Huntsville Chess Club
Individual Chess Problem Solver's
Rules and Guidelines

20190115

What the problem solver can expect:

1. The chess problems are presented on printed diagrams. See attachment for an example.
2. Problem solvers record their solutions unambiguously in standard algebraic notation in the blanks provided.
3. The problems are from or based-upon positions in real games.
4. The problems are in three levels of difficulty. These are:
   a. Easy: One or two move combinations or mates with one significant variation, or forced mate in 3. Target Skill USCF Standard Rating: 1000-1400
   b. Moderate: Three or four move combinations or mates with no more than two variations, or forced mate in 5. Target Skill USCF Standard Rating: 1400-1800
   c. Five or more move combinations or mates with three or more variations. Target Skill USCF Standard Rating: 1800+
5. Incorrect, blank, or ambiguous moves receive a score of 0 (zero). Correct solutions receive a score of 5. The maximum score for any set of 6 problems is 30.
6. Your performance (correct or incorrect solutions) does not affect your USCF ratings, but may affect a TBD HCC problem solvers rating.
7. Participants will be informed of the official solutions immediately after the end of each round.

Rules:

A. If allowed by the Director, a solver may use the chess board(s) and men made available by the organizer, or his own set(s).
B. The use of all electronic or technological aids which can help in solving is forbidden as well as any other kind of unfair behavior. Solvers may request in advance and may receive at the discretion of the Director consideration for special needs such as a doctor on call.
C. The Director may penalize unfair behavior by whatever means deemed appropriate in proportion to the offense. For example:
   a. Offense: Solver's cell phone rings during solving time.
      Penalty (first offense): Director warns solver.
      Penalty (second offense): Director subtracts 1 point from problem sheet.
   b. Offense: Solver consults cell phone to reply to text message not related to solving a problem during solving time.
      Penalty (first offense): Director subtracts 1 point from problem sheet.
      Penalty (second offense): Director forfeits solver from the contest.
   c. Offense: Solver consults computer/cell phone chess analysis application during solving time.
      Penalty (first offense): Director forfeits solver from the contest, and reports offense to HCC Executive Board for consideration of further penalty.
D. A solver must write the solutions only on the problem sheet provided by the Director.

E. The solutions are to be written in algebraic notation for as many moves as the solution blanks require. Each move must represent **best play by both players**. (Note that "best play" for the defending side does not mean sacrificing significant amounts of material in a suicidal attempt to delay mate. Best play for the defending side means making every reasonable effort to extend play without the sacrifice of significant material. For example, the defending side should play for a more-complex mate in 4 rather than 3.)

F. If a solver believes he has found a cook (a second *key* move), he may give it instead of the solution. In this case, he has to give the complete moves of the cook. The correct and complete solution or cook of a problem scores 5 points.

G. An incomplete solution scores 1 point for every correct move until an incorrect move is recorded; not to exceed 5 points. Correct move(s) after an incorrect move are considered incorrect.

H. If a problem has no solution, 0 (zero) points are awarded for this problem.

I. If a move is written incorrectly, unclear or ambiguously, the move is regarded as incorrect. If, however, the Director is sure that the correct move was intended, then the move is regarded as correct.

J. During the solving time, a solver may leave the solving area only with a permission of the Director and should be accompanied by a controller.

K. A problem solving period is 20 minutes. The Director announces 10 minutes left and the last minute in each round. After the announcement of the last minute all solvers remain sitting to the end of the round. When the end is declared they stop writing and wait until the controllers collect all the solving sheets.

L. For the individual score, the points a solver achieves in the different rounds will be totalled

M. The number of points determines the ranking. In the event of a tie on points, the solver with the most correct scores for the more difficult problems wins.

N. A solver may challenge a solution if he believes it to be incorrect (cooks, duals, no solution). The Director will use a computer analysis program to determine the validity of the challenge. If the challenge proves valid, then the alternate solution is declared correct for scoring purposes.

O. Protests against any circumstance of the problem contest must reach the Director not later than one hour after the end of the solving time. The Director is allowed to accept protests at any time at his discretion. If the Director cannot be found, a protest should made to any of his assistants. Protests have to be made by an individual solver.

P. The Director's task is to deal with such protests and to settle disputes. He should deliver his decision along with his argument as soon as practical after careful consideration of these rules. He has to ensure that a solution given by a solver only can be seen by this solver himself, or by the leader or other members of his team.

Q. Objections to any decision by the Director must be made in writing and must reach the Director within one hour of the announcement of the decision.

R. Such objections shall be dealt with by a jury consisting of three neutral persons nominated by the HCC President. The majority decision of the jury (in written form with the argument) is final.

S. These Rules should be published on the official announcement board at least 24 hours before the start of the first round as well as a Director's timetable for the complete tournament (registration, start of the rounds, preliminary results, timetable for protests, final results, prize giving, etc.).

This version of the Rules was accepted by the HCC Executive Board January 2019.
Recommendations / explanations of the HCC EB:

1) Problems with just one line of moves and a clear conclusion are preferable.

2) Solvers should be allowed to write their names on the backside of solving sheets at any time before, during, or after the solving time.

3) The Director can determine a possible correctness of moves by following the further effect(s) of written move(s) or by the presence/absence of signs for capture, check, mate etc. normally used by a solver.

4) The Director should use common sense, especially in cases when it is not specified which of two pieces of the same kind moves to the specific square.

Chess is ruthless — you've got to be prepared to kill people.

Reference:
- http://www.logicalchecks.com/index.html
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_chess_problems
- http://www.saunalahti.fi/~stniekat/pccc/wcsc.htm

Attachments:
- Example Chess Problem Solver's Worksheet
- Solution Key

Example Chess Problem Solver's Worksheet

1) Difficulty Level: Easy

White to Move and Mate in 2

1. _____ _____
2. _____

2) Difficulty Level: Easy

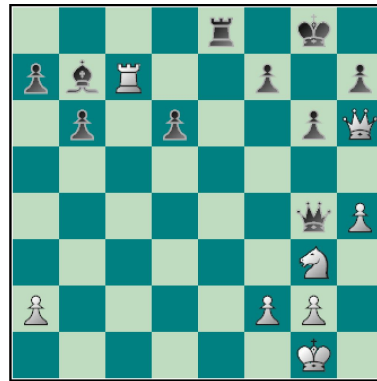Black to Move and Mate in 2

1.   …   _____
2. _____ _____

3) Difficulty Level: Easy

White to Move and Mate in 3

1. _____ _____
2. _____ _____
3. _____

4) Difficulty Level: Moderate

Black to Move and Mate in 4

1.   …   _____
2. _____ _____
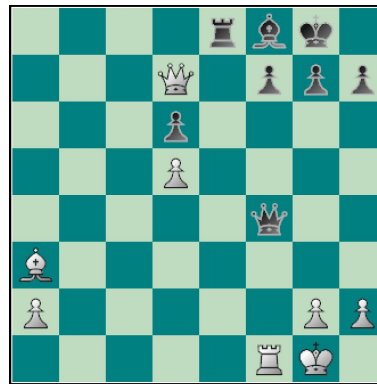3. _____ _____
4. _____ _____

5) Difficulty Level: Hard

Black to Move and Win

1.   …   _____
2. _____ _____
3. _____ _____

6) Difficulty Level: Hard

Black to Move and Win

1.   …   _____
2. _____ _____
3. _____ _____

Solution Key

1) Difficulty Level: Easy

White to Move and Mate in 2

1. Qxf7+   Rxf7
2. Re8#

2) Difficulty Level: Easy

Black to Move and Mate in 2

1. … Qxd1+
2. Nxd1   Re1#

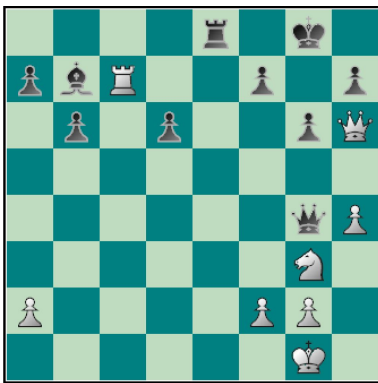3) Difficulty Level: Easy

White to Move and Mate in 3

1. Qh6+   Kxh6
2. Rh4++   Kg7
3. Bh6#

4) Difficulty Level: Moderate

Black to Move and Mate in 4

1. … Re1+
2. Kh2 (1. … Nf1 loses immediately to 2. Qxg2#. Therefore, it is not black's best move.) 2. … Rh1+
3. Kxh1 (Again, 1. … Nxh1 is not black's best move.) 3. … Qh3+
4. Kg1   Qxg2#

5) Difficulty Level: Hard

Black to Move and Win

1. … Rxa3
2. bxa3 (All other lines offer less resistance. For example, Stockfish recommends 2. Rb1 RxQ 3. Re4 etc. Stockfish's moves allow white to hang on longer, but black will win with a significant material advantage. Rule E states that sacrificing significant amounts of material in a suicidal attempt to delay mate is not considered best play.) 2. ... Qxa1+
3. Rb1   Re1+ (This last move is sufficient proof that the solver understands the remaining winning moves.)

6) Difficulty Level: Hard
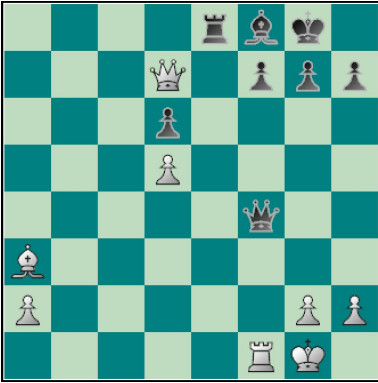
Black to Move and Win

1. … Qd4+

2. Kh1 (2. Rf2 loses immediately to Re1#. Rule E states that the defending side should play for a more-complex mate.) 2. … Qf2

3. Qb5   Re1 (This last move is sufficient proof that the solver understands the remaining winning moves.)