

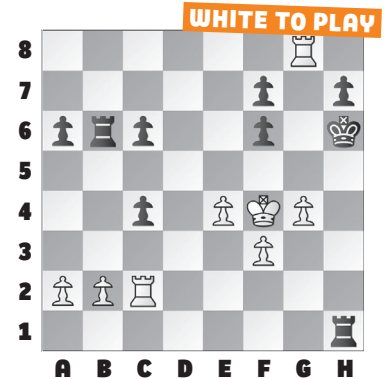
ALL-AMERICAN TACTICS

This week's puzzles come from last year's **American Cup**. Featuring a mixture of classical and rapid chess, this tournament is a perfect mix of

quality chess and nail-biting tactics.

In our **example**, Black avoided this position in Nakamura – Sevian, because he saw that he would get mated after **35. Rd2!** White threatens Rd2-d6 and Rd6xf6. **35. ... c5** There is no other way to stop it, but now, after **36. Rd7!** White threatens Rd7xf7 followed by Rg8-g7 and Rg7xh7 mate. There's no way to stop this, as his king is frozen and White's king is well protected by pawns. This is the stuff you have to

see several moves in advance if you play against Nakamura!



1. WHITE TO PLAY

2. WHITE TO PLAY

3. BLACK TO PLAY

4. WHITE TO PLAY

5. WHITE TO PLAY

6. WHITE TO PLAY

SOLUTIONS

Most tactical ideas never make it onto the board. Watch the American Cup with commentary, or you might miss ideas like those in puzzles 1, 3, and 6. **1) 34. g4!** Black has no way to stop Rc2-h2 with mate! (Nakamura – Sevian, St. Louis, 2023, analysis) **2) 42. Rxc3!** White had just sacrificed her queen, and this is why. If Black declines the rook, White will be up an entire piece after Rd6-Rd8+, so **Black resigned** shortly. (Paikidze

– Zatoniskih, St. Louis, 2023) **3) 33. ... Nc1!** The queen is effectively trapped, since **34. Qb1 Ra1** forces **35. Qb2** when **35. ... Nd3+** wins the queen via discovered check. (Dominguez – Nakamura, St. Louis, 2023, analysis) **4) 48. Bf1!** Black's last chance was hoping White “pre-moved” the promotion with 48. b8=Q?? allowing 48. ... Qg1 mate! **48. ... Qe5 49. Qa7** the b-pawn is coming through. **49. ... Ne1+ 50. Kh1 Qd5 51. b8=Q+** and **Black**

resigned. (Krush – Tokhirjonova, St. Louis, 2023) **5) 18. Rfd1** Is the queen trapped? No, it has one square, right? **18. ... Qb2 19. Nc4** Maybe not, and **Black resigned.** (Nakamura – So, St. Louis, 2023) **6) 37. Be3** An astute skewer of a hanging piece and a key square. Now, Ra1-a7 will pin the queen to the hanging bishop! **37. ... Rc4 38. Ra7** and the bishop is doomed after any queen move. (Nemcova – Abrahamyan, St. Louis, 2023, analysis)