had a huge admiration for the Hungarian Chess Composition School, particularly famous in helpmates.
 2. The set theme was an excellent opportunity for chess composers to unleash their creativity in the less researched domain of the so called “Anti-Identical” helpmates.
- That’s why I expected to see many original compositions and a fierce battle for the very generous prize fund.

However, after the deadline expiration I received only 14 entries in anonymous format from the tournament director. I immediately started to analyze them enthusiastically hoping their quality will exceed the rather low quantity.

Some compositions failed to show properly the Indian theme, which was a mandatory requirement: “*A white unit makes a critical move in relation to a square where another white piece first intercepts it, and then reopens the line*”. For this reason I had to exclude three entries, sadly including the most appealing setting from the competition (No 4) in which there was no critical move.

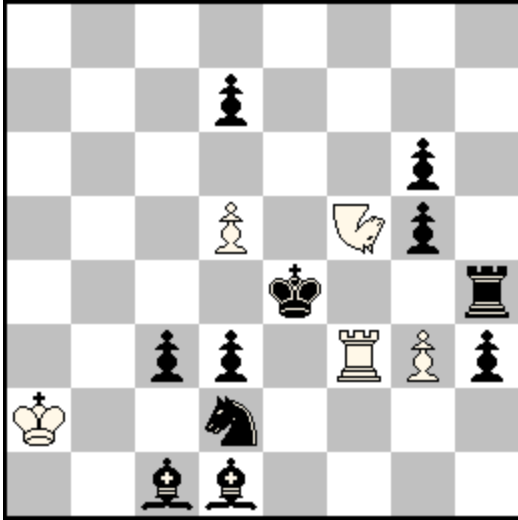
I soon discovered that many entries did not respect what I call the “fairy specificity” criterion: when a fairy piece or a fairy condition is employed, then it should be somehow actively employed in all phases. Putting a static fairy piece on the board, which has nothing to do with the theme, just to stop some admittedly ugly cooks is in my humble opinion a violation of the fairy chess composition aesthetic principles. This basic rule was breached in various degrees by more than half of the compositions which have been subsequently excluded from the present award.

Only two entries eventually remained to be judged. To get a prize, the composition should satisfy the following additional formal requirements:

- The presentation must be in multi-solution form (no twins)
- In the third solution, the front piece should actively sacrifice itself on a free square

None of the problems fulfilled these requirements, hence the following classification.

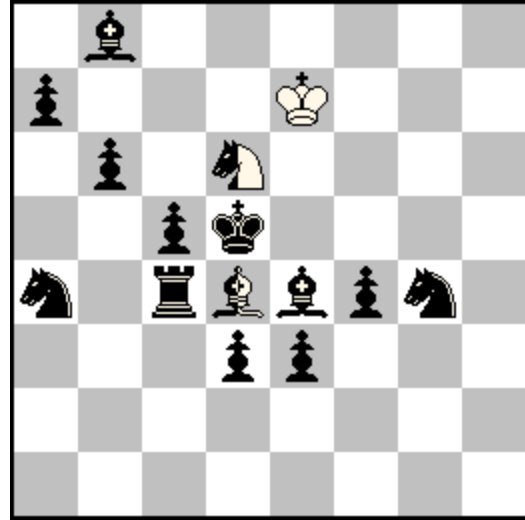
Honorable Mention – 100 €
Sven Trommler & Michael Barth (Germany)



(5 + 11) H#2.5
3 solutions

- 1...Nxd1 2.Rg4 Re3+ 3.Kf5 Re6#
- 1...Ng7 2.Be2 Rf5 3.Ke3 Rf4#
- 1...Rxd3 2.Kxd3 Nb7+ 3.Kc2 Ne1#

Commendation – 70 €
Michael Barth & Sven Trommler (Germany)



(1 + 11 + 2) H#2.5 Take & Make
B: bRc4 → f5 C: bRc4 → f6

- a) 1...nBa1 2.b5 nSxc4-c3+ 3.Kd4 nSxa4-b6#
- b) 1...nBh8 2.e2 nSxf5-f6+ 3.Ke5 nSxg4-e3#
- c) 1...nBxf6-h6 2.Kxd6-b7 nBxf4-f3 3.Ka8 nBxe4-h1#

Honorable Mention – No 7

The black play and strategy is reduced to the minimum: one selfblock, respectively the King's march to the mating square. The only fairy piece – the white Nightrider – displays a good activity in all phases. The author managed to stop cooks by using black pawns and had to give up the model mate from the first solution. The capture of the black Bishop in the first solution is rather crude and shows the difficult trade-offs the composer had to do. This composition earns a higher place due to the active sacrifice of the white Rook in the third solution, although the sacrifice is impure.

Commendation – No 6

As in the previous problem, there is a good homogeneity in the first two solutions, with B2 anticipatorily opening the gate for the arrival of the neutral Knight. The passive capture of the neutral Knight in the third solution is more than compensated by the high density of Take & Make effects and a third mate with the neutral Bishop in the corner. Shifting the black Rook in the twins facilitates a lot the realization of the theme, hence the lower classification.

Many thanks to the director and the participants for their efforts and apologies for those who consider my criteria being too harsh! I can only hope you will all feel there is some harmony in the above two compositions.

Vlaicu Crişan
14th April 2023, Cluj-Napoca