

## **BEWARE OF THE SCANDI MAN**

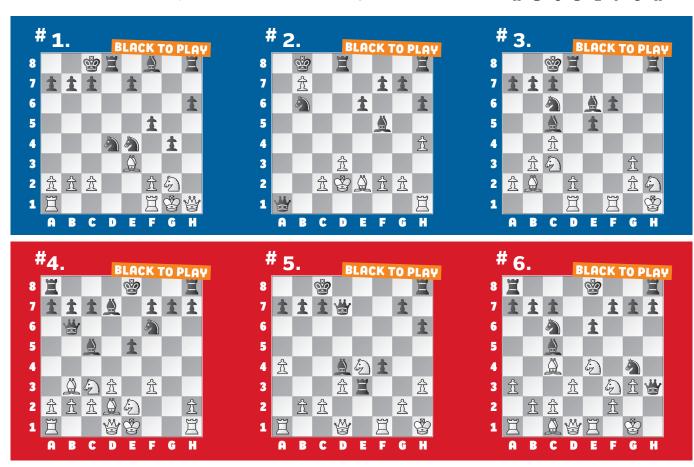
The past two Tactics Tuesdays saw White have all the fun against the Scandinavian. But famous chess instructor and YouTuber IM John Bartholomew (aka Fins) has earned a reputation as a bit of a Scandi Man, not only surviving but often thriving with kingside offensives against over-ambitious opponents who underestimate the opening's dynamic potential and flexibility.

Here are a number of his nicer mates in his favorite opening, as a reminder to always check your king safety even if your opponent plays 1. ... d5 against your king's pawn.

This week's example is the

trickiest of the bunch. As a **bonus**, can you find Black's mate?!





## **SOLUTIONS**

1) 20. ... Nf3 mate. An unusual play on the famed smothered mate! (champion2029 – Fins, lichess.org, 2021) 2) 25. ... Nc4 mate. Hopefully you did not get distracted by that hanging rook. The goal is to checkmate the king, not grab the rook! (gramatikov – Fins, lichess. org, 2022) 3) 21. ... Rxh2+ 22. Kxh2 Rh8 mate. Beware dark-squared bishops guarding the g1-square. (iliaT – Fins, lichess.org, 2022) 4)

## 13. ... Bf2+ 14. Kf1 Bh3 mate.

The weakened kingside can spell doom even before White castles. Especially if their king gets pushed to f1! (JeremyMaldini – Fins, *lichess. org*, 2021) 5) 21. ... Rxh3+22. gxh3 Qxh3 mate. Once again, Black's dark-squared bishop covers the g1-square. But without the half-open h-file to play with, Bartholomew finds another way to bust open White's kingside, thanks to the nice lateral mobility of his e3-rook.

(ogul1civan - Fins, lichess.org, 2020)

6) 13. ... Bxf2+ 14. Nxf2 Qxg3+
15. Kh1 (or 15. Kf1 Qxf2 mate)
15. ... Nxf2 mate. The g3-pawn didn't look too weak, but this was a wonderful double-removing-of-the-guard. (Jhonnyer1500 – Fins, lichess.org, 2021) Bonus) Did you find this famous smothered mate pattern? 14. ... Nh3+ 15. Kh1 Qg1+
16. Rxg1 Nf2 mate. Once you see it, you'll start seeing it everywhere! (L-denis1985 – Fins, lichess.org, 2023)

