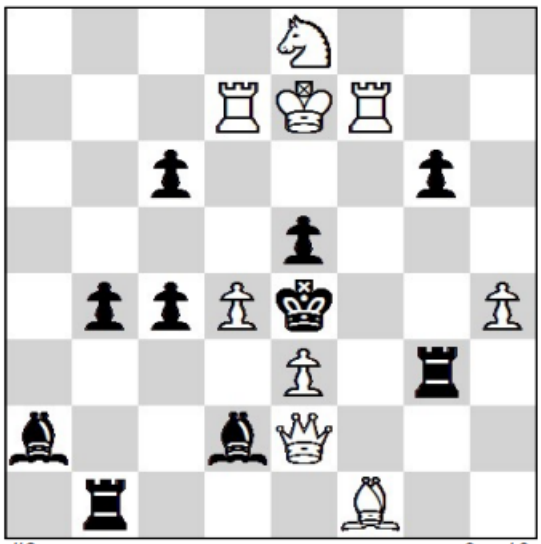
Some useful notes with respect to the Chess Solving Event which will be organised at Geusselt on the 10th of January. First of all it should be mentioned that there are numerous kinds of chess problems, with only a few of them following the rules of classical chess. Anyone can create a new 'chess world' with a different set of rules, and compose problems based on these rules (fairy chess problems). Nevertheless, there are 6 standard categories which are included in official competitions. Let's have a look at them and at the way an answering sheet is filled. Please have in mind that every fully correct problem gives 5 points. The following examples are from the recent World Championship.

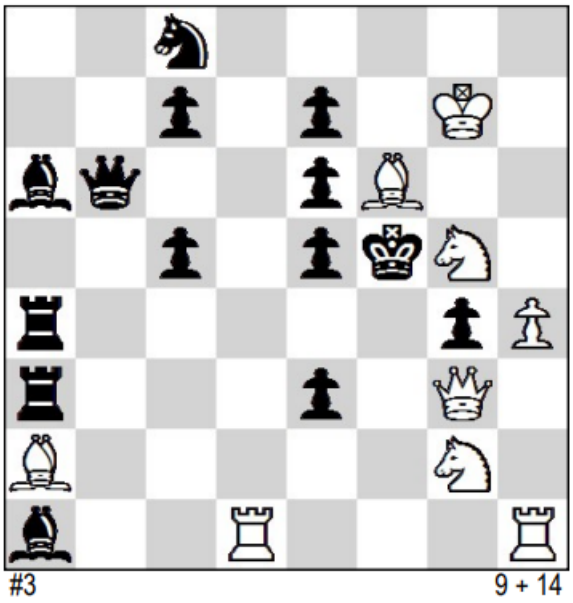
1) **2-movers**. In orthodox problems there is the n-1 rule, the solver has to write up until the n-1 move. That is to say that in the case of mates-in-2 he simply writes the key (first move).



#2 9 + 10

The solver had to write simply 'Rf5' in order to get 5 points.

2) **3-movers**. In mates-in-3 the solver writes the key (first move) as well as the threat created. Unless there is a zugzwang where the solver writes all the possible continuations, black has some moves which defend against the main threat. The solver has to write which 2nd move of white manages to beat these defences and mate in 3.




Solution: 1.Rd8 threatening 2.Rf8 (remember, the solver is not obliged to write the last move)

Defences: i) 1…..Rc4 (the idea is to answer 2.Rf8 with Nd6 as now the diagonal a2-g8 is closed) 2.Rd4

ii) 1…..Bc4 (same idea as above) 2.Rd3

iii) 1…..Qb3 (same idea) 2.N:b3

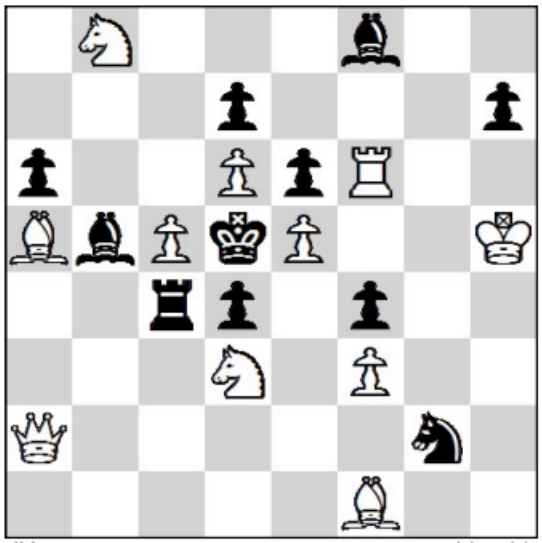
iv) 1….Rb3 (same idea) 2.Bb1

v) 1….Bb5 (answer 2.Rf8 with Be8) 2.Bb1

In this problem we have the key and 5 defences against it, if a solver misses one defence (as I did) he gets 4 out of 5 points, if he misses 2 defences he gets 3/5, if 3 then 2.5/5 and so on.

It should be also underlined that in problem solving we ignore all the lines mating in fewer moves than requested by the problem. Here for instance, 1….e4 defends successfully against 2.Rf8, but as white delivers immediate mate with 2.Qf4# we don't bother dealing with this line.

3) **Moremovers.** It can be a mate-in-4, or in-5, in-6 etc. More or less the same process as in the 3-movers, but the solver has to write up until the 3rd move.



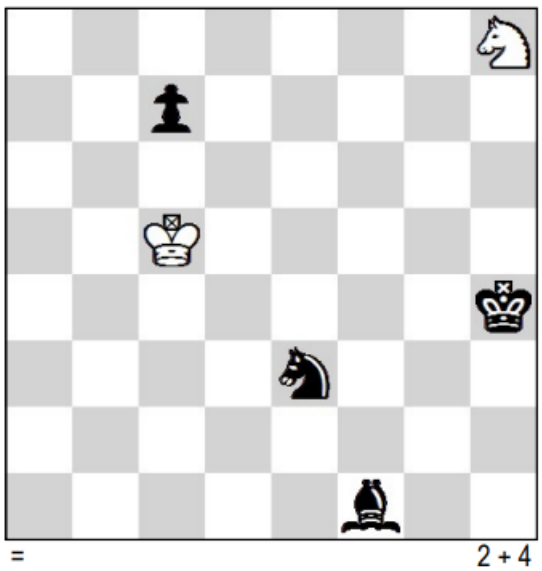
#4 11 + 11

Solution: 1. Rf5 threatening 2.Nb4 K:c5 3.N:d7 (B:d7 4.Q:c4#)

Defences: i) 1….e:f5 2.Q:g2 (threat 3.Qg8#) Bg7 3.Q:g7 (followed by either Qf7 or Qg8)

ii) 1…..Ne3 2.N:f4 K:c5 3.Qa3 (Rb4 4.Q :b4#)

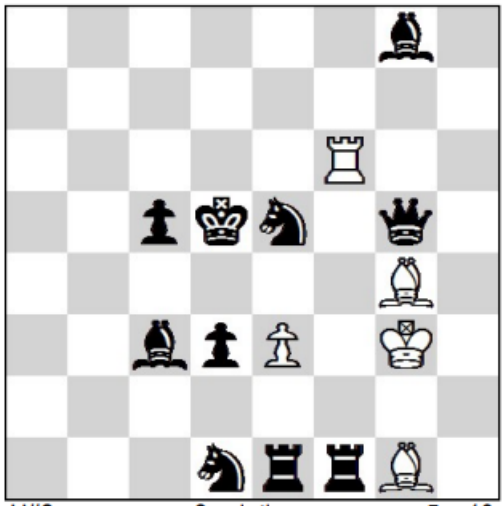
4) **Endgame studies**. We have to find either a win or a draw in a seemingly lost position (we always 'play' the white side). There should be one line (no sub-variations), usually consisting of 6-10 moves, sometimes with spectacular sacrifices, and ending in an aesthetically beautiful position. A table-base draw (eg. R+B VS R) is considered a draw, no need to prove it on the board.



= 2 + 4

Solution: 1.Kc6 Kg5 2.Nf7 (a solver arriving here gets the first half a point) Kf6 3.Nd8 (1 point) Ke7 4.K:c7 (2 points) Nd5 5.Kc6 (3 points) Nb4 6.Kc7 Na6 7.Kc8 (4 points) Bg2 (or Bb5) 8.Nc6 (5 points) B:c6 stalemate. Black has to capture the knight, otherwise the knight escapes and it is a table-base draw. As you might have noticed, points are allocated only on white's moves.

5) **Helpmates.** Black pieces collaborate with white pieces in order to mate the poor black king. Often there are many solutions, so the 5 points are splitted accordingly. Two important things to have in mind, black plays first and the solver has to write ALL the moves up until the mate.



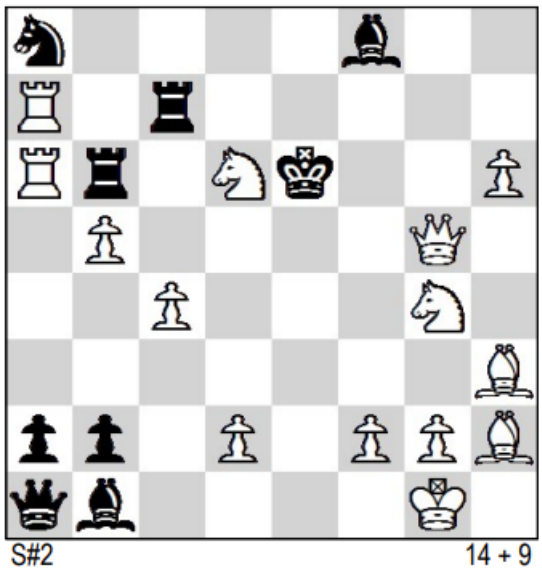
H#2 3 solutions 5 + 10
(1,5 / 3,25 / 5)

Solutions: i) 1.Q:e3 Bf3 2.Kd4 Rf4 #

ii) 1.Nf7 e4 2.Ke5 Re6 #

iii) 1.Ke4 Rf2 2.K:e3 Re2#

6) **Selfmates.** Black doesn't want to mate white, but white forces him to do so. We write the key (first move) along with the threat it creates. Black has some defences against the threat, we write how white deals with these defences. As black's last move is forced, it can be omitted.



S#2 14 + 9

Solution: 1.h7 threatening 2.Nh6 (Bf5#)

Defences: i) 1….R:b5 2.Ne5 (Bf5#)

ii) 1….R:c4 2.Qf5 (B:f5#)

iii) 1….Rc5 2.Qg6 (B:g6#)

iv) 1….Rf7 2.Nf6 (Bf5#)

One point for finding the key and the threat, and one point for every defence.

Don’t be terrified by the difficulty of the problems, the set you will compete will be easier than the examples given. You will be called to solve 6 problems in 120 minutes, one problem from each category.

In the meantime I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year!