

IT'S ALL ABOUT CHECKMATE

What's the goal of a chess game? This isn't a trick question. It's checkmate! It's easy to lose track, though, with everything else we're

supposed to think about. This is why we study checkmate patterns, as we need to be ready to see a mating net as soon as it appears.

In this **example**, White ends the game with **19. Qh6!**, threatening mate on h7 after Nf3-g5. There is no time to capture the loose bishop on b2. With **19. ... Bd8**, Black covers the g5-square, so White switches to the light squares with **20. gxh5 Qe7 21. Ba3! Qe8 22. hxg6 fxg6 23. Bxg6 Rf7 24. Bxf7+ Qxf7**. Now, as a **bonus**,

how should White bring in the next (and final) piece?



1. WHITE TO PLAY

2. WHITE TO PLAY

3. BLACK TO PLAY

4. BLACK TO PLAY

5. BLACK TO PLAY

6. BLACK TO PLAY

SOLUTIONS

1) 38. Rb8 Black's last move vacated the back rank, and now White has a "hook mate!" **38. ... Nb5+ 39. Kb4 Rxa4+ 40. Kxa4 Nc7 41. Rc8** and **Black resigned**. (Rida – Aslan, Egypt, 2023) **2) 73. Nc6+** The return of the hook! **73. ... Kc8 74. Rh8+ Kb7 75. Rb8** mate. (Bakshizada – Munkhjinn, Egypt, 2023) **3) 38. ... Bf1+** Black uses the threat of a back-rank mate with ... Bf1-h3 (after the king retreats to g1 or h1) to force

a win of material. **39. Kf3 Rc3+ 40. Nd3 Bxd3** and **White resigned**. (Diaz Guerrero – Kocharyan, Egypt, 2023) **4) 32. ... g3+** Black uses the threat of a back-rank mate to force the king into a discovery. **33. Kf3** Or **33. Kf1 Bc4+** **34. Kg1 Re1** mate. **33. ... Rd4+ 34. Ke2 Rxd2+ 35. Kxd2 Bxg2** and Black has too many pawns. (Ejsymont – Altynbek, Egypt, 2023) **5) 22. ... Nf3+** Penetration on the weak light squares! **23. Kf1** Or **23. Kg2 Rxh2+** **24. Kf1 Qc4+** is similar.

23. ... Qc4+ **24. Bd3 Qxd3+** **25. Re2 Bh3** mate. (Nguyen Doan – Lu, Egypt, 2023) **6) 55. ... d2+** **56. Kd1 Kd4!** White was relying on the breakthrough with b5-b6 and promoting the a-pawn. Black had her eyes on something more direct! **57. b6 Kc3** Threatening ... Nc4-e3 with mate. **58. Rb3+ Kxb3 59. b7 Kc3 60. b8=Q Ne3** mate. (Enkhzaya – Kokareva, Egypt, 2023) **Bonus) 25. Kh2!** Bringing in the final piece! (Kleimenov – Nguyen, Egypt, 2023)