

Losing Chess in proof games

*Fascinated by the myriad possibilities of expression through **Losing Chess**, I decided to write an article about this topic. I then asked Bernd Gräfrath to read it. The consequence was that it was added another part (Part A) to the existing two (B and C). The three jointed parts form the finished article below, which we are proud to present to you.*

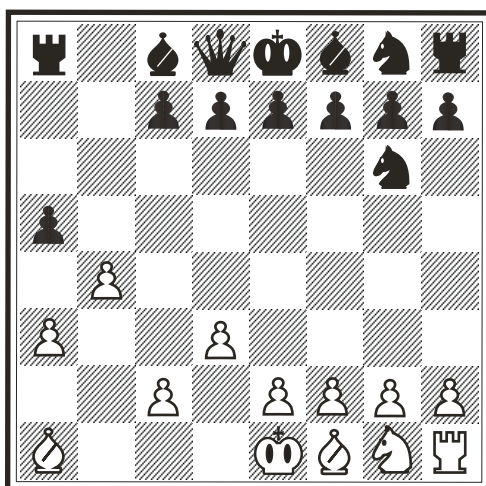
A) Some basic themes

by Bernd Gräfrath

I discovered the beauty of Losing Chess retros when I studied Ralf Binnewirtz's book *Schlagabtausch im Rauberschach* (Dresden: Maedler, 2000). This book discusses all LC problems and studies which were published up to that point. The retro section featured great problems by Wolfgang Dittmann; and for some time, the interest in LC problems declined. But I had the impression that there were still many mysterious landscapes to be explored in that area, and the published collection helped to avoid anticipations. At first, I composed LC problems with retroanalysis in the traditional sense; later on, I concentrated on LC proof games. When I received Popeye 4.51, I began to compose complex themes in LC proof games which I would not have dared to publish without computer-checking. The following twelve problems give a selective survey of themes in LC proof games, with some hints at unrealized challenges.

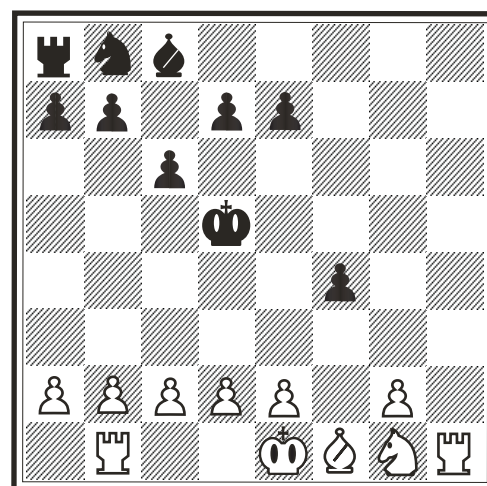
When a fairy condition is employed, this should be justified: either by showing something which cannot be realized with orthodox means, or by using the fairy condition intensely. Problem A1 is the first example of a **Schnoebelen-King** in LC. It is obvious that this theme is specific to fairy chess. Solution: 1. Sc3 Sc6 2. Sa4 Se5 3. b4 Sg6 4. d3 b5 5. Bd2 bxa4 6.Qb1 a3 7. Qb2 axb2 8. a3 bxa1K 9. Bc3 a5 Bxa1. Problem A2 also shows something fairy-specific: a **Pronkin-King**. Solution: 1. h4 c6 2. h5 Qb6 3. h6 Qxf2 4. hxg7 Qxe1 5. gxh8K Qxd1 6.Kxg8 Qxc1 7. Kxh7 Qxb1 8. Rxb1 Bh6 9. Kxh6 f5 10. Kh5 Kf7 11. Kh4 Ke6 12. Kg3 Kd5 13. Kf2 f4 14. Ke1. [Addition by the editor: a predecessor of problem A2 by Michel Caillaud, see A12]

A1) B. GRAFRÄTH
The Problemist 2008



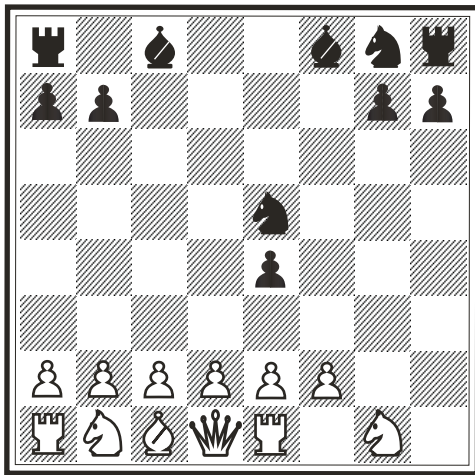
(13+15) Losing Chess
PG in 9.5 moves C+

A2) B. GRAFRÄTH
Die Schwalbe 2008



(11+10) Losing Chess
PG in 13.5 moves C-

A3) B. GRAFRÄTH
Die Schwalbe 2008



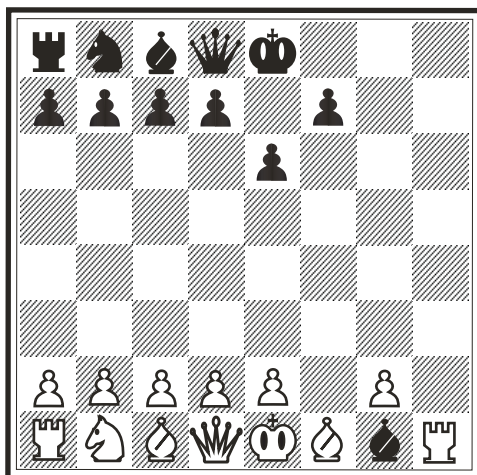
(12+11) Losing Chess
PG in 10.5 moves C+

Recently, there was a thematic construction tourney of Die Schwalbe, and it asked for the Pronkin-theme in LC. Although the **Pronkin-theme** can be shown in orthodox proof games, it is nevertheless an interesting challenge. (For the results, see Die Schwalbe of October 2008, p. 576) There are specific difficulties which have to be overcome, so that the promoted piece is not caught up in captures. Problem A3 shows a **Pronkin-S** in its purest form: Since the Pronkin-theme is an extension of the Phoenix-theme, it is to be wished that promoted piece only appears after the relevant original piece has already been captured. Solution: 1.g4 d5 2. g5 Qd6 3. g6 Qxh2 4. gxf7 Qxg1 5. fxe8S Qxf1 6. Sxc7 Qxe1 7. Rxe1 e5 8.Sxd5 e4 9. Sf4 Sd7 10. Sh3 Se5 11. Sg1.

The following problems show combinations of the Pronkin-theme with other themes. Problem A4 has 2 solutions, one with a **Pronkin-Rook**, and one with a **roundtrip of the original Rook**. (The problem was originally misprinted as a “shortest” proof game; but the term “exactly” is necessary.) Solutions: 1. h4 Sf6 2. Rh3 e6 3. Rg3 Be7 4. Rxg7 Sh5 5. Rxh7 Bxh4 6. Rxh8 Bxf2 7. Rxh5 Bxg1 8. Rh1; 1. h3 Sh6 2. h4 e6 3. h5 Sg4 4. h6 Sxf2 5. hxg7 Sxh1 6. gxh8R Bc5 7. Rxh7 Bxg1 8. Rxh1.

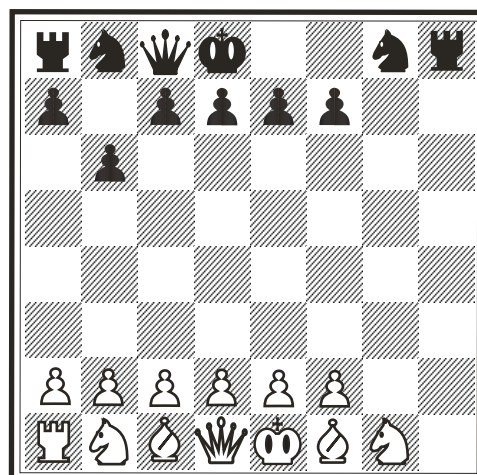
In Problem A5, a **Pronkin-Rook** is combined with the **Donati-50-theme** (a promoted piece returns to its promotion square) and the **Ceriani-Frolkin-theme**. Solution: 1.h4 b6 2. h5 Bb7 3. h6 Bxg2 4. hxg7 Bxh1 5. gxh8R Qc8 6. Rxh7 Kd8 7. Rxh1 Bg7 8. Rh8 Bxh8.

A4) B. GRAFRÄTH
Sachova Skladba 2009



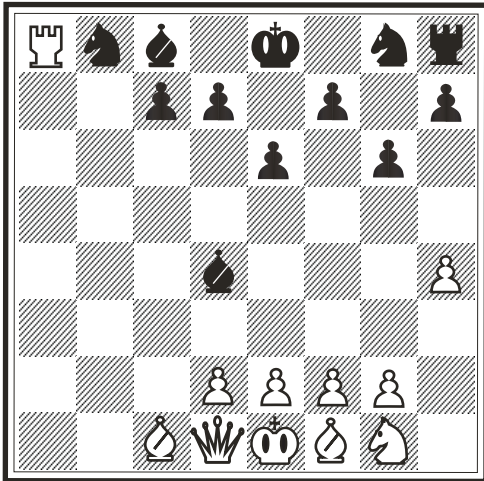
(12+11) Losing Chess
PG in exactly 7.5 moves
2 sol C+

A5) B. GRAFRÄTH
Variant Chess 2009



(12+11) Losing Chess
PG in 8 moves C+

A6) B. GRAFRÄTH
Mat Plus 2009



(11+12) Losing Chess
PG in 10.5 moves C+

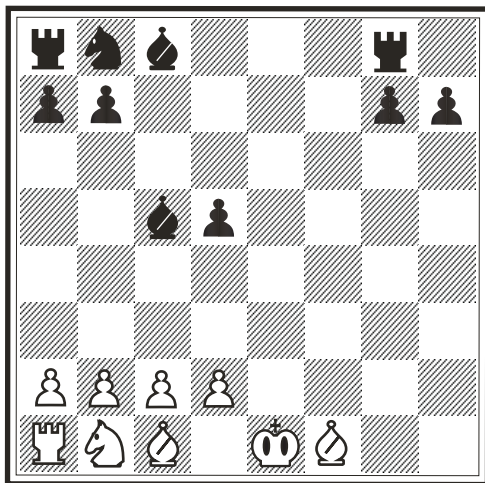
Problem A6 combines themes which may be very hard to combine in an orthodox proof game. In any case, LC allows to show the following themes in very few moves: **Pronkin-Rook** with **Ceriani-Frolkin**-theme, plus **Anti-Pronkin-Rook**. Solution: 1. a4 e6 2. a5 Qf6 3. a6 Qxb2 4. axb7 Qxc2 5. bxa8R Qxb1 6. R8xa7 Qxa1 7. Rxa1 g6 8. h4 Bg7 9. Rh3 Bxa1 10. Ra3 Bd4 11. Ra8.

Problem A7 shows an **Anti-Pronkin-Queen** which is captured after visiting the thematic promotion square. Solution: 1. g4 c5 2. g5 Qc7 3. g6 Qxh2 4. gxf7 Qxh1 5. fxe8Q Qxg1 6. Qxe7 Qxf2 7. Qxc5 Qxe2 8. Qxe2 Bxc5 9. Qe8! d5 10. Qxg8 Rxg8.

A Schnoebelen-Queen cannot be shown in orthodox proof games, and if I am not mistaken, this also holds for LC proof games. But the Schnoebelen-theme can be shown with other pieces.

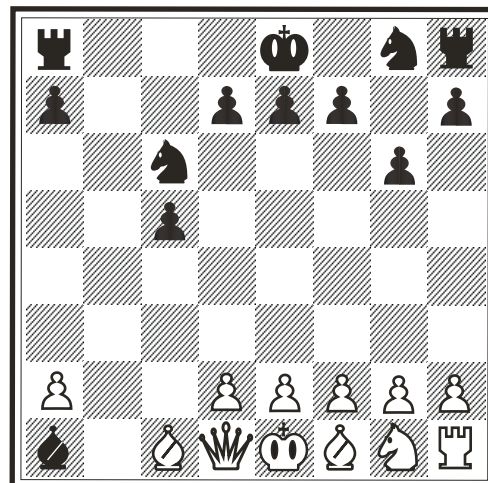
Problem A8 combines a **Schnoebelen-S** with an **Anti-Pronkin-S** which is even captured in the end. Solution: 1. c4 g6 2. c5 Bg7 3. c6 Bxb2 4. cxb7 Bxa1 5. bxa8S c5 6. Sa3 Sc6 7. Sc4 Bb7 8. S4b6 Qxa8 9. Sxa8 Bxa8.

A7) B. GRAFRÄTH
Suomen Tehtävänäikat 2009



(9+10) Losing Chess
PG in 10.5 moves C+

A8) B. GRAFRÄTH
Die Schwalbe 2009



(12+13) Losing Chess
PG in 9 moves C+

In analogy to problem A8, problem A9 shows the same themes with Bishops. Solution: 1. h4 e5 2. h5 e4 3. Rh4 Qxh4 4. h6 Qxf2 5. hxg7 Qxe1 6. gxf8B Qxd1 7. Sh3! Qxd2 8. Bxd2 Kxf8 9. Bb4 Sh6 10. Bxf8 Rxf8.