

Smothered Mates

Smothered mates

It is always pleasant to deliver 'clever' checkmates, and one of these is the smothered mate where the enemy King is boxed in by his own pieces and then your Knight (N) can use the ability to give checkmate by 'jumping' over pieces.

Look at position (a). White is behind on material but can give checkmate in one move. What is it?

(a)



Now to position (b). White is again behind on material but can force checkmate in just 2 moves. Can you see them?

Hint: after the first move White wants to create a position similar to that shown in diagram (a).

(b)



In position (c) it is Black to move, what happens if he/she just take the white Bishop with the c-pawn? What would be a better move for Black?

(c)



In position (d) White gives 4 successive checks, 3 of them with the Knight, the last of which is mate! Can you see the combination of moves to win the game?

(d)



See all answers [HERE](#)

The Novice and Intermediate problems below continue the theme of smothered mates. How many can you solve?

This month's problems - Novice
Problem N39



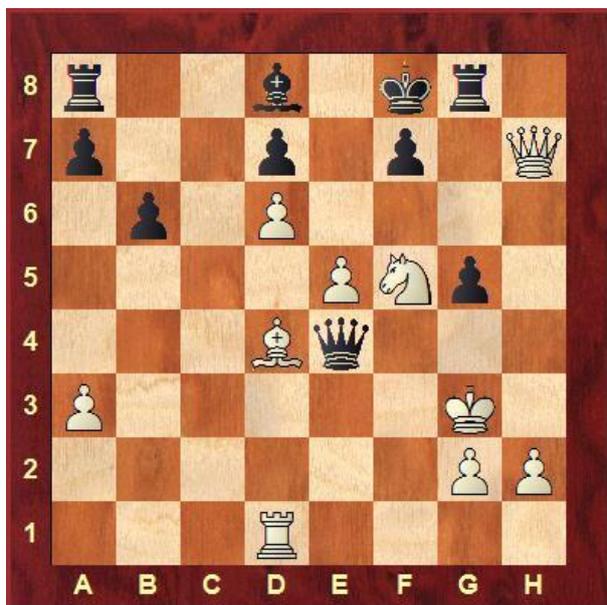
N39 (a) Here Black played Nxf4 but White forced mate in 3 moves. How?
 (b) What was a better move for Black than 1... Nxf4?

Problem N40



N40 How does Black win a piece or threaten a smothered mate?

This month's problems - Intermediate
Problem I39



I39 White has a forced win in 5 moves, finishing with a smothered mate. Can you calculate the combination?

Problem I40



I40 White has another forced win in 5 moves, finishing with a smothered mate. Can you find the correct sequence?

Solutions to last month's problems - Novice

Problem N37



N37 White to play and win

Answer:

White plays

1. Rxh5 then if
2. Nxh5
3. Qxh7#

Black can delay matters with Rxf2+ but cannot stop both the mate at h7 with Q and B or the mate at h8 with Q and R

Problem N38



N38 Find the winning moves for White

Answer:

White plays

1. Qxg7+ Kxg7
2. Rxh7+ Kg8
3. Rh8+ Kg7 (or Kf7)
4. R3h7#

This is a forced mate and demonstrates the power of two connected rooks on a file attacking the opponent's King.

Solutions to last month's problems - Intermediate

Problem 137



137 How should Black continue to attack?

Answer:

Black plays

1. h5
2. cxd4 h4
3. Qe2 Qxh2+
4. Kxh2 hxg3+
5. Kg1 Rh1#

This was a tricky one!

Problem 138



138 Can you find a winning attack for White?

Answer:

Here the theme is the attack by the rooks along the h file and the need for the Black Q to prevent g6 and stop the check along the a2-g8 diagonal. So the Black Q needs to be deflected and so

White plays

1. Ne5! dxe5
2. g6 Qxg6 (to prevent the mate at h8)
3. Qc4+ Rf7
4. Rh8#

If Black replies with

- 1..... Qxe5
2. Qxe5 followed by g6 will win.

Answers to Smothered Mate Problems (return to Problems [HERE](#))

(a) White simply plays

1. Nf7#

(b) To create the 'smothered' position similar to position (a) White plays

1. Qg8+ Rxc8 (forced)

2. Nf7# (again!)

(c) Black would be very silly to play

1..... cxb5

As instead of winning the Bishop he/she loses the game by

2.Nd6#

A better first move for Black would be

1..... d5 as this opens the position, prevents any smothered mates and attacks two of Whites pieces (the B and N).

If you solved these 4 problems on smothered mates then see if you can spot these opportunities in your games.

(d) The 4 successive checks are

1. Nf7+ Kg8

2. Nh6+ Kh8

3. Qg8+ Kxc8

3. Nf7#