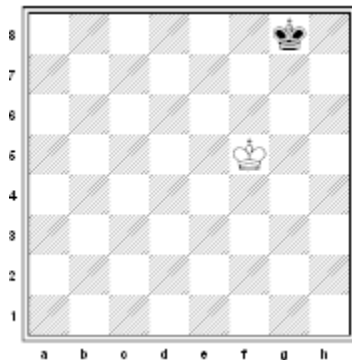


My problem No.166 in Julias Fairies.com and the construction Task challenge received correct solutions and responses from six talented composers. Mr. Thomas Brand also wrote about it in his Danish Chess-blog which features his articles on Retro problems. www.thbrand.de/retroblog/

1. Mr.Pietro Pitton (Italy)
2. Mr.Themistoklis Argirakopoulos (Greece)
3. Mr. Mario Richter, (Germany)
4. Mr. Vlaicu Crisan (Romania)
5. Mr. Alexandr Levit (Russia)
6. Mr. Thomas Brand (Germany).

I am very happy that so many found time to attempt the construction task !. Everyone found that my problems (b) and (e) had multiple solutions.

K.Seetharaman
No.166, Julias Fairies.com



Construct an *“Illegal Cluster”* by adding the following

- (a) WS, BR & BS
- (b) WB, BR & BS
- (c) WP, BR & BS
- (d) WQ, WS & BS
- (e) WR, WS, BS & BB.

My intended Solutions:

- (a) Add WSh6, BRg4 & BSf7
- (b) Add WBe6, BRd7 & BSd5
- (c) Add WPh7, BRh6 & BSg6
- (d) Add WQh8, WSg7 & BSh7
- (e) Add WRe8, WSd8, BSd7 & BBe7.

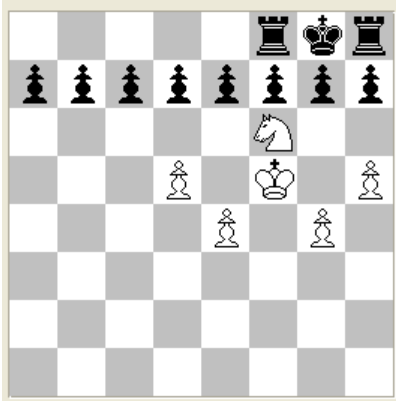
All six of them sent very interesting settings for new **Illegal Cluster** positions using my **King** positions. Some sent more than one. I am giving below their best entries and the solution diagrams. Every one of these positions deserves to be better known and publishable. As there is no easy way to check for their uniqueness, I only checked if the positions are valid **Illegal Clusters**! My comments below the **Solution** diagrams are based on the author's explanation and notes.

The best setting is obviously by Mr.Vlaicu Crisan who succeeds in adding 18 men in a position where neither king is in check. I will be sending the book prize to him.

Solution Diagrams:

1. Pietro Pitton (Italy)

-Add 15 men. White: 4 pawns & 1 knight. Black: 8 pawns and 2 rooks.



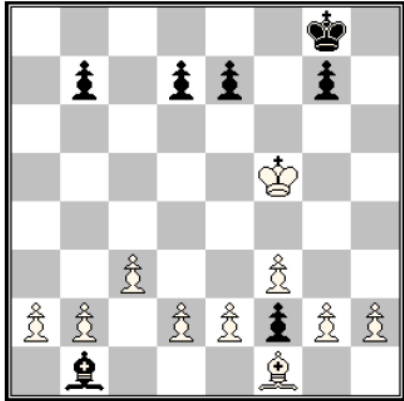
(6+11)

There is nice logic here. Why the last move 1. Se8-f6+ cant be the last move? Because with the WS at e8 black has no last move. Capturing a black knight at f6 is not enough, as the black knight could not have arrived at f6 in the previous move !

Removing either black rook provides breathing space for black king, while removing any pawn provides escape for the black queen to be sacrificed at f6 or a promoted queen/rook for that purpose ! Good logic !

2. Themistoklis Argirakopoulos (Greece)

-Add 15 men: 8 White pawns, 1 WB, 4 black pawns, 1 black bishop.

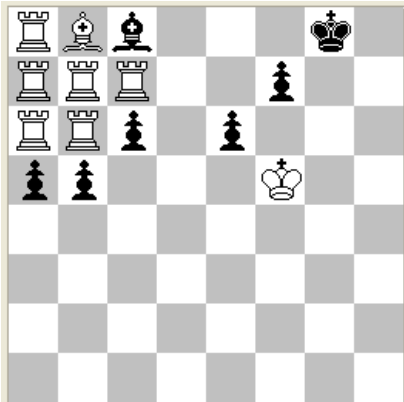


(10+5)

Only way for the bishop check is by a black pawn c2 capturing at b1. **But only four white men (Q,R and two Ss) are available for pawn-capture** as Rh1 and Bc1 were captured on their home square by knights. Black pawn f2 needs two captures and black pawn to arrive at c2 needs the other two. So no white piece available for capture at b1. Removing f1 will allow WRh1 to be captured at f2 while removing a2 will reduce the required captures, making the position legal ! Nice !

3. Mr. Mario Richter, (Germany)

-Add 13 men: 5 white rooks, 1 white bishop, Black bishop and 5 black pawns. !

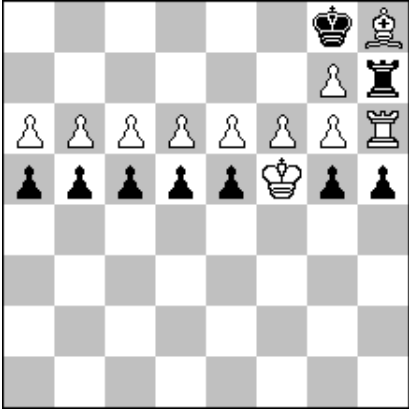


(8+7)

Well I did not prohibit the use of promoted men ! The only probable black last move 1. d:e6+ locks the north west corner !! So a surplus man has to be removed. Nice !

4. Mr. Vlaicu Crisan (Romania)

- Add 18 pieces: *Add 8 white Pawns, 1 white Rook, 1 white Bishop, 7 black Pawns and 1 black Rook*



This is an amazing setting. Neither King being in check ! The number 18 is probably difficult to beat.

“No last move possible in the diagram because of illegal self-checks, so the initial position is clearly illegal. By removing any piece the position becomes legal, for instance:

-bPa5: (-1).a5-a6 a6xQ/R/B/Sb5 etc.

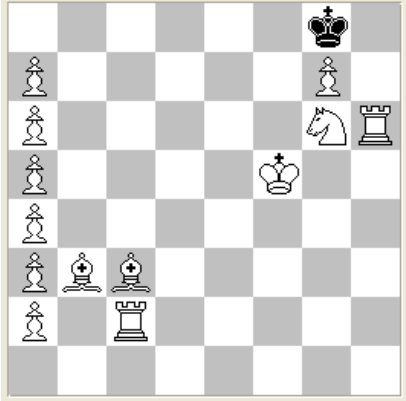
-wPa6: (-1)... a6-a5 (-2).a5xQ/R/B/Sb6 etc.

-wBh8: (-1)... Rh8-h7 (-2).Rh7-h6 h6-h5 (-3).h5xQ/B/Sg6 etc.

Please note that wRh6 and bRh7 can not be switch places.” (Vlaicu Crisan).

5. Mr. Alexandr Levit (Russia)

-Add 7 white pawns and five white pieces.



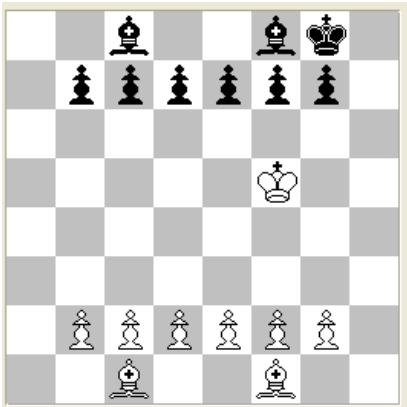
(13+1)

At first sight it seems that white has a ready last move 1. Ke6-f5+. But what was the previous black move ? There is none as white King at e6 blocks f7 for the black king! So the white king check must be a capture. The white pawns prove that there is no black piece available for capture !

Removing any white pawn from 'a' file will provide that victim while removing other men will provide a last move for black king. Simple and elegant !

6. Mr. Thomas Brand (Germany).

Add 2 bishops and 6 pawns of same colour to an illegal cluster.



The diagram shows the try and the solution !

This is a witty setting using the white king position and providing a nice try.

Though the color of the pieces to be added is not specified, only WHITE men as shown above should be added. Now the position is illegal because white king could not have escaped from the cage. Removing any white pawn of bishop provides the opening.

The Try:

Adding black men does not work ! Though the same logic for black king applies, the setting continues to be illegal when black pawn d7 is removed – the check from the bishop c8 will be then illegal ! Really nice !

Hope everyone had fun! Thanks to all participants !

K.Seetharaman.