



THE PUZZLING SIDE OF CHESS

Jeff Coakley

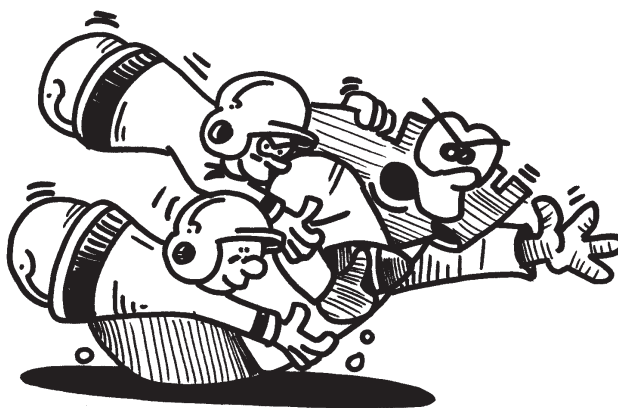
SERIES-MATES: Serious Offence

number 231

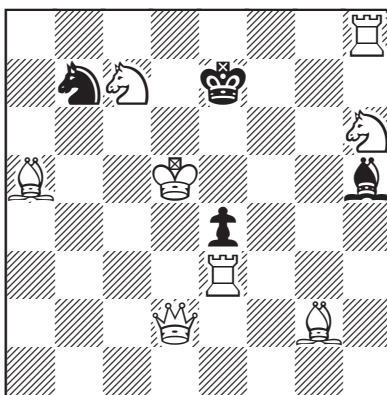
January 26, 2024

Lost somewhere in the archives of forgotten sayings is a simple truth: “The best offence is a strong offence.” And what could be stronger than playing multiple moves in a row?

To prove the point, this column presents seven problems. As usual, we begin with the shortest form of series-mate, the double whammy.



Double Whammy 72

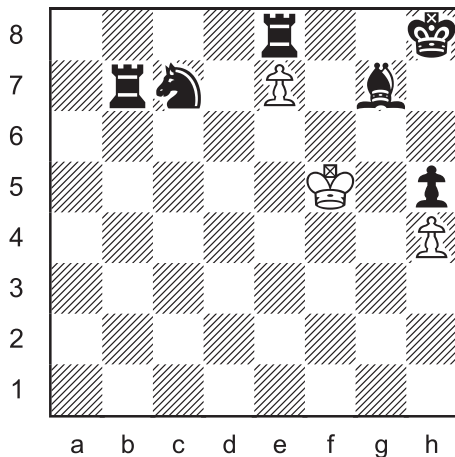


White plays two moves in a row to mate Black.

The first move may not be check. Either move may be a capture. Both moves may be with the same piece. Black does not get a turn.

The majority of series-mates involve a pawn promotion. The following twins are no exception.

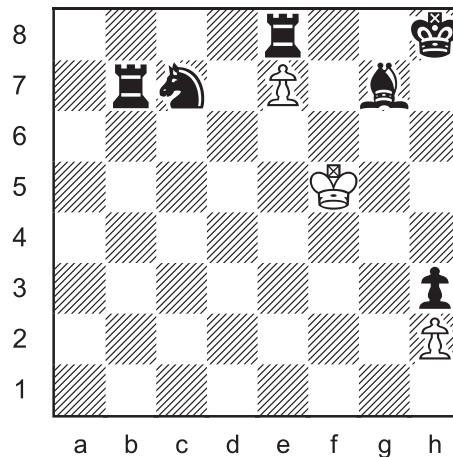
Multi-Wham 78



series-mate in 17

White plays seventeen moves in a row to mate Black.

Multi-Wham 79



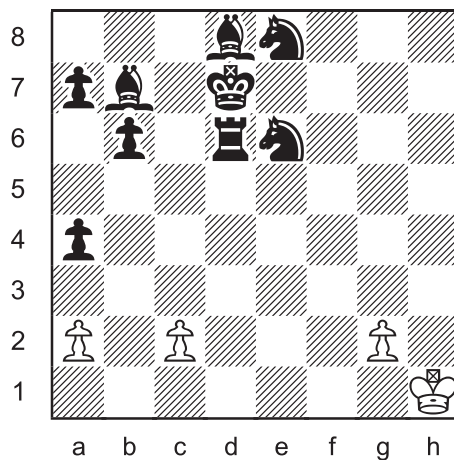
series-mate in 18

White plays eighteen moves in a row to mate Black.

Only the final move may give check. Captures are allowed. Black does not get a turn. White may not place their own king in check, even if they get out of check on a subsequent turn.

White has three unmoved pawns in the next problem by German composer Norbert Geissler. Can you guess which one will deliver the mate?

Multi-Wham 80

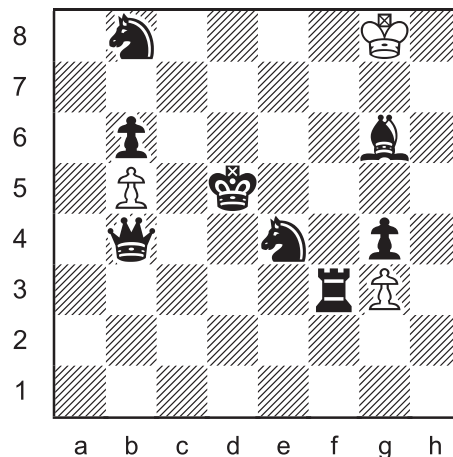


series-mate in 17

White plays seventeen moves in a row to mate Black.

Unlike the previous puzzle, there are very few alternative lines to calculate in the next series-mate. That makes it much easier to solve.

Multi-Wham 81



series-mate in 18

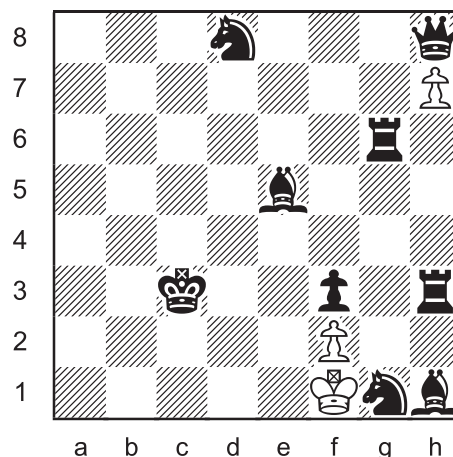
White plays eighteen moves in a row to mate Black.

Purely by coincidence, the following problem, multi-wham number 82 on the *Puzzling Side*, is a mate in 82 moves. It's a marathon run by American composer George Sphicas. Although far from the record length, it elegantly combines classic king circuits with a *model mate*.

Multi-Wham 82

George Sphicas 1989

Problemkiste

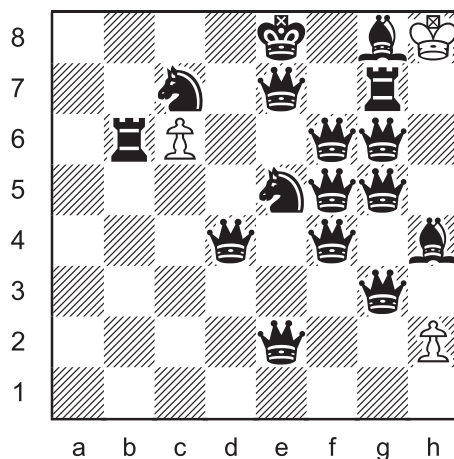


series-mate in 82

White plays eighty-two moves in a row to mate Black.

Black has a full “super-charged” army in our final puzzle. But they are no match for White’s barrage of moves.

Multi-Wham 83



series-mate in 24

White plays twenty-four moves in a row to mate Black.

Article 1.2 of the FIDE Laws states that “*players move alternately.*” In a game of chess, playing two or more moves in a row is a serious offence. Punishable in chess court by fines or forfeiture.



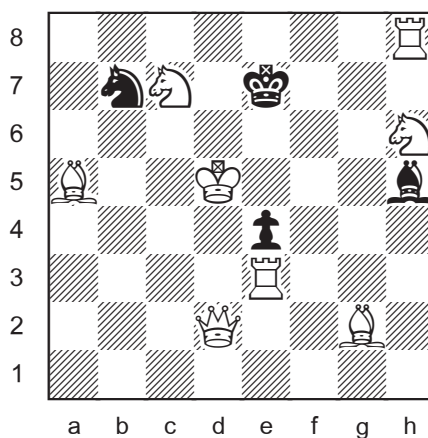
SOLUTIONS

All problems except multi-wham 80 and 82 by J. Coakley, *Puzzling Side of Chess* (2024).

PDF hyperlinks. You can advance to the solution of any puzzle by clicking on the underlined title above the diagram. To return to the puzzle, click on the title above the solution diagram.

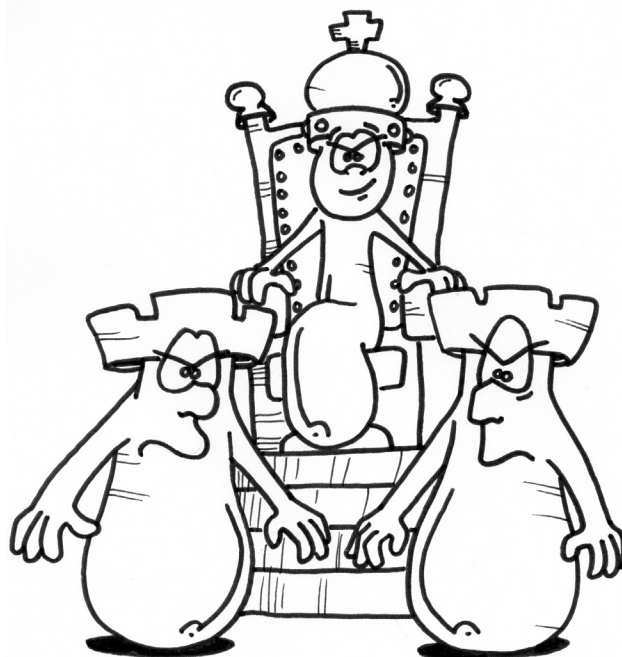
Archives. Past columns are available in the *Puzzling Side* archives.

Double Whammy 72

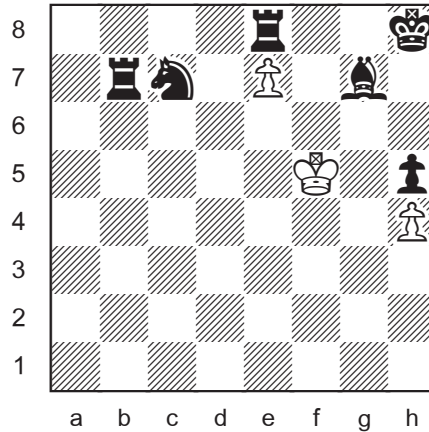


1.Kxe4 2.Kf5#

As in days of yore, the king boldly leads his army into battle.



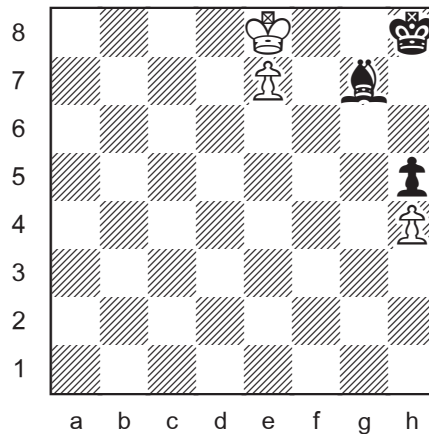
Multi-Wham 78



series-mate in 17

1.Ke4 The white king goes for the rook on e8. The pawn on h5 can wait. Starting 1.Kg5? 2.Kxh5 requires two extra turns, mating in the same way as the solution but on move 19.

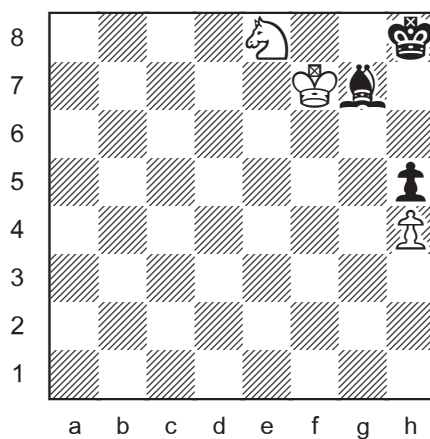
2.Kd3 3.Kc4 4.Kc5 5.Kc6 6.Kxb7 7.Kxc7 8.Kd7 9.Kxe8



10.Kf7 11.e8=N

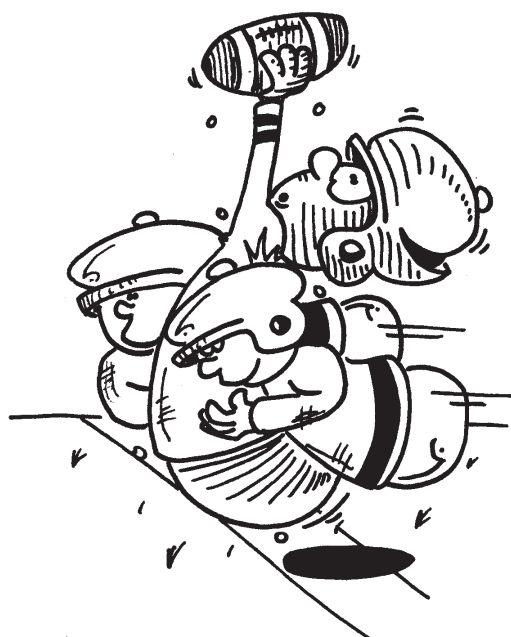
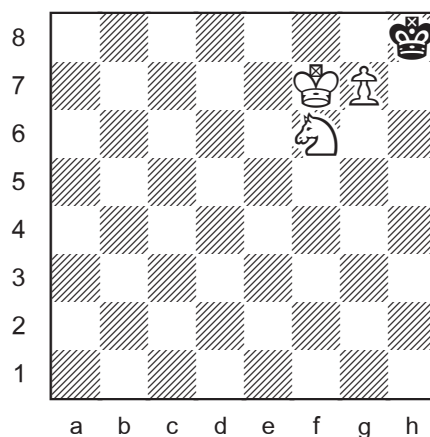
A queen or rook would check. A bishop takes two moves too many.



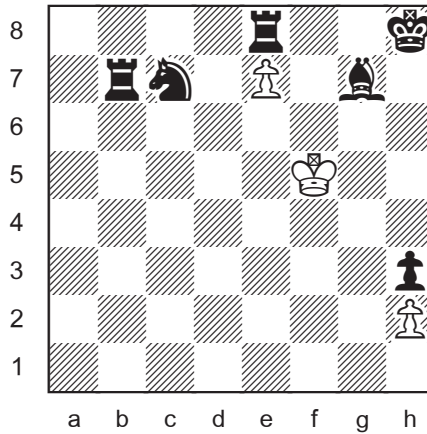


12.Nf6 Mate is possible after 12.Nxg7? but it is much slower.
 For example, 13.Nxh5 14.Nf4 15.h5 16.h6 17.h7 18.Kg6
 19.Kh6 20.Ng6#.

13.Nxh5 14.Nf6 15.h5 16.h6 17.hxg7#



Multi-Wham 79

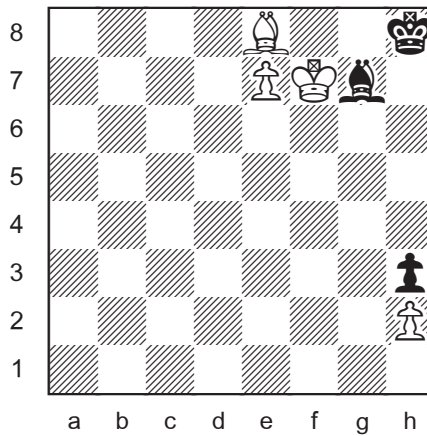


series-mate in 18

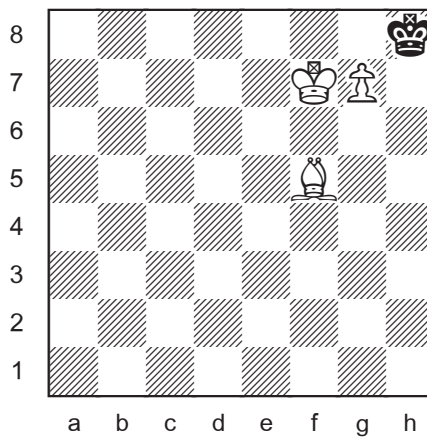
1.Ke4 2.Kd3 3.Kc4 4.Kc5 5.Kc6 6.Kxb7 7.Kxc7 8.Kd7 9.Kxe8 10.Kf7

Same first ten moves as in the previous twin.

11.e8=B This time a bishop is quicker! A knight takes two more turns.



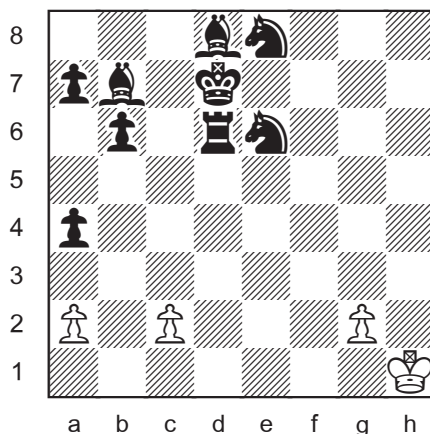
12.Bd7 13.Bxh3 14.Bf5 15.h4 16.h5 17.h6 18.hxg7#



Multi-Wham 80

Norbert Geissler 1998

Problemkiste



series-mate in 17

A relatively rare series-mate where the white king plays no part. However, there is a pin involving him. The white g-pawn cannot move because it is pinned by the black bishop on b7.

Unpinning by *1.Kh2?* and promoting the g-pawn with *6.g8=Q* takes a turn too many. For example, *7.c4 8.c5 9.cxb6 10.bxa7 11.a8=Q 12.Qb8 then ...17.Kf7 18.Qxe8#*.

Promoting to knight with *6.g8=N?* also requires 18 moves to mate. See the line below with *5.a8=Q*.

So the fun begins with the c-pawn.

1.c4 2.c5 3.cxb6 4.bxa7 5.a8=R

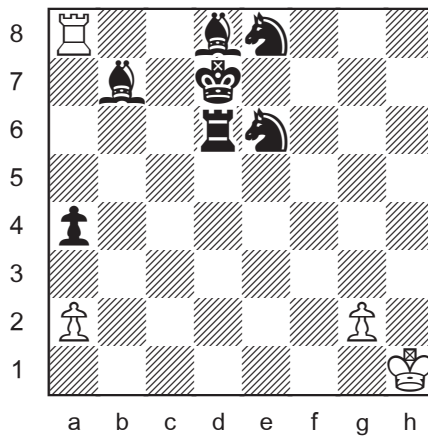
Underpromotion to rook is the most efficient way to mate.

A queen would not be able to take any black piece because of check. But there is mate in 18 with *5.a8=Q?* For example, *6.Qa5 7.Qc5 8.Kg1, then ...13.g8=N 14.Nh6 15.Nf5 16.Nxd6 17.Nf7 18.Ne5#*.

The same mate in 18 is possible with a knight promo. *5.a8=N?* *6.Nc7 7.Nb5 8.Nxd6 9.Nf7 10.Kg1, then ...15.g8=Q 16.Qg5 17.Qc5 18.Ne5#*.

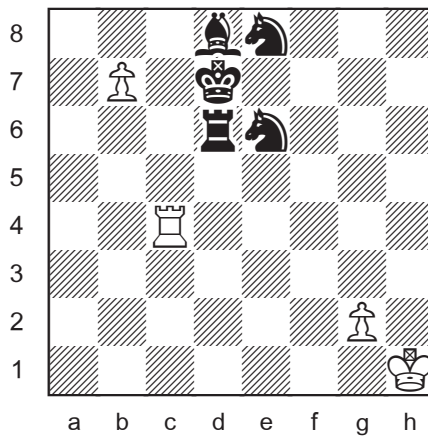
Promoting to bishop is good for mate in 20. *5.a8=B?* *6.Bxb7*, followed by *...12.Kf7* and *... 17.g8=Q 18.Qg1 19.Qc1 20.Qc8#*.

A lot of analysis to decide on the right move. And plenty of precision by composer Geissler.



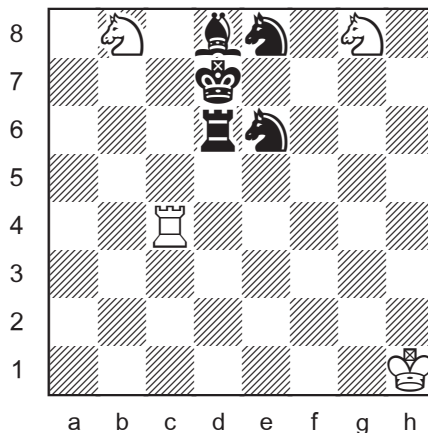
6.Rxa4 7.Rc4 The rook clears a path for the a-pawn and takes control of the open c-file.

8.a4 9.a5 10.a6 11.axb7 Unpins the g-pawn without a king move.

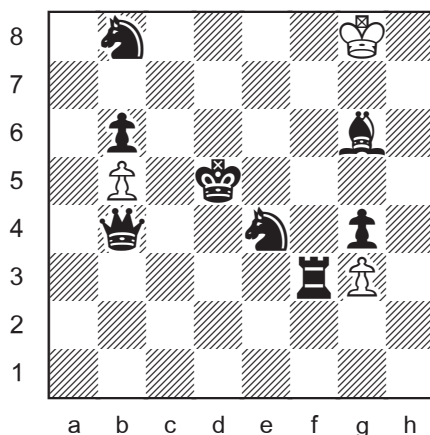


12.g4 13.g5 14.g6 15.g7 Are you ready for the grand two knight finale?

16.g8=N 17.b8=N# Wham, bam!



Multi-Wham 81



series-mate in 18

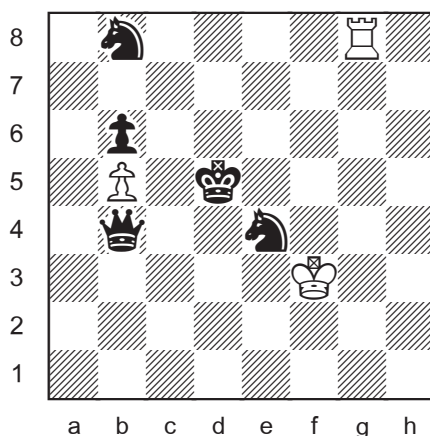
With the black rook controlling the f-file, it's obvious that the white king's first task is to capture the pawn on g4 and then the rook.

1.Kg7 2.Kxg6 3.Kh5 4.Kxg4 5.Kxf3

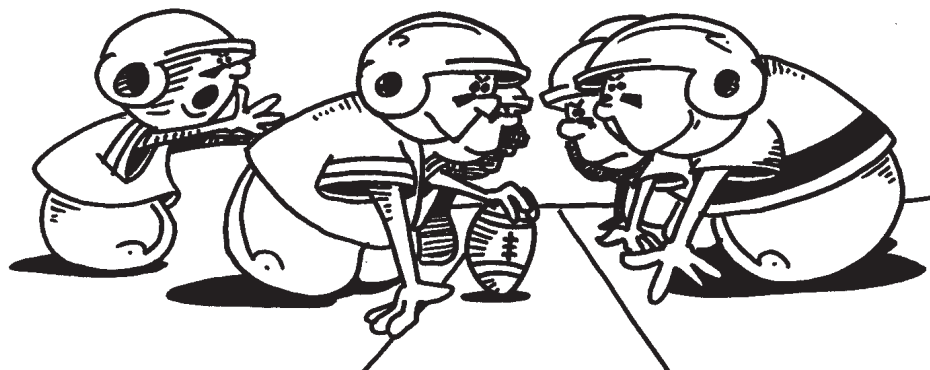
Now the g-pawn can proceed to promote.

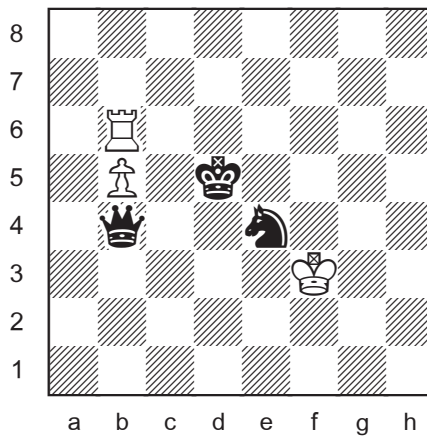
6.g4 7.g5 8.g6 9.g7 10.g8=R

A queen or bishop would give check. And a knight would not be able to free the white b-pawn by capturing on b6 because of check.



11.Rxb8 12.Rxb6 Do you see the winning play now?

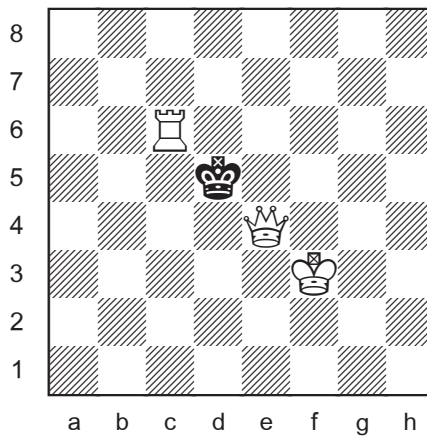




13.Rc6 The rook takes his place in the mating net.

14.b6 15.b7 16.b8=Q An easy choice.

17.Qxb4 18.Qxe4#



A symmetrical splitting of the board along a long diagonal.

cheer on the Bills . . . hex the opposition

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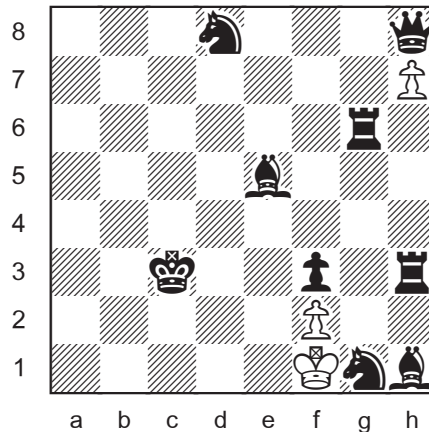
Cheer on the Bills . . . put a hex on the opposition. With every purchase of \$10.00 or more you are entitled to one FREE WHAMMY. What is a whammy? With a whammy you cheer on the Bills by waving the blue side or hex the opposition by waving the red side.

Join the whammy cheering section. Drawings will not be held weekly, but each Saturday prior to a home game. Free coffee, donuts, & pop will be served. Each whammy cheer person will receive a whammy, a whammy hat, a whammy t-shirt, and a whammy cushion. Entry forms in store & below.

Multi-Wham 82

George Sphicas 1989

Problemkiste



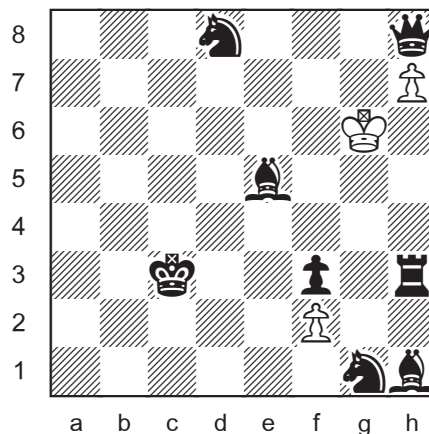
series-mate in 82

It is impossible for the white king to free the h-pawn since it is blockaded by the black queen. In a series-mate, a king can never capture a queen because he cannot move next to her.

So the white king must liberate his f-pawn by taking the pawn on f3. The black pawn is guarded by three pieces which all need to be eliminated before the pawn can be taken. Additionally, the three defenders are also guarded. The last piece in the "chain of defence" is the rook on g6 which protects the knight on g1.

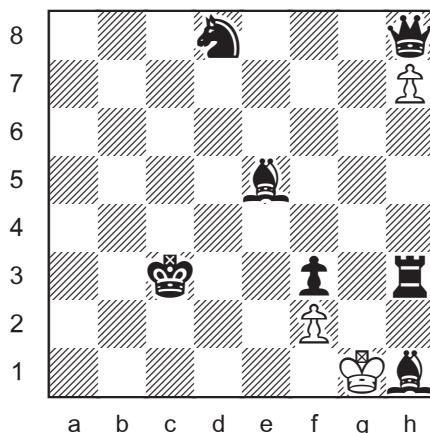
The task is easy to calculate, but it cannot be accomplished quickly. A long journey lies ahead. The first target is the rook on g6.

1.Ke1 2.Kd1 3.Kc1 4.Kb1 5.Ka2 6.Ka3 7.Ka4 8.Kb5 9.Kc5 10.Kd5 11.Ke4 12.Kf5 13.Kxg6



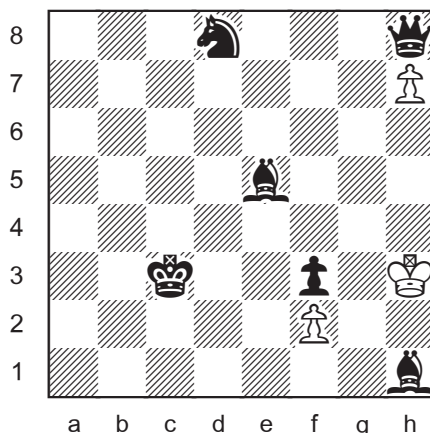
Now the knight on g1 is unguarded. The only way for the king to get there is back the way he just came.

14.Kf5 15.Ke4 16.Kd5 17.Kc5 18.Kb5 19.Ka4 20.Ka3 21.Ka2
 22.Kb1 23.Kc1 24.Kd1 25.Ke1 26.Kf1 27.Kxg1

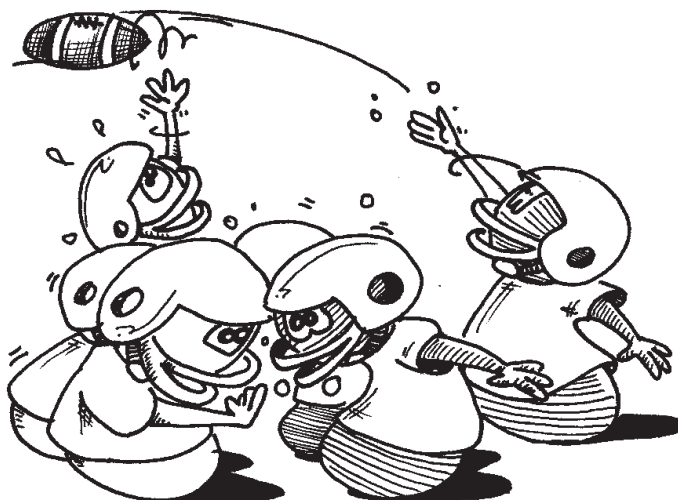


The rook on h3 is no longer protected, so the king goes around the board again to capture it.

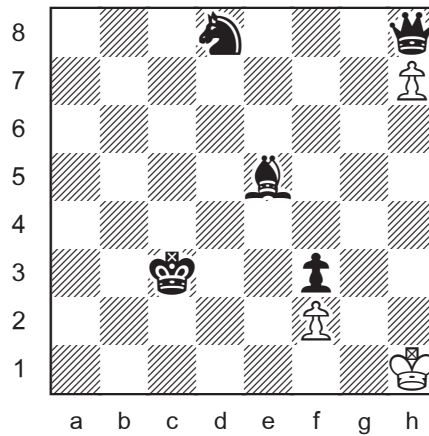
28.Kf1 29.Ke1 30.Kd1 31.Kc1 32.Kb1 33.Ka2 34.Ka3 35.Ka4
 36.Kb5 37.Kc5 38.Kd5 39.Ke4 40.Kf5 41.Kg4 42.Kxh3



Another defender gone. Now back to get the unguarded bishop on h1.

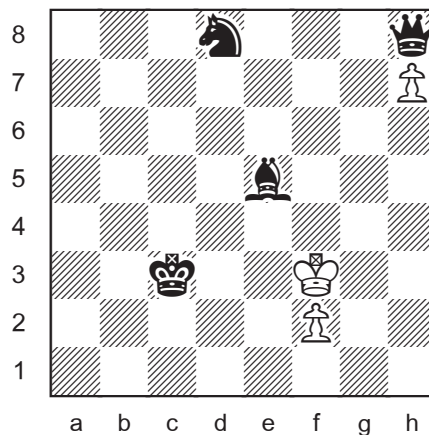


43.Kg4 44.Kf5 45.Ke4 46.Kd5 47.Kc5 48.Kb5 49.Ka4 50.Ka3
 51.Ka2 52.Kb1 53.Kc1 54.Kd1 55.Ke1 56.Kf1 57.Kg1 58.Kxh1

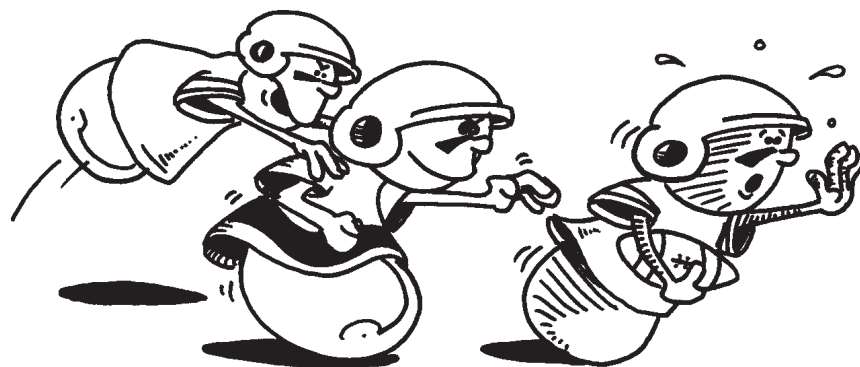


Finally, the blockading pawn is without a guard. One last circuit for the white king. Five if your counting.

59.Kg1 60.Kf1 61.Ke1 62.Kd1 63.Kc1 64.Kb1 65.Ka2 66.Ka3
 67.Ka4 68.Kb5 69.Kc5 70.Kd5 71.Ke4 72.Kxf3

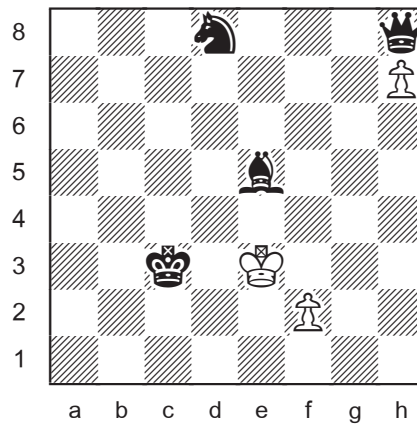


In a way, this is where the real problem starts. Freeing the f-pawn was just preliminary foreplay. Series-mate in 10 from here.



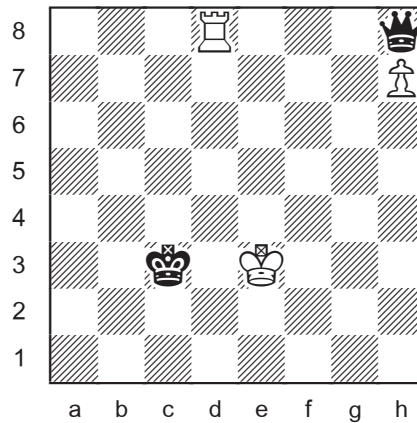
73.Ke3

The king moves opposite his counterpart so that he controls the three intervening squares on the d-file.



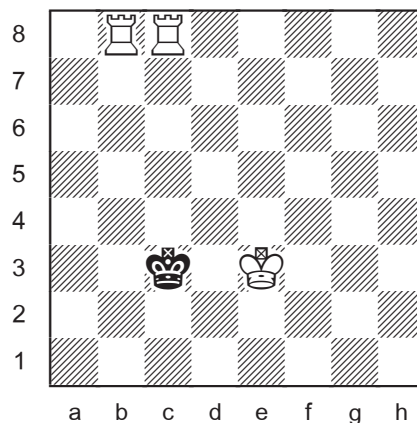
74.f4 75.fxe5 Advancing to f8 and promoting to queen takes one extra move. For example, 75.f5? 76.f6 77.f7 78.f8=Q 79.Qxh8 80.Qxd8 81.h8=Q 82.Qg8 83.Qd2# (or 80.Qe8 81.Qa4 82.h8=B!? 83.Bxe5#).

76.e6 77.e7 78.exd8=R A queen could not capture on h8.



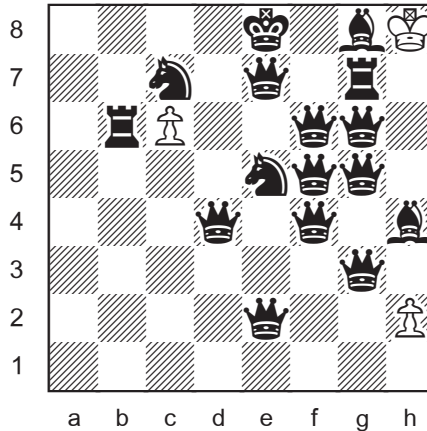
79.Rxh8 80.Rb8 81.h8=R A queen would give check.

82.Rhc8# Tada!



Model mate: Every white piece takes part in the mate. No square in the black king's field is attacked more than once.

Multi-Wham 83



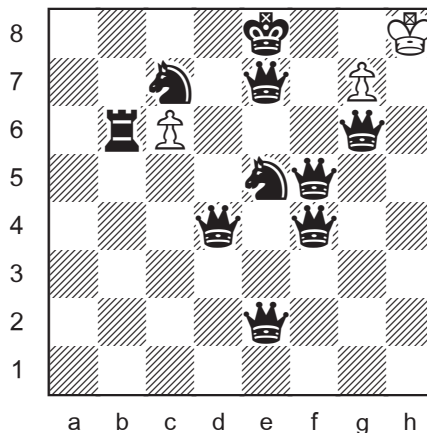
series-mate in 24

There's no way the white king is going anywhere for a while, so it's up to the h-pawn to make something happen.

1.hxg3 2.gxh4

Hard to foresee, but taking the bishop is the right path. A promoted knight will capture the queen on f4 later.

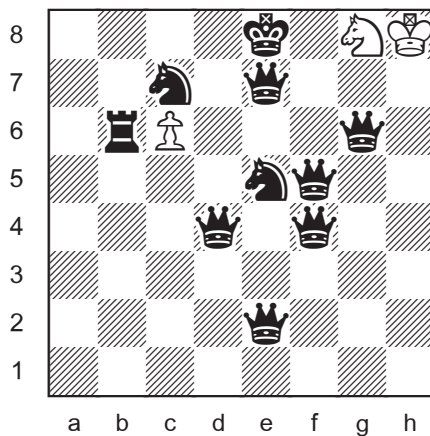
3.hxg5 4.gxf6 5.fxg7 6.Kxg8 7.Kh8



8.g8=N

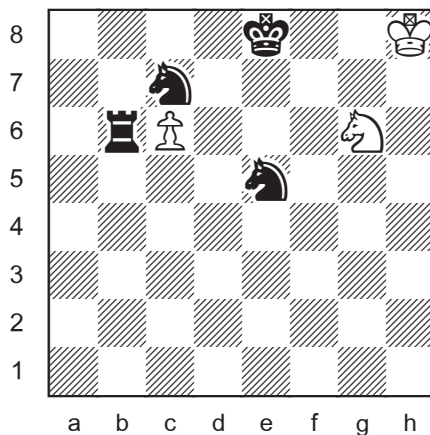
A queen or rook would check. A bishop could not capture on c7 or g6.





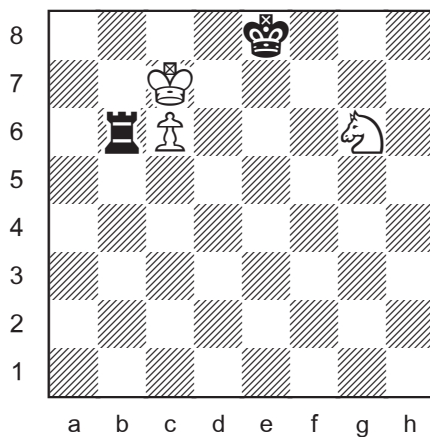
Now the knight gobbles up six queens in six turns.

9.Nxe7 10.Nxf5 11.Nxd4 12.Nxe2 13.Nxf4 14.Nxg6



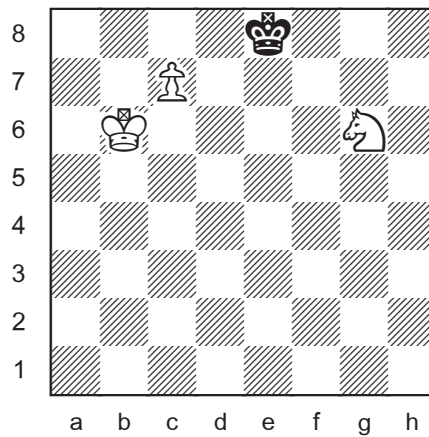
The knight cannot free the c-pawn by capturing on c7 because it would be check. That task belongs to the king.

15.Kg7 16.Kf6 17.Kxe5 18.Kd6 19.Kxc7



Five moves to go.

20.Kxb6 21.c7

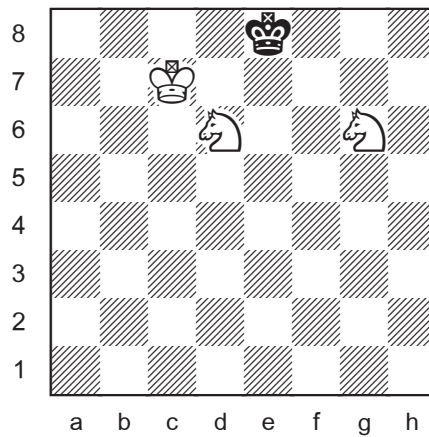


22.c8=N

One faster than 22.Kc6? 23.Kd6 24.Ke6 25.c8=Q#.

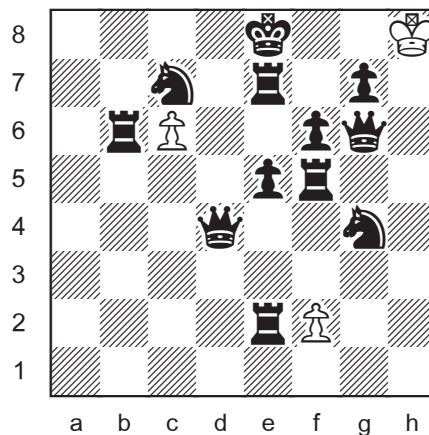
23.Kc7 24.Nd6#

What could be more perfect than a model mate with two knights versus a lone king?



For any minimalists in the audience, here is a less charged version of the same problem.

Multi-Wham 83b

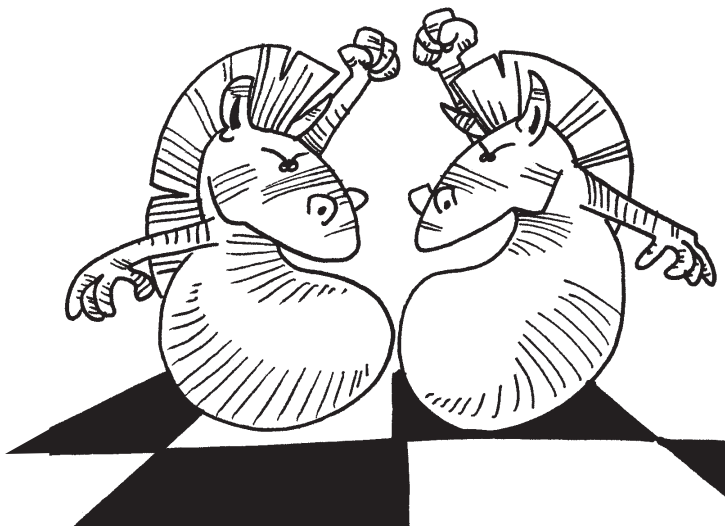


series-mate in 22

Multi-Wham 83b

Solution: A similar slightly shorter line with the same final position.

1.f3 2.fxg4 3.g5 4.gxf6 5.fxg7 6.g8=N 7.Nxe7 8.Nxf5 9.Nxd4
10.Nxe2 11.Nf4 12.Nxg6 13.Kg7 14.Kf6 15.Kxe5 16.Kd6 17.Kxc7
18.Kxb6 19.c7 20.c8=N 21.Kc7 22.Nd6#



Until next time!

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