

Roland Baier wins Second Home Solving Tournament

When we organised the Lockdown Tournament last May, it was never the intention to repeat this. At that moment nobody had any idea what the future would bring. We all hoped to return quickly to our normal live. Half a year later we know that it is not that simple.

Some time ago I made the selection for the traditional Henk Hagedoorn Memorial in the Netherlands, but when this tournament was cancelled, everything went fast. With most of the problems “ready to use” and a complete lack of live tournaments, the decision to repeat the Home Solving Tournament (a much better name than the ugly “Lockdown”) was quickly made. We kept the rules of the first tournament, except the three time-slots. Choosing the time to solve is maybe convenient for the solver, but believe me, it’s crazy for the organizers.

The first time I did all the administration, however suddenly realizing that your computer is the centre of the world for one day is a frightening experience. All the participants depend on your faultless communication. But there is the constant fear that something can go wrong: break down of the internet cables in the street (happened to me a few weeks ago), bad internet-connection, missing or undelivered mails, or those dreadful unexpected hours long Windows update at the wrong moment. This time Axel volunteered to do the administration, and I had a more relaxed day, doing only the marking of the solving sheets. We had no noteworthy technical issues and everything went very smoothly.

Many participants of the first tournament registered again, and we welcomed also some new faces. Although, this might be not the appropriate expression. Maybe I’m old fashion, but it is still difficult for me to write “we welcomed some new e-mail-addresses”. Finally, we had 66 participants, one less than in the first tournament.

The problems did their job, and almost everyone needed the complete two hours. The reader can study the results and problems in detail in the accompanied pdf’s. As expected, the best solvers occupied the top places. It was still a small surprise that former world champion from Switzerland Roland Baier won the tournament. “Easier than last time”, he wrote when he mailed his solutions. I’m not so sure if the other 65 participants agree.

The Russian junior Maxim Romanov finished nicely in second place. In fact, the Russian juniors, who participated thanks to the recommendation of Andrey Selivanov, did very well. Special mention must go to Nikita Ushakov, who was the only one to crack the S#4.

We noticed a “collective blind spot” at the H#3. Although almost everyone started the first solution with 1.Sbc3, about 2/3 of those solvers wrote for the second solution only 1.Rc3, and not 1.Rcc3 or 1.R6c3. Of course, we accepted this, because from the continuation it is clear which rook went to c3.

The selfmates proved to be very difficult. If you promise not to tell it to anybody, we can use them again at the next WCSC 😊.

As always, Axel Steinbrink did a fine job and lead the tournament meticulously. Finally a big “thank you” to our participants. It’s thanks to their fair-play that these tournaments are possible. And for those who couldn’t make it, they can still tackle the problems and compare their results with the solvers in the tournament.

Stay safe, and hopefully we will meet – finally! – again in 2021.

Luc Palmans