

NIEMANN, AMBASSADOR OF PEACE

American GM Hans Niemann won the 2023 Tournament of Peace with a 2946 performance rating: the best single-tournament result in 2023.

Niemann's run was peppered with tactical brilliancies. Today's puzzles all come from a single game against GM Anton Korobov, since the brilliancy is often in the details and variations. In most of these positions, the question is which piece to capture with, or whether there is a better *intermezzo* check.

In the position in our **example**, Black blundered with **24. ... Bc8??**. As a **bonus**, can you see how Niemann opened up the kingside

and began a spectacular mating attack?



1. WHITE TO PLAY

2. BLACK TO PLAY

3. WHITE TO PLAY

4. WHITE TO PLAY

5. WHITE TO PLAY

6. WHITE TO PLAY

SOLUTIONS

1) The final blow was: **37. Qh8+ Ke7 38. Rxc7+ Kf6 39. Qh6** mate. (All positions from Niemann – Korobov, Zagreb, 2023) **2)** If White played 40. Rg2?, Black forces perpetual with **40. ... Qe1+ 41. Rg1 Qe4+** when 42. Rg1 allows repetition and **42. f3 Qxf3+ 43. Rg2 Qf1+ 44. Rg1 Qf3+** does too. (analysis) **3)** **32. Nf6+! Kf8** Not 32. ... Kh8 33. Qh7 mate. **33. Nxe4** is crushing, with Ne4-g5 coming. Note that White had

to be careful not to play 33. Qxe4? when after 33. ... Bxf6 he is just down a piece. (analysis) **4)** **34. Rg1!** In this variation, White wins by threatening a mating net involving Rg1-g7+. If **34. ... Kd7** to prepare 35. Rg7+ Re7, then **35. Rg8** wins! **35. ... Re1+ 36. Kg2 Qb8 37. Rg7+ Re7 38. Nf6+ Kc7 39. Rxe7+**. (analysis) **5)** Only **37. Qh8+** and not 37. dxe6?!, which would allow 37. ... Qe4+! 38. f3 Qxf3+ 39. Rg2 Qxg2 mate. **37. ... Kf7 38. dxe6+ Kxe6 39. Rxc7 Qe4+**

There is no perpetual. **40. Kg1** See **Puzzle 2** for 40. Rg2??. **40. ... Qe1+ 41. Kg2 Qe4+ 42. Kg3 Qd3+ 43. f3** (analysis) **6)** **35. Bxc4!** Not 35. Rxc4? Qd4! 36. Qh8+ Kf7, when now the g4-rook blocks Be2-h5+. **35. ... Qd4 36. Be6!** Preventing ... Rg7-g8. Black played 36. ... Qd4xb2, taking us to **Puzzle 1. Bonus**) The game continued **25. Bxf6! Bxf6 26. Nxc5 Bh8 27. Qh6** with the plan of hammering the g6-pawn via f2-f4-f5 and doubling the rooks on the g-file.