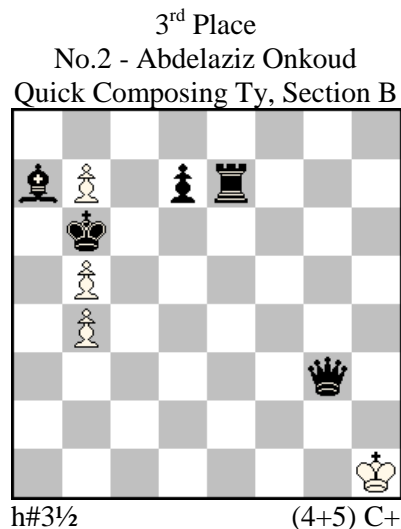
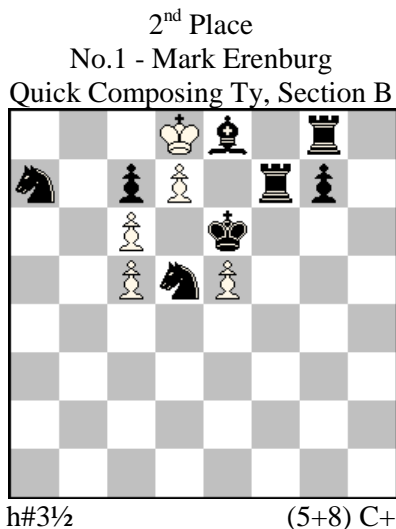
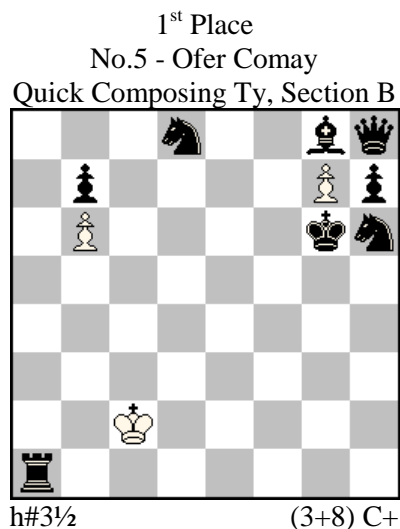


**67<sup>th</sup> WCCC, Alba Iulia 2025**  
**Quick Composing Tourney, Section B**  
*Award by Kostas Prentos (Greece)*

The tourney asked for orthodox helpmates in 3 or more moves, with the requirement that a white Pawn promotes and is captured on its promotion square without ever moving. This is the Schnoebelen theme, named after Philippe Schnoebelen from France, who introduced it in the dawn of the proof game revolution of the 1990s. Without fairy conditions, the only way to determine the exact type of promotion is by eliminating all other possibilities, using the opposite King's moves as a tool. This theme gained popularity over time and in recent years it has appeared quite prominently in helpmates, as well. A search in WinChloe revealed a few Schnoebelen helpmates from the previous century, the earliest being published in the late 1950s.

It goes without saying that this is a difficult theme to achieve in a helpmate, but it becomes even harder when the mating side promotes to a Schnoebelen piece. With a white pawn near promotion and more supporting white force around the corner, the struggle with cooks is real. Another matter of concern is how to avoid the same patterns as in previous problems. Having such a theme in a quick composing tourney borders on cruelty. That said, when I found out about the theme on Sunday morning, I was filled with anticipation to see how the composers would overcome this enormous challenge.

As expected, the number of entries I received for judging was very low: only six, in anonymous diagrams. No.4 was not thematic; leaving just five problems for consideration. All of them had a single thematic solution, with more or less similar content, that made their ranking difficult. Although my expectations were not met, I included every single one of these five entries in the award, to compensate the authors for the hard time they had composing for this tourney. It is my hope that those who had more ambitious ideas, but could not finish them in the allotted time, will be successful with more time at their disposal.



**1<sup>st</sup> Place (No.5) Ofer Comay (Israel):**

1...gxh8=R 2.Ra7 bxa7 3.Kg7 a8=Q 4.Kxh8 Qa1#

This is the only entry with a real choice of play on W1: The capture of the bQ on h8, prepares the square on which the bK will be mated, eventually (Kniest theme). Some additional features are also appealing, e.g. the relation between the type of captured and promoted pieces (wPxQ=R & wPxR=Q), a long corner-to-corner move by the promoted Queen, resulting in a long-range model mate.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Place (No.1) Mark Erenburg (Israel):

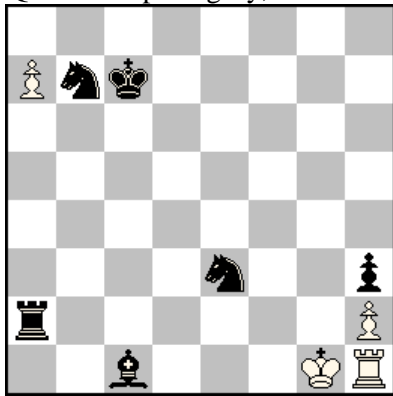
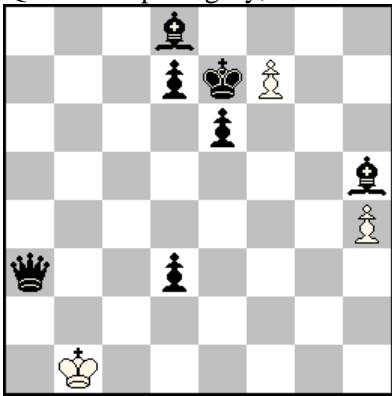
1...dxe8=S 2.Rd7+ cxd7 3.Kf7 c6 4.Rxe8+ dxe8=Q#

White is severely cramped, even after the promotion of the wPd7, so Black has to provide enough oxygen to keep White going. Two active sacrifices of the black Rooks, on top of the thematic sacrifice of the white Schnoebelen piece, white pawn tempo, consecutive Umnov by the white pawns; overall, a solid entry.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Place (No.2) Abdelaziz Onkoud (France):

1...b8=S 2.Kc7 b6+ 3.Kd8 bxa7 4.Qxb8 axb8=Q#

This is the most economical problem of the group, although WID 902056, with only 8 pieces, holds the absolute record for a helpmate showing a white Schnoebelen. The promotion on W1 is for tempo, but of course, this effect is diminished by the fact that White has no other available moves.

<p>4<sup>th</sup> Place No.6 - Anton Nasyrov Quick Composing Ty, Section B</p>  <p>h#3½    b) ♙c1→e1    (4+6) C+</p>	<p>5<sup>th</sup> Place No.3 - Menachem Witztum &amp; Ricardo de Mattos Vieira Quick Composing Ty, Section B</p>  <p>h#4½    (3+7) C+</p>
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## 4<sup>th</sup> Place (No.6) Anton Nasyrov (FIDE):

a) 1...a8=B 2.Ra7 Kf2 3.Kb8 Rxc1 4.Kxa8 Rc8#

b) 1...a8=Q 2.Rxh2 Rxh2 3.Kb6 Qxb7+ 4.Ka5 Ra2#

Although I accepted this problem to the competition, I did not consider the second, non-thematic solution for its ranking. The thematic phase is a simplified version of the first example from the announcement. The main difference is that the thematic promotion in this problem is a tempo move: If White could pass, the solution would be the same. However, White does not have any other available moves for W1.

## 5<sup>th</sup> Place (No.3) Menachem Witztum (Israel) & Ricardo de Mattos Vieira (Brazil):

1...f8=S 2.Bg6 h5 3.Bc7 hxg6 4.Kd8 g7 5.Qxf8 gxf8=Q#

Essentially the same play as in the second example from the announcement, without the Klasinc, but with different minor effects, like the distant self-block, mixed Phoenix (wPxbQ=wQ), etc.