

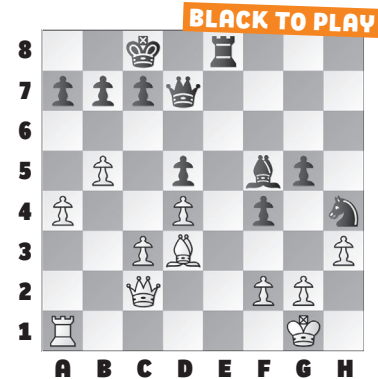
K-12 GRADE HIGHLIGHTS, PT. 1

Over 2,000 players traveled to Orlando, Florida last month for the **2023 K-12 Scholastic Grade Championships**. This week and

next week, we look at some tactical highlights from the top boards of a few of the 13 grade-based sections. Look for mating nets as well as familiar tactical themes like deflection and removing the guard!

In our **EXAMPLE**, Black uses a sacrifice to construct a mating net with **27. ... Bxh3!** When **28. gxh3 Qxh3** wins, since **29. Bf1** (maybe **29. Bf5+** was White's idea, but the knight guards the f5-square!) **29. ... Nf3** forces mate. As a **BONUS**,

how should Black continue if White plays **28. g3**, as in the game?



1. WHITE TO PLAY

2. WHITE TO PLAY

3. BLACK TO PLAY

4. BLACK TO PLAY

5. WHITE TO PLAY

6. WHITE TO PLAY

SOLUTIONS

1) White finishes in style with a mate in two: **28. Qd6+ Ke8 29. Nxb7** mate. (Anandh – Kumar, Orlando, 2023) **2)** Another stylish mate in two! Always calculate those forcing moves, even if they lose material. **28. Qf8+ Rxf8 29. Rxf8** mate. (Zhou – Maddipati, Orlando, 2023) **3)** This one's a mate in three! **37. ... Rxh4+ 38. Kg2 f3+** and **White resigned** rather than face **39. Kg3 Ne2** mate. (Berdugo – Liu, Orlando, 2023) **4)**

46. ... Bxc4! Not all “even trades” are even. **47. Kg2** The point was **47. bxc4 Ne2+** would be winning the whole rook. Instead, after **47. ... Bxb3 48. Kf1 Bc4+ 49. Ke1 Bd3** Black's b-pawn has a clear path. White played on, but could have resigned here. **5)** **28. Rh8+** A nice deflection. The queen hangs after **Ng6xh8**, but the rook on d8 hangs after the king moves. **Black resigned.** (Lyon Martinez – Trey, Orlando, 2023) **6)** **52. Rxb4** Remove the defender!

52. ... Rxe6 The point was **52. ... axb4 53. Rxd6** winning. **53. Rb8+** An important intermezzo, which is easy to overlook when calculating this sequence in advance. After **53. ... Re8 54. Rxe8+ Kf7 55. d6 Rxc6+ 56. Bxc6 a4 57. d7, Black resigned.** (Reiss – Yao, Orlando, 2023) **Bonus)** After **28. ... Nf3+ 29. Kh1**, as played in the game, Black has a number of winning moves. Black chose **29. ... Rh8**, after which **White resigned.** (Vudutala – Gao, Orlando, 2023)