

THE PUZZLING SIDE OF CHESS

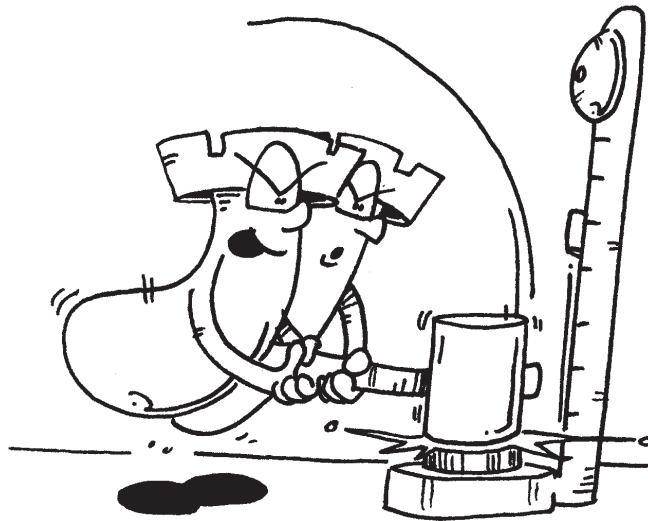
Jeff Coakley

SERIES-MATES: Serious Stuff

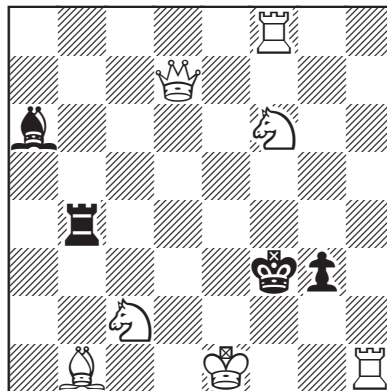
number 235

May 26, 2024

This column presents six more problems in our “series on series”. As usual, we start with a double whammy, then work our way up to more serious stuff.



Double Whammy 73

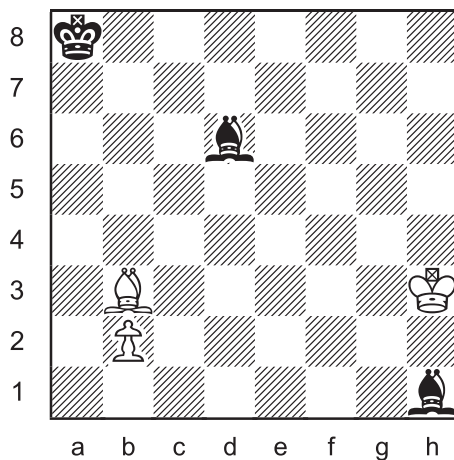


White plays two moves in a row to mate Black.

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.

Our first multi-wham is an extension of a problem by Croation composer Ivo Tominic. Two other versions are given after the solution.

Multi-Wham 84



series-mate in 19

White plays nineteen moves
in a row to mate Black.

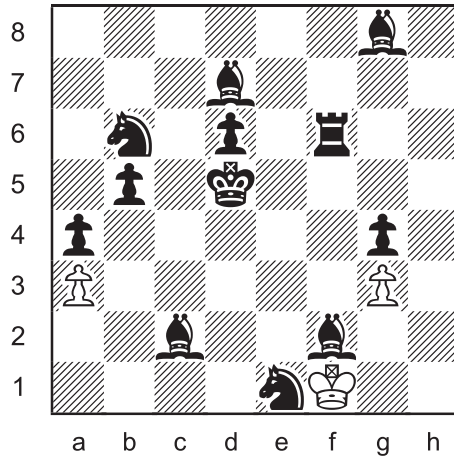
*Only the final move may give check. Captures are allowed.
Black does not get a turn. White may not place their own king in check,
even if they get out of check on a subsequent turn.*



Whammy tickets sold here. Step right up!

The next problem is the longest mate in this column. But long doesn't necessarily mean hard. Sometimes it just takes a lot of moves to get around the board.

Multi-Wham 85



series-mate in 50

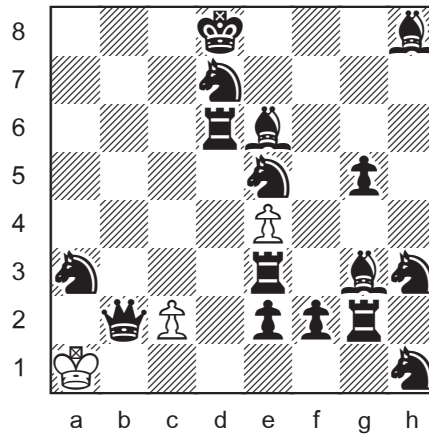
White plays fifty moves in a row to mate Black.



How many whammies can you take?

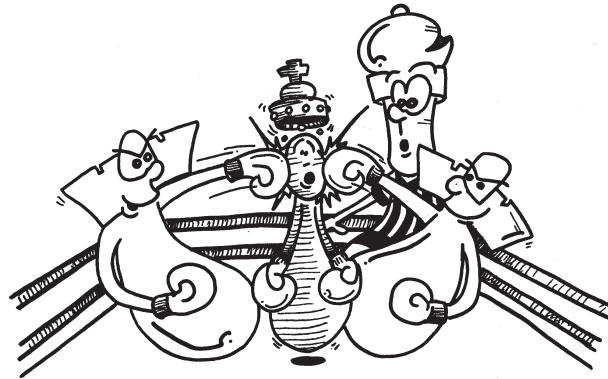
White has two pawns against a full black army in the next problem.
How the mighty do fall.

Multi-Wham 86



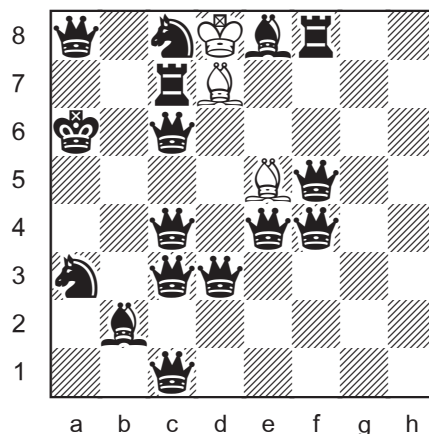
series-mate in 38

White plays thirty-eight moves in a row to mate Black.



The following multi-wham is the shortest in the column, but may be the hardest to solve, given the multitude of confusing options.
It's White with king and two bishops versus "super-charged" Black.

Multi-Wham 87

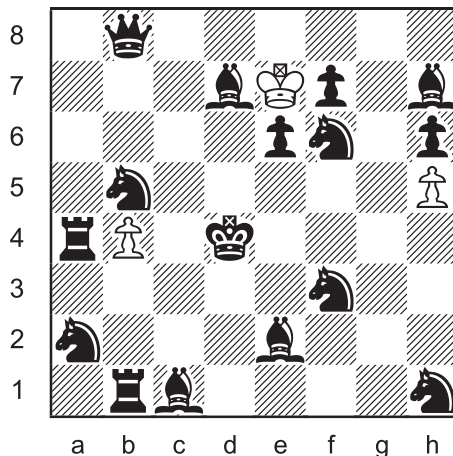


series-mate in 17

White plays seventeen moves in a row to mate Black.

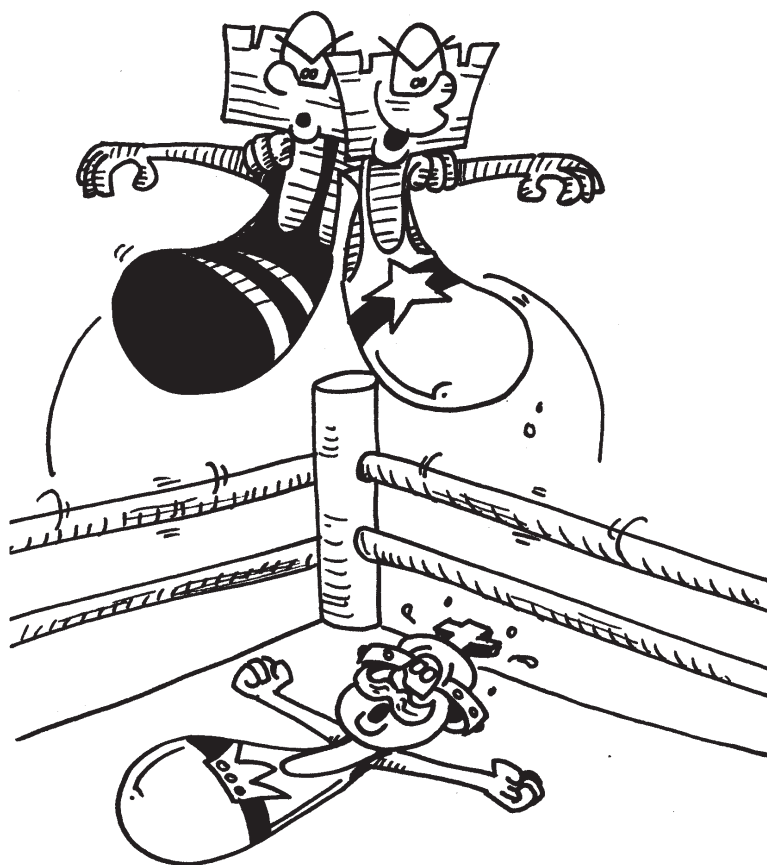
The previous problems had relatively few pawn promotions. It looks likely that there will be two in our final puzzle. Once again, Black has the maximum 16 pieces. White just two pawns, and 45 whammies!

Multi-Wham 88



series-mate in 45

White plays forty-five moves in a row to mate Black.



Double Coup de Grâce

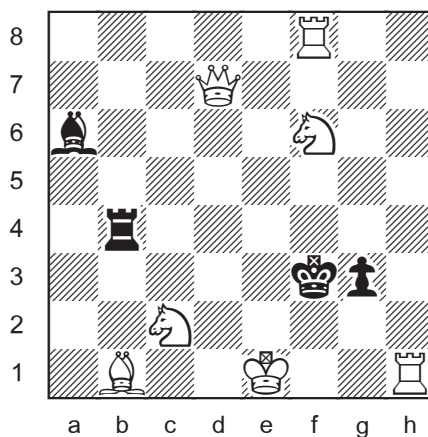
SOLUTIONS

All problems are by J. Coakley, *Puzzling Side of Chess* (2024).
84, 84b, and 84c are versions of a series-mate by Ivo Tominic, 1978.

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.

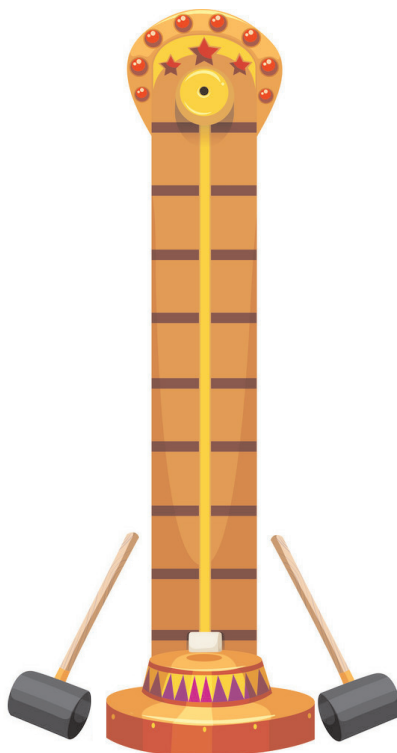
Archives. Past columns are available in the *Puzzling Side* archives.

Double Whammy 73



1.Qb5 2.0-0#

The queen obstructs the black bishop to allow castling.

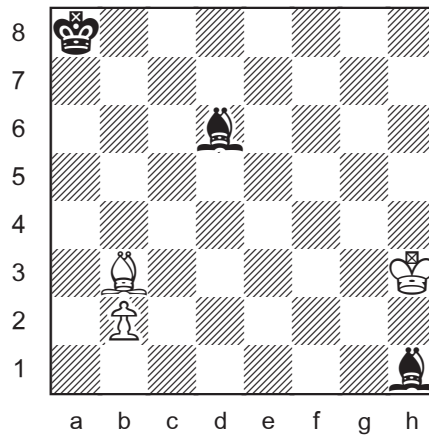


Multi-Wham 84

J. Coakley 2024

Puzzling Side of Chess

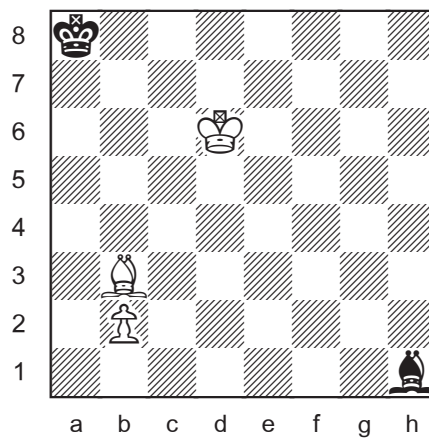
version of Ivo Tominic 1978, *Mat (Belgrade)*



series-mate in 19

There is no way for the white pawn to promote, so it is clear that the white bishop will eventually deliver mate on the long diagonal. Do you see the mating pattern? To achieve it, the white king must first eliminate both black bishops.

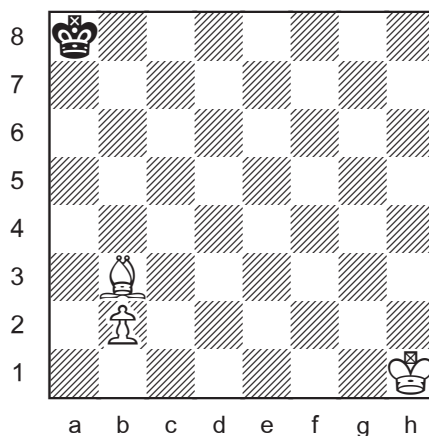
1.Kg4 2.Kf5 3.Ke6 4.Kxd6 One down.



5.Ke5 6.Kf4 7.Kg3 8.Kh2 9.Kxh1 Two gone.

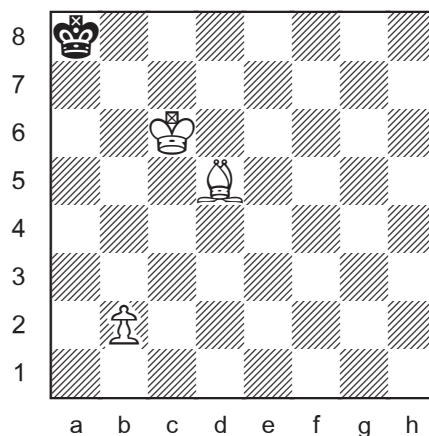


Reaching the position below, which is Ivo Tominic's original problem.
Series-mate in 10.

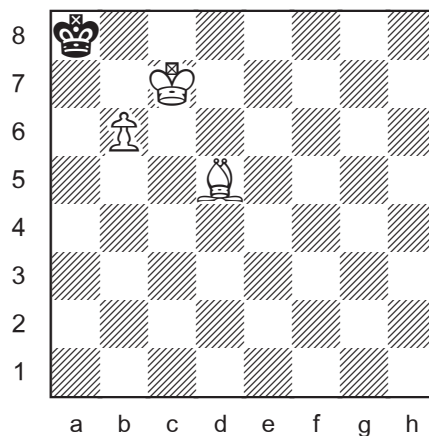


Perhaps surprisingly, the quickest way to mate is to set up a discovered check on the final move.

10.Kg2 11.Kf3 12.Ke4 13.Kd5 14.Kc6 15.Bd5



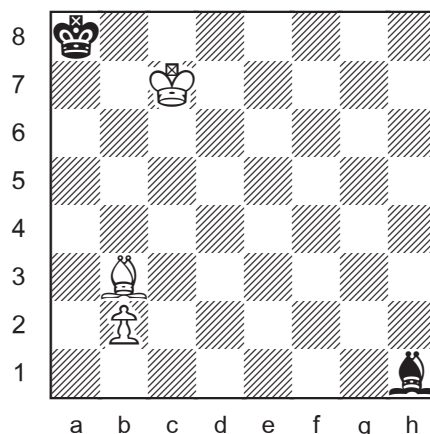
16.b4 17.b5 18.b6 19.Kc7#



Two more versions of this problem are given on the next page.

This version is the purest form of Tominic's idea. The white king ends up where he starts!

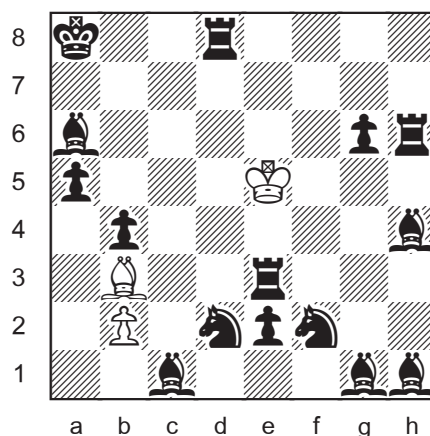
Multi-Wham 84b



series-mate in 16

And the next position is the most convoluted. A typical example of stretching a miniature into a grotesque. And they all end the same.

Multi-Wham 84c

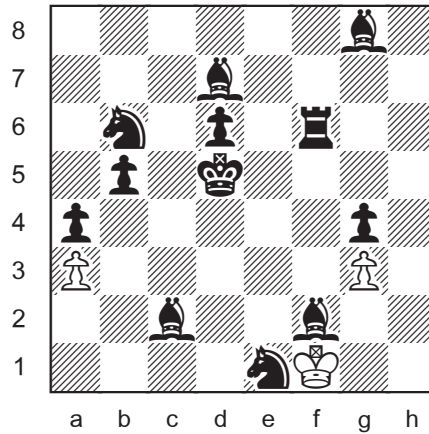


series-mate in 40

84b 1.Kd6 2.Ke5 3.Kf4 4.Kg3 5.Kh2 6.Kxh1 7.Kg2 8.Kf3 9.Ke4
10.Kd5 11.Kc6 12.Bd5 13.b4 14.b5 15.b6 16.Kc7#

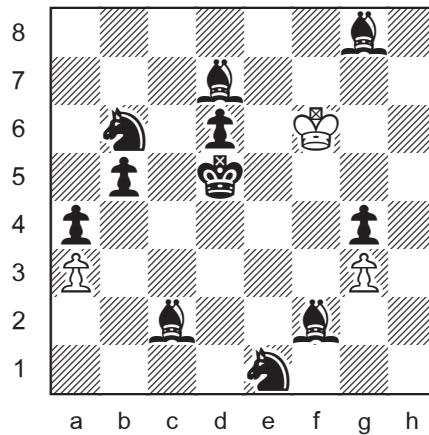
84c 1.Kf4 2.Kxe3 3.Kf4 4.Ke5 5.Ke6 6.Kf7 7.Kg7 8.Kxh6
9.Kxg6 10.Kh5 11.Kxh4 12.Kg5 13.Kf6 14.Ke7 15.Kxd8
16.Kc7 17.Kb6 18.Kxa6 19.Kxa5 20.Kxb4 21.Kc3 22.Kc2
23.Kxc1 24.Kxd2 25.Kxe2 26.Kf1 27.Kxg1 28.Kxf2 29.Kg1
30.Kxh1 31.Kg2 32.Kf3 33.Ke4 34.Kd5 35.Kc6 36.Bd5
37.b4 38.b5 39.b6 40.Kc7#

Multi-Wham 85

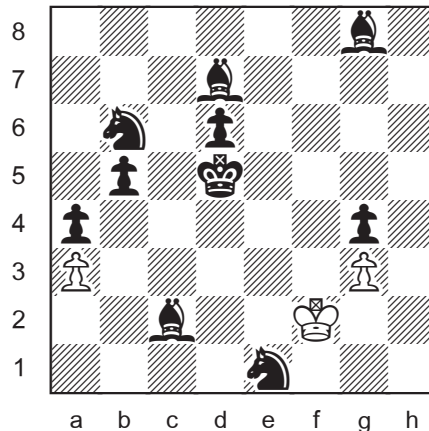


series-mate in 50

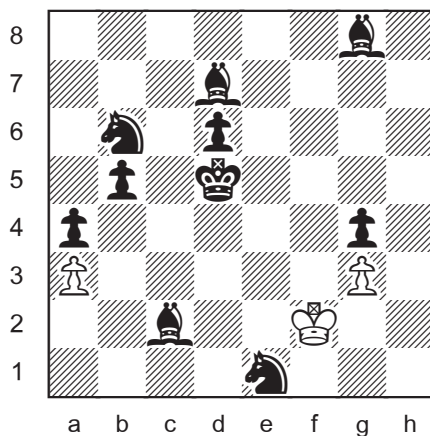
The white king needs to capture on a4 or g4 in order to free a pawn. But both pawns are protected by a long chain of defending pieces. The weak link is the black rook on f6. Only one way to get there.
1.Ke2 2.Kd2 3.Kc3 4.Kb4 5.Ka5 6.Ka6 7.Kb7 8.Kc7 9.Kd8
10.Ke7 11.Kxf6 The bishop on f2 is unguarded now.



12.Ke7 13.Kd8 14.Kc7 15.Kb7 16.Ka6 17.Ka5 18.Kb4 19.Kc3
20.Kd2 21.Ke2 22.Kxf2



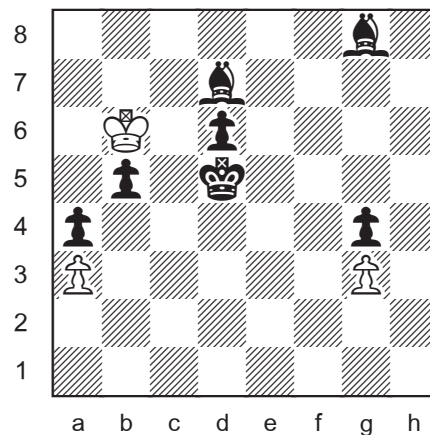
The capture on f2 leaves both black knights undefended.



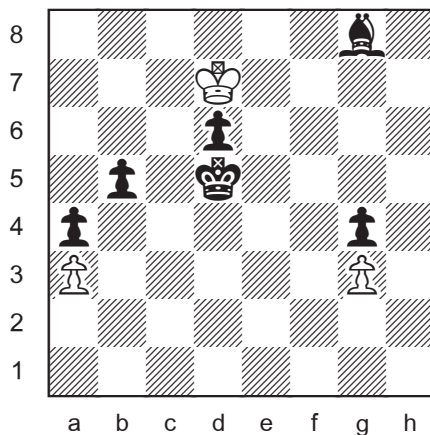
23.Kxe1 24.Kd2 25.Kxc2

Taking the bishop along the way to b6 is fastest. 25.Kc3? 26.Kb4 27.Ka5 28.Kxb6 would take two extra moves.

26.Kc3 27.Kb4 28.Ka5 29.Kxb6

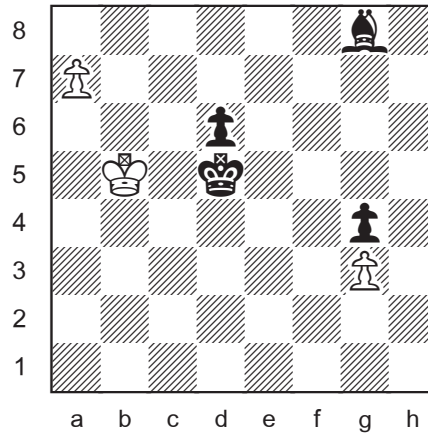


30.Kc7 31.Kxd7



So which white pawn should be freed first? A quick count shows that the a-pawn can be promoted three moves sooner. And in fact, mate would be 3 moves late after 32.Ke7? 33.Kf8 34.Kxg8.

32.Kc7 33.Kb6 34.Kxb5 35.Kxa4 36.Kb5 37.a4 38.a5 39.a6 40.a7

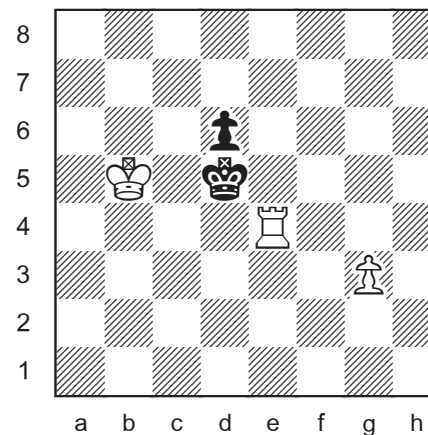


41.a8=R

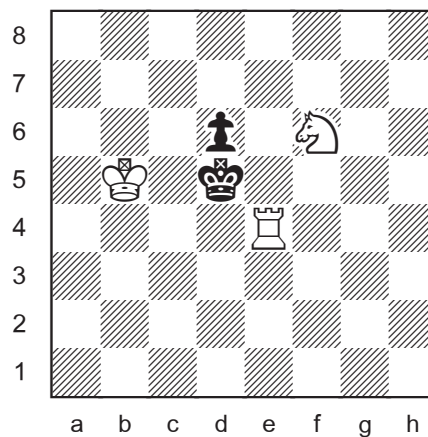
Promoting to queen or bishop would be check, and a knight could not leave a8 without giving check.

41.Kb6? 42.Kb7 43.a8=Q is 8 turns too slow.

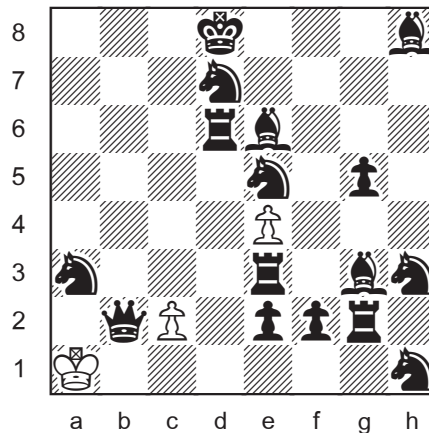
42.Rxg8 43.Rxg4 44.Re4 The rook steps off the pawn's path and takes its place for the coming mate.



45.g4 46.g5 47.g6 48.g7 49.g8=N 50.Nf6#

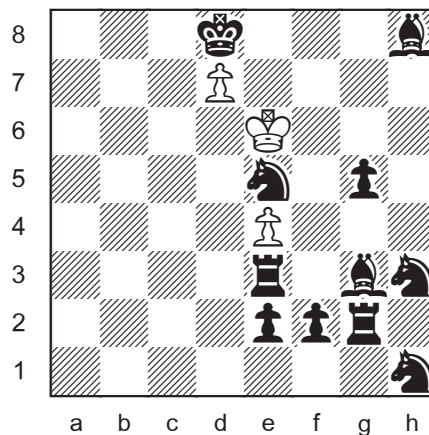


Multi-Wham 86

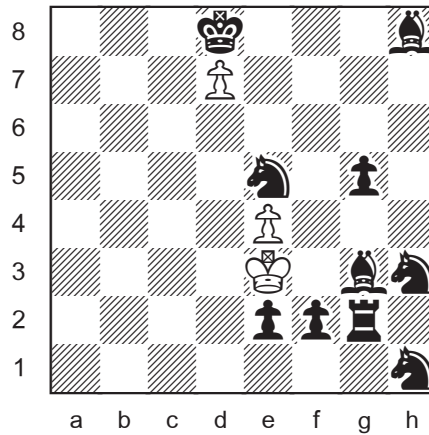


series-mate in 38

- 1.Kxb2 First move is forced.
2.c3 Second move is obvious, blocking the black rook on e3, building a bridge so the white king can cross the 3rd rank.
3.Kxa3 4.Kb4 With the king on the 4th rank, the white c-pawn is free to advance and capture the knight on d7, which removes the defence of square c5, clearing the way for the king to capture the rook on d6 and bishop on e6.
5.c4 6.c5 7.c6 8.cxd7 9.Kc5 10.Kxd6 11.Kxe6

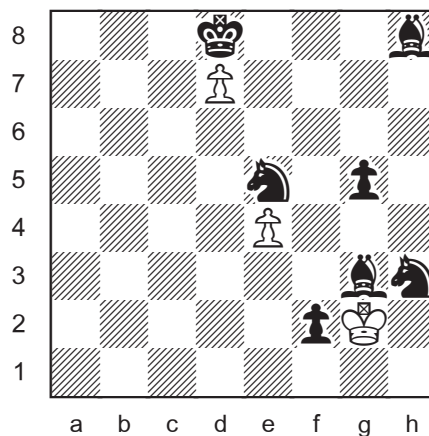


- Now the king comes back to take the unprotected rook on e3.
12.Kd5 13.Kd4 14.Kxe3



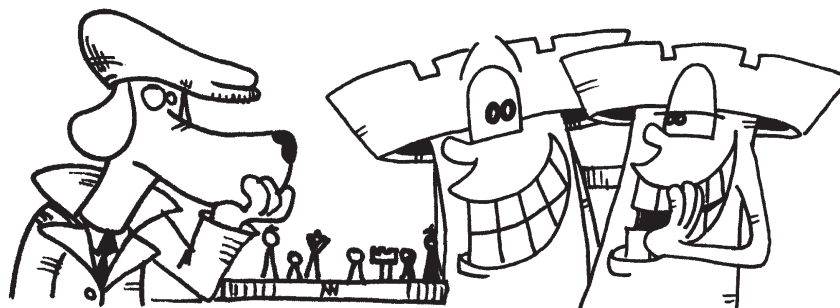
To liberate the white e-pawn, the king needs to capture the black knight on e5 which is defended by the two black bishops. The bishop on g3 is itself defended by the rook on g2 and knight on h1. Those are White's next targets.

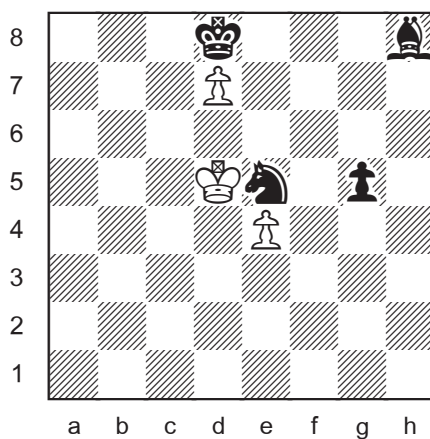
15.Kxe2 16.Kf1 17.Kxg2 18.Kxh1 19.Kg2



Now the white king must circle back to the queenside to reach the bishop in the h8 corner. The quick way is through f2, so White takes the knight on h3 and bishop on g3 to speed the journey. The knight also guards the pawn on g5 which must eventually be captured.

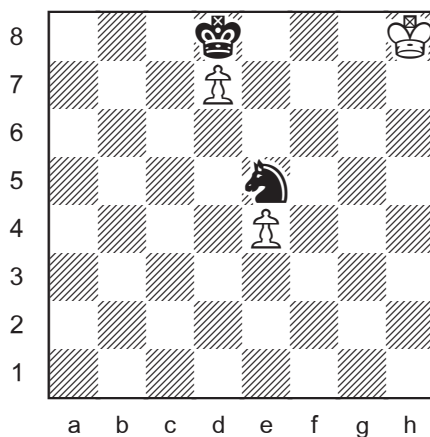
20.Kxh3 21.Kxg3 22.Kxf2 23.Ke3 24.Kd4 25.Kd5





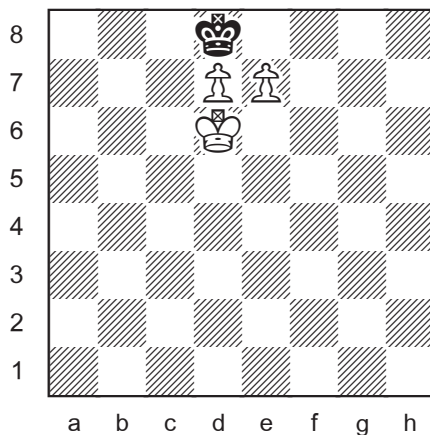
Most of the black army has been eliminated. It's series mate in 13 at this point. Probably you've seen the mating pattern already. The only route to h8 is through f5 and g5.

26.Ke6 27.Kf5 28.Kxg5 29.Kh6 30.Kh7 31.Kxh8



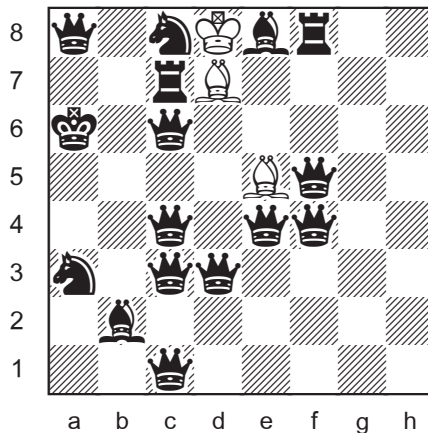
Here comes the end!

32.Kg7 33.Kf6 34.Kxe5 35.Kd6 36.e5 37.e6 38.e7#



The fabulous two-pawn checkmate.

Multi-Wham 87

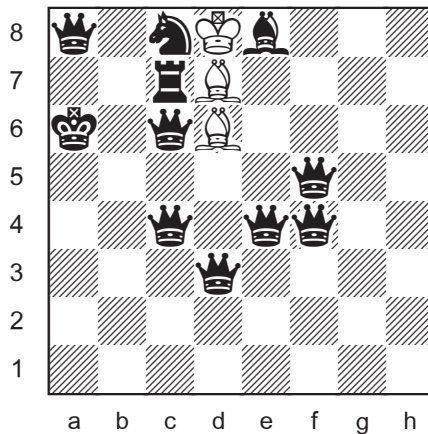


series-mate in 17

The bishop on d7 is pinned, even if the white king moves to e7. To unpin that bishop, the other bishop will eventually have to block the pin by going to d4 or d6.

1.Bxc3 It's next to impossible to calculate but taking first on f4 is one move too slow, and on c7 two moves. White captures the other dark-square pieces in the most efficient sequence before going to the d-file.

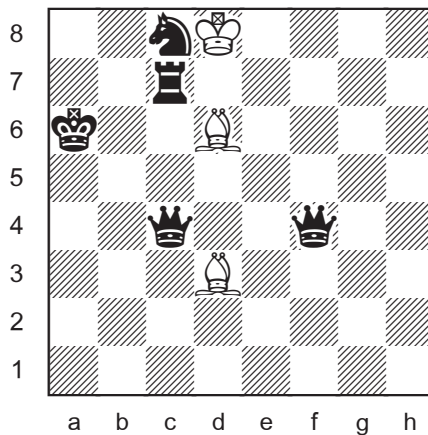
2.Bxb2 3.Bxc1 4.Bxa3 5.Bxf8 6.Bd6



It's probably clear by now that the mating move will be capturing the queen on c4. On the next few turns, White takes all the other light-square pieces except the knight. The last capture is on d3 which does two things: unpins the bishop on d6 and prepares to deliver mate with *Bxc4#*. The knight on c8 will be taken later by the king.

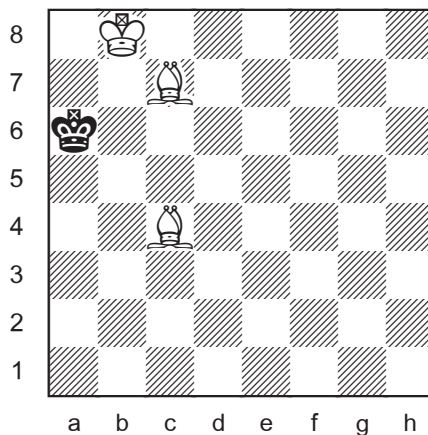
7.Bxe8 8.Bxc6 9.Bxa8 10.Bxe4 11.Bxf5 12.Bxd3

Five moves to go.



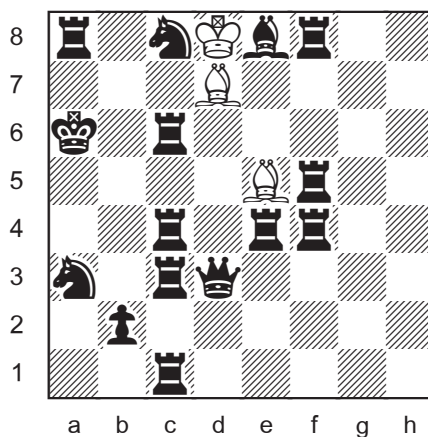
13.Bxf4 14.Bxc7 The dark-square bishop removes two more defenders and frees the white king.

15.Kxc8 16.Kb8 17.Bxc4#



Here is the same position (minus a piece on c7) with reduced firepower that better reveals the functions of the black defenders.

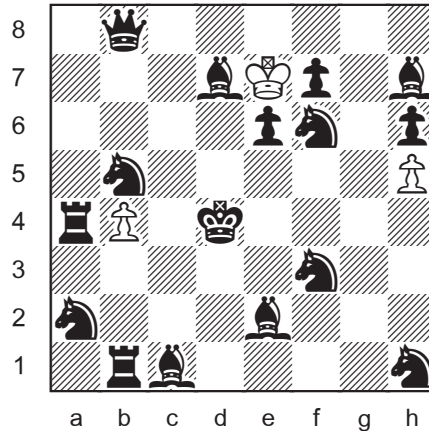
Multi-Wham 87b



series-mate in 17

87b 1.Bxc3 2.Bxb2 3.Bxc1 4.Bxa3 5.Bxf8 6.Bd6 7.Bxe8 8.Bxc6 9.Bxa8
10.Bxe4 11.Bxf5 12.Bxd3 13.Bxf4 14.Bc7 15.Kxc8 16.Kb8 17.Bxc4#

Multi-Wham 88



series-mate in 45

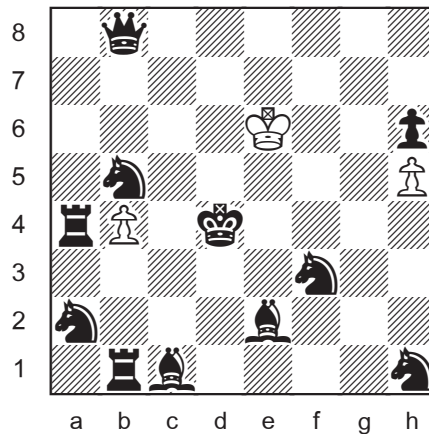
The white king cannot release the b-pawn on his own. The blockading knight on b5 is defended by the queen on b8. *A king cannot approach a queen to capture it.* So it's the h-pawn that must be freed by the king.

White's h-pawn is blocked by the black pawn on h6 which is guarded by the bishop on c1 which is guarded by the rook on b1 which is guarded by the bishop on h7 which is guarded by the knight on f6. The white king captures the defenders in reverse order.

1.Kxf6 2.Kg7 The pawn on f7 will be captured on the king's return trip.

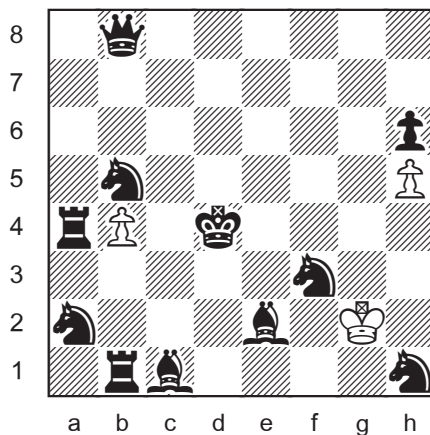
3.Kxh7 To reach b1, the king will have to go through g4. To get there, the pawn on e6 must be eliminated.

4.Kg7 5.Kxf7 6.Ke7 7.Kxd7 8.Kxe6



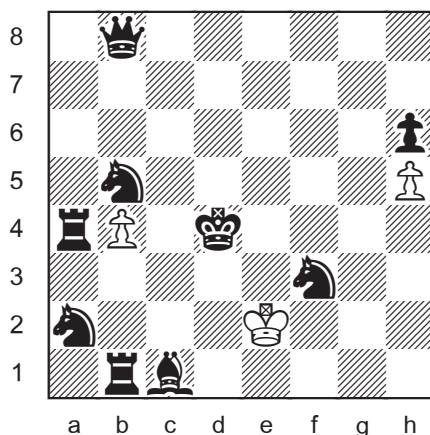
The king's path is clear now as far as g2.

9.Kf5 10.Kg4 11.Kh3 12.Kg2



The knight in the corner and bishop on e2 are the next road blocks to be removed.

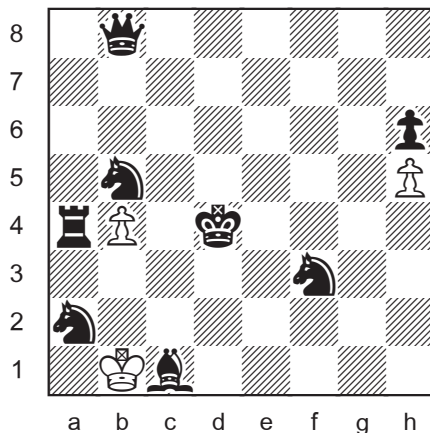
13.Kxh1 14.Kg2 15.Kf2 16.Kxe2



17.Kd1

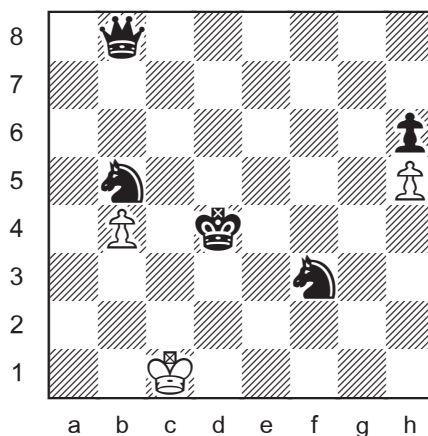
The king goes immediately for the rook on b1. The knight on f3 will be captured later when the king is going in the opposite direction. That's the efficient way to minimize the number of moves.

18.Kc2 19.Kxb1



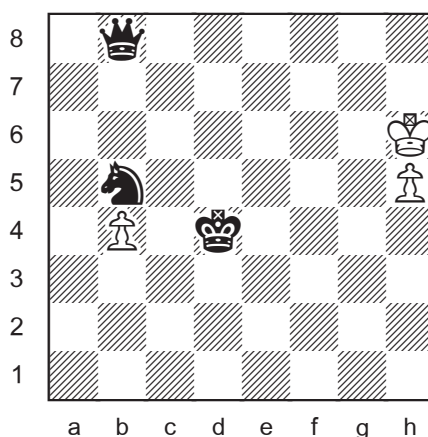
The bishop on c1 is still guarded by the knight on a2 which is guarded by the rook on a4. So they are the next dominoes to fall.

20.Kc2 21.Kb3 22.Kxa4 23.Kb3 24.Kxa2 25.Kb1 26.Kxc1



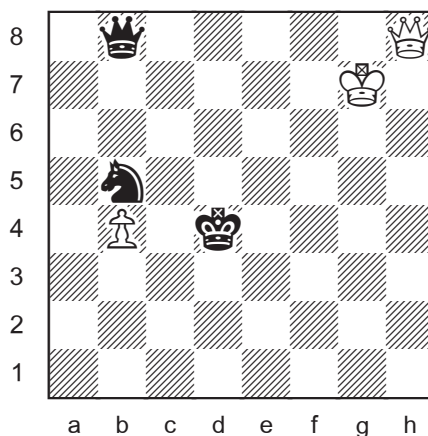
The long chain of defence that was guarding the black pawn on h6 has been dismantled. The white king's route there is more or less direct.

27.Kd1 28.Ke2 29.Kxf3 30.Kg4 31.Kf5 32.Kg6 33.Kxh6



34.Kg7 The king goes to g7 to obstruct the long diagonal so that the h-pawn can promote to queen on h8 without giving check.

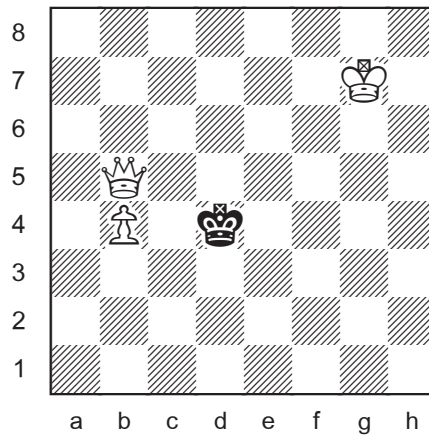
35.h6 36.h7 37.h8=Q



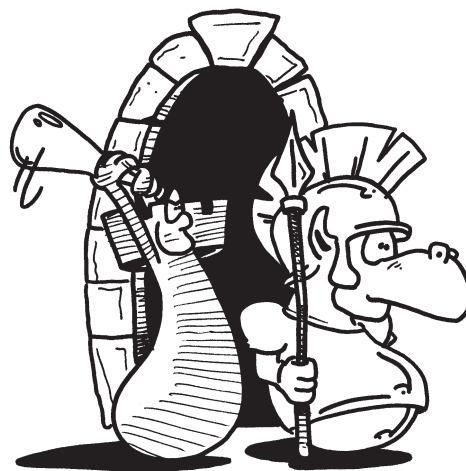
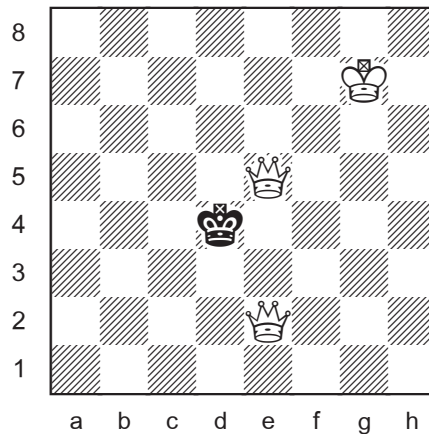
The new queen will now free the b-pawn.

38.Qxb8 39.Qxb5

To decide on the queen's next move, the mating position must be foreseen.



40.Qe2 41.b5 42.b6 43.b7 44.b8=Q 45.Qbe5#



Until the next whammy!

© Jeff Coakley 2024. Drawings by Antoine Duff. All rights reserved.