

### IT HAPPENS TO THE BEST OF US

We all have that one chess player in our life who we feel like we can never beat. It feels like they never make a mistake! But no matter how

good they are, everybody blunders. Everybody even hangs mate!

Want proof? In the first two rounds of the 2023 FIDE World Cup alone, we were able to fill an entire worksheet with FMs, IMs, and even GMs blundering checkmate. See if you can solve them all below.

The **example** to the right is a hard one. Black forced mate with **38. ... Ra1!! 39. Nxa1** Not 39. Rxa1 Rxa1+ 40. Nxa1 Qd1+ with mate to follow. **39. ... Ra2 40. Rbg1.**

As a **bonus**, can you find Black's checkmate in your head?!



**# 1. WHITE TO PLAY**

**# 2. WHITE TO PLAY**

**# 3. WHITE TO PLAY**

**# 4. WHITE TO PLAY**

**# 5. WHITE TO PLAY**

**# 6. WHITE TO PLAY**

### SOLUTIONS

**1) 35. Qxh6+!** Black resigned, rather than put **35. ... Kxh6 36. Rh5#** on the board. Remember to always calculate the checks and captures, and to look for follow-up checks and captures. It only takes a few seconds to ask what happens if you sac your queen! (Huschenbeth – Rakotomaharo, Baku, 2023) **2) Black's 73. ... h3??** blundered mate. It's important to consider your opponent's forcing

moves, no matter how close your passed pawn is to queening and no matter how fast it looks! **74. Nf4+ Kh6 75. Nf5#** (Pantsulaia – Harsha, Baku, 2023) **3) Black's 40. ... Qd4??** blundered a mate. **41. Rb8+ Rf8 42. Qh7#** The rook now sits on Black's only flight square. (Janik – Gumularz, Baku, 2023) **4) 38. Rf8+ Kh7 39. Rh8+** Black resigned, rather than face White's queen entering via Qf2-f8-g7. A lovely clearance sacrifice! (Yilmaz – Liang, Baku,

2023) **5) 58. g4!** There is no answer to g4-g5 with mate. Presumably, Black only looked at queen checks that relinquish control of the g7-square. (Kozul – Sanal, Baku, 2023) **6) 28. ... Rd7** missed White's threat. **29. Re8+ Black resigned**, as **29. ... Kxe8 30. Qe4+ Ne6** Or **30. ... Qe6 31. Qa8+ Rd8 32. Qxd8 mate. 31. Qa8+ Nd8 32. Qxd8+ Rxd8** gets mated by **33. Rxd8#** (Carlsen – Pantsulaia, Baku, 2023) **Bonus) 40. ... Nf2#.** (Bachmann – Sarin, Baku, 2023)