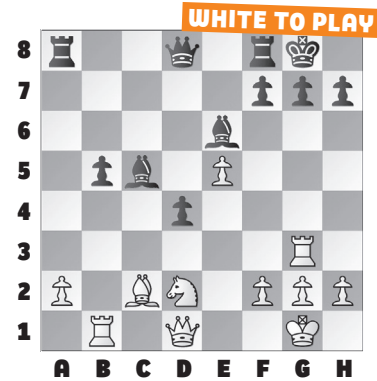


checkmate due to time pressure.

This week, we will see a number of other tactical “blind spots” that show up under pressure, including: loose pieces, not calculating all forcing moves, and king safety.

Our example is about all three themes. White won with 22. Bxh7+ Kxh7 23. Qh5+ Kg8 24. Qh6 g6 25. Ne4! when the point of the whole sequence was creating the weak square on f6 and switching the attack to the g7-square.

As a bonus, do you see how White can win from here?



BACK TO BASICS IN BAKU

Last week, we took a trip to Baku, Azerbaijan for the 2023 FIDE World Cup and Women’s World Cup, where we saw elite players blunder into

1. BLACK TO PLAY

2. WHITE TO PLAY

3. WHITE TO PLAY

4. WHITE TO PLAY

5. WHITE TO PLAY

6. BLACK TO PLAY

SOLUTIONS

1) 34. ... Rxc5 A theme this week: loose pieces drop off! (Huschenbeth – Navara, Baku, 2023) **2) 33. exd5!** Another theme: look for checks in forcing lines. **33. ... Bxd3 34. Rxc6+ Kd7** Similar is 34. ... Rxc6 35. Rxc6+ Kd7 36. Kxd3. **35. Kxd3** and White is a pawn up. (Saleh – Gezachew, Baku, 2023) **3) 39. Nxf7! Qd7** Black also loses with 39. ... Kxf7 40. Qc4+! Ke7 41. Rxc8 and the same idea. **40. Nxf6+! Bxf6 41. Qc4+** and **Black**

resigned. (Jumabayev – Paichadze, Baku, 2023) **4) 43. Qd8+!** The queen is hanging on h3. White forces the king to an unfortunate line. **43. ... Kh5** Alternatives all lose the queen as well: 43. ... Kg4 44. Qd7+; 43. ... Kf5 44. Qd7+; 43. ... Kh6 44. Qh8+ **44. Qh8+ Kg4 45. Qc8+ Kf3 46. Qxh3** (Injac – Sovetbekova, Baku, 2023, analysis) **5) 22. Rxd5!** White opens lines to the weak e8-square. **22. ... exd5 23. Bb6!** (Salimova – A. Muzychuk, Baku, 2023) **6) 31. ...**

Bh6! The direct 31. ... Bc2+ doesn’t work, as after 32. Ke2 Qd3+ 33. Kf2 Bh6, White has 34. Qxf7+ . **32. Qf2** The only square that defends mate on d2 gets in the king’s way. **32. ... Bc2+** White resigned, due to **33. Kc1 Bd3+! 34. Kd1 Qc2** mate (A. Muzychuk – Salimova, Baku, 2023) **Bonus) 26. Rf3!** White covers the f6-square. **26. ... Bf5 27. Rxf5! Ra6** Or 27. ... gxf5 28. Nf6+ Bxf6 29. exf6 with mate on g7 **28. Rf3** and Black resigned. (Gurel – Ivic, Baku, 2023)