

FFJDI 1er Concours International de Problème Dames Canadiennes 2014

Text: Ard-Jan de Jong

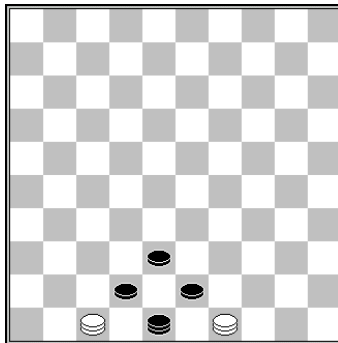
The concourse

In 2014, the Fédération Française de Jeux des Dames Internationaux 64 & 144 cases (FFJDI 64 & 144) organized their first international concourse on Canadian checkers problemism. The Canadian checkers board with 144 squares is shown on diagram 1, also showing the field numbering used for the notation of moves. The rules of moves and captures are the same as for international checkers on 100 squares. For this concourse, two categories were defined, for which each competitor could submit 2 problems. Category A was on 10x10 to 20x20 initial positions without kings, theme free. Category B was on 12x12 to 25x25 initial positions without kings, with the theme “pyramid of Cheops”. This theme is illustrated by diagrams 2 and 3, showing examples of small and large pyramids on the 100 board. Contact person was Franck Laurent (France) and jury members were Peter Shkludov (Belarus), Rustam Shayakhmetov (Russia) and Nicolas Doubovy (France).

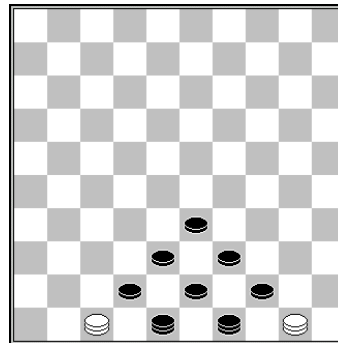
1 144 squares board

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40	41	42
43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54
55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66
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2 small pyramid

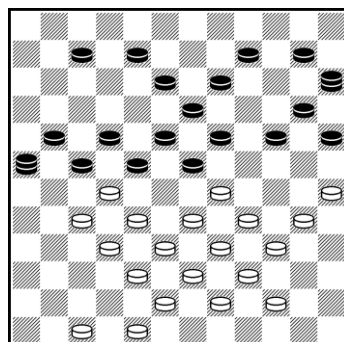


3 great pyramid

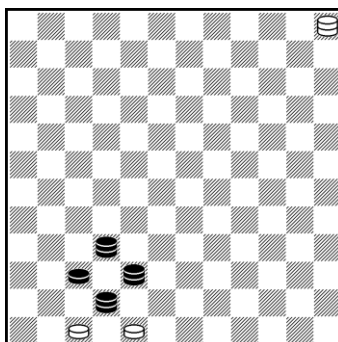


According to Wikipedia and subsequent references, the history of Canadian checkers dates back to at least 1805, when 144 boards were already on sale in London. Details are reported on a Canadian championship match in 1860, and around 1960, world championships were regularly organized for both match-play and problemism.

4 D de Ruiter



4M 67-61



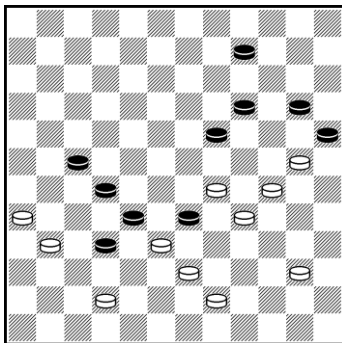
144 squares board

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30
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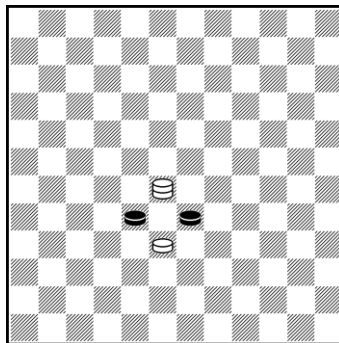
For an impression of Canadian problemism on the 144 board around 1960, see the winning problem of 1960 on diagram 4, with solution 40-35, 46-39, 52x28, 47-41, 65-60, 58x47, 42-36, 51-46, 45x36, 36-30, 30x4, 4x6, 68-61, 69x45, 6x63. Champion Mondial Problémiste Au Jeu Canadien No 12, 1960. Clearly, this style differs from the main-stream problemism on the 100 board around that time. In fact, the very same author published diagram 5 in the very same year, with solution 43-37, 64-59, 40x5, 5x39! Le Revue Canadienne 12-1960. The final position on diagram 1M is an example of the

famous “Van der Meer square”, named after a Dutch problemist. On the 100 board, this square is notoriously hard to realize in a fine initial position without kings. Perhaps the first realization on the 100 board was published in 1947 by G van Dam, GL Gortmans and S van der Meer (cf. H Wiersma, Damminiaturen 1977). This concerned a realization with two black kings and one white king in the initial position. Dick de Ruiter shows that on the 144 board, the ending can be realized with, as it seems, relative ease. Comparing diagram 4 and 5 shows Dick’s qualities as a concourse problemist, skillfully adapting to the 1960 style of 144 problemism with his diagram 4, with nicely separated white and black blocks, a couple of black kings in the initial position and a long solution, which may be pretty hard to find. Still, one may observe a tiny similarity between problems 4 and 5, as both culminate in and ending with a prominent 4-piece square!

5 D de Ruiter



5M Black to move



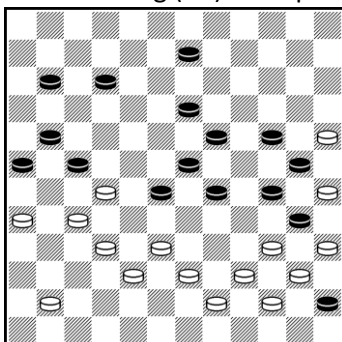
144 squares board

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
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25	26	27	28	29	30
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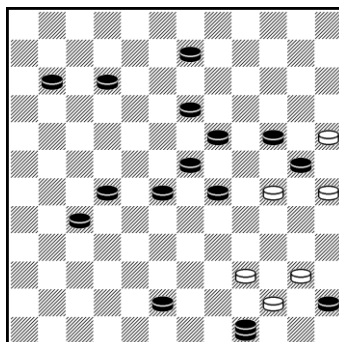
The problems

In their presentation of the concourse, the FFJDI 64-144 announced that “[...] the main idea 144 must not be suitable for 100 squares. We are looking for new ideas.” Assuming that this implied that the organizers were looking for problems like diagram 5 rather than diagram 4, I looked forward to this contest very much. I hoped that the 144 board would allow to finally realize a couple of complicated on-the-shelf-ideas in nice and sharp compositions. This indeed helped for Category A where the theme was free, but not so much for Category B, where I found the theme rather restrictive. Others may have had similar experience, because by far the highest marks were obtained by Category A problems. These we will first discuss, using the original concourse numbering of problems.

A1 AJ de Jong (NL) – 225pt



A1M 30-24



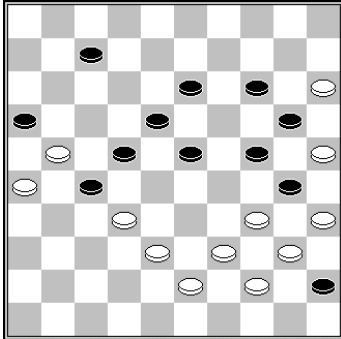
144 squares board

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
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The solution of diagram A1 reads 44-37, 37-32, 57-50, 43-37, 53-47, 54x41, 30-24, 24x33, 42x3, 3x7. The problem works towards diagram A1M, where white sticks by 30-24 (66x64) 24x33 and now the core of the problem is reached, where the black king must take a majority capture over two men by (71x35), followed by the fatal blows 42x3, 3x7. Diagram A1a shows an earlier attempt to realize the same idea on the 100 board, with solution 29, 354, 10, 17, 1, 21, 11, 9/4. Het Nieuwe Damspel 01-1990. The majority capture of the black king is displayed on diagram A1aM. Problem A1a is

unsatisfactory because for the final capture, white can choose to land on either 9 or 4, which is an elementary form of a second solution. As illustrated by diagram A1, the additional space on the 144 board allows for a realization with an unambiguous final capture.

A1a AJ de Jong



A1aM (49x19)

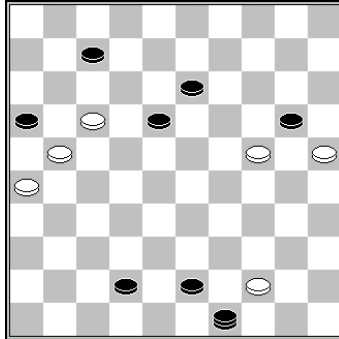
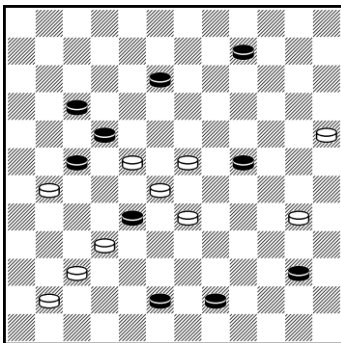
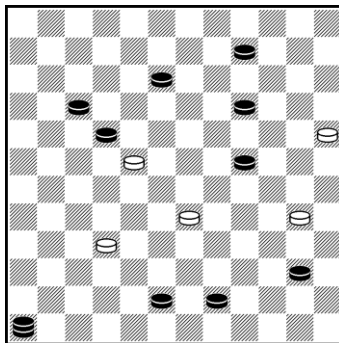


Diagram A5 shows a composition of third prize winner Vitaly Kruchkov from Ukraine with solution 56-49, 34-28, 48-41, 30x4, 4x66. The core idea is shown on diagram A5M. Here, white plays 48-41 forcing black to the curious majority capture (67x36). This capture seems virtually impossible to realize on the 100 board, so that A5 indeed profits well from the additional space on the 144 board.

A5 V Kruchkov – 155pt



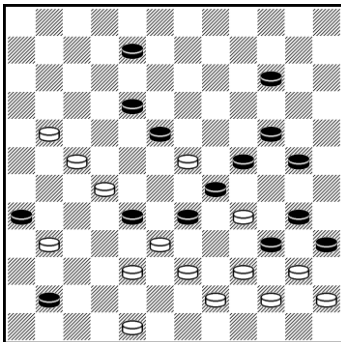
A5M 48-41



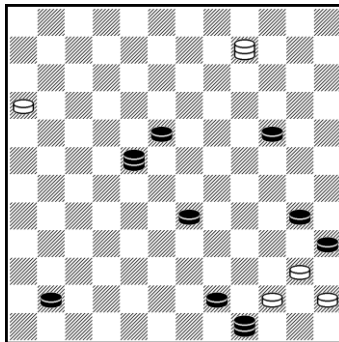
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This certainly also holds for the following two compositions of second prize winner Victor Shulga from Belarus. Diagram A7 received the highest marks of all submissions, with solution 25-19, 69-62, 32-26, 26x2, 34x47, 2x11, 19-13, 11x67, 67-50, 50-70. The initial position is easily explained by the last moves 55-49 (56-61) of white and black.

A7 V Shulga (W-Rusl) – 255pt



A7M 19-13

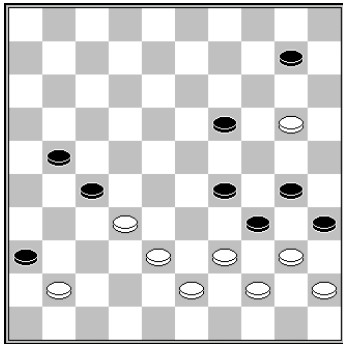


1	2	3	4	5	6
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13	14	15	16	17	18
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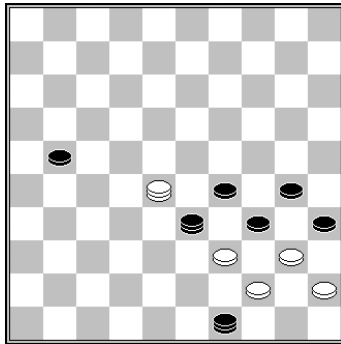
Many interesting things happen in A7. We get white's backwards capture 34x47 maneuvering the black king from 41 to 33 by a magnificent majority capture (41x33) over three. The black king is then

blocking the path for the black man on 27 so that the white king can land on 11 by 2x11. This moment is shown to diagram A7M where, astonishingly, none of the parties can capture anything. White then proceeds by 19-13 and by white's next capture 11x67, the black man on 46 is removed. This creates two more tempi, allowing for the final moves 67-50-70. Overall, this amounts to the roundtrip 2x11x67-50-70 along 5 fields by the white king!

A7a AP de Zwart

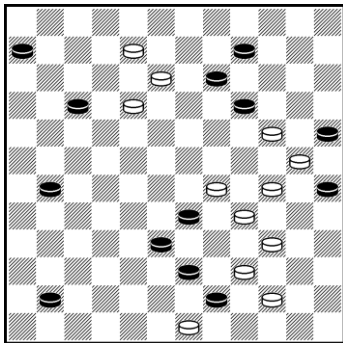


A7aM 28-14

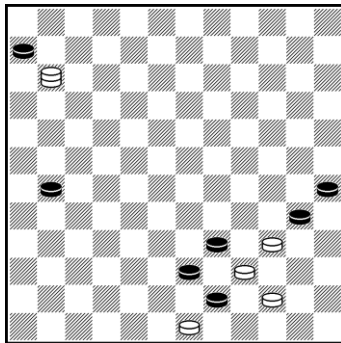


The final ending is very well known on the 100 board, and diagram A7a is a famous realization with solution 14, 5, 28, 14, 25, 26, 48. De Problemist 08-1980. From all of white's pieces, only the white man on 20 will ever move during the solution, and does so in an amazing roundtrip comprising the complete solution of seven moves. After promotion, this adds up to a roundtrip 5x28-14-25x26-48 of a white king along no less than 6 fields. Diagram A7aM shows the moment right after the landing of the white king on 28!! A formidable idea to keep the solution going, blocking the capture 39x28, and followed by immediate unblocking with 28-14! All just brilliant timing!

A9 V Shulga (W-Rusl) – 160pt



A9M 59x46

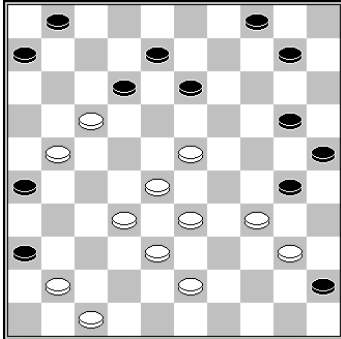


1	2	3	4	5	6
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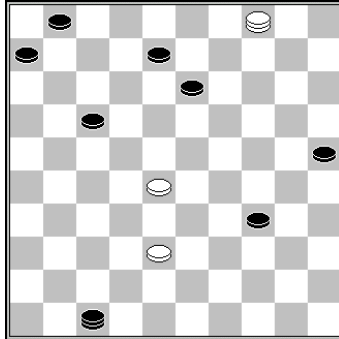
The second-highest rated problem of Victor Shulga was also in Category A and is shown on diagram A9, with solution 15-10, 29x5, 5x13, 59x46, 70x59, 13x31 (42-48) 31-20 and so on. I imagine that the author may not have been entirely happy with final ending, which can be won in several ways, and neither with the initial position with the three white man on 9. 15. 21 so close to the promotion fields, although no-one of this trio eventually promotes. On the contrary, they are all sacrificed on white's very first move. In the following we are presented the pretty picture of A9M. The eagle just landed on 13 and will stay there during two more white moves 59x46, 70x59, a remarkable achievement. I'm not sure if this feature has been ever realized like this on the 100 board, but the classic problem of Dick de Ruiter on diagram A9a comes close, with solution 11, 7, 9, 27, 42, 4, 11, 2. De Gelderse Dammer, 11-1958. After 4x11 in diagram A9aM, the cliffhanger on 11 immediately proceeds by 11x2 in the very next move, and does not "hang" during two white moves as in A9M. Also note the polished moves 17-11-7 and the clever majority capture 47-42!! It is possible to prolongate Dick's cliffhanger on 11 by one white move, as A Wuijtenburg showed 48 years later with

diagram A9b, with solution 261 (48A) 16, 9, 42, 4, 11 (50) 44, 2. A(50) 44 etc. De Problemist 02-2006. Note the clever ad libitum at the first move. At A(50) white proceeds with 44, eventually resulting in the same ending, but without prolonged hanging on 11.

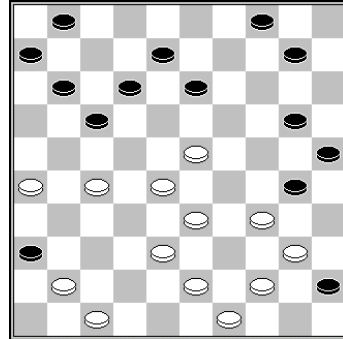
A9a D de Ruiter



A9aM 4x11

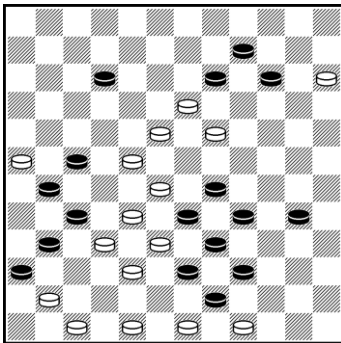


A9b A Wuijtenburg

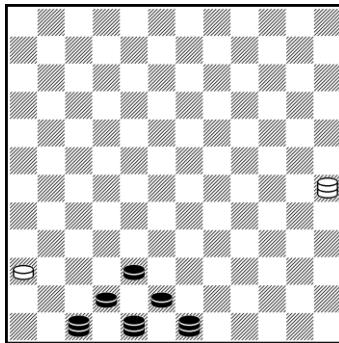


In category B, the highest marks were given to problem B1 with solution 28-23, 27-22, 18-12, 69-63, 71x58, 70-64, 51-46, 68x57, 12-5, 5x42, 31x55. In the final position, black is left two final moves, eventually leading to the requested pyramid-theme.

B1 AJ de Jong (NL) – 205pt



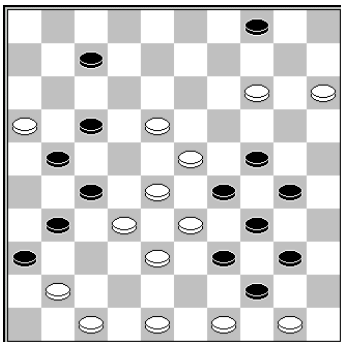
B1M Black to move



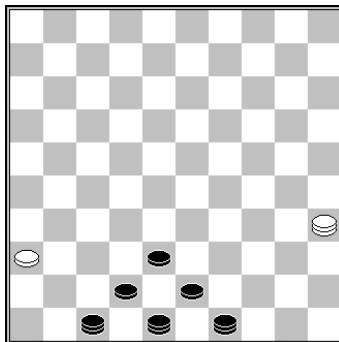
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Ending B1M had been realized earlier by the 100 board problem B1a, with solution 9, 10, 483, 39, 44, 29, 38, 4, 35, 36. Het Nieuwe Damspel 07-1988. Not satisfactory are the initial moves 14-9 (4x22), which is no majority capture, and the fact that the white man on 14 has a free path to promotion field 5. On the 144 board it was possibly to overcome both of these issues. I hesitated to start the problem with an additional move 34-28 (19x32) to arrive at a position with 17 pieces each and better coverage of 28-23, but this would create a free promotion path by the exchange 25-20x20.

B1a AJ de Jong

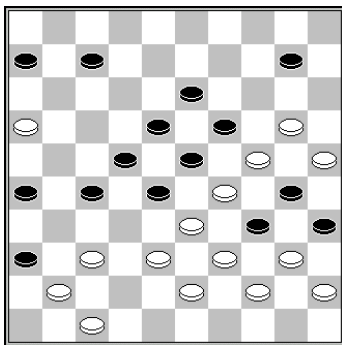


B1aM Black to move

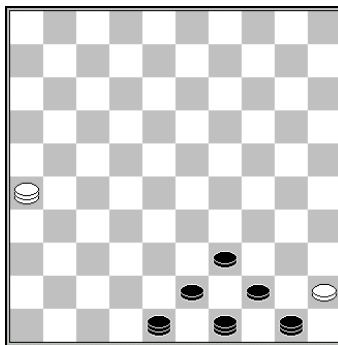


B1a seems to be the only realization of pyramid B1aM on the 100 board. However, a shifted version of this pyramid has been fantastically realized by Sergei Yushkevitch. His composition is shown on diagram B1b, with solution 42, 31, 32, 14, 5, 34, 24, 11, 15, 16. Hoofdlijn 09-2004. A search through the 100 board database "Compositions2013" shows that Sergei was already working on this pyramid for nineteen years, given an early and more down-to-earth realization of B1bM in HND 07-1985. B1b is magic. On the first three moves, black is swiftly presented the first three of his kings. Shortly thereafter, our Hogwarts-educated Ukrainian friend even presents black with an unlikely fourth black king, positions the top of the black pyramid with the spectacular backward capture 25x34 (19x39), closes the door for the capture of the black king on 47 by 5x24 just on time, dryly moves black 6 to 17 by 16-11 (6x17) and eventually rounds off by 24-15x16 to arrive at diagram B1bM. A treasure of human culture, and a prime candidate for the front cover of the next edition of the Lonely Planet of the Ukraine.

B1b S Yushkevitch



B1bM Black to move



The results

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Ardjan de Jong (Netherlands): | 43 points (25 pts B1, 18 pts A1) |
| 2. Victor Shulga (Belarus): | 40 points (25 pts A7, 15 pts A9) |
| 3. Vitaly Kruchkov (Ukraine): | 22 points (12 pts A5, 10 pts A10) |

For more details on the concourse and for a complete list of competing problems, I refer to the FFJDI 64-144 website ffjdi64-144.sportsregions.fr. Finally, I wish to greatly thank the FFJDI 64-144 committee for organizing this concourse and their excellent work in the aftermath. May this concourse be the first of a long history of concourses on checkers problemism on the 144 board!