

AMERICAN CUP 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

This week's puzzles come from the **American Cup** in St. Louis. Enjoy a number of time scramble highlights from America's top players.

In our **example**, from IM Alice Lee's victory over GM Irina Krush, Black is so close to tying the match. All she has to do is activate her rook, right? **32. ... Rf8??** Wrong! The real problem is White has threats of her own, so necessary was either **32. ... Kg7** or **32. ... Kh8**.

Instead, now White won after **33. Qxd5+ Kg8 34. Qxd4+**. After **33. ... Rf7 34. Qxd4 Qf3+**, Black can force a draw, which would still lose the match. Remember: no matter how

crushing your attack, always look for your opponent's threats first.



1. BLACK TO PLAY

2. WHITE TO PLAY

3. BLACK TO PLAY

4. WHITE TO PLAY

5. BLACK TO PLAY

6. BLACK TO PLAY

SOLUTIONS

1) 41. ... Nd2+ and **White resigned**, as the e2-knight is a goner after any legal way to get out of check. (Dominguez – Caruana, St. Louis, 2024) **2) 32. Bxg5!** White is now ready to deliver mate. After **32. ... fxg5 33. Be6+**, **Black resigned**, rather than face **33. ... Kf8 34. Rh8** mate. (Lee – Tokhirjonova, St. Louis, 2024) **3) 28. ... Qxb2+** Mind your pins! The game ended after **29. Kd1 Qxb1+ 30. Ke2 Bb5+ 31.**

Kf2 Qf5+ 32. Kg3 Bxd2 when Black wins material and **White resigned** shortly. (Abrahamyan – Yu, St. Louis, 2024) **4) 45. Qxh7+!** This position made the rounds on social media after the match concluded. In severe time trouble, White missed a “textbook” mate! Instead, 45. Nd5 was played, and White went on to lose. **45. ... Nxh7 46. Ng6+ Kg8 47. Bd5** mate. (Sevian – Aronian, St. Louis, 2024, analysis) **5) 65. ... g4!** The best way to win a minor piece

endgame is often to force tactical simplifications into a winning pawn endgame. **66. hxg4 Bg5+ 67. Kd3 Bxd2 68. Kxd2 Ke4 69. Ke2 Kf4 70. Kd3 e4+! 71. Kd4 e3 72. g5 e2** and White resigned. (Zatonskih – Tang, St. Louis, 2024) **6) 33. ... Rxh4** A crushing mating attack! **34. gxh4 Qg4+ 35. Kh2 Qxh4+ 36. Kg1 Bh3** Bring all your toys to the party! **37. Rd4 Qh5 38. Qd3 Bg2** and **White resigned** due to unstoppable mate threats. (Sevian – So, St. Louis, 2024)